



## Catholic Discipleship

Unit 2: Conversion

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### Opening Prayer

O Holy Spirit of God, take me as your disciple. Guide me, illuminate me, sanctify me. Bind my hands that they may do no evil. Cover my eyes that they may see it no more. Sanctify my heart, that evil may not dwell within me. Be my guard. Be my guide.

Wherever you lead me, I will go. Whatever you forbid me, I will renounce. Whatever you command me, in your strength I will do. Lead me, then, to the fullness of your truth. Amen.

- Henry Edward Cardinal Manning, 1809-1892

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### Orientation

- ▶ The twelve units of *Catholic Discipleship* will help us explore dimensions of what it means to be a missionary disciple in the Church today.
- ▶ Each unit has an essay section, a spiritual exercise section, and a Scripture passage with reflection questions.
- ▶ Please read the essay section before each meeting.
- ▶ We will do the spiritual exercises together.
- ▶ We will use the Scripture as part of our prayer.

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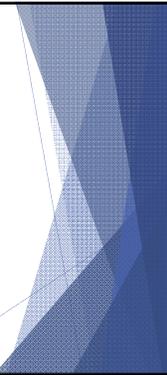
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### Objectives

- ▶ To reflect on ideas about conversion
- ▶ To heighten our awareness of conversion
- ▶ To think about opportunities for conversion
- ▶ To be able to talk more freely about conversion

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### Quick Poll

If someone on Sunday asked how many in our congregation saw themselves as disciples, how many do you think would raise their hands?

- 10%
- 25%
- 50%
- 75% or more

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### Being Questioned

*Have you accepted Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior?*

This is a familiar question asked by some Protestants.  
When you are asked this question, how does it make you feel?

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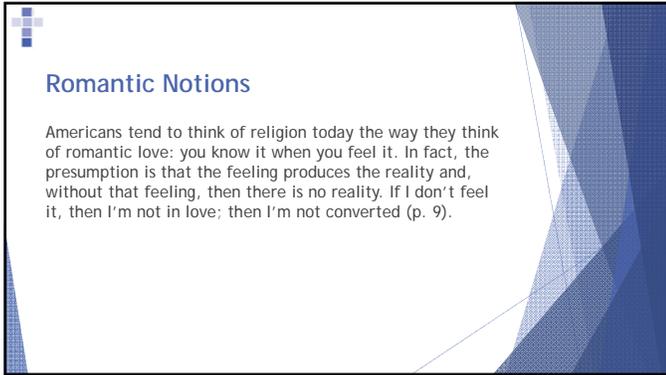
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### Romantic Notions

Americans tend to think of religion today the way they think of romantic love: you know it when you feel it. In fact, the presumption is that the feeling produces the reality and, without that feeling, then there is no reality. If I don't feel it, then I'm not in love; then I'm not converted (p. 9).

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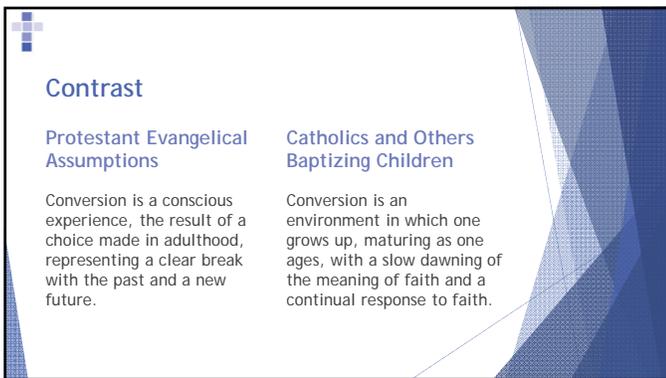
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### Contrast

<h4>Protestant Evangelical Assumptions</h4> <p>Conversion is a conscious experience, the result of a choice made in adulthood, representing a clear break with the past and a new future.</p>	<h4>Catholics and Others Baptizing Children</h4> <p>Conversion is an environment in which one grows up, maturing as one ages, with a slow dawning of the meaning of faith and a continual response to faith.</p>
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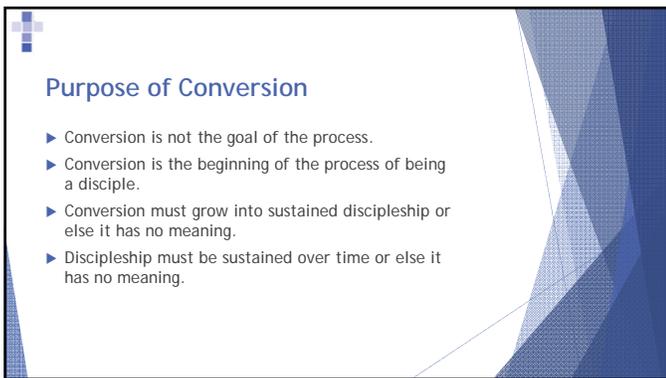
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### Purpose of Conversion

- ▶ Conversion is not the goal of the process.
- ▶ Conversion is the beginning of the process of being a disciple.
- ▶ Conversion must grow into sustained discipleship or else it has no meaning.
- ▶ Discipleship must be sustained over time or else it has no meaning.

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**Conversion—US Bishops,  
“Go and Make Disciples” (1992)**

We know that people experience conversion in many ways. Some experience a sudden, shattering insight that brings rapid transformation. Some experience a gradual growth over many years. Others undergo conversion as they take part in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults—the normal way adults become members of the Church today. Many experience conversion through the ordinary relationships of family and friends. Others have experienced it through the formation received from Catholic schools and religious education programs. Still others have experienced ongoing conversion in renewals, ecumenical encounters, retreats, parish missions, or through some of the great spiritual movements that have blessed church life today (#13).

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**Conversion—US Bishops,  
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Conversion is the change that happens in our lives through the power of the Holy Spirit (#2).

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**Spiritual Exercise (p. 13)**

- ▶ On each line, try to summarize your attitude toward God, Jesus, the Church or faith at that age.
- ▶ Look at your list after you are finished and note any immediate observations.

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**RCIA**

- ▶ **Inquiry** period
- ▶ **Catechumenate** period of growing in knowledge and commitment
- ▶ **Purification & Enlightenment** period in which one progresses toward conversion (“elect”)
- ▶ **Initiation** when we receive the sacraments
- ▶ **Mystagogia** when we grow as new believers

Identify how these different kinds of periods are present in our ongoing lives of practicing our faith.

Think about these different dynamics in our Catholic faith life: how are they related to “ongoing conversion”?

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**Scripture—Matthew 9:9-13**

As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the customs post. He said to him, “Follow me.” And he got up and followed him. While he was at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat with Jesus and his disciples. The Pharisees saw this and said to his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” He heard this and said, “Those who are well do not need a physician, but the sick do. Go and learn the meaning of the words, ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ I did not come to call the righteous but sinners.”

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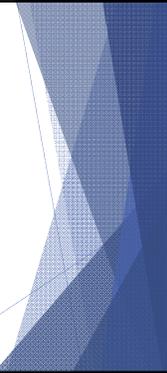
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### Conclusion

- ▶ Thank you for coming and participating.
- ▶ Please think of bringing a friend along next week.
- ▶ We invite you to spend some time in hospitality after our session.
- ▶ Please stand and recite together the Catholic Discipleship prayer and the Lord's Prayer.

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### Catholic Discipleship Prayer

Lord, God, through our baptisms you have made us disciples, followers of Jesus who attend to his Word, pray and worship in his Spirit, experience love in his community of the Church, and are sent to serve by helping others as he did. Lead us, Father, more fully into your Kingdom, which Jesus came to begin and fulfill. Help us, through his Spirit, to adhere to him and bring his Good News to all we encounter. We pray this in his name. Amen.

*Our Father...*

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