

**7-Parish Vocations Committee
Notes March 13, 2024**

Present: **Our Mother of Sorrows:** Rick Cammilleri, **St. Charles Borromeo:** Mark Stechschulte, **St. John the Evangelist:** Rick Paoletti, **St. Lawrence:** Deacon Ed Giblin, **St. Leo the Great:** Neil Combs, **St. Mark's:** Lorraine Vancour, **Facilitator/Link to the Pastoral Planning Task Force:** Karen Rinefierd

Excused: **Holy Cross:** Mary Ann DeLucenay

Purpose of this group: to develop and implement strategies for the 7 parishes to work together to encourage vocations—in general, to the priesthood/diaconate, to religious life, to lay ecclesial ministry

Ed distributed a poster about the permanent diaconate for each parish. Two copies had been previously sent to each parish in the diocese, but they may now have been removed. If they are still posted, this copy could be added to another place on the church campus or at the school. Action: each member will give one to their pastor/pastoral administrator to be displayed. Karen took the one for St. Lawrence since she will see Fr. Chase before Ed does.

Ed also gave Karen copies of a brochure prepared by the USCCB entitled “Do you feel called to serve God’s people as an ordained deacon in the Catholic Church?” Since the Bishops’ Committee on the Diaconate has been subsumed into another department, the brochure may no longer be available, but we may want to develop something similar.

Discussion of brainstormed possible action steps to foster vocations to the permanent diaconate

Possible Action Step	Comments at this meeting
1) There could be a similar display for the permanent diaconate as the one previously mentioned for priestly vocations at Holy Cross and Our Mother of Sorrows. Ed recommended two titles that he frequently gives to men considering the diaconate: <u>101 Questions and Answers on Deacons</u> by William T. Ditewig and <u>The Heart of the Diaconate</u> by James Keating.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It would be easy to add informational materials to the displays we are pursuing at each parish with materials about the priesthood.
2) Consider a multi-parish Holy Hour hosted by all the deacons in our seven parishes. Perhaps Adoration with Liturgy of the Hours (Evening Prayer, Night Prayer) followed by an informal gathering in the parish hall with a brief presentation and time for Q&A. Ask the deacons and pastors to make personal invitations to men whom they think might be open to discerning a diaconal vocation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If we do this, we should extend an invitation to prospective deacons and their wives. • We should offer one for all 7 parishes rather than separate ones at each parish. • We should ask the pastors and current deacons to invite someone they think would be a good deacon and accompany him and his wife.

3) Ask the deacons in each parish to write a brief bulletin article highlighting their own call to ordained ministry, their experiences in formation and ministry, and how their diaconate gives sacramental witness to the Servant Christ.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There could be a recurring article—one per month.
4) Have a bulletin article including what the church is looking for in permanent deacons.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ed sends an article like this out to all parishes annually, but he doesn't know how many parishes actually put it in their bulletins.
5) Ask the local priests and permanent deacons to invite men in their communities whom they think would be fine deacons to consider the diaconate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This could be part of #2.
6) What does a permanent deacon actually do? Have a deacon witness at/after Mass.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need to highlight that the deacon's role is not only about the Mass but includes charity.

There was a decision to pursue #2. We would start with a Holy Hour. The presentation that follows would emphasize the different facets of the permanent diaconate: Word, Altar, and Service, including a sampling of the different ministries in which deacons are involved. We would encourage priests and deacons to invite and accompany men and include their wives. Ed noted that the second Sunday of October is Deacon Sunday. We could aim for October. There will be no new deacon class beginning this fall—the next will be in the fall of 2025 if there are at least 4 or 5 candidates.

Action steps on fostering vocations to the priesthood--who needs to be involved, how to begin, who will do what?

Action #1: Coordinate efforts with the existing diocesan vocations awareness team.

- Agreement to invite Fr. Bill Coffas to come to a future meeting of this committee and ask him, "What can we do to help you?"

Action #2: Incorporate a vocation talk into faith formation or youth ministry

- We need to talk with each Pastor/Pastoral Administrator and the Faith Formation Director and Youth minister (if these are separate people).
- We recommend that this vocation component happen during high school, but we will leave the decision to the Faith Formation Director or Youth Minister. Each parish would incorporate it when and how they choose.
- First the designated committee member will email their pastoral leader on Friday, April 12 or soon after.
- That initial contact with the pastoral leader will be followed by contacting the Faith Formation Director/Youth Minister:
 - Holy Cross, Our Mother of Sorrows, St. Charles Borromeo, and St. Lawrence—Mark will contact first Amanuel Malik and then the youth ministers: Donna Gray (St. Charles and St. Lawrence), Donna Jacobi (Holy Cross), and Cindy Lammes (Our Mother of Sorrows).
 - St. Leo the Great—Neil will contact Danielle Hubbel. (Note: Danielle is on maternity leave until June.)
 - St. Mark's—Lorraine will contact Kris Burgio.

Action #3—Develop displays about vocations for all 7 parishes (Holy Cross and Our Mother of Sorrows already have these

- Deferred until next meeting.

Other resources sent after the committee met:

- From Ed Giblin: A survey by the US Catholic Bishops regarding youth and young adults who have considered a vocation to priesthood or religious life [Survey of Youth and Young Adults on Vocations: Major Findings | USCCB](#)
- From Deacon Frank Pettrone: an article about how the Diocese of Columbus, Ohio is increasing their number of vocations to the priesthood [US Diocese of Columbus doubles number of seminarians in two years - Vatican News](#)

Next meeting: Wednesday, April 24 at 7:00 pm, tentatively in room 7 of the Borromeo Ministry Center at St. Charles

Closing prayer: Hail Mary