

Evangelizing Parishes: *Becoming Centers for the New Evangelization*



Focus the Lens of the New Evangelization on Parish Life and Structures

- Begin with prayer and sacraments
- Focus on personal discipleship
- Provide intentional training of for evangelization
- New Evangelization: new in ardor, methods, and expressions

Create Organizational Health

Reliance on prayer

- In the course of our parish life, we must entrust to God everything we do by intentionally beginning all of our meetings, events, and preparations in prayer

Real leadership team

- Building a solid team of skilled leaders who are grounded in prayer enables a pastor to shepherd a growing flock and bring many more souls to Christ

Clear vision

- Prayerfully creating and communicating a clear vision for your parishes helps keep clergy, staff, volunteers, and parishioners on target.

Foster Growth in Personal Discipleship

Reverent, Active Sacramental Life

- The sacraments are the chief source of grace for the people of God. Parishes in the New Evangelization make a particular effort to celebrate them in a way that makes clear their profound meaning
- Eucharistic Adoration and Reconciliation make personal encounters with Christ possible for growing disciples, which is why it is so important that they are available at accessible times
- Focusing on the key elements of what outsiders will experience the first time they visit your parishes for Mass on the weekend will help you reach them
- Prioritize quality sacred music, a passionate and memorable homily, and cultivating a team of welcoming ministers - from the priest, down to the servers and hospitality team

Religious Instruction and Faith Formation

- Take into account the thresholds of conversion and phases of discipleship when building compelling programs
- Remember that deeper conversion to Christ is ongoing: faith formation is a lifelong process
- Teaching about Jesus Christ, the scriptures, and the teachings of the Church is an important part of making disciples

Small Group Discipleship

- Small groups provide a way for people to grow together meaningfully in discipleship, and on a deeper level, to reach far more people personally than the pastor or his staff can alone
- They are a means of creating a network of personal relationships in your parish that build up the community of the parish and, in doing so, build up the body of Christ

A Culture of Promoting Vocations

- As Cardinal Seán says, “Vocations are everybody’s business!”
- We must encourage our parishioners to view themselves as called by God to a specific vocation to a holy marriage, priesthood, or religious life
- Develop simple, but effective vocation ministries in our parishes that draw the attention of the parish to the importance of priestly vocations in particular

Go Out to Share the Good News with Zeal

Apostolic and Charitable Activities

- Charitable works that flow from a prayerful life of discipleship have a power to convert that is hard to deny - think of Blessed Mother Theresa
- Missionary outreach should be rooted in Christ and animated by the Holy Spirit

Resources and Spirit to Evangelize

- Disciples in our parishes need to be trained to evangelize well
- Disciples in our parishes need assistance in discerning their charisms and gifts
- Evangelizing parishes are open to and expect conversion
- When the soul is filled with Christian joy, it must overflow

Other Items to Consider

Emphasis on the Sacramental Life of the Parish

- We must go to Christ, and bring those we are training, catechizing, and evangelizing to Him, in particular through the sacraments
- There can be many obstacles to participating in parish sacramental life, especially for outsiders. Consider, for example, the times you offer daily Mass, confession, and adoration

The Next Big Thing

- Do we offer too many activities? Are we clearly communicating our priorities?
- Does the next big thing get drowned out by the many other things we think we need to do or want to do?

“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.”

—Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium (The Joy of the Gospel)*, no. 33