

Spring Educator Gathering
March 16, 2026
Holy Cross Diocesan Center in La Crosse

8:00 Rosary (optional)
8:30 Mass
9:30 Madre Peregrina Presentation
10:35 Move to first break out
10:45 First break out
12:00 Lunch
1:00 Second break out
2:15: Move to church or chapel
2:20: Closing Prayer
2:30: End

Main Morning Session – 9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

Hear from the team traveling with the [Madre Peregrina](#) life-sized sculpture depicting the Virgin Mary in her apparitions of Our Lady of Guadalupe near Mexico City. They will be retelling of the apparitions, offer an immersive prayer experience and lead singing of hymns composed for Our Lady of Guadalupe. Veneration of the statue will be available and prayer intentions will be gathered and taken back to the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City where a special Mass will be offered for the intentions received from the visit.

Break-out Sessions (You will pick two)

Servant of God Sister Thea Bowman, FSPA – “Calling all to a Living Faith”

Born in Canton Mississippi and a professed Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration, Sister Bowman used her powerful voice to educate, evangelize, and call the Church to greater racial inclusion. Through her gifts of preaching, music, and teaching, she challenged Catholics to confront racism while encouraging her African American brothers and sisters to embrace and share their “fully functioning” personhood. She proclaimed this message with boldness and grace until her death in 1990.

Blessed Solanus Casey, OFM Cap. – “Thank God Ahead of Time”

Presented by Jack Felsheim

Blessed Solanus Casey, a Wisconsin native whose humble witness of gratitude, trust in God, and service to the poor still speaks powerfully to us today. By learning about his life and the times he lived in, you

will be inspired and equipped with practical ways to bring his spirituality—especially the call to “Thank God Ahead of Time”—into your classroom and school community.

Servant of God Father Joseph Walijewski – “A Pencil in our Lord’s Hand”

Presented by Father Kyle Laylan

A priest of the Diocese of La Crosse, “Padre Jose” as his Peruvian parishioners would lovingly call him, was inspired to provide shelter for the many abandoned children he encountered while serving in the streets near Lima. His life of heroic virtue has inspired many to see the face of God in everyone they meet. Many know him by his lasting mission Casa Hogar.

Venerable Father Samuel Mazzuchelli, OP – “God’s Builder”

Presented by Pat Conley

Born in Milan in 1806 and a descendent from a prominent Italian family, young Samuel joined the Dominican Order of Preachers and came to America at age 22. He served the native tribes and new immigrant settlers in the area around the southwest part of Wisconsin, building more than 24 churches and civic buildings (St. Gabriel in Prairie du Chien is one) before his death in 1864.

Venerable Bishop Frederic Baraga – “The Snowshoe Priest”

Traveling the length and breadth of the Great Lakes, this Slovenian born priest ministered to the Ottawa and Chippewa Indians. He established a mission at LaPointe in 1835 on the northern shores of Wisconsin and ministered to many in the territory later to be part of the Diocese of La Crosse. His legacy includes a three-volume diary and 20 Native American books, some of which are still in use today.

Blessed Brother James Miller, FSC – “Brother. Teacher. Missionary. Martyr.”

Presented by Father Tom Lindner

Born on a farm near Stevens Point, he found his calling as a Christian Brother and was recognized for his ability to repair and maintain the school where he was assigned in Minnesota. Later, his assignment would take him to Central America to work and teach at one of the Brothers’ schools, eventually leading to his murder at the hands of the Guatemalan military.