



Sacred Heart Catholic Church

502 2nd Ave SE
Aberdeen, South Dakota 57401
Telephone (605) 225-7065
sacredheartaberdeen.net

Vision Sunday #5

Over the last four months we have been rolling out and exploring the meaning behind our parish's new vision statement: **Inviting Everyone to Passionately Live the Gospel**. We have examined the term 'Gospel', the phrase 'Live the Gospel' and the extended version, 'Passionately Live the Gospel' and why each of these elements are essential to the vision of Sacred Heart. You will notice though that predominantly the past three months have all been individually, or perhaps interiorly, focused. It is crucial that each member of the parish understand the Gospel message and live it with passion in the course of their daily life. Essentially, it is a vision and call to discipleship. However, the vision of the parish does not end there! This weekend we will expand our discussion even further to the entire vision statement and shift our focus to the first few words, 'Inviting Everyone'.

In his apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (Evangelization in the Modern World), Pope St. Paul VI writes:

We wish to confirm once more that the task of evangelizing all people constitutes the essential mission of the Church. It is a task and mission which the vast and profound changes of present day society make all the more urgent. Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize.

The Church **exists** in order to evangelize! That is a radically different orientation than many of us have experienced in the Catholic Church in the last few decades. In his book, *Divine Renovation*, Fr. James Mallon writes, "we have forgotten our essential missionary identity: that the Church does not have a mission but *is* a mission." The calling to 'Invite Everyone' is a vision of missionary activity. The vocation, and indeed responsibility, that each of us as baptized Christians have is not just to discipleship, but missionary discipleship. Pope Francis has emphasized this calling in his pontificate, especially in his apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel).

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. (EG, 27)

In the next paragraph of the same document Pope Francis further develops this vision for what parish life looks like within a truly missionary culture:

In all its activities the parish encourages and trains its members to be evangelizers. It is a community of communities, a sanctuary where the thirsty come to drink in the midst of their journey, and a centre of constant missionary outreach. (EG, 28)

In the last few lines of the Gospel of Matthew Jesus hands his disciples what is known as The Great Commission before ascending to the Father. "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 behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age" (Matthew 28: 19-20). In one sense the parish vision is to become a missionary outpost of The Great Commission – a place that not only calls and helps people to grow in holiness and virtue, but also a place that forms and sends people out to reach and invite everyone. To truly become a missionary Church.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us!
Mary, star of the New Evangelization, pray for us!

- Thomas Eskro
Director of Evangelization
and Discipleship



Inviting Everyone
to Passionately Live the Gospel