

# PREPARING FOR MISSION



ARCHDIOCESE OF ST. LOUIS

# DISCIPLES MAKE DISCIPLES

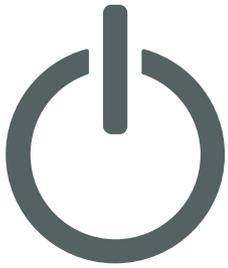
## USING THIS GUIDE

You can't give what you don't have. In order to be an evangelizer - to make disciples - you must first be a disciple.

This guidebook is intended to help each of us respond to what God is asking of us as *Missionary Disciples*. It can be used for individual study or for discussion in small groups - with parish staff, leaders, volunteers - anyone who is looking to be equipped for the mission.



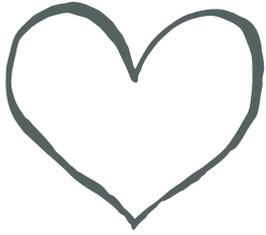
NEW HEARTS  
NEW MINDS  
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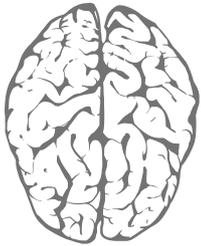
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PREPARING FOR MISSION GUIDEBOOK

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# PREPARING FOR MISSION

## RESPONDING TO GOD'S CALL AS MISSIONARY DISCIPLES

As we work to renew our parishes across the Archdiocese of St. Louis, we are reminded the first thing that must be made new is each of us.

The Church has called each of us to take an active role in Evangelization - in proclaiming the Good News and walking with our brothers and sisters as they discover life in Christ.

Unfortunately many of us don't feel ready to evangelize; we often don't feel holy enough or knowledgeable enough about our faith to try to share it with others.

Sharing the Good News of the Gospel is an essential part of being a Christian - it's not optional! Jesus, in his last command told us:

***Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.***

MATTHEW 28:18-20

One of the ways we can prepare for our shared mission is to reflect on what God has done in our own lives. In the Joy of the Gospel, Pope Francis says:

***For if we have received the love which restores meaning to our lives, how can we fail to share that love with others?***

JOY OF THE GOSPEL, 8

### REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

In what ways are you comfortable sharing the Good News? What are the ways that you feel unprepared to evangelize?

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### REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

How have you felt God's love in your life? When was a time someone shared God's love with you?

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# LOOKING AHEAD

## THE CHURCH IS AN EVANGELIZER, BUT SHE BEGINS BY BEING EVANGELIZED HERSELF

EVANGELIZATION IN THE MODERN WORLD 15

The remaining sections of this study will help each of us - no matter where we are on our faith journey - to continue to conform our lives to Christ and to "be ready to give a reason for the hope within you" (1 Peter 3:15).

We'll be looking at the ways that the Lord wants to move in us, to form us into his Missionary Disciples, to be actively involved in this work that he has called each of us to.

**IN VIRTUE OF THEIR BAPTISM, ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD HAVE BECOME MISSIONARY DISCIPLES (CF. MT 28:19).**

**ALL THE BAPTIZED, WHATEVER THEIR POSITION IN THE CHURCH OR THEIR LEVEL OF INSTRUCTION IN THE FAITH, ARE AGENTS OF EVANGELIZATION, AND IT WOULD BE INSUFFICIENT TO ENVISAGE A PLAN OF EVANGELIZATION TO BE CARRIED OUT BY PROFESSIONALS WHILE THE REST OF THE FAITHFUL WOULD SIMPLY BE PASSIVE RECIPIENTS.**

JOY OF THE GOSPEL 120

The next sections of our study will be broken down into three categories:

God wants to give us **NEW HEARTS** to be more deeply in love with Him, His Church and the world around us.

God wants to give us **NEW MINDS** so we can be better prepared to share our faith, and to better understand those in the world we are trying to reach.

God wants to send us out with **NEW METHODS** so we can be *effective* in reaching those who are in need of the good news.

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BEHOLD, I AM DOING A NEW THING; NOW IT SPRINGS FORTH, DO YOU NOT PERCEIVE IT? I WILL MAKE A WAY IN THE WILDERNESS AND RIVERS IN THE DESERT.

ISAIAH 43:19



# NEW HEARTS

**AND I WILL GIVE YOU A NEW HEART, AND A NEW SPIRIT I WILL PUT WITHIN YOU. AND I WILL REMOVE THE HEART OF STONE FROM YOUR FLESH AND GIVE YOU A HEART OF FLESH**

EZEKIEL 36:26

## INTRODUCTION

From the very beginning of creation, God has wanted our hearts. He created us to be in relationship with him. The very first paragraph of the Catechism of the Catholic Church says this:

**“God, infinitely perfect and blessed in himself, in a plan of sheer goodness, freely created man to make him share in his own blessed life. For this reason, at every time and in every place, God draws close to man. He calls man to seek him, to know him, to love him with all his strength. He calls together all men, scattered and divided by sin, into the unity of his family, the Church.**

CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, 1

## REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

What are some of the ways that you have felt God “draw close to you”? How can you seek, know, and love him “with all your strength”?

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The entire story of Salvation History we read throughout the Bible could be summed up as God seeking his people who have gone astray and calling them back to Him. The Israelites again and again sought after false gods; this is often still our story today.

## REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

What are some things in the modern world that we are tempted to give our hearts to instead of God?

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One of the ways we can prepare for our shared mission is to reflect on what God has done in our own lives. In the Joy of the Gospel, we read:

**“For if we have received the love which restores meaning to our lives, how can we fail to share that love with others?”**

JOY OF THE GOSPEL, 8

## REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

How have you experienced God’s forgiveness and mercy? How can you invite others to that same experience?

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### FOR ADDITIONAL REFLECTION

John 4:1-42

Psalm 51

Matthew 9:9-13



### PRACTICAL CHALLENGE

Spend time in prayer reflecting on the ways you have received God’s mercy in your own life.

# NEW HEARTS

**I WILL GIVE THEM A HEART TO KNOW ME, THAT I AM THE LORD. THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, FOR THEY SHALL RETURN TO ME WITH THEIR WHOLE HEART.** JEREMIAH 24:7

## A HEART FOR GOD

What does it mean to have a heart for God?

As we seek to evangelize, the Lord first continues to call each of us to a closer relationship with him.

In the Joy of the Gospel, Pope Francis begins by inviting each of us to renew our relationship with God each day:

***I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unflinchingly each day. No one should think that this invitation is not meant for him or her, since "no one is excluded from the joy brought by the Lord".***

JOY OF THE GOSPEL, 3

This daily encounter in prayer is the most important part of our preparation for the evangelizing mission that God is calling us to, because Jesus reminds us that "without me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

## REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

How do you encounter the Lord daily?  
How can you be more reliant on God?  
In what parts of your life is this hard?

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In the Old Testament, we are familiar with the story of King David; we see his bravery in taking on Goliath, his mercy shown towards King Saul, and his leadership as King of Israel. David was anointed King of Israel not because of these gifts or his stature, but because he had a *heart for God*.

***The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.***

1 SAMUEL 16:7

## REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

In what ways do I try to rely on my own gifts and talents? How can I learn to trust in God and rely on him daily?

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# NEW HEARTS

## A HEART FOR GOD

Even though David had a heart for God, he still sometimes fell short and sinned, as we see in his adultery with Bathsheba (see: 2 Samuel 11).

But because when he was confronted with his sin he repented, he never lost his heart for God.

After recognizing his sin, he writes Psalm 51, a beautiful expression of repentance and God's mercy:

**“Turn away your face from my sins;  
blot out all my iniquities.  
A clean heart create for me, God;  
renew within me a steadfast spirit.**

PSALM 51: 11-12

David was called by God to repent of his sins. Even though David was a sinful man, we still call Jesus "Son of David" and consider King David one of the greatest figures in salvation history. It's a stunning reminder of the power of God's forgiveness.

So too, each of us must confront our own shortcomings and continue to give our hearts to God anew each day.

When we do this, we begin to see ourselves and the world around us through the eyes of faith, as St. Paul did:

**“Therefore, we are not discouraged; rather, although our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.**

**For this momentary light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to what is seen but to what is unseen; for what is seen is transitory, but what is unseen is eternal.**

-2 CORINTHIANS 4:16-18

## REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

How can you develop a spiritual worldview, to see all things with the eyes of faith? In what parts of your life is this hard? What does Jesus want to make new in your heart?

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### FOR ADDITIONAL REFLECTION

2 Samuel 12:1-25      Psalm 63  
Matthew 16:13-20



### PRACTICAL CHALLENGE

Spend 30 minute in prayer this week and then find time for the sacrament of reconciliation.

# NEW HEARTS

IN VIRTUE OF THEIR BAPTISM, ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD HAVE BECOME MISSIONARY DISCIPLES...EVERY CHRISTIAN IS A MISSIONARY TO THE EXTENT THAT HE OR SHE HAS ENCOUNTERED THE LOVE OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS: WE NO LONGER SAY THAT WE ARE "DISCIPLES" AND "MISSIONARIES", BUT RATHER THAT WE ARE ALWAYS "MISSIONARY DISCIPLES".

JOY OF THE GOSPEL, 120

## A HEART FOR GOD: PART 2

Our encounter with the love of God is what fuels our mission.

Only when we understand our deepest identity as sons and daughters of God do we comprehend the urgency and importance of making God's love known to the world around us.

All throughout the Gospels, we see Jesus calling people out of their former way of life to come and follow him. When we respond to this call, everything changes.

*The next day John was there again with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he said, "Behold, the Lamb of God." The two disciples heard what he said and followed Jesus. Jesus turned and saw them following him and said to them, "What are you looking for?"*

*They said to him, "Rabbi" (which translated means Teacher), "where are you staying?" He said to them, "Come, and you will see." So they went and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day. It was about four in the afternoon.*

JOHN 1:35-39



## REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

When did you first answer Jesus' call to follow him? How is your life different now than it was before your initial conversion? How is Jesus calling you to a continuing conversion?

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*The joy of evangelizing always arises from grateful remembrance: it is a grace which we constantly need to implore. The apostles never forgot the moment when Jesus touched their hearts: "It was about four o'clock in the afternoon" (Jn 1:39).*

JOY OF THE GOSPEL, 13

John, when writing his Gospel many years later, recalls the exact hour when Jesus called him - the moment his life changed forever. Sometimes, we can be afraid of this change, but we should have hope that Jesus never takes away more than he gives us:

*A thief comes only to steal and slaughter and destroy; I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly.*

JOHN 10:10

# NEW HEARTS

## A HEART FOR GOD PART 2

Being a follower of Jesus, a missionary disciple, doesn't mean everything will always be easy, rather it means that we have confidence that Jesus has already won the final victory and that our hope is in Him.

We have an eternal prize that makes our sufferings worthwhile, as St. Paul tell us:

**...WE EVEN BOAST OF OUR AFFLICTIONS, KNOWING THAT AFFLICTION PRODUCES ENDURANCE, AND ENDURANCE, PROVEN CHARACTER, AND PROVEN CHARACTER, HOPE.**

**AND HOPE DOES NOT DISAPPOINT, BECAUSE THE LOVE OF GOD HAS BEEN POURED OUT INTO OUR HEARTS THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT THAT HAS BEEN GIVEN TO US.**

**FOR CHRIST, WHILE WE WERE STILL HELPLESS, YET DIED AT THE APPOINTED TIME FOR THE UNGODLY**

*ROMANS 5:3-5*

## REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

What are the ways you have experienced "abundant life" since you answered Jesus' call to follow him? How have you felt God's love during difficult moments in your life?

How do you share hope with others?

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### FOR ADDITIONAL REFLECTION

Psalm 27      John 11: 1-44  
Matthew 4:18-22



### PRACTICAL CHALLENGE

Spend 30 minutes in prayer this week reflecting on when Jesus first called you to follow Him.

# NEW HEARTS

## A HEART FOR THE CHURCH

Why don't we evangelize?

Often times, it may be because we don't feel ready or we don't think we are holy enough.

While this may be partially true (evangelization is the work of the Holy Spirit), we can never stop giving our hearts to God and growing in our holiness.

That partial truth can't stop us from taking the next step - we are each still called to step out of the boat (as St. Peter did) and take on the mission Christ gives us as his Church. To help continue on that journey, we'll continue to offer resources for developing a heart for God for your personal use.

As we develop a heart for God and his mission, it's important that we also develop a heart for the Church that he gave us to radiate His light to the world.

Moving deeper into the heart of the Church always, at the same time, moves us out towards the world to share the good news and lead all we meet into life in the Church. We cannot separate these realities!

In Acts chapter 2, we see the very beginnings of the Church at Pentecost. Peter and the Apostles go forth to preach the Good News and thousands are converted.

***“Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and they asked Peter and the other Apostles, “What are we to do, my brothers?” Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”***

ACTS 2:37--38

Peter and the apostles, having just received the Holy Spirit, invited the converts into the life of the Church through the sacrament of Baptism! In the very next section, we read about what made up the life of the early Church:

***“They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers.***

ACTS 2:42

This is what we are still called to today as members of the Church!



# NEW HEARTS

## A HEART FOR THE CHURCH

The 4 categories seen above in Acts 2:42 are pillars of Christian life, pillars of discipleship. The Catechism of the Church, which shows us the teaching and the beauty of the Catholic faith, is divided into 4 sections that could be seen to reflect these pillars too:

- a. Teaching of the Apostles (I. Creed)
- b. Fellowship (III. Life in Christ - Moral life)
- c. Breaking of the bread (II. Christian Mystery - Sacrament)
- d. Prayers (IV. Christian Prayer)

### REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

How have you experienced the life of the Church? In which of these areas listed in Acts 2:42 are you most aware of having experienced Christ?

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In his document *Evangelization in the Modern World*, Pope Paul VI says this about the nature of the Church:

**SHE EXISTS IN ORDER TO EVANGELIZE, THAT IS TO SAY, IN ORDER TO PREACH AND TEACH, TO BE THE CHANNEL OF THE GIFT OF GRACE, TO RECONCILE SINNERS WITH GOD, AND TO PERPETUATE CHRIST'S SACRIFICE IN THE MASS, WHICH IS THE MEMORIAL OF HIS DEATH AND GLORIOUS RESURRECTION.** *EVANGELIZATION IN THE MODERN WORLD, 14*

As Catholics, we believe that the Church exists to be the channel of grace to the world, and that Christ gave the Church unique graces to offer the world - including the Sacraments.

While Evangelization doesn't always begin with the Sacraments, its goal is always to invite grace into the lives of those we are in relationships with - which eventually leads to the Sacraments.



# NEW HEARTS

A HEART FOR THE CHURCH

## REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

How have you felt God's grace in your life? How have the Sacraments helped you encounter the Lord?

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As Catholics we believe Christ is truly present in the Church in the Sacraments, and present to us through the Church as a communion.

**COMMUNION WITH JESUS, WHICH GIVES RISE TO THE COMMUNION OF CHRISTIANS AMONG THEMSELVES, IS AN INDISPENSABLE CONDITION FOR BEARING FRUIT: "APART FROM ME YOU CAN DO NOTHING" (JN 15:5). AND COMMUNION WITH OTHERS IS THE MOST MAGNIFICENT FRUIT THAT THE BRANCHES CAN GIVE: IN FACT, IT IS THE GIFT OF CHRIST AND HIS SPIRIT.**

*CHRISTIFIDELES LAICI 32*

In Salvation History, God called his chosen people to Himself so that they could be a light to the nations, to make him known.

We are continuing that story today in the Church as we are called to draw close to him through life in the Church and then to go out to all the world and make him known in all our relationships - as others have done for us!

## REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

How have you felt God's grace in your life? How have the Sacraments helped you encounter the Lord?

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### FOR ADDITIONAL REFLECTION

Psalm 84  
CCC 794

Matthew 16:13-20  
Christifideles Laici 32



### PRACTICAL CHALLENGE

Spend time in prayer thinking of the relationships in your life that God may be calling you to invite Him into.

# NEW HEARTS

## MISSION IS AT ONCE A PASSION FOR JESUS AND A PASSION FOR HIS PEOPLE

JOY OF THE GOSPEL, 269

### A HEART FOR OTHERS

When we begin to experience life in Christ and His Church, we also begin to participate in Christ's mission to the world, the mission that he gave to the Church to carry on after his Ascension into heaven.

From the very beginnings of *our story* of Salvation History, God's people have always been meant to be a light to the nations, as he promised in His Covenant with Abraham that "all the families of the Earth will be blessed through you" (Gen 12:3).

Having a heart for God and His Church necessarily means that we must also have a heart for drawing others into the same joy of the relationship with God that we have experienced.

***For if we have received the love which restores meaning to our lives, how can we fail to share that love with others?***

JOY OF THE GOSPEL, 8

The same life-giving love that led Jesus to take on our flesh, become man and share in our human life is the love that compels us to walk with others - to meet them in their need, both physical and spiritual, and to lead them to union with the Father - just as Jesus has done for us!

***Those who with God's help have welcomed Christ's call and freely responded to it are urged on by love of Christ to proclaim the Good News everywhere in the world.***

CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH 3

### REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

Who are those in your life that you want to know Christ? How do you think you can share the faith with them in word and deed? Do you pray for them regularly?

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In Matthew 18, we read the Parable of the lost sheep:

***What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go in search of the one that went astray? And if he finds it, truly, I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.***

MATTHEW 18:12-14



# NEW HEARTS

## A HEART FOR OTHERS

As we draw close to the heart of the Father, we too are meant to desire that those who have strayed will be reunited with the flock. Jesus tells us in the Gospels that “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick” (Luke 5:31).

In our own families and day to day lives, we can usually think of a number of people who have walked away from the faith or have never known God; those who need the healing love of Jesus. And each of us, as disciples of Christ, are called to get involved:

***“The disciple is ready to put his or her whole life on the line, even to accepting martyrdom, in bearing witness to Jesus Christ, yet the goal is not to make enemies but to see God’s word accepted and its capacity for liberation and renewal revealed.*”**

*JOY OF THE GOSPEL, 24*

However, here lies a central tension that many people feel as they begin the work of evangelization: How do I proclaim the Good News, the truth of Jesus Christ and his Church, without “making enemies” or coming off as condemning the world? Unfortunately, there are no easy answers here; it takes practice!

## REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

Have you experienced this tension?  
If so, how?

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St. Paul shows us a powerful example in his ministry of how we might proclaim the Gospel. As he went all around the known world preaching God’s saving love, he didn’t just show up, call for repentance, and move on to the next town. Rather, he lived among the people that he sought to convert. He knew them. He loved them. He gives us his model in his first letter to the Thessalonians:

***“With such affection for you, we were determined to share with you not only the gospel of God, but our very selves as well, so dearly beloved had you become to us.*”**

*1 THESSALONIANS 2:8*



# NEW HEARTS

**A HEART FOR OTHERS**

There is so much more to doing evangelization well than simply standing on a street corner and proclaiming God's saving love to anyone that might walk by (though this may have a time and place). We must always start with the call of Jesus to "love one another as I have loved you" (John 13:34).

We are called to an evangelization that often expresses itself as walking with people throughout their everyday lives, witnessing to the love that we have received and then inviting those that we have developed relationships with to receive God's love.

Pope Francis has invited each of us to learn this "art of accompaniment" that learns to engage in the lives of others and show them the face of Christ – in word and deed. He also reminds us that it is often not quick work, it must be:

**...STEADY AND REASSURING, REFLECTING OUR CLOSENESS AND OUR COMPASSIONATE GAZE WHICH ALSO HEALS, LIBERATES AND ENCOURAGES GROWTH IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.**

*JOY OF THE GOSPEL, 169*

## REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

How have you found opportunities to "share life" with others? How might you also "share the Gospel of God" with them? How might you further develop a heart for others in your day to day life?

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### FOR ADDITIONAL REFLECTION

Evangelii Nuntiandi 24, 41      John 15:1-17  
Joy of the Gospel 24, 169      Luke 10:25-37



### PRACTICAL CHALLENGE

Spend time in prayer thinking of the who God may be calling you to share the Good News with. Pray for them and the for opportunity!

# NEW MINDS

**DO NOT CONFORM YOURSELVES TO THIS AGE BUT BE TRANSFORMED BY THE RENEWAL OF YOUR MIND, THAT YOU MAY DISCERN WHAT IS THE WILL OF GOD, WHAT IS GOOD AND PLEASING AND PERFECT.**

ROMANS 12:2

## INTRODUCTION

Our journey of missionary discipleship calls each of us to encounter Christ, to grow in our relationship with him and to witness him to others daily. As we progress on this path, each of us is called to begin to see the world around us differently, to see through the eyes of faith.

***Faith does not merely gaze at Jesus, but sees things as Jesus himself sees them, with his own eyes: it is a participation in his way of seeing.***

LUMEN FIDEI 18

Asking the Lord to give us New Minds is crucial to become missionary disciples so that we can not only continue to love God better, but also so we can know our faith and know and love His people better - the people to whom we are called to serve and share the Good News.

While we live in a world where Christian messaging and Christian institutions have traditionally been very common, many cultural commentators are observing that our culture is increasingly shifting to a "post-Christian" worldview.

We must ask the Lord to give us New Minds to prepare us to better understand our mission.

***The split between the Gospel and culture is without a doubt the drama of our time, just as it was of other times. Therefore every effort must be made to ensure a full evangelization of culture, or more correctly of cultures. They have to be regenerated by an encounter with the Gospel. But this encounter will not take place if the Gospel is not proclaimed.***

EVANGELII NUNTIANDI 20

## REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

How do you perceive the culture around you? In what ways does it support Christianity? In what ways does it make being a Christian hard?

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# NEW MINDS

## INTRODUCTION

As we seek to deepen our relationship with God (New Hearts), we must also grow in that relationship.

Just as a wedding day marks the first day of the beginning of a journey that will take that relationship to new depths, an encounter with Christ - a moment where we decide to drop our nets and respond to his call, is only the beginning of our discipleship journey. Christ calls us as we are, but he never leaves us there.

So, how can I continue to deepen my relationship with God? 20th Century Catholic Author Frank Sheed made an important observation:

**...we can never attain a maximum love of God with only a minimum knowledge of God.**

FRANK SHEED

While knowledge of God alone will never be enough, knowing more about God increases our capacity to love!

### REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

How am I continuing to grow in my relationship with Christ? In what areas of the Catholic faith do I need to continue to be formed?

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This concept of the importance of loving and knowing applies not only to our faith, but also to those in the world to whom we are called to evangelize:

**The work of evangelization presupposes in the evangelizer an ever increasing love for those whom he is evangelizing.**

EVANGELII NUNTIANDI, 79

When we better know and love the world to which we are sent to bring the Good News, it informs our approach. St. Paul, recognizing the spiritual maturity of the Corinthians to whom he was sent said this:

**I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready.**

1 CORINTHIANS 3:2

Because St. Paul had spent time with the Corinthians, he knew what they needed to grow in their relationship with God, and what held them back.

St. Paul models this type of ministry for us throughout his writings in the New Testament - adapting his methods of preaching the Gospel to meet the needs of whoever he was with.

# NEW MINDS

## INTRODUCTION

**TO THOSE OUTSIDE THE LAW I BECAME LIKE ONE OUTSIDE THE LAW—THOUGH I AM NOT OUTSIDE GOD’S LAW BUT WITHIN THE LAW OF CHRIST—TO WIN OVER THOSE OUTSIDE THE LAW. TO THE WEAK I BECAME WEAK, TO WIN OVER THE WEAK. I HAVE BECOME ALL THINGS TO ALL, TO SAVE AT LEAST SOME. ALL THIS I DO FOR THE SAKE OF THE GOSPEL, SO THAT I TOO MAY HAVE A SHARE IN IT.**

*1 CORINTHIANS 9:21-23*

So too, as we undertake our evangelizing mission, must we know not only our faith, but how to present it to a culture that is increasingly hostile to the Christian faith. We are called to “always be ready to give a reason for the hope that is within you” (1 Peter 3:15).

To do this, it helps to know the state of our culture, and the common objections or hurdles of those in it so that we can speak love and truth to the world that needs Christ.

We need the Lord to give us New Minds.

## REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

Do you feel prepared to “give a reason for your hope”? What would help you feel more equipped to evangelize?

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### FOR ADDITIONAL REFLECTION

Matthew 10:25-33    Evangelii Nuntiandi 79  
Romans 12            Lumen Fidei 18-20



### PRACTICAL CHALLENGE

Think of those you know that do not practice the faith and consider what obstacles they might face or what might help them return.

# NEW MINDS

**REMEMBER NOT THE EVENTS OF THE PAST, THE THINGS OF LONG AGO CONSIDER NOT; BEHOLD, I AM DOING A NEW THING; NOW IT SPRINGS FORTH, DO YOU NOT PERCEIVE IT? I WILL MAKE A WAY IN THE WILDERNESS AND RIVERS IN THE DESERT.**

ISAIAH 43:18-19

## THE CHANGE OF AN AGE

As we have said, having a “New Mind”, requires us to see the world through a different lens - to have a spiritual worldview. Our mission as the Church has been established from the beginning: to “go and make disciples of all nations” (Mt. 28).

But having a “New Mind” also requires us to recognize the changes in our world and how we might adapt our own methods to more effectively reach people today.

We know that “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8); however, the world to which we are seeking to bring Jesus is constantly changing and evolving. Modern technology has connected people in ways that were previously unimaginable.

Recognizing the ways in which the world is changing helps us to better understand how the people to whom we are sent might receive the Gospel message.

“*At the same time, today’s vast and rapid cultural changes demand that we constantly seek ways of expressing unchanging truths in a language which brings out their abiding newness. ‘The deposit of the faith is one thing... the way it is expressed is another’.*”

JOY OF THE GOSPEL, 41

## REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

How is the world today different than it was centuries ago? Or a generation ago? How has the way you experience the faith changed in your lifetime?

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“*We are not living an era of change but a change of era.*”

POPE FRANCIS



# NEW MINDS

## THE CHANGE OF AN AGE

With this rapidly changing world, Pope Francis and his predecessors have noted that the current moment that the Church is facing will require us to prepare ourselves to reach the world in a different way.

We must become increasingly aware of the movement away from a culture that has Christianity embedded within its societal structures to a culture that is forgetting its Christian roots and is even becoming less tolerant to the Gospel and its message.

**“Even in countries evangelized many centuries ago, the reality of a ‘Christian society’ which, amid all the frailties which have always marked human life, measured itself explicitly on Gospel values, is now gone.**

NOVO MILLENNIO INEUNTE 40

### REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

What unique challenges does our world today present in sharing the Gospel?  
How is this different than other times?  
How might that inform our approach to engaging the world?

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Even though there are challenges, we should not be afraid!

In the life of the Church, periods of renewal have always flowed from unexpected sources and in the face of the hardest circumstances.

Through the aid of the Holy Spirit guiding the Church, the challenges presented in our culture today to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ are no more insurmountable than the challenges faced at any time throughout the history of the Church.

Christ has promised us that “the gates of Hell will not prevail” against the Church! (Matthew 16:18)

No one living in the first century would have predicted the success of the Apostles in evangelizing the world at that time.

With confidence in Christ’s mandate and guided by the Holy Spirit, they set out to make disciples of all nations with conviction.



# NEW MINDS

## THE CHANGE OF AN AGE

With each unique challenge comes unique opportunities. Today, we have the same opportunity as the early church to renew ourselves with the fire of the Holy Spirit given at Pentecost and to go forth witnessing God's love. Let us together reclaim our missionary identity and moment that God is calling us to!

**GOD IS OPENING BEFORE THE CHURCH THE HORIZONS OF A HUMANITY MORE FULLY PREPARED FOR THE SOWING OF THE GOSPEL. I SENSE THAT THE MOMENT HAS COME TO COMMIT ALL OF THE CHURCH'S ENERGIES TO A NEW EVANGELIZATION AND TO THE MISSION AD GENTES. NO BELIEVER IN CHRIST, NO INSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH CAN AVOID THIS SUPREME DUTY: TO PROCLAIM CHRIST TO ALL PEOPLES.**

*REDEMPTORIS MISSIO, 3*

## REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

What unique opportunities do you see for sharing the Gospel today?  
In what ways do you see the culture as hungry for the Gospel message?

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### FOR ADDITIONAL REFLECTION

CCC 849-856    Redemptor Hominis 10  
Joy of the Gospel 40-45



### PRACTICAL CHALLENGE

Read the book *From Christendom to Apostolic Mission* by the University of Mary.

# NEW MINDS

**AND HE GAVE SOME AS APOSTLES, OTHERS AS PROPHETS, OTHERS AS EVANGELISTS, OTHERS AS PASTORS AND TEACHERS, TO EQUIP THE SAINTS FOR THE WORK OF MINISTRY, FOR BUILDING UP THE BODY OF CHRIST**

EPHESIANS 4:11-13

## EQUIPPING THE SAINTS

You may have seen a study from Dynamic Catholic that found about seven percent of Catholics are most engaged in the life of the parish: they account for more than 80 percent of the activity and giving, and indicate a strong desire and commitment to prayer, study, generosity, and evangelization.

The fine print of the study shows that while roughly seven percent of Catholics *desire* to evangelize, only 0.6% of Catholics feel equipped to evangelize; that is, they feel that they have had sufficient training to proclaim the Good News and invite people to conversion.

If these study numbers are accurate, that means that more than ninety percent of Catholics who even want to evangelize believe they do not have adequate training in order to share Christ with others.

It's important to note that the large majority of Catholics don't identify evangelization as important at all.

If evangelization is truly the mission of the Church, we have a serious disconnect!

## REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

Do you desire to Evangelize? How can you increase your "zeal for souls"?

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Every Catholic is called to participate in the work of evangelization in some way. Pope Francis reminds us that:

***It would be insufficient to envisage a plan of evangelization to be carried out by professionals while the rest of the faithful would simply be passive recipients.*** JOY OF THE GOSPEL 120

The Catechism of the Catholic Church says that all Catholics "have the right and the duty" to evangelize (CCC 900).

Not just priests, deacons, sisters, or those employed by the Church - all of us!



# NEW MINDS

## EQUIPPING THE SAINTS

**THIS DUTY IS THE MORE PRESSING WHEN IT IS ONLY THROUGH THEM THAT MEN CAN HEAR THE GOSPEL AND KNOW CHRIST. THEIR ACTIVITY IN ECCLESIAL COMMUNITIES IS SO NECESSARY THAT, FOR THE MOST PART, THE APOSTOLATE OF THE PASTORS CANNOT BE FULLY EFFECTIVE WITHOUT IT.**

*CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, 900*

Unless each of us respond to our baptismal call to be missionary disciples – the work of in our parishes will be less effective than it could be. That is a powerful thought!

So, knowing that it is essential for us to get involved, we have to ask ourselves: what holds us back?

### REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

What holds you back from sharing the Good News?

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Even if we don't feel ready, we can't let that hold us back from what God is calling us to. He's asking us to not delay in being a witness in whatever stage of life we are in.

**ALL OF US ARE CALLED TO MATURE IN OUR WORK AS EVANGELIZERS. WE WANT TO HAVE BETTER TRAINING, A DEEPENING LOVE AND A CLEARER WITNESS TO THE GOSPEL. IN THIS SENSE, WE OUGHT TO LET OTHERS BE CONSTANTLY EVANGELIZING US. BUT THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT WE SHOULD POSTPONE THE EVANGELIZING MISSION; RATHER, EACH OF US SHOULD FIND WAYS TO COMMUNICATE JESUS WHEREVER WE ARE.**

*JOY OF THE GOSPEL, 121*



# NEW MINDS

## EQUIPPING THE SAINTS

So how do we “mature in our work as evangelizers”? What do we need to feel equipped? Unfortunately, there are no cut and paste answers or easy formulas for being a fruitful evangelizer. But, we can identify a few key elements that are helpful to build on.

While it’s not an exhaustive list, developing ourselves in these areas can serve as a great starting point to help us step out in faith.

### 1. Prayer

Evangelization is the work of the Holy Spirit- both in us and those we are seeking to evangelize. We cannot evangelize unless we are a people of prayer.

### 2. Love for Neighbor

Do you desire the good of your (literal and figurative) neighbors? Do they experience you as a loving and giving person? Do they see Christ in you?

### 3. Testimony

Being aware of what God has done in our own lives and preparing to share how we have experienced his grace helps us to “always be ready” (1 Pet 3:15).

### 4. Knowing the Message

Can you share the core Gospel message (often called the *kerygma*) in an articulate way? Do you spend time reflecting on it in prayer?

### 5. Apologetics

Can you explain the basic tenets of the faith? Do you know where to look for answers when you are unsure? Often feeling like we don’t know enough is the main thing that holds us back from engaging with others. Never stop learning!

### 6. Shared life

Living the principles of *1 Thessalonians 2:8* is essential. Like St. Paul, are we sharing not only the Gospel, but our day to day lives with those we are evangelizing?



# NEW MINDS

## EQUIPPING THE SAINTS

One of the best ways to be ready to evangelize is to recognize that God has called you to do so using the unique gifts and talents that He gave you! It's likely that no two people will be called by God to Evangelize in the exact same way.

**FOR AS IN ONE BODY WE HAVE MANY PARTS, AND ALL THE PARTS DO NOT HAVE THE SAME FUNCTION, SO WE, THOUGH MANY, ARE ONE BODY IN CHRIST AND INDIVIDUALLY PARTS OF ONE ANOTHER. SINCE WE HAVE GIFTS THAT DIFFER ACCORDING TO THE GRACE GIVEN TO US, LET US EXERCISE THEM: IF PROPHECY, IN PROPORTION TO THE FAITH; IF MINISTRY, IN MINISTERING; IF ONE IS A TEACHER, IN TEACHING; IF ONE EXHORTS, IN EXHORTATION.**

*ROMANS 12: 4-8*

Each of us have gifts and charisms that God has given us to build up the Body of Christ in unique ways. Even the Apostles, who all spent years learning from Christ himself exercised their own ministry differently and in different parts of the world.

## REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

In which of the above areas are you being called to grow? What gifts or charisms do you feel that God has given you? How can you use them for God?

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### FOR ADDITIONAL REFLECTION

CCC 897-913      Christifideles Laici 24  
Joy of the Gospel 111-141



### PRACTICAL CHALLENGE

Explore the evangelization resources on  
[allthingsnew.archstl.org](http://allthingsnew.archstl.org)

# NEW MINDS

**TO THE WEAK I BECAME WEAK, TO WIN OVER THE WEAK. I HAVE BECOME ALL THINGS TO ALL, TO SAVE AT LEAST SOME. I DO ALL THIS FOR THE SAKE OF THE GOSPEL, THAT I MAY SHARE IN ITS BLESSINGS.**

1 CORINTHIANS 9:22-23

## EVANGELIZING THE CULTURE

Evangelization is about bringing the Good News to the entire world. As the Apostles set out to proclaim the resurrection of Jesus, they first preached to the Jews who had been waiting with expectant faith for the Messiah. They found a large audience that was ready to accept the message of Jesus.

Beginning with St. Paul, they also set out on a mission to proclaim Jesus to those cultures which were more hostile to their message, including those who worshiped pagan gods not compatible with Christianity and to those who had no religious understanding at all.

In our approach to evangelization, we must be willing to go where it's not always comfortable!

We must be willing to engage parts of our culture that are distant from our faith or those who might not be likely to accept an invitation to attend Mass or a church event.

**“Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses.”**

EVANGELII NUNTIANDI, 41

## REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

What parts of your life are you uncomfortable talking about the faith? Why do you think that is? How can you witness the faith before teaching the faith?

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So, to quote the first converts in Acts, “what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37)

St. Paul gives us a roadmap we can follow. In Acts 17, he travels to Athens to preach about Jesus Christ. First he went to the local synagogue and preached to the Jews there that the Messiah they had been waiting for had come.



# NEW MINDS

## EVANGELIZING THE CULTURE

After he went to the synagogue he did something extraordinary. He went to the Areopogus – a major meeting place in town – and stood up and began to proclaim Christ. But he did not do this in the same way he had done for Jewish audiences who had been expecting the messiah. Instead, he said this:

***You Athenians, I see that in every respect you are very religious. For as I walked around looking carefully at your shrines, I even discovered an altar inscribed, 'To an Unknown God.' What therefore you unknowingly worship, I proclaim to you.***

ACTS 17:28

He went on to give a beautiful sermon about their search for God. He didn't speak about Jewish prophecies or scriptures, he spoke to them about what they were familiar with: "In Him we live and move and have our being as some of your poets have said".

He quoted poetry from their own culture, taking their spiritual sense and search for truth we so often associate with Greek philosophers and revealed to them the fullness of the truth that had been seeking; he revealed to them that Jesus was the answer they had been looking for their whole lives.

***...the kingdom which the Gospel proclaims is lived by men who are profoundly linked to a culture, and the building up of the kingdom cannot avoid borrowing the elements of human culture or cultures.***

EVANGELII NUNTIANDI, 20

St. Paul takes what is good in their culture and relates it to the truth of Christianity.

So too, we are called to adapt our methods of evangelization to whatever audiences the Lord calls us to reach.

## REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

What good do you see in our culture today? How can you relate it to the Truth of Jesus Christ?

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# NEW MINDS

## EVANGELIZING THE CULTURE

***This question of "how to evangelize" is permanently relevant, because the methods of evangelizing vary according to the different circumstances of time, place and culture, and because they thereby present a certain challenge to our capacity for discovery and adaptation.***

EVANGELII NUNTIANDI 40

What are some of the unique challenges we face in evangelizing our culture today?

A rise in atheism or those who don't claim any religious affiliation (often called the "nones"), the idea of being "spiritual but religious", a common belief that faith and science are incompatible, and moral relativism are just a few. There are many, many more.

The work of ordinary, everyday Catholics is to bring the Gospel into all parts of society - especially the parts which only you can be involved in.

***Lay people, whose particular vocation places them in the midst of the world and in charge of the most varied temporal tasks, must for this very reason exercise a very special form of evangelization.***

EVANGELII NUNTIANDI, 70

Think about this for a moment: You might be the most authentic witness of the Gospel that someone ever meets. You might be the only engineer, doctor, plumber, or electrician - or whatever it is that you do - that someone sees witness to their Christian faith. Your unique gifts and charisms are necessary to building up the Church and reaching the lost!

***...there is a kind of preaching which falls to each of us as a daily responsibility. It has to do with bringing the Gospel to the people we meet, whether they be our neighbors or complete strangers."***

JOY OF THE GOSPEL, 127

As we go forth in our day to day lives, let's be willing to engage the culture and bring the Gospel into every part of humanity making it new.

## REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

What unique situations might God be calling you to witness the Good News? What topics or areas of our culture might you be able to speak into?

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### FOR ADDITIONAL REFLECTION

1 Corinthians 9:19-27 Joy of the Gospel 127-129  
Evangelii Nuntiandi 70-73



### PRACTICAL CHALLENGE

Spend time in prayer asking God how he is calling you to evangelize the culture you are in.

# NEW METHODS

**JESUS SAID TO THEM, "CHILDREN, HAVE YOU CAUGHT ANYTHING TO EAT?" THEY ANSWERED HIM, "NO." SO HE SAID TO THEM, "CAST THE NET OVER THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE BOAT AND YOU WILL FIND SOMETHING." SO THEY CAST IT, AND WERE NOT ABLE TO PULL IT IN BECAUSE OF THE NUMBER OF FISH.**

JOHN 21:5-6

## INTRODUCTION

As a Church and as individuals we are called to respond to what the Lord is asking of us. As we respond, we undergo constant conversion - we are made new:

***“So whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come.***

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17

As God works in our lives and we become this new creation in Christ, we are asked to daily discern how God is asking us to grow closer to him and grow in our love of neighbor.

Discernment isn't identifying the difference between right and wrong - that's morality.

Discernment is taking all the good things we could be doing and asking God which ones he wants us to be doing. It's about using our unique gifts and charisms faithfully to build up the Kingdom of God. It's about doing God's will.

## REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

Think of a time when God asked you to discern a decision in the past. How did you hear God speak into your life?

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In many ways, the art of discernment is what is required for us as we seek to meet the needs of an ever changing world, both as a church and individually:

***“Renewal does not only concern individuals but the entire Church...The Church must look with penetrating eyes within herself, ponder the mystery of her own being...This...leads to a comparison between the ideal image of the Church as Christ envisaged her and loved her as his holy and spotless bride (cf. Eph 5:27), and the actual image which the Church presents to the world today.***

JOY OF THE GOSPEL, 26



# NEW METHODS

## INTRODUCTION

Unfortunately, we often fall short of being who God calls us to be. This doesn't mean that we should stop trying, it simply means we must continue to respond each day. As individuals, we have the Sacrament of Reconciliation to aid us in this. As a Church, we seek to embrace together the renewal that God asks of us.

This renewal leads us to an urgency to share the Good News - to undergo a missionary transformation as a Church:

**I DREAM OF A "MISSIONARY OPTION", THAT IS, A MISSIONARY IMPULSE CAPABLE OF TRANSFORMING EVERYTHING, SO THAT THE CHURCH'S CUSTOMS, WAYS OF DOING THINGS, TIMES AND SCHEDULES, LANGUAGE AND STRUCTURES CAN BE SUITABLY CHanneled FOR THE EVANGELIZATION OF TODAY'S WORLD RATHER THAN FOR HER SELF-PRESERVATION.**

*JOY OF THE GOSPEL 27*

Sometimes our parishes can get stuck in a routine. We do the same things, year after year, and when we get the same results we often wonder why. Most of the statistics in surveys about life in the Church point to continued trends of decline.

While the Church isn't going to re-define doctrines to accommodate the world, it is asking each of us to consider how we can engage the world - to embrace New Methods in our ministries & discern how God wants us to reach out to those in our communities with a Gospel message that will enrich their lives and offer them eternal life.

So how do we respond?

**PASTORAL MINISTRY IN A MISSIONARY KEY SEEKS TO ABANDON THE COMPLACENT ATTITUDE THAT SAYS: "WE HAVE ALWAYS DONE IT THIS WAY". I INVITE EVERYONE TO BE BOLD AND CREATIVE IN THIS TASK OF RETHINKING THE GOALS, STRUCTURES, STYLE AND METHODS OF EVANGELIZATION IN THEIR RESPECTIVE COMMUNITIES.**

*JOY OF THE GOSPEL, 33*



# NEW METHODS

## INTRODUCTION

While embracing change can be scary, the scriptures are full of stories of God providing for his people when he asked them to do seemingly unusual things. Think of Noah building an arc, all the events leading up to the Exodus from Egypt or even the feeding of the five thousand.

When we place our trust in God and respond faithfully to His call, He always provides - even if it's not always in the ways we're expecting or hoping!

Just as He called His people out of the familiarity of Egypt into the promised land, so too He is calling us to something new. As we set out to embrace **New Methods**, let's continue to offer God whatever we have and place our trust in Him to provide.

## REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

In which of the above areas are you being called to grow? What gifts or charisms do you feel that God has given you? How can you use them for God?

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## REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

What are some areas you think your parish could embrace New Methods of reaching people?

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### FOR ADDITIONAL REFLECTION

1 Kings 17:7-6

John 21:1-14

Joy of the Gospel 25-33



### PRACTICAL CHALLENGE

Look up a list of your parish ministries. Think about which ones are effective in preaching the Gospel.

# NEW METHODS

**THE PARISH IS NOT AN OUTDATED INSTITUTION; PRECISELY BECAUSE IT POSSESSES GREAT FLEXIBILITY, IT CAN ASSUME QUITE DIFFERENT CONTOURS DEPENDING ON THE OPENNESS AND MISSIONARY CREATIVITY OF THE PASTOR AND THE COMMUNITY.**

*JOY OF THE GOSPEL, 28*

## GETTING STARTED

So what are some of these *New Methods* we must embrace?

That's exactly what we are called to discern in our own ministries and parishes over the coming years! Each individual and each parish must listen to God and hear what He wants of them and how He wants them to make His presence known in the world.

With that said, here are a few categories to reflect upon that might challenge us all. While these might not be brand new ideas, how we practice them in our day to lives might require us to embrace change.

## GOING FORTH

**GO, THEREFORE, AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

*MATTHEW 28:19*

As parishes and as individuals, we have to have a missionary orientation. A missionary doesn't simply sit back and wait for someone to come to them, rather they go out bringing the Good News. While you may not be called to be a missionary in a foreign country, you are called to be a missionary to the parts of the world that you live in! Our parishes must have an outward orientation too - which may require some change.

**THE CHURCH WHICH "GOES FORTH" IS A COMMUNITY OF MISSIONARY DISCIPLES WHO TAKE THE FIRST STEP, WHO ARE INVOLVED AND SUPPORTIVE, WHO BEAR FRUIT AND REJOICE...**

*JOY OF THE GOSPEL, 24*

## REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

What are some areas you think you or your parish could embrace New Methods of reaching out to people in your community?

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# NEW METHODS

## GETTING STARTED

### LISTENING + ACCOMPANIMENT

HE ASKED THEM, "WHAT ARE YOU DISCUSSING AS YOU WALK ALONG?" THEY STOPPED, LOOKING DOWNCAST. ONE OF THEM, NAMED CLEOPAS, SAID TO HIM IN REPLY, "ARE YOU THE ONLY VISITOR TO JERUSALEM WHO DOES NOT KNOW OF THE THINGS THAT HAVE TAKEN PLACE THERE IN THESE DAYS?" AND HE REPLIED TO THEM, "WHAT SORT OF THINGS?"

LUKE 24:17-19

As Jesus models for us in the story of the road to Emmaus, it's important to walk with people, listen to them and ask questions! As we get to know people, their beliefs, fears, and struggles, we better understand how we can respond to their needs.

We can't assume to know exactly what someone needs on their path to conversion. We must be patient and witness the Gospel by our actions, ask questions, and be present for the highs and lows of people's lives in order to model Jesus' ministry.

**AN EVANGELIZING COMMUNITY GETS INVOLVED BY WORD AND DEED IN PEOPLE'S DAILY LIVES; IT BRIDGES DISTANCES, IT IS WILLING TO ABASE ITSELF IF NECESSARY, AND IT EMBRACES HUMAN LIFE, TOUCHING THE SUFFERING FLESH OF CHRIST IN OTHERS. EVANGELIZERS THUS TAKE ON THE "SMELL OF THE SHEEP" AND THE SHEEP ARE WILLING TO HEAR THEIR VOICE.**

JOY OF THE GOSPEL, 24

### REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

How can you grow in listening and accompaniment? How can your parish?

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# NEW METHODS

## GETTING STARTED

### HOSPITALITY + WELCOME

**WHOEVER RECEIVES YOU RECEIVES ME, AND WHOEVER RECEIVES ME RECEIVES THE ONE WHO SENT ME**

MATTHEW 10:40

As we go forth to walk with people as they journey towards Christ and back to our Churches, it's important to ask: What are they coming back to? How will they be received? True hospitality recognizes the needs of the person before them and tries to remove any obstacles that might prevent them from receiving God's grace.

Can donuts and coffee help with this? Sure! But if the person sitting next to them at Mass gave them a dirty look for an hour because "they are in my pew", it may not be enough. Hospitality and welcome is more than the work of a committee. There is so much we can do to help transform our *entire communities* into welcoming communities that will do whatever it takes to welcome people and walk with them on a path of discipleship in the parish.

**THE CHURCH MUST BE A PLACE OF MERCY FREELY GIVEN, WHERE EVERYONE CAN FEEL WELCOMED, LOVED, FORGIVEN AND ENCOURAGED TO LIVE THE GOOD LIFE OF THE GOSPEL.**

JOY OF THE GOSPEL, 114

### REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

How can you grow in hospitality and welcome? How can your parish ?

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#### FOR ADDITIONAL REFLECTION

Luke 24:13-35     Acts 2  
Joy of the Gospel 127-131



#### PRACTICAL CHALLENGE

Engage someone in a deeper conversation after mass this week. Pray for them before and after you speak with them.

# NEW METHODS

## BUILDING A PATH OF DISCIPLESHIP

We need to build pathways of discipleship both individually and institutionally to help everyone grow in their relationship with Christ and His Church.

It might be helpful to simplify this idea to a few phases that we can focus on in our daily lives to help us understand evangelization and what this pathway looks like. Here's a simple paradigm: **Encounter. Grow. Witness.**

One definition we've used around the Archdiocese of St. Louis to highlight what evangelization looks like practically is that each of us is called to encounter Christ, to grow in our relationship with him and to witness him to others.

As we are evangelized ourselves, we are sent out to help others encounter, grow and witness. Before we can invite someone into an encounter with Christ, we often need to lay the groundwork of a meaningful relationship to help make this invitation more meaningful and effective. This is often called pre-evangelization.

### PRE-EVANGELIZATION | THRESHOLDS OF CONVERSION

The thresholds of conversion represent stages that people often go through on their journey to faith. Identifying where individuals are can help us better understand the needs of those on the path to faith. These thresholds of conversion are taken from the book *Forming Intentional Disciples* by Sherry Weddell. These thresholds are:

- INITIAL TRUST**
- SPIRITUAL OPENNESS**
- SPIRITUAL CURIOSITY**
- SPIRITUAL SEEKING**
- INTENTIONAL DISCIPLESHIP**

FOR A DEEPER DIVE ON THE THRESHOLDS OF CONVERSION READ:

**FORMING INTENTIONAL DISCIPLES**

BY SHERRY WEDDELL



# NEW METHODS

## BUILDING A PATH OF DISCIPLESHIP

### ENCOUNTER

We want to help individuals have a meaningful Encounter with Christ - and then decide to follow Him in their everyday lives. Each of us must respond to the call of Jesus in the Gospels to "repent and believe in the Gospel". When the Catechism of the Catholic Church talks about repentance it talks about a "radical reorientation of our whole life" (CCC 1431).

We do this through our initial encounter with Christ - where, like the apostles Christ calls us to drop our nets and follow him. We also do this through our ongoing daily encounter with Christ - through prayer and the sacraments- where we daily re-commit our lives to following Jesus

### REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

How does your parish help people have an initial Encounter with Christ ? How does it help foster a deeper daily Encounter?

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### GROW

After this encounter & the decision to follow Jesus we must then grow in our relationship with Christ and in understanding His teachings given to us and lived in the life of the Church. The more we come to know about our faith, the more fully and freely we can love and follow Jesus.

As we grow closer to Christ by imitating him and his Holiness, we also must grow in imitating him in his mission to redeem the world. To be Christlike means to be in intimate relationship with the Father and to be sent to the world to invite them into the same relationship. Each of us is called to Holiness and Mission - and we must grow in our readiness for each.

### REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

How does your parish help people grow in holiness? How does your parish help people be equipped for their evangelizing mission?

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# NEW METHODS

## BUILDING A PATH OF DISCIPLESHIP

### WITNESS

This witness is lived in the world by both word and deed. One without the other is incomplete. While we may often want to “let our actions do the talking”, the Church asks us to also proclaim the Gospel message - the kerygma.

**THE GOOD NEWS PROCLAIMED BY THE WITNESS OF LIFE SOONER OR LATER HAS TO BE PROCLAIMED BY THE WORD OF LIFE. THERE IS NO TRUE EVANGELIZATION IF THE NAME, THE TEACHING, THE LIFE, THE PROMISES, THE KINGDOM AND THE MYSTERY OF JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE SON OF GOD ARE NOT PROCLAIMED.”**

-EVANGELIZATION IN THE MODERN WORLD, 22

The world needs our invitation to life in Christ! We can't assume that simply being around our Christian community will make clear to someone the tremendous offer of grace that God has for them. It's important to note - we can never do this by force - we must propose the Gospel, not impose it upon others.

The lived witness of Christ's mercy should be ever present in our communities by our Christian Charity. If we are not living the mandate that Christ gave us that 'whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.' then our proclamation of the Gospel rings hollow.

### REFLECTION/DISCUSSION

How does your parish go forth outside the parish boundaries? How well does your parish create opportunities to give a spoken witness of the Gospel message or a personal testimony?

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# CONCLUSION

## GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES

**BUT YOU WILL RECEIVE POWER WHEN THE HOLY SPIRIT COMES ON YOU; AND YOU WILL BE MY WITNESSES IN JERUSALEM, AND IN ALL JUDEA AND SAMARIA, AND TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH**

ACTS 1:8

### WHAT'S NEXT?

Do you feel ready to live as a missionary disciple?

If not, that's okay. It's likely that neither did the first Apostles, and many faithful followers of Christ after them.

But nonetheless, empowered by the Holy Spirit they proclaimed Christ, clothed the naked, fed the hungry and so much more - and the world has never been the same. On that first Pentecost, thousands were converted. Because of their witness, that same faith has been passed on to us today.

No study guide can make you a missionary disciple. There won't be one moment where you suddenly feel ready to evangelize & there is no *one thing* you have to do next. Rather, we must take this call to mission & discern how God is calling us to respond - each and every day. Like the first apostles, you are sent.

**Go and make disciples!**

**THE ONE WHO SAT ON THE THRONE SAID, "BEHOLD, I MAKE ALL THINGS NEW." THEN HE SAID, "WRITE THESE WORDS DOWN, FOR THEY ARE TRUSTWORTHY AND TRUE."**

REVELATION 21:5

For additional resources and recommended programs for your use, please visit [archstl.org/evangelization](http://archstl.org/evangelization) or contact Brian Miller, Director of Evangelization and Discipleship at 314-792-7083 or [brianmiller@archstl.org](mailto:brianmiller@archstl.org).

