THE CHURCH EVANGELIZING!

A PASTORAL LETTER TO THE CHURCH OF PITTSBURGH
ON SHARING THE GOOD NEWS OF GOD'S LOVE

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THE
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www.ChurchEvangelizing.com
1. The Church Evangelizing! What is it? Where is it? Who is it? How is it? When is it? The answer to these questions is as close as one of the most treasured realities of life: friendship.


3. These twelve words sum up what it means for you and me to be The Church Evangelizing! Jesus asks each of us to be His friend. He gave that invitation in the Gospel of John: “I have called you friends.”¹ Some of the basic rules of friendship we learned in kindergarten: “play nice,” “share with others,” “take turns,” “care for others,” “do not tattle.” As we grew older, we learned that everyone needs a friend to be our “bridge over troubled water.” That is Who Jesus is for us. And Jesus wants to become friends with everyone we know. Introducing our friends to Jesus is what it means to be The Church Evangelizing!

SECTION 1
THE CHURCH EVANGELIZING!
4. This is nothing new for the Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh. My predecessors all made friends for Jesus. Every bishop of our diocese over the nearly 170 years of our history has carried out the mission of evangelization: O’Connor, Domenec, Tuigg, Phelan, Canevin, Boyle, Dearden, Wright, Leonard, Bevilacqua, Wuerl and yours prayerfully.

5. But the Church of Pittsburgh isn’t just its bishops, its nearly 400 priests, 100 deacons, and 1,031 religious. It is every one of the nearly 700,000 faithful in six counties and four vicariates. We are The Church Evangelizing!

6. From the first missionary priests who celebrated Mass at the Point in 1754, through the 19th century outreach of Saint John Neumann and Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos to immigrants in the Strip District, to the parents who for generation after generation have nurtured and raised their children in the faith, to the religious and lay who have catechized our young, to the parish RCIA leaders who help to lead converts into our Catholic Church today, the Church of Pittsburgh has always been The Church Evangelizing! We are Catholics here and now because Catholics who went before us passed on the faith to us.

7. Today I am renewing the call to evangelize. It is a call that triumphed over the anti-Catholic bigotry of the 19th century. It is a call heard by daring immigrants who contributed to the rapid growth of the Catholic population in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It is a call that
echoes the Second Vatican Council, beginning with Pope Blessed John XXIII and Pope Paul VI, and continues through Pope Blessed John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI to Pope Francis.

8. The Church of Pittsburgh faces the dynamic challenges of bringing the Christian faith to a secular world at the dawn of the 21st century. As members of the Body of Christ in the Church of Pittsburgh, we have the blessed responsibility to continue to be The Church Evangelizing!

9. The Church Evangelizing! is the Church to which you and I belong. It is our Catholic Church, the Church of Pittsburgh. The “church” part we know well. The “evangelizing” part we need to know better. I want us to bring to light some of the fresh ways that our dear Pope Francis is calling us to reflect anew on the Catholic life we share. I ask you to re-imagine with me how you and I can live our faith in a way that transforms our corner of the world. It is my personal belief, inspired by that of our Holy Father, Pope Francis, that you and I must make “evangelizing” not only a household word, but a daily reality. With the Holy Spirit to guide and empower us, we can—indeed we must—make The Church Evangelizing! a transforming influence in southwestern Pennsylvania and beyond.
10. On September 8, 1975, in his encyclical letter *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, Pope Paul VI issued the first call for a “new period of evangelization.” In 1978 Pope Blessed John Paul II took up that call and made it the foundation of his 27-year pontificate. In his encyclical letter, *Redemptoris Missio*, he wrote: “I sense that the moment has come to commit all the Church’s energies to a New Evangelization. No believer in Christ, no institution of the Church, can avoid the supreme duty: to proclaim Christ to all peoples.” He called for an evangelization that is “new in ardor, methods, and expression.”

11. His successor, Pope Benedict XVI, took powerful and practical steps to make the New Evangelization a roadmap for the whole Church. He paved the road for that mission with a “Year
of Faith” in 2012-2013. It was a time in which we joined our hands and hearts with those of Catholics throughout the world to rethink what it means to be a “Church Evangelizing.”

12. And now Pope Francis is taking his turn, urging us to become “a Church that evangelizes,” a point he makes in so many of his inspiring talks. By word and deed he is leading us in the “New Evangelization.”

13. Inspired by our Popes, we bishops throughout the world are acting on this inspiration. In dioceses, seminaries, universities and parishes, we have begun to pave the pathways for the “New Evangelization.” With so much cooperation and with God’s grace, we might expect that the world would be more quickly converted to Christ. I pray that it will be. But in the meantime I cannot sit idly by waiting for it to happen.

14. To evangelize is the work of the whole Church, not just for our current pope, not just for your bishop or for our priests, deacons and religious. This
task belongs to all women and men of The Church Alive! It is our work together as the Body of Christ.

15. Whether married or single, clergy or religious, laywoman or layman, we have a vocation from God. We are called to holiness. Our vocation is built upon the grace we received in baptism—the very life of Christ Himself. Jesus is reflected in each of our vocations, no matter how different they are from each other.

16. Remember what a vocation is—a gift from God; a call from God intended to be our ticket into heaven. All four vocations in the Church—the married life, the single life, the consecrated life of sisters and brothers and the ordained life of deacons, priests and bishops—reflect how we respond to the call to become more like Christ. We may live our vocations in different ways, but each vocation is a call from Jesus “who is the same yesterday, today and forever.” All of this—the stuff of what it means to be Church, the stuff of what it means for us to be the Body of Christ today—begins with God’s desire that we become more like Him in and through our vocation.

17. This is precisely where the New Evangelization must begin!

REMEMBER WHAT A VOCATION IS—
A GIFT FROM GOD
18. When I was a little kid in Ambridge in the 1950’s, every so often the regular TV programs would be preempted by the Billy Graham crusades. Dr. Graham, who recently celebrated his 95th birthday, was a powerful evangelical speaker. He tried to “connect the dots” between everyday life and faith in Jesus. He wanted to call listeners and viewers to respond to the Holy Spirit, to begin a loving, dynamic relationship with the Lord.

19. Dr. Graham usually preached in a stadium. At the conclusion of each of his crusades, he would invite those present to come down out
of the bleachers and approach his podium as a sign of their willingness “to come to Jesus.”

20. I must confess that as I watched what was happening on TV, I felt guilty. Imagine that! Feeling guilty because I was excited about our Christian faith! You know the answer to that question as well as I now know it. We should be excited about our faith. All Christians—Catholics, Anglicans, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Methodists, Baptists, Evangelicals, Orthodox and many others—are all called to “come to Jesus” and to invite others to do the same. Not unlike Billy Graham, we all, you and I, are called to be evangelists.

21. As Catholics, we invite others “to come to Jesus” not only at events in stadiums, but to come to Him in the sacraments, most especially the Eucharist. We invite others “to come to Jesus” when we encourage them to join us in serving our sisters and brothers in need. We invite others “to come to Jesus” when we bring them to the richness and fullness of our Catholic faith.

22. The word “evangelization” and its verb “to evangelize” and the role of an “evangelist” are rooted in the ancient Greek word evangelion. Translated, it means “Gospel” and Gospel literally means “good news.” To evangelize is to tell the Good News about Jesus—that the Son of God has come to earth and changed everything, that He took on our flesh and let our blood flow through His veins. He became one of us, fully human with the exception of sin. Jesus has come into your life and mine, leaving nothing as it was before. The mission of every Christian, symbolized in our bearing His name, is to share that good news with everyone.
23. As Jesus completed His earthly ministry, He told the people in His little flock not to be closed in on themselves. He said to them: “Go into the world and proclaim the Good News to every creature, make disciples of all nations.”

“Go into the whole world!” And don’t just say what you need to say—Learn it! Love it! Live it! Proclaim it! Get excited about it! Jesus does not offer a low impact or a “lite” version of Christianity. He calls us, trusts us, to continue the work He began more than two millennia ago. Saint Paul eventually took Jesus very seriously. He considered himself to be accursed if he failed to follow through on Jesus’ command. “Woe to me,” he wrote, “if I do not evangelize!”

24. When my mom and dad and my grandparents heard that word “evangelize,” I’m sure they probably thought about Billy Graham. But they knew evangelizers, without ever calling them such. They were the priests who served our parish and the sisters who taught at our school. But whatever the impression we had of evangelists back then, evangelizing is everybody’s business now.

25. Pope Francis has repeated the same call: “Evangelization is the Church’s mission, not just of a few, but my, your, our mission.” Everyone in the Church needs to do the work of telling the Good News. Our witness is needed right where we are at any given moment: in our homes; in our workplaces; in the supermarkets; in the gyms; in our classrooms; on the basketball courts; in the shopping malls and on our neighborhood streets. Pope Francis has made it clear that our witness must be to and for everyone—to each other as fellow Catholics, active or not, as well as to other Christians, to non-Christians and to nonbelievers.
“Sometimes we lose our enthusiasm for mission because we forget that the Gospel responds to our deepest needs, since we were created for what the Gospel offers us: friendship with Jesus and love of our brothers and sisters. If we succeed in expressing adequately and with beauty the essential content of the Gospel, surely this message will speak to the deepest yearnings of people’s hearts.”

— Pope Francis

26. The Church Evangelizing! is you and me. Perhaps you have heard it said that Christ would have died for you and me, even if we were the only two persons living on earth. Well, it’s true. Our Lord is depending on our witness, our vocation, our evangelization, as if you and I were the only Christians on the earth.

27. For some of the people in our lives, our neighbors, co-workers, friends and even family members, we may be their primary and only link to Jesus Christ. Though I spend my life joyfully with my brother priests and deacons as we try to preach the Gospel, we, the clergy, are not able to reach those whom you, the laity and religious, are able to reach. Pope Blessed John Paul II said as much in his Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of 1988, entitled Christifideles Laici:

“The images taken from the gospel of salt, light, leaven, although indiscriminately applicable to all Jesus’ disciples, are specifically applied to the lay faithful. They are particularly meaningful images because they speak not only of the deep involvement and the full participation of the lay faithful in the affairs of the earth, the world and the human community, but also and above all, they tell of the radical newness and unique character of an involvement and participation which has as its purpose the spreading of the Gospel that brings salvation.”

— Blessed Pope John Paul II
28. What the Holy Father said then is truer now than ever: you as our laity can proclaim the Good News and evangelize others better in your workplaces and in the marketplaces than we priests, deacons and bishops could ever do in those places. You are there. You are with them every day. You see them and speak with them. And they are with you and speak to you.

29. Though Pope Francis captivates large crowds in Saint Peter’s Square, there are many more people he simply cannot reach. They are the ones you see day after day in your homes, neighborhoods and offices. They are the people you can lead to Jesus Christ.

30. When you and I look at the people we see each day, do we see what Jesus sees? “At the sight of the crowds, His heart was moved with pity for them because they were troubled and abandoned, like sheep without a shepherd.” Jesus wants to be more than a shepherd to the “crowd.” He wants to be their family, their friend. He wants them to be part of His Body, the Church, and He wants your help to invite them in!
31. As Jesus gazed on His closest disciples at the Last Supper, knowing that His death was near, He spoke as if He was also looking at you and me. He said: “I have called you friends.”

Here is the central truth of salvation: God has overcome all that we put in the way of His love. He so desired to enjoy our company that He took on our human condition, but without sin. “The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us.” Or as Saint Paul wrote: “For you
know the gracious act of our Lord, Jesus Christ, that for your sake he became poor, although he was rich, so that by his poverty you might become rich.”

32. By His poverty Jesus made possible a true friendship between God and each member of the human race. To be saved is to enjoy God’s friendship, to live in divine fellowship.

33. The Blessed Trinity—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—lives eternally in perfect communion. By grace, we are caught up into God’s life. Saint Peter tells us that we have “come to share in the divine nature.” Through our baptism we die with our Friend, Jesus Christ, and we rise with Him to new life. Our new life is a friendship we could not have imagined or wished for apart from God’s Self-revelation. Jesus did not simply tell us facts about the Trinity. He gave us a share in the life of the Trinity. That’s friendship, friendship with God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit!

34. Back in Ambridge in the 1950’s, I had a very good friend, Johnny by name. Almost sixty years later, Johnny (and now his wife) and I are still good friends. What a blessing this is! When we were kids, Johnny and I became like family to each other. We spent hours in each other’s homes. We shared food at each other’s tables. My parents felt comfortable with Johnny. Johnny’s parents felt comfortable with me. That’s what friendship does. It draws us into a bond of communion, one with another and then with others. Some of Johnny’s friends became my friends and vice versa.
35. This is what Jesus accomplishes by His friendship with us. He draws us into the bond of communion that He enjoys eternally with the Father and with the Holy Spirit. To be saved is to live in the communion of friendship with the Blessed Trinity and to share that life with the whole household of God. That's a description of heaven. The way we begin to experience heaven here on earth is in the Church and through the sacraments and especially in our homes, offices and schools. When we are friends with Jesus, heaven is everywhere we are!
36. While Jesus Himself spoke of His saving work in terms of friendship, this work is not His alone. He said: “No one has greater love than this—to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” Ι° He went on:
“You are my friends if you do what I command you. I no longer speak of you as slaves, because a slave does not know what his master is about. I have called you friends because I have told you everything I heard from my Father. It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and to bear fruit that will remain. So that, whatever you ask the Father in my name He may give you. This is my commandment to you. Love one another.”

— The Gospel of John

37. Love one another! That is perhaps the most frequently repeated phrase in the New Testament (I count thirteen instances and I may have missed a few). Why is this commandment repeated so often? Probably because in the first century as in the twenty-first, it was easy to forget.

38. We must never forget that Jesus issued a command in that beautiful passage where He called His disciples “friends.” He told them that they were chosen and appointed to “go and bear fruit.”

39. This is what we need to do. If not, we will not be living as friends of Christ. If we are not seeking to make friends for Jesus, then we are not responding to Jesus’ words at the Last Supper: “You are my friends if you do what I command you.” And again, “Love one another as I have loved you.”

40. Evangelization, pure and simple, is the extension of the friendship with Jesus to others through us. To evangelize is to draw others into friendship with Christ. To be an evangelist is to
be the face, the hands, the heart and the voice of Christ to those who long to hear a friendly voice and to see a friendly face.

41. I propose that evangelization is as beautiful, as supportive and as life-giving as friendship. This is as true in the “New Evangelization” as it was in the “old evangelization.” Evangelization is the task of every baptized Christian. It is not only a priest or sister or brother “thing.”

42. Watch how Jesus evangelized. At the very beginning of His public ministry, He befriended two men. One of them was Andrew and the other Andrew’s brother, Simon Peter. Then, Jesus met Philip, who rushed out to get his friend Bartholomew to join them.

43. On the day He rose from the dead, Jesus found two disciples walking on the road to Emmaus. They were despondent. So He walked with them, talked with them, consoled them, challenged them, debated them, sat with them at table and finally gave Himself to them in the breaking of the bread. Jesus accomplished so much with a walk and a friendly meal. That was His way. It should be our way, too.

44. Read the story about the cookout Jesus prepared for His friends on the shore of the Sea of Tiberias. Once again, Jesus was making connections with them in ways they could understand. He spoke the language of who they were as fishermen. And in this encounter, Jesus shared with them the Good News of His love.

45. At the end of His earthly ministry, Jesus was still evangelizing in the same way—through friendship, one person at a time, from one person to another. In this, He was building up a communion of His friends in His name and through His love.
46. Earlier this year, I had the opportunity to travel with 175 faithful of our diocese to the Holy Land. One of the most profoundly beautiful moments we shared was in a boat on the Sea of Galilee. At a certain point, the captain shut off the engine. The silence that followed took each of us back to those important encounters between Jesus and His first disciples. It was a silence that was life-giving. What we imagined as having happened to them was happening to us on that very lake. Jesus was likewise connecting with us. He was befriending us more deeply.

47. By doing this, Jesus guaranteed that they would be recorded in the holy Scriptures. He did what He did so that we would see Him and learn from Him. Whether we are in a quiet boat on the Sea of Galilee or a pew in one of our churches, friendship with Jesus compels us to share the joy, the “good news” of His love. He did this so that we would imitate Him and make more friends for Him by being excited about our faith because His friendship changes our lives!

48. Think of the Samaritan woman at the well who urged her neighbors, “Come and see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?” Her joy at being known and loved by Jesus compelled her to share it with others. Then, after her neighbors met Jesus, they said their faith was no longer because of her words but because they knew they had encountered the Savior of the world. This woman’s enthusiastic conviction was a bridge for others to encounter Jesus.
49. On the heels of Jesus’ public ministry, the Church imitated Him and made friends for Him throughout the world. In his third letter, Saint John the Evangelist identifies the Church simply as “the friends”: “I hope to see you soon, when we can talk face to face. Peace be with you. The friends greet you; greet the friends there each by name.”

50. When the earliest members of the Church heard the Good News of Jesus from the Apostles, they behaved the same way as the first Apostles behaved: they brought their friends around to get to know Jesus. They wanted all of their friends to be friends with Jesus.

51. In the Acts of the Apostles, we meet a man named Cornelius. Cornelius was an ordinary man who had an ordinary job that put him in contact with lots of people. He knew that they would all be better off if they knew Jesus. So he made that encounter possible through a simple invitation. It worked. His friendship with them and his friendship with Jesus connected them all in a new and powerful way.

52. That was The Church Evangelizing! nearly 2,000 years ago. But what about now?
53. Our world is full of many ideas about friendship. People collect hundreds if not thousands of “friends” on social media. These friends may “like” the bits of our life that we carefully select to display. They may “follow” us electronically to learn more about who we are.

54. In our day, social media enables old friends to stay in touch, even when oceans...
separate them. Social media lets grandparents watch their grandchildren grow day by day. Social media is a useful tool in the hands of true friends.

55. Friendship, in the traditional Christian understanding of the word, requires contact, connection and care. It requires love, which requires conversation, concern, constancy. Love is many things.26 One thing friendship is NOT is passive or mechanical. It is not stingy. Friendship is active. It requires time.

56. Since friendship is a virtue, it grows better with practice. The gift of friendship is real, but it requires time and effort, heart and soul. We must make time for our friends. We all say we’re busy, and perhaps we are. But we should continue to ask ourselves if we are willing to be as available to others as we would want them to be for us. Can we doubt that there is a need for friendship today? How many people ache for even a few minutes of our attention? As necessary as human friendship is in each of our lives, even more so is the unfolding of friendship with Jesus. How else can we pass on the Good News of His love to others?

57. Therein lies a challenge!
58. Statistics show that we Americans are becoming increasingly isolated and alone. In the 1980’s, the average person reported having three friends. By 2000, the average had fallen, with one out of four people reporting no one with whom they shared friendship. We should not be surprised that similar proportions of people are becoming isolated from Jesus. Sadly, they do not even know Him. Several years ago, I found this to be painfully true.

59. In 2009, I traveled to south Florida to celebrate a milestone birthday in the life of my dear goddaughter, Carla Nicole. It was her thirtieth birthday. And while I was in her neighborhood, I spent a couple of hours in a shopping mall near her apartment. As I browsed through a department store, I heard a voice calling out to me: “Sir, sir.” The middle-aged man continued, “I have been admiring that trinket that you are wearing around your neck. Where might I be able to buy one?” The “trinket” to which he referred was, in fact, the crucifix that I wear around my neck. He admired a trinket! What he didn’t know was that it was Jesus! Imagine that. Here was a man of the 21st century who knew neither the Cross nor the One who hung from it.

60. This stranger represents the people who live and work with us. If Jesus appeared to them now to ask why they did not know Him, they could answer as did the paralyzed man in the Gospel when he explained why he hadn’t gone into a pool known for healing: “Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up.”27 They have no one, even though you and I are standing next to them, working beside them, perhaps playing on the same softball team and shopping at the same grocery store.

61. Is this not a summons to us? Should we not read “the signs of the times” as an invitation to tell people, like my “friend” in the Florida mall, to come to know Jesus?

62. This, too, is the New Evangelization.
63. In every place and era, the Church has had, like Mary, the happy task of bringing Jesus into the world! And how do you and I as Church continue to bring Jesus into each other’s lives? As disciples of Jesus, we feed the hungry, without discrimination. We shelter the homeless and give clothes to the poor. We build hospitals to heal the sick. We run schools for those who are hungry for knowledge. Our cemeteries provide a resting place for the remains of our beloved ones.

64. From its beginning on August 8, 1843, the Church of Pittsburgh has been committed to passing on the message of Jesus, not only through the celebration of the sacraments...
but through our loving service to one another. Over more than 170 years, in our homes and our parishes, within our schools, in hospitals and nursing homes, through our interactions in neighborhoods throughout Pittsburgh and the six counties of our diocese; in every town, municipality and borough, we have, as Church, sought to be the Body of Christ. We continue to do so today.

65. People are still in need, and we help them, whether they belong to our Church or not. We help those in need of health care and others in need of a homeland. Some want to find a job while others seek only the assurance of their worth. All of them know they can turn to the Church for help.

66. Added to these basic needs is a greater one—the need for relationship, for family and friends.

67. We priests know this hunger because we see it daily. There it is—in those who are elderly and neglected, in spouses who are abused in marriage or abandoned in divorce, in children whose parents are too busy for them, in senior citizens who have outlasted their coworkers or outlived their relatives. Jesus met folks with the same needs. He reached out to them. He
befriended them. He became for them family, friend, Church.

68. As members of the Church of Pittsburgh, we are called to continue the work of Jesus—to connect with those in our day who hunger for family, friends and Church. If we are not inviting the people we see daily to join us in friendship with Christ, then we are like the priest and the Levite in His parable of the Good Samaritan. We are the ones who pass by the man lying in the ditch. By and large, that’s not a description of the faithful of the Church of Pittsburgh. I have met so many of you over the course of these years since I have become your bishop. I believe—no, rather I know—that we are The Church Alive! And as such, Jesus continues to raise the bar for us to be more alive, more caring, more loving, more merciful.

69. In writing this pastoral letter, I offer you my support and beg your support of me. Together with Jesus, we can become family, friend and Church to many others. That is the New Evangelization. I beg you to join me in taking it up with greater ardor, discipline and joy.

70. But how?
71. It is imperative that we see that everything in our lives needs to be grounded in prayer—a connection with, to and from God. Jesus is always ready to give us time—His time—and He has all the time in the world for us. If we want Jesus, we must in turn take and make the time for Him. We need to pray daily. The Church’s tradition makes this easy for us. In our diocese, we have no shortage of Masses offered every day. We have many prayer groups that meet on a regular basis. We have retreat houses, monasteries, religious communities and formation centers dedicated to helping us converse with God.
72. Prayer, connection with Jesus, is the necessary foundation of The Church Evangelizing! We cannot share Jesus with others if we do not first know Him. We need to talk to Jesus regularly before we can introduce Him to others. After all, conversation is the sustenance of all relationships, and especially and particularly with Jesus. Prayer is the prerequisite before we can engage in the energy and effort of the New Evangelization. As Jesus Himself said: “Without me, you can do nothing.”

29 Saint Paul so pointedly illustrates this reality in his letter to the Church of Philippi: “There is nothing I cannot master with the help of the One who gives me strength.”

30 And most assuredly Mary stands as an icon of the importance of prayer since she was called to be THE one who would bring Christ into the world.

73. I know this from experience. On February 11, 1997, the day that I received the news that Pope Blessed John Paul II had named me a bishop, I had to struggle with the “how” and “why” of that appointment. I was ever so aware of my own humanness. So, I took my doubts and struggles and my trusty New American Bible to the chapel of the Sisters of the Holy Spirit (where I then served as chaplain). My Bible had been given to me by a good friend in 1969. It had been a constant companion throughout all of my studies and throughout the course of my priesthood.
Sitting before the Blessed Sacrament that night, I opened my Bible to the first chapter of the Gospel of Luke. I read over, reflected upon, and embraced ever so tightly the story of Mary receiving the message of her becoming the mother of Jesus. In the moment of that tender prayer, I “heard” Mary asking the same questions that I was asking—“How?” and “Why?” And what Mary heard in response from the great Archangel Gabriel is the same response I heard that night. It is the same answer we all need to hear as Church: “Do not be afraid; you have won God’s favor. ...For nothing is impossible with God.”

That encounter in the chapel became the inspiration for my choice of an episcopal motto: “Nothing is Impossible with God.” I believe that same phrase can be the clarion call for us to be The Church Evangelizing! But that will require power from the Holy Spirit that flows through us only to the extent that we truly become people of prayer.

When we grow in our genuine practice of prayer, we also grow in the awareness of God’s presence. We “practice the presence of God.” And that practice produces an inevitable effect on our lives. Through prayer, we grow in integrity because we come to know that God is always with us. It makes us The Church Evangelizing!
77. To consider the work of the Church as friendship with Jesus may be a paradigm shift for some of us. It may mean a radical rethinking of how we approach what we’re already doing every day. It will certainly mean a training of the will so that we can grow more sensitive to the needs of the people around us.

78. That growth is necessary for all of us, including those who serve “professionally” in the Church’s ministries. Anyone who has ever worked for the Church has struggled with the temptation to reduce what they do to a “job” with processes and procedures. But that’s not enough for any Christian, for them or us.
79. The New Evangelization is not a job, a fad or a program. It is living the faith; it is passing it on. We all need to do what’s best for the people we serve. In our drive to help other people, we must run risks. It is all too easy, sometimes, to sacrifice the human element for the sake of greater efficiency. It’s all too easy to reduce the dimension of friendship in the Lord to “receiving gold stars” on our forehead for a job done well!

80. We must never forget that, as The Church Evangelizing!, we are called to be the Body of Christ. Friendship with Jesus must characterize everything that we do as followers of Jesus.

81. If we are teaching children or young adults about Jesus, we are not just doing a job. We are making friends for Jesus.

82. If we are charged with serving the poor, we can never fall into the trap of statistics; we must not allow ourselves to measure success in terms of the gallons of soup dispensed or the number of sandwiches served. We are called to feed souls, and souls thrive on friendship. We need to make friends for Jesus.

83. If we are answering the parish phone or passing out bulletins after Mass, we need to make friends for Jesus. If we sing in a funeral choir, visit the sick, lead a Bible study, help prepare couples for marriage or work at the parish fish fry, we need to be making friends for Jesus.
84. Are we available to others as we serve them? Do we communicate to them what Christ communicates to us—that we must have time for them, as Jesus has time for us? In the midst of our busyness and the pressure to succeed that are so much a part of the world we live in, the New Evangelization challenges us to change our way of thinking, speaking, acting and living as followers of Jesus. Faith in action isn’t merely something we do. Faith in action is not a work, not a job. It is Jesus working through us and for others.

85. To all of you, members of the Church of Pittsburgh, empowered by the grace of God: we need to change our mindsets. Doing the work of Jesus, the work of evangelization, being The Church Evangelizing! demands that we be friends and that we befriended others as Jesus is our friend and as He befriends us all.
86. You and I find in the saints, both ancient and new, many models for friendship. We are reminded about its importance in the Old Testament Book of Sirach.
Faithful friends are a sturdy shelter; whoever finds one finds a treasure.
Faithful friends are beyond price, no amount can balance their worth.
Faithful friends are life-saving medicines, those who fear God will find them; those who fear the Lord enjoy a stable friendship, for as they are so will their neighbors be. 

—The Book of Sirach

87. So many of our ancestors in the faith engaged in evangelization as a partnership and a friendship with God. In the Old Testament, “Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness; and he was called ‘the friend of God.’” Abraham was not promised an easy way of life, but the best way of life. That is to say, it was the way of partnership with God! It involved, moreover, many other friends: his nephew Lot; the priest Melchizedek; the three visitors from heaven who confirmed that Abraham would be the father of many nations and that his descendants in God’s service would be more numerous than the stars in the sky.

88. Just as the New Testament rests on the Old, so, too, did some of the most important figures in the Gospels stand on the wisdom of Sirach’s hymn to friendship. Elizabeth and Mary were relatives for sure, but friends first. They were great partners in the story of salvation, paving the way for the partnership of their sons, John the Baptist and Jesus.

89. Saint Peter and Saint John established a wonderful partnership—working together, challenging each other and rejoicing together in the trust placed in them by Jesus.

90. The fiery temper of Saint Paul sometimes made him a difficult friend but he, too, was found to be tamed by his good partner, Barnabas, who was so often a “middleman for Christ.”

91. Among the saints of the early Church are many good models of partnership.

92. Saint Augustine was a saint renowned for his friendships. Those who knew him were drawn to the faith that he had embraced as an adult. As a matter of fact, when he was baptized some of his childhood friends received the sacrament with him! He kept up a lively correspondence with a variety of friends—the widow Proba, who was a businesswoman; the Pope Paulinus of Nola, who was a poet; as well as many scholars and politicians. Augustine made time for his friends and, in so doing, he led others to become his partners for Christ.
TRUE FRIENDSHIP IS INCLUSIVE. IT DOESN’T FORM A CLIQUE. IT CREATES AN EVER-WIDENING CIRCLE OF FRIENDS.

94. Partnership multiplies friendship. True friendship is inclusive. It doesn’t form a clique. It creates an ever-widening circle of friends. If our friendship with the Lord is truly a partnership with Him, it will motivate us to make more friends for Jesus Christ.

95. This is the way of the saints. This is the way of The Church Evangelizing! You and I, striving to live our friendship with the Lord and our partnership with each other—that should be our way of life as Church.

96. In writing a pastoral letter like this one, I squirm a bit because I feel judged by my own words. I could never argue that the work of evangelization is easy. If it were, Jesus would not have needed to command it! And I would not be writing this letter.
97. It takes faith. It takes belief that “Nothing is Impossible with God.”

98. That’s what fuels effective evangelization.

99. In reflecting on my own role in the New Evangelization, I must testify about those who have partnered with me in this mission. I am not a Lone Ranger. I could never persevere in the priesthood for thirty-nine years and as a bishop for seventeen, without the encouragement and support of many partners in faith. My parents, Susan and Stanley Zubik, are more than mother and father to me. They were, and are, partners in Christ, friends of the Lord—my mom from above, my dad here on earth.

100. Many of my childhood friends I still count as partners today. Classmates from school and the seminary have weathered the years with me. Through decades of priestly service, my life has been woven into the lives of so many individuals and families who have welcomed me into their homes. In doing so, they have reflected the mind and heart of Jesus. They have taught me a great deal about Christian partnership, Christian friendship and friendship with Jesus.
101. My brother bishops have supported me and advised me. It was my privilege to serve in this diocese under John Cardinal Wright, Bishop Vincent Leonard, Anthony Cardinal Bevilacqua, and most assuredly with Donald Cardinal Wuerl. They all took the chance to trust me, some even when I was a seminarian. I have treasured the friendships of Cardinals and Bishops who have guided, assisted and supported me: Daniel Cardinal DiNardo, Adam Cardinal Maida, the late Bishop John McDowell and the late Bishop Anthony Bosco, Bishop William Winter, Bishop Thomas Tobin, Bishop Paul Bradley, Bishop Edward Burns, Archbishop Bernard Hebda and Bishop William Waltersheid. God continues to ask much of me. He blesses me by way of partnership with our past and present bishops.

102. It is my hope that you, too, feel the challenge of *The Church Alive!* by your partnership with those who likewise cherish friendship with Jesus. “It is important to have friends we can trust. But it is essential to trust the Lord who never lets us down.”

103. You and I need to be excited about our role in the New Evangelization. We need to be inspired by those who partnered with Jesus: His mother, Mary, and John the Baptist; Martha, Mary and Lazarus; Peter, James and John; and many more, named and unnamed. But above all, He was and is in partnership with His Father and the Holy Spirit in the Most Holy Trinity.
SECTION 11
EIGHT BUILDING BLOCKS
OF THE NEW EVANGELIZATION

1 PRACTICE HOSPITALITY
2 KNOW THE FAITH
3 SPEAK UP
4 GIVE CORRECTION
5 BE LOYAL
6 STAY IN TOUCH
7 REMEMBER THE POOR
8 BE ENCOURAGING
104. Having reflected on the way that Jesus partnered with others to spread the Good News, the stage is set to fix our attention on building the Kingdom of God. May we be given the grace to advance the message of Jesus in and through *The Church Evangelizing*!

105. Perhaps it’s the old teacher in me, but permit me to suggest eight building blocks of *The Church Evangelizing*, drawn from Jesus’ example of evangelizing with His partners, the Apostles and the disciples: (1) practice hospitality; (2) know the faith; (3) speak up; (4) give correction; (5) be loyal; (6) stay in touch; (7) remember the poor; and (8) be encouraging. These eight activities are how we build friendships with and for Jesus.

106. A thought about each.

107. In every interaction that Jesus had with those whose stories are told in the four Gospels, the virtue of hospitality was clearly evident. Wherever Jesus went, whomever He met, He always demonstrated a warm and inviting welcome. In the whole effort of evangelization, hospitality is basic.

108. The New Testament tells us clearly: “Do not neglect hospitality, for through it some have unknowingly entertained angels.”36 Just as Jesus and His disciples did, we must be welcoming to others—at home, at work and especially at church. People should feel the warmth of our Savior when they come to our places of worship.

109. The most consistent complaint I hear from people who have left the Church, or who do not enter its doors save for Christmas and Easter, it is that they do not feel welcomed. They don’t feel welcomed when they are met by the ushers. Neither do they feel welcomed
Hospitality is basic. It makes us feel that we belong.

110. Hospitality is basic. It makes us feel that we belong. It is foundational to our union, our communion with one another.

111. Back in the summer of 1967, I was trying to decide on the next step in my life. I had been accepted into several colleges. I had also applied to the seminary formation program of the Diocese of Pittsburgh. I couldn’t make up my mind. During the course of that summer, I had an opportunity to visit Saint Paul Seminary. I will never forget the welcome I felt from two men who were already students there—Jim Merkel, who is now a priest of the Diocese of Saint Petersburg in Florida; and David Schorr, currently pastor of Resurrection Parish in West Mifflin and Saint Rita Parish in Whitaker. They made me feel so much at home. Because of their welcome, my decision about the next step I should take in my life became immensely clear. If they had not been so welcoming, I may not have entered the seminary, may not have been ordained a priest, and clearly would not be writing this letter to you. Without knowing it, they were partners of the New Evangelization.

112. If we are going to be serious about the New Evangelization, it is imperative that when we see unfamiliar faces in church, we move to greet them warmly. We ought to help them find a place, not just in a pew, but in the heart of our parishes. We need to learn about their interests and lead them to a community of faith where they can find friendship and experience an invitation to partnership. This is what it means to be Church—to be that place where we meet Christ and become partners in evangelization. Whether that happens in a prayer group or a Bible study, in weekday Masses or devotions, hospitality means helping people to find their place with us. That’s welcome. That’s the hospitality of Jesus. That’s the New Evangelization. That’s The Church Evangelizing!
113. To be evangelizers, we must know our faith. A number of you have heard me say, privately and publicly, that for several decades we as a Church did a poor job of passing on the faith. We did little to instruct people in our beliefs and our traditions. And today, we’re paying the price.

114. How often I find myself in circles of people who are Catholic, but who are clueless about the sacraments, especially the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Marriage. They are clueless about the virtues that should characterize who we are as a Catholic community. They are clueless even about Who Jesus is and what He came to earth to do for us.

115. To know our Catholic faith from both Scripture and Sacred Tradition is to have a rich treasure which needs to be shared with others—not only from the pulpit or in a classroom but over a cup of coffee or a glass of wine; at dinner in a restaurant or during a friendly chat on the phone.

116. But before we can share our faith, we need to know our faith, to study it, no matter what our age. We need to become more familiar with any one of the excellent catechisms at our disposal: the *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*, or the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, or the *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church*, to name a few. They can be purchased in print, downloaded as an e-book or accessed online. At the same time, we have the wonderful gift in the Church of Pittsburgh of our weekly newspaper, *The Pittsburgh Catholic*. 
Every week there are materials, columns and stories that will educate in the faith and help us see the world through the eyes of faith. The Pittsburgh Catholic is a critical tool to evangelize the evangelizers.

117. Once we learn more about who we are as Catholics, we will be in a better position to witness to others what it means to live the Christian faith. When we rely on the Holy Spirit, knowledge of our faith empowers us to be good evangelizers, to invite others to join us as active followers and friends of Jesus.

118. Many of you may recall the story I shared at the Mass for my installation as Bishop of our diocese on September 28, 2007.

119. The day after the announcement of my appointment, I was on a plane back to Green Bay, where I had been serving as Bishop. One of my personal practices is that each day, as I begin any journey I will take by car, by plane or on foot, I always pray the holy Rosary.

120. On that particular day, as I finished my Rosary, I could feel the eyes of the man sitting next to me. As I looked at him, he smiled and said, “Afraid to fly?” We both laughed and I said, “Hardly. I’m a very active frequent flyer.” I
followed up his question with the comment that he must be Catholic since he knew what the Rosary was. What he then said stunned me, as it still does today. His response was, “I used to be a Catholic, but no longer. I’m now a Buddhist.”

121. Perplexed by his answer, I asked him what had happened. Why had he left the Church? His response teaches me a powerful lesson, and I hope it will be one for you as well. He said, “I truly believe in Jesus. But I left the Church because I’ve never met anybody who takes Him seriously!” Wow! His response was truly an indictment! Hopefully, it can also be an invitation.

122. His story invites us to become more active in our faith, to become true evangelizers after the example of the first Apostles. But before we can be such messengers of our faith, we need to take our faith seriously, to know and love Jesus and His Church. Only then can we live our faith in a way that reflects Jesus in our lives.

123. Perhaps it would be a good idea for each of us to take five or ten minutes of every day to study what the Church teaches—certainly no more time than you and I already spend in checking the news in newspapers, radio, television or social media. To know the faith takes time. It requires an open mind and an open heart. From personal experience, I know that when we take a little bit of time each day to read the Catechism and pray over the Scriptures, we continually learn something new about Jesus and about our faith. That helps us in our daily lives and in our conversations. God has the schedule all worked out. He is waiting to meet you and me. We just need to respond.

124. I must admit that one of the things that causes me more than a little pause at many meetings is when I meet with blank stares or silent tongues. That reaction seems to prove that the secular culture has done a good job of passing on one of its own dogmas: that we should never talk about politics or religion. I know many Catholics who feel free to ignore the caution on political conversation, but still feel awkward about discussing our faith.

125. If we are serious about our role as evangelizers, we must speak up, either to ask questions about that which we don’t understand
or to defend what we know to be true. There is no need to censor ourselves when speaking about matters of faith. We must not be afraid to bring God into our conversations. It’s imperative that we don’t shy away from prayer, whether it’s at Sunday Mass or in table grace at home or in McDonald’s. We must not be reluctant to ask others for prayer. I always consider it a compliment and an act of trust when someone asks me to pray for them. I see it as a relief when I ask others to pray for me.

126. What is it that tempts us to be shy about our faith?

127. I can remember as a young priest feeling very much at ease when praying with the folks at Sacred Heart Parish in Shadyside, where I was a “wet behind the ears” parochial vicar. Whether it was in the parish church before a meeting, or visiting the sick in the hospital or praying with mourners at a wake, I felt at ease offering prayers with and for them. With one exception—I can still remember how shy I was about praying in the presence of another priest. I had to muster up the courage (and sometimes failed to do so) when I could and should have asked a fellow priest to pray with me.
128. I will never forget a turning point in my spiritual shyness. It came when I paid a hospital visit to a wonderful priest of our diocese, now long deceased, Father Joseph Hannon, the long-time pastor of Saint Albert the Great Parish in Baldwin. As I was leaving his room in Shadyside Hospital, I mustered up the courage to ask dear Father Hannon whether I could pray with him. As he looked at me, tears began to well in his eyes. At that point he said, “Of course, young man. Would you pray with me? You know, I’ve never been asked that question before by another priest. You have so touched my heart.”

129. What Father Hannon taught me that day applies in our own day. The world is starving for truth and for the clarity and consolation that comes with faith. We need to speak up in love. We can’t be shy about our faith and its practice. How important it is for us to be vocal about our faith, particularly in prayer, especially with and for others!

130. During the time that I was a student at Saint Mary’s Seminary in Baltimore, Maryland, in the final stages of my preparation for ordination to the priesthood, one of my best friends tried to teach me an important lesson. Apparently, I had the tendency (about which I was totally oblivious) of not wanting to accept help from other people. Every Tuesday afternoon, Tom and I would go to take care of our laundry at the laundromat on Cold Spring Avenue in the Roland Park section of Baltimore.

131. On our way back from our weekly chore, I was carrying a basket full of freshly laundered clothes. When we got to the door of the seminary, I insisted on opening it for him while I tried to balance the clothes basket in my other hand. Later that evening, he confronted me for not allowing him to do the favor for me. That’s the kind of intervention friends need to do for each other. Only our families and our true friends will tell us the hard facts that we need to hear.
132. When we fail to gently call a fellow Christian to task for gossip, for lying, for unkindness, we join a conspiracy to tarnish the name of Jesus. At the same time, an apology to someone who has been harmed by such behavior is a powerful witness of the humility and mercy of Christ.

133. In our upside-down culture, we are led to believe that we must tolerate bad behavior, never challenge anyone, never risk any type of “charitable correction.” When we fall into this kind of temptation, we miss the mark of friendship and, more to the point, the challenge of the New Evangelization. To let each other, as fellow sojourners on the way to the kingdom in heaven, continue in ignorance, vice or untoward behavior betrays what it means to be members of the Church. This mindset works against evangelization. We do each other no favors if we tell each other only what each wants to hear and neglect to say the things that each needs to hear. This willingness to challenge and be accountable to one another is a building block of the New Evangelization. That’s The Church Evangelizing!

134. With a few examples to the contrary, the friends of Jesus were loyal to Him to the end—Saint John placing his head on the chest of Jesus at the Last Supper, Mary meeting her Son on the way of His cross, Saint John standing beneath the cross of Jesus on the hill of Calvary. These are powerful reminders to us to maintain a loyalty that supports each other in our growth to holiness.
135. One of the most powerful lessons I learned about loyalty came from two priests of our diocese, both now long deceased. One was an outstanding leader, a great financier, a gifted man who was well respected for all that he accomplished in fifty years of priesthood. His best friend was a man who battled his whole life with the addiction to alcohol. To imagine that these two men could be the best of friends seemed impossible until you saw them interact. Whenever the one friend found himself overpowered by alcohol, the other friend was there to pick him up, to support him, to love him. That is loyalty. That, too, is a part of the New Evangelization. That’s what it means to be The Church Evangelizing!

136. Recently, I was with a good friend who recounted her battle with cancer twenty years earlier. She endured the rigors of chemotherapy and radiation. But more important to her sense of hope than those treatments was the way her friends cared for her. They did little things to support her each day. They cheered her on in the midst of her struggle against a grim prognosis. Now, some twenty years later, she recounts that perhaps the most visible and powerful sign of God’s healing hand was the
care, concern, compassion and strength that she received from friends who stayed in touch during her hour of need.

137. How often I have witnessed that kind of touch from you, the Church of Pittsburgh, when you so generously respond to the need of the missions or to catastrophic natural disasters. The New Evangelization challenges us to not be shy about “staying in touch” with others. Jesus did so, and so must we. That’s The Church Evangelizing!

Remember the Poor.

138. Since March 13, 2013, the day that our Holy Father, Pope Francis, was elected, he has continued to shake us up and shake us out of the complacency that often blinds us to the needs of the poor. How many times has Pope Francis said to us: “When you give alms, do you look into the eyes of the people you give them to? …The important thing is not looking at them from afar or helping from afar. No, no! It is going to encounter them. This is the Christian! This is what Jesus taught: to go meet the most needy.”

139. Many of us have seen the powerful photo of Pope Francis embracing a man with a very severely disfigured face. In that gesture, he turned the man from an object of loathing into a person in whom the entire world saw true beauty and infinite worth. That, too, is an important part of evangelization.
140. The Gospels and our Catholic faith remind us that it is not an option to care for the poor—it is an essential obligation. When we serve the poor, we must do more than drop a few extra bucks in the collection basket or throw some coins in the baseball cap of a beggar on the sidewalk. It is important that we befriend them, with a warm smile if nothing else.

141. Not only are we called to reach out to those who are poor in the world’s goods, it is imperative that we give of ourselves to those who are poor from lack of relationships. Jesus evangelized by paying attention to the people of His day who were shunned by others: prostitutes, lepers, children, women, commoners alike. Each of us must likewise think of people whom we may shun because of political persuasion, economic status, sexual orientation, ethnic background, religious affiliation or lack thereof. We need to pay attention to people and share ourselves with them. That, too, is the New Evangelization. That, too, is what calls us to be The Church Evangelizing!

142. Many of us have had the experience of “bumping into” people with whom we have attended school. Many times these encounters can be quite telling.

143. Several decades ago, I literally bumped into a high school classmate whom I had not seen since graduation day years earlier. We recognized each other instantaneously. Since I was wearing my Roman collar, he knew my profession, but I did not know his. Then he told me he was a vice president of one of the major banks in the city. My eyes almost popped out of my head. When we were in high school, this man barely passed. He rarely did homework. He never spoke up in class. He never went to a school dance. He did not play sports. He simply “took up space.”
144. When I asked him how he was able to be so successful, he shared an incident that had inspired him, and that I hope will inspire you and me.

145. As graduation neared, our teacher sat with him and, in no uncertain terms, told him that he’d better “get his act together.” She shared with him that he almost didn’t graduate. She also knew that he had great potential. Whatever she said and however she said it made a deep impression on him. He went on to soar through college and his financial career.

146. You and I can recount similar stories of people who turned the corner in their lives because someone encouraged them to change.

147. Jesus always did that. The stories that He told—the story of the Good Samaritan; the story of the man born blind; the story of the woman at Jacob’s well; the story of the call of the tax collector, Matthew; the story of the woman caught in the act of adultery; the story of the good thief on Calvary—are all examples of Jesus encouraging others to do and to be their best.

148. To be *The Church Evangelizing!* demands that we develop that same attitude.

149. We, as members of Christ’s Church, need to step out of ourselves and encourage people who, for one reason or another, have not felt at home with us. They have felt uncomfortable with us, judged by us or abandoned by us. They have not felt that we loved them. Reaching out to them in love and grace is the New Evangelization. That’s what makes us *The Church Evangelizing!*
150. In the course of this letter, I have tried to reflect on what evangelization means. It is a word that continues to captivate us, just as it should capture our words and our deeds.

151. As I began writing this letter to you, I reflected on the eleven Bishops who preceded me—O’Connor, Domenec, Tuigg, Phelan, Canevin, Boyle, Dearden, Wright, Leonard, Bevilacqua, and Wuerl. Every shepherd of this diocese has called the clergy and faithful to stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before us.

152. Let us never forget that others will need to stand on our shoulders. Like our ancestors in the faith, we will only be strong enough to support those who follow us to the extent that we grow ever stronger in our love for the Lord and live with the power of His grace working
in and through us. The demand made upon us from the outset of our faith is that we embrace what it means to be The Church Evangelizing! To be such a Church demands a partnership that is sealed by an unbreakable bond between us and God and a growing bond of friendship that joins us to Him and to one another. That’s the New Evangelization. That is The Church Evangelizing!

153. In the Spirit of Christ, I invite you to join with me in being evangelizers—strong in prayer, heartfelt in words, sealed with deeds, and sustained for the long haul, not with the language of the lips, but with the language of the heart. That, my friends, is the New Evangelization. That is The Church Evangelizing! Together, may we grow so strong in faith, hope and love that others can stand on our shoulders as we have stood on the shoulders of those before us. As we do so, let us together, now and for ages to come, be The Church Evangelizing!

Grateful for our belief that “Nothing is Impossible with God,” I am

Your brother in Christ,

Most Reverend David A. Zubik
Bishop of Pittsburgh

April 20, 2014
Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord

“HEARTFELT IN WORDS, SEALED WITH DEEDS”
5. Mark 16:15.
6. 1 Cor. 9:16.
13. 2 Cor. 8:9.
25. 3 John 14–15.
26. cf. 1 Cor. 13.
30. Phil. 4:13.
32. Sir. 6:14–17.
34. cf. Gen. 15:5.
37. Pope Francis, Message to the People of Argentina, August 7, 2013.
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The icon on the front and back covers, as well as several throughout the document, were created by iconographer Ann Chapin.
THE CHURCH EVANGELIZING!
REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Consider answering these as a family.
You may wish to reflect and discuss these questions with a neighbor,
with fellow parishioners or within an existing ministry or faith sharing group.

SECTION 1: THE CHURCH EVANGELIZING!

1. When you reflect on the history of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, what challenges did the Church have to overcome in order to spread the Gospel in this region?

2. “Indeed we must make The Church Evangelizing! a transforming influence in southwestern Pennsylvania and beyond.” (#9)
   • In your opinion what needs to be transformed?
   • How can the Church be a transforming influence?
   • In the past, what did the Church help to transform in southwestern Pennsylvania? (people, systems, places, etc.)
   • In the present, what might the Church help to transform in southwestern Pennsylvania? (people, systems, places, etc.)

SECTION 2: BUT WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO EVANGELIZE?

1. Pope Francis in “The Joy of the Gospel” reminds us: “Jesus wants evangelizers who proclaim the Good News not only with words, but above all by a life transfigured by God’s presence.” (Evangelii Gaudium #259) Bishop Zubik reminds us that each one of us has a unique and necessary vocation in the Church.
   • How in your specific vocation do you show others that God is present?

2. Each of us, in our own vocation, “is precisely where the New Evangelization must begin.” (#15)
   • Discuss some ways that your own vocation is the starting point for your evangelization activities.
SECTION 3: BUT WHAT IS THE NEW EVANGELIZATION?

1. Are you excited about your faith?
   • Why or why not?
   • If not, what can you do about it? Who can help you?
   • If you are genuinely excited about your faith, how do you show it in a way that attracts others to Christ?

2. Who has invited you to “come to Jesus” either in the sacraments or in service to those in need?
   • How did they do it?
   • What was effective?
   • What can you imitate?

3. “Jesus wants to be their family, their friend. He wants them to be part of His Body, the Church, and He wants your help to invite them in!” (#30)
   • Who are the people in your family, neighborhood, workplace or social circles who might not know the friendship of Jesus?
   • Ponder each one of these persons individually. Pray for them with all your heart every day.
   • Consider their unique hopes and hurts. How can you show them Jesus’ compassionate companionship?
   • How can you be a better friend to those who may not yet be friends with Jesus?
   • Jesus sincerely desires to be our friend and wants everyone to be part of His Body, the Church. How does this truth touch your heart and influence your thoughts and form your behaviors?
SECTION 4: HOW CAN THIS BE?

1. “God has overcome all that we put in the way of His love.” (#31)
   • Quietly reflect on what you put in the way of God’s love.
   • How does your celebration of the sacraments enable Christ to continue to overcome all that separates you from God?

2. “For your sake He became poor, although He was rich, so that by His poverty you might become rich.” (2 Cor. 8:9)
   • What might you give up for the salvation of others?

3. “Jesus made possible a true friendship between God and each member of the human race. To be saved is to enjoy God’s friendship, to live in divine fellowship.” (#32)
   • How does this image of salvation make you feel?
   • How can you share our beautiful belief that salvation is living as God’s best friend?

SECTION 5: WHERE IS THE WAY?

1. “To be an evangelist is to be the face, the hands, the heart and the voice of Christ to those who long to hear a friendly voice, and to see a friendly face.” (#40)
   • Who are the people in your own family, parish, neighborhood, or workplace who especially need to see a friendly face?
   • What are you willing to do about that?

2. The work of the Church is the work of love.
   • How is the work of your parish a work of love?
   • Think about the fish fry, the festival, bingo, the parking lot after Mass. What specifically can you do to make these moments in parish life profound works of love?
   • The early Church was deeply committed to the widow and the orphan. How is your parish caring for the bereaved and for children whose parents may not be able to be fully present to them?
   • Is your parish a bond of friends, a family, or a clash of cliques? What groups in your parish do a good job of including new members?
   • Are any of the groups in your parish exclusive, unwelcoming of new members or to new ideas? What concrete steps can you take to address this?

3. “They wanted all of their friends to be friends with Jesus.” (#50)
   • Is your friendship with Jesus so deep and so real that you are excited for others to get to know Him as you do?
   • Is your love of Jesus contagious?
   • Do you tell others the good things He has done for you?
   • How can you become more aware of the wonders God is doing in your life each and every day?
SECTION 6: WHAT IS THE WAY TODAY?

1. How does social media help you to be a better friend? How could it hinder friendships?

2. Blessed Mother Teresa said of our society there is a “poverty of relationships.” Do you agree or disagree? Why or why not?

3. There are people who have never heard of Jesus.
   - What is the first thing you would say about Him?
   - How would you describe your relationship with Him?
   - Have you ever given a “witness talk” or shared honestly with others what God’s Love has meant to you or what your faith means to you? If not, what would you say?
   - How do you respond to people who say God does not exist?
   - If asked, could you explain why you wear a crucifix, why you go to Mass or pray the Rosary?

4. How do your actions reveal your faith in Jesus?

5. Can people tell by the way you live that you are Catholic?

6. If you were accused of being Catholic would there be enough evidence to convict you?

SECTION 7: THE TIME IS NOW!

1. Throughout our 170 year history, the Church of Pittsburgh has shared the message of Jesus.
   - What are the unique challenges of spreading the Gospel in our times?
   - What are the unique opportunities of spreading the Gospel in our times?
   - How urgent do you think is the need for evangelization?
   - What can we do to make evangelization a greater priority in our own life, in our family, in our parish community?

2. The parable of the Good Samaritan is an example of how to be a friend.
   - Recall a time in your life when you were in pain, alone or misunderstood. Who was a friend to you? What did they do?
   - Who are the people in your life you may be tempted to walk past? How much are you willing to go out of your way and share your resources so another can experience the Love of God?
SECTION 8: THE NEW EVANGELIZATION AND PRAYER

1. “We need to talk with Jesus regularly before we can introduce Him to others.” (#72)
   • What does this mean to you?
   • How does the way you talk with Jesus help your friendship with Him to deepen? Do you only ask Him for things? Do you really talk with Him honestly, as a friend? Do you allow Him to get a word in edgewise?
   • How can you become more mindful in reciting your prayers?

2. Mary is an icon of the importance of prayer. As a devout Jew, she prayed the psalms throughout the day.
   • How can you pray throughout your day?

3. What is meant by “practicing the presence of God”? (#76)
   • How does a greater awareness of God help you to evangelize?
   • What practical steps can you take to become more aware of God’s presence?

SECTION 9: THE NEW EVANGELIZATION AND CHANGE

1. “Anyone who has ever worked for the Church has struggled with the temptation to reduce what they do to a ‘job’.” (#78)
   • What can be done to prevent this?

2. “The New Evangelization challenges us to change our way of thinking, speaking, acting and living as followers of Jesus.” (#84)
   • Consider the first disciples, how were they challenged to change their way of thinking, speaking, acting and living?
   • Why is your personal change necessary for The Church Evangelizing?

3. A daily examination of conscience and regular confession helps Catholics to become more aware of what needs to be changed.
   • What else can help you identify what might need to change in you for you to be an effective evangelist?
   • Who else can help you identify what might need to change in you for you to be an effective evangelist?
SECTION 10: PARTNERSHIP IN THE NEW EVANGELIZATION

1. The wisdom in the Old Testament Book of Sirach asserts: “faithful friends are life-saving medicines.”
   • How have you known this to be true in your own life?

2. Scripture contains several stories of exemplary friendship: Ruth and Naomi, Jonathan and David, Daniel and his friends, Mary and Elizabeth, Paul and Barnabas.
   • What do these stories tell us about the nature of holy friendship?
   • Why do you think so many successful religious communities were founded by friends?
   • What can you do with your friends for God that you could not do alone?

3. “If our friendship with the Lord is truly a partnership with Him, it will motivate us to make more friends for Jesus Christ.” (#94)
   • Are you motivated to make friends for Jesus?
   • What would motivate you?
   • What keeps you motivated?

4. Jesus invites you to be His partner, His closest collaborator and friend in communicating the Love of the Father.
   • How do you feel knowing Jesus invites you to be His partner in Evangelization?
   • Is it a 50-50 partnership?
   • Why or why not?
SECTION 11: THE 8 BUILDING BLOCKS OF THE NEW EVANGELIZATION

1. Hospitality is foundational to The Church Evangelizing! List 10 ways your parish could demonstrate greater hospitality.

2. Knowledge of the faith is required of evangelizers. Bishop Zubik invites us to spend some time every day learning our faith. How could you encourage this in your family, in your parish?

3. Speaking up is not something that may come naturally. In what settings are you most comfortable sharing your beliefs? In what settings are you least comfortable? What would help you?

4. Giving correction is often easier than receiving correction. Are you open to hearing from a friend how you might be more wholesome, healthy and holy? What enables you to offer effective correction?

5. Being loyal is the sign of a true friend. How can you foster fidelity in all your relationships?

6. Staying in touch with family and friends near and far is one way you show others the true nature of God. God stays in touch with us. One name for Jesus is “Emmanuel” which literally means God is with us. Name three ways you can let people know you care even when you are not there.

7. Remembering the poor is not an option for followers of Jesus, it is an essential obligation. Are you ever mindful of those in need when deciding how to share your time, talent and treasure? How do you truly befriend the poor—not merely giving material assistance, but by entering into a relationship based upon mutual love and respect?

8. Be encouraging is the final building block of The Church Evangelizing! It is easy for us to lose heart. It is also easy to find fault and seek to blame. Who in your life offers encouragement? How can you encourage your pastor? Your spouse? Your children? Your co-workers? Your neighbors?