

Evangelization – Ministry Formation 2020

Focus Questions

- What are you most proud of about the Catholic faith?
- Do you consider yourself an evangelizer? If so, how do you go about it? If not, why not?
- How does your parish work to evangelize people?
- How were you evangelized?
- What Gospel story helps you understand evangelization?

I. The Problem

1. The Spiritual Culture Today

✓ Disturbing statistics

- ✚ 1 in every 10 Americans is a former Catholic
 - ✚ People leaving the Catholic Church outnumber those entering 6 to 1 = higher rate than any other denomination
 - ✚ Only 30% of Americans raised as Catholic are still practicing
 - ✚ 1 in 4 Americans = “nones,” 1 In 3 millennials = fastest growing demographic
 - ✚ Between 1972-2010 Church marriages decreased 60%
 - ✚ Only 48% of Catholics believe in a personal God w/ whom they can have a relationship (Pew Research)
 - ✚ Only 23% of Catholics attend Mass each week
 - ✚ Since 2007 = 3% decline in Americans who identify as Catholic, from 23% to 20%
- ✓ “Too many Catholics have been catechized and sacramentalized but never evangelized” Bishop Raymond Lucker
- ✓ *Forming Intentional Disciples*, Sherry Weddell – Cultural Catholicism is totally ineffective as a “retention strategy.” * “We live in an era when religious identity is not stable, but remarkably fluid” * “God has no grandchildren.” * Our “Don’t ask/Don’t tell” culture = “fitting in to overall parish culture of non-discipleship.” * “The common working assumption is that personal discipleship is a kind of optional spiritual enrichment for the exceptionally pious or spiritually gifted”
- ✓ *Soul Searching*, Christian Smith – “Moralistic Therapeutic Deism”
- ✚ God exists, created/orders world, watches over humans
 - ✚ God wants people to be good, nice, fair
 - ✚ Central goal of life is to be happy, feel good about oneself
 - ✚ God does not need to be particularly involved in one’s life except when there’s a problem
 - ✚ Good people go to heaven when they die
- ✓ A Parasite on Christian Faith – “MTD is an alternative faith that feeds on and gradually coopts if not devours established religious practices... MTD has little to do with God or a sense of mission in the world. It offers comfort, bolsters self-esteem,

helps solve problems, encourages doing good. It makes no pretense to change lives, it's low commitment, the goal is to make one happy, a 'cult of nice...' God is friendly and predictable, offering little and asking less. MTD does not ask people to lay down their lives for anyone, because niceness does not go that far. [Sacrificial] love goes that far – and true love is neither nice nor safe.”

Almost Christian, Kenda Creasy Dean

2. Fr. Ron Rolheiser – *The Shattered Lantern* – “Our generation has an ambivalent relationship toward God: He is absent but, because of our religious past, we still have a connection. Future generations will not even have his calling card... We still have some experience of God, though rarely is this a vital one wherein we actually drink, first-hand, from living waters. Most often, insofar as God does enter our everyday experience, God is not experienced as a living person to whom we actually talk, person to person, from whom we seek final consolation and comfort, and to whom we relate friend to friend, lover o lover, child to parent. Rather God is experienced and related to as a religion, a church, a moral philosophy, a guide for private virtue, an imperative for justice, or as a nostalgia for private propriety. For most of us, belief in God resembles the following: God is religion and religion represents a way of life – church-going; guidance from the Bible; sex within monogamous marriage; no lying, cheating, or swearing; ...and being nice to each other. For most of us, then, God is more of a moral and intellectual principle than a person and our commitment to this principle runs the gamut from fiery passion... to a vague nostalgia... it is just that one does not see much evidence that anyone is actually all that interested in God”
 - ✓ Narcissism – “our propensity for individualism,” * lack of awareness of others’ reality * more self-preoccupation * a culture of “it’s all about you” * “bowling alone” syndrome promotes greater privacy and isolation
 - ✓ Pragmatism – value lies in usefulness and achievement * what can I do? * what do I have? * what do others say about me? * Little interest in that which is impractical * lifestyles promote achievement, accomplishment * Parable of the Great Feast in Lk 14:16-24
 - ✓ Restlessness – desire to achieve/accomplish = we are more driven, compulsive, and hyper, less peaceful, reflective, contemplative * unrestrained greed for experience * = a loss of interiority * Socrates: “The unexamined life...” * too much Martha, too little Mary * no time for God * Augustine’s “our hearts are restless...”
3. “The desire for God is written in the human heart... Only in God will [a person] find truth and happiness.” CCC #27
4. “The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch, but also in communion and intimacy, with Jesus Christ.” CCC #426, CT #5, GDC #80
5. Questions to consider:
 - ✓ Is this really a problem?
 - ✓ Is it my problem?
 - ✓ If so, what can I do about it? I’m just one person and not that influential.

II. 10 Principles of Evangelization (handout)

III. The Goal of Evangelization

“Evangelization is one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread” Fr. Bob Bedard

1. To invite a person to believe in Jesus Christ
2. To enfold the believer in the sacramental, communal life of the Church
3. And then, to enable, inspire and support a lifetime of intentional discipleship

IV. Sharing Faith: 3 Questions

V. Conviction and Desire: Forming and Living as Missionary Disciples

- ✓ Matthew 28:19-20 – “Go... Make... Baptize... Teach”

1. Forming Intentional Disciples – Samaritan Woman in John 4

- ✓ Intentional = deliberate decision to be in close relationship w/ Jesus Christ, and to follow him as a disciple in the midst of his Church
- ✓ Have heard, understood, believe the gospel message
- ✓ Live out Baptismal responsibilities
- ✓ Consciously acknowledge a faith relationship w/ Jesus Christ
- ✓ Commit to active participation in the life/mission of the Church
- ✓ “We do many things as church leaders: we build buildings, design programs, staff churches, sponsor events, etc. But are we making disciples? Are we deficient in the one thing that matters most? Geiger research
- ✓ *How can we do better at forming intentional disciples in our families and parishes?*

2. Developing a Culture of Witness – Four Guys and a Paralytic in Mark 2

- ✓ “Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses.” Pope St. Paul VI
- ✓ “A Christian life lived with charity and faith is the most effective form of evangelization” US Bishops, *Disciples Called to Witness*
- ✓ “It is not by proselytizing that the Church grows but by ‘attraction’ Pope Francis, *Joy of the Gospel*, #14
- ✓ “When we meet Christ and accept His Gospel, life changes and we are driven to communicate our experiences to others... the Church needs genuine witnesses: men and women whose lives have been transformed by meeting with Jesus, men and women who are capable of communicating this experience to others.” St. John Paul II, WYD in Toronto, 2002
- ✓ “The faithful become agents of evangelization through a living witness and commitment to the Gospel. The everyday moments of one’s life lived with Christian charity, faith, and hope provide witness to family members, friends, neighbors, colleagues, and others

who have stopped actively participating in the life of the Church. This witness is essential for reaching others in today's modern world." US Bishops, *DCTW*

- ✓ "The witness of Christians whose lives are filled with the hope of Christ, opens the hearts and minds of those around them to Christ. This openness to Christ is a moment of conversion (*metanoia*). It is the moment in which a person's life is reoriented to Christ, when he or she – by grace – enters into a relationship with him and thus enters into a relationship with the community of believers, the Church... Faith involves a profound change of mind and heart, a change of life, a *metanoia*." US Bishops, *DCTW*
- ✓ 62% of Catholics say they seldom or never share their faith or view of God with anyone else – Pew Religious Landscape Survey
- ✓ Atheists talk more about God than Catholics do – Pew Research, 2008
- ✓ Kerygma – core message of the Good News
 - "People will not accept Jesus based on the word of the Church, but they will accept the Church based on the word of Jesus. Leading with the 'who' of Jesus rather than the 'what' of the Catholic Church is the first step in helping people come to a relationship with Christ." Fr Raniero Cantalamessa
 - "The subject of proclamation is Christ who was crucified, died, and is risen: through him is accomplished our full and authentic liberation from evil, sin and death; through him God bestows 'new life' that is divine and eternal. This is the 'Good News' which changes man and his history, and which all peoples have the right to hear." Pope St. John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, #44
 - **Creation** – A loving God created the world, and each one of us is created to live in relationship with him.
 - **Fall** – Through humanity, sin entered the world, and our perfect union with God was broken
 - **Redemption** – God sent his beloved Son, Jesus, to redeem humanity. Jesus' Life Death and Resurrection atone for the sins of the world. We are offered a share in this redemption
 - **Re-creation** – Jesus invites me to trust him, to turn from sin, and commit my life to him
 - **Salvation** – Jesus Christ has poured the Holy Spirit into my heart to bring me to new life in his Church and sends his Church on mission so that others can experience that new life
- ✓ *How can I articulate the kerygma in a manner that is concise, understandable and convincing?*
- ✓ *Who has been an influential witness in faith for you?*

3. Living as Missionary Disciples – Marching orders in Acts 1:8 and Matt 28:19-20

- ✓ Forming Missionary Disciples
 - Making Disciples – journeying w/ people through pre-discipleship thresholds; fostering encounters w/ Christ that provide explicit opportunities to draw closer to him (conversion) cf. Mk 3:13-14

- Maturing Disciples – Rooting new disciples in the disciplines of following Christ, i.e. daily prayer, sacramental life, scripture reading, ecclesial living, service in the world
- Missioning Disciples – providing opportunities to discern one’s vocation in the midst of the community; connecting people’s spiritual gifts to areas of ministry and service to the world; equipping disciples to share Christ in word and deed in a way that bears fruit.
- The Evangelization Diamond – touching *all* the bases... BUT, can’t go home if you don’t touch 1st base! From home to 1st base → from the secular world to encountering Jesus; = pre-evangelization, planting the seed; meeting folks where they are; not the time for apologetics, but entering into relationships so they can trust you and trust God. From 1st to 2nd base → proclamation of the kerygma and invitation to deeper relationship w/ Jesus and acceptance of his saving action on the cross, making him the center of one’s life. From 2nd to 3rd base → disciples are formed + equipped for ministry. From 3rd base to home → sent in apostolic mission to the world, compelled to share God’s love and mercy with all people.
- ✓ Four “Ingredients” for Missionary Discipleship
 - Encounter
 - ✚ “The purpose of evangelization is to lead people to encounter Christ”
LAMD
 - ✚ “I invite all persons everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter w/ Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unfailingly every day.”
Pope Francis, *Joy of the Gospel*
 - ✚ “Knowing Jesus is the best gift that any person can receive; that we have encountered him is the best thing that has happened in our lives, and making him known by our words and deeds is our joy.” Latin American + Caribbean Bishops
 - Accompany
 - ✚ “The response to this encounter with Christ needs accompaniment”
LAMD
 - ✚ “Being truly present to others, especially those who are struggling”
LAMD
 - ✚ “Catechesis is an apprenticeship for the entire Christian life.” *General Directory for Catechesis* #67
 - Community
 - ✚ “Evangelization invites people to the Body of Christ, which is the Catholic Church” LAMD
 - ✚ “... a natural source of accompaniment, consolation, support, understanding”

- ✚ “The Church is a community brought together by the work of the Holy Spirit.” LAMD
- ✚ *Koinonia* = the unity that comes with being bonded in Christ * “the community of believers was of one mind and one heart...” Acts 4:32 * “partners in grace” Phil 1:7 * “complete my joy by being of the same mind, with the same love, united in heart, thinking one thing” Phil 2:1-2
- ✚ “The Christian community is in herself living catechesis” National Directory for Catechesis p. 57 * “The parish is the curriculum” US Bishops, *Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us*
- Send
 - ✚ Evangelization leads disciples to accept God’s desire to send them on mission. LAMD
 - ✚ “We become missionary disciples when we take our encounter with Jesus Christ out into the world.” LAMD
 - ✚ Commissioning at the end of Mass (“*Ite missa est*”)
 - ✚ CCC 905 – “the true disciple is on the lookout for occasions of announcing Christ by word and deed...”
 - ✚ “Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope, but do so with gentleness and reverence.” 1 Peter 3:15
 - ✚ “In the long run, is there any other way of handing on the Gospel than by transmitting to another person one’s personal experience of faith?” St. Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* #46

4. Growing an Engaged Church – The Rich Man in Mk 10

- ✓ “The conventional wisdom is ‘believing leads to belonging’ i.e. the deeper one’s faith is, the more likely the desire to belong. The reality is just the opposite [acc. to Gallup research]: **it is belonging** (engagement) **that leads to believing** (commitment)! So, if you want your members to become more spiritually committed, help them become more engaged.” Winseman, *Growing an Engaged Church*
- ✓ “The parish is the curriculum” US Bishops, *Our Hearts Were Burning*
- ✓ The difference between failing parishes and successful ones comes down to *engagement*. Engagement is different than involvement. Involvement is what you do in and for your church. Engagement is about emotions and strong psychological connections with the congregation, it’s about connecting w/ people. It’s about how you feel about your parish. (paraphrased from Winseman)
- ✓ Engagement measures what’s important to people: what do I get? What do I give? Do I belong? How can we grow?
- ✓ 12 Signs of an “Engaged” parish (Winseman)
 - I know what is expected of me
 - My spiritual needs are being met
 - I have a chance/opportunity to do what I do best

- I regularly receive recognition
 - The pastor and staff care about me as a person
 - Someone encourages my spiritual development
 - My opinions seem to count
 - The mission of my parish makes me feel that my participation is important
 - Other parishioners are committed to spiritual growth
 - I have a best friend in the parish
 - In the last 6 months someone has talked to me about my spiritual growth
 - I have opportunities to learn/grow in my faith
- ✓ *As you look at the 12 characteristics of an engaged parish, how would you assess the engagement factor in your parish? What would help it to become more engaged?*

VI. Final Summing Up: Cardinal Dolan's 7 Point Reflection on Evangelization (2012)

1. Remembering that even those who boast of their secularism have an innate longing for the divine; the first step of evangelization must be to keep the quest for God alive.
2. "Be not afraid" – confident, without being triumphalist, since it is the power of God who sends his people to evangelize.
3. Knowing that the new evangelization is not about presenting doctrine or a belief-system, but a Person, whose name is Jesus.
4. Nevertheless, this Jesus is the Truth. Hence, evangelization is linked to catechesis.
5. An evangelist must be a person of joy – someone who smiles.
6. The new evangelization is about love – the love of God made concrete in service.
7. Finally, martyrdom. A reminder that the Church is now peopled by those who are suffering persecution for their faith, and that these martyrs give impetus to the new evangelization.

Encouraged Reading on Evangelization

- *The Joy of the Gospel* – Pope Francis
- *Rejoice and Be Glad* – Pope Francis
- *On Evangelization in the Modern World* – Pope Paul VI
- *Go and Make Disciples* – USCCB
- *Directory for Catechesis* – Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization

- *Living as Missionary Disciples* – Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis, USCCB
- *Divine Renovation* – Fr. James Mallon
- *Forming Intentional Disciples* – Sherry Weddell
- *Developing Disciples of Christ* – Julianne Stanz
- *The Shattered Lantern* – Fr. Ronald Rolheiser
- *Growing an Engaged Church* – Albert Winseman
- *Salvation* – Michael Patrick Barber

Assignment

Option #1 (Preferred) **Write a short, convincing witness talk.**

Imagine that your pastor has asked you to present a 3 minute witness talk (a personal story of faith from your life) at the upcoming parish retreat. Those at the retreat are average parishioners who have never been exposed to this kind of sincere and explicit faith sharing, so he is inviting you to show others how to articulate the action of the Holy Spirit in one's life. Please follow the guidelines stated below. Some considerations:

1. Your faith story does not have to be dramatic, but it does need to be YOURS
2. Keep it concise and focused! Follow these guidelines:
 - 1st minute – a picture of where you were; your life before encountering Christ in a meaningful way
 - 2nd minute – decision point; experience of encounter/conversion/surrender; where/how your life changed
 - 3rd minute – a picture of your life now; how has your life been transformed?
3. Make sure it incorporates an explicit proclamation of Jesus Christ and his impact on your life.

Option #2 **Explain How Your Ministry is Evangelizing**

If the basic mission of the Church is to evangelize, then every ministry must, by definition, be an evangelizing ministry. Take a careful and searching look at your own involvement in pastoral ministry. In what way is your ministry evangelizing? You may want to consider some or all of these questions as you prepare your response:

1. How is my faith / ministry furthering the goals of GAMD?
2. When do I most experience myself as a disciple?
3. How does being a disciple make me feel in terms of my responsibilities to others, to the Church, to God?
4. How would I describe myself as a witness to Jesus Christ?
5. Do I invite people to faith tactfully, with respect and gentleness, with care for their needs?
6. Do I invite people to experience Christ in his community of faith?

Email responses within 2 weeks to: Jmcgrath02@gmail.com