



The Practice of Evangelization In Our Parishes

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**Session One:
Gathered and Sent**



Opening Prayer

Loving God, you called each of us by name, and gave your only Son to redeem us. In your faithfulness, you sent the Holy Spirit to complete the mission of Jesus among us. Open our hearts to Jesus. Give us the courage to speak his name to those who are close to us, and the generosity to share his love with those who are far away. We pray that every person throughout the world be invited to know and love Jesus as Savior and Redeemer. May they come to know his all-surpassing love. May that love transform every element of our society. Amen.



Gathered and Sent

Parish Focus and Goals

- **What is the nature of parish?**
- **What do we see as our mission?**
- **What are the goals we are trying to accomplish?**



Poll

How would I describe myself?

- Pastor of a Parish
- Parish/Parochial Vicar
- Member of Parish Staff
- Member of Parish Council or Other ministry
- Parish “volunteer”



Parish Definition

Canon 515:

A parish is a certain community of Christ's faithful stably established within a particular Church, whose pastoral care, under the authority of the diocesan Bishop, is entrusted to a parish priest as its proper pastor.



Elements of Parish

- Stable
- Community
- Based in the Eucharist
- With structure, i.e., organization



Parish Mission

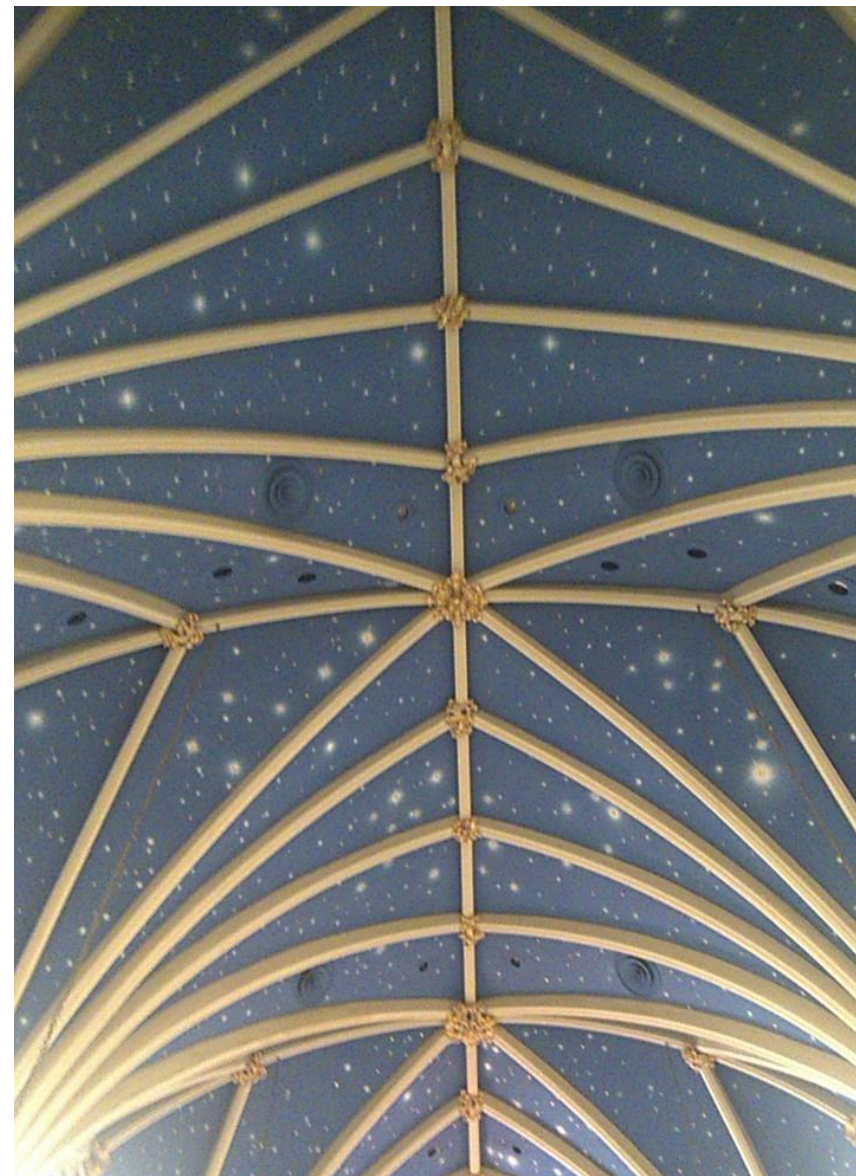
Canon 528

The pastor, by obligation, has to make sure that the Gospel is announced to all in his parish in its integrity; and, therefore, that his people are taught Christian doctrine especially in the Sunday homily and through catechetical formation; and urge that an evangelical spirit attend to social justice; make sure children and the young have Catholic education, and use every means, particularly with his lay people, to see that the Gospel message reaches those who have stopped practicing faith or who do not profess true faith.



Parish Mission

- Sacraments
- Sacraments, esp. the Eucharist
- Education of children and adults
- Outreach to the poor
- Mission to Catholics who are not active
- Mission to bring the Gospel to all





Poll

Which two receive the most emphasis in your parish?

- Sacraments, esp. the Eucharist
- Education of children and adults
- Outreach to the poor
- Mission to Catholics who are not active
- Mission to bring the Gospel to all



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. (27)

Joy of the Gospel





Parish Renewal-Joy of the Gospel

The renewal of structures demanded by pastoral conversion can only be understood in this light: as part of an effort to make them more mission-oriented, to make ordinary pastoral activity on every level more inclusive and open, to inspire in pastoral workers a constant desire to go forth and in this way to elicit a positive response from all those whom Jesus summons to friendship with himself. (27)





Parish

The parish is not an outdated institution; precisely because it possesses great flexibility, it can assume quite different contours depending on the openness and missionary creativity of the pastor and the community. While certainly not the only institution which evangelizes, if the parish proves capable of self-renewal and constant adaptivity, it continues to be “the Church living in the midst of the homes of her sons and daughters”. (28)





Parish

This presumes that it really is in contact with the homes and the lives of its people, and does not become a useless structure out of touch with people or a self-absorbed group made up of a chosen few. The parish is the presence of the Church in a given territory, an environment for hearing God's word, for growth in the Christian life, for dialogue, proclamation, charitable outreach, worship and celebration. (28)





Parish

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. (28)





Areas of Evangelization for the Parish

➤ **Catholic identity**

- 20% of Catholics attend every Sunday
- 20% of Catholics attend once a month or more

➤ **Residual Catholic identity**

- 60% of Catholics attend twice a year or less (25% never)

➤ **No faith identity**

- “Nones,” “Agnostics,” “Atheists”





Mission of the Redeemer— #33

- 1) Peoples, groups and sociocultural contexts in which Christ and his Gospel are not known or which lack Christian communities
- 2) Christian communities that have adequate and solid ecclesial structures. “In these communities the Church carries out her activity of pastoral care.”
- 3) Intermediate situation in countries with ancient Christian roots where “entire groups of the baptized have lost a living sense of the faith.” What is needed for these groups is “a ‘new evangelization’ or a ‘re-evangelization.’”





Joy of the Gospel: Objective #1

In first place, we can mention the area of *ordinary pastoral ministry*, which is “animated by the fire of the Spirit, so as to inflame the hearts of the faithful who regularly take part in community worship and gather on the Lord’s day to be nourished by his word and by the bread of eternal life”. In this category we can also include those members of faithful who preserve a deep and sincere faith, expressing it in different ways, but seldom taking part in worship. Ordinary pastoral ministry seeks to help believers to grow spiritually so that they can respond to God’s love ever more fully in their lives. (14)



Joy of the Gospel: Objective #2



A second area is that of *“the baptized whose lives do not reflect the demands of Baptism”*, who lack a meaningful relationship to the Church and no longer experience the consolation born of faith. The Church, in her maternal concern, tries to help them experience a conversion which will restore the joy of faith to their hearts and inspire a commitment to the Gospel. (14)



Lastly, we cannot forget that evangelization is first and foremost about preaching the Gospel to *those who do not know Jesus Christ or who have always rejected him*. Many of these are quietly seeking God, led by a yearning to see his face, even in countries of ancient Christian tradition. All of them have a right to receive the Gospel. Christians have the duty to proclaim the Gospel without excluding anyone. (14)

Joy of the Gospel: Objective #3





Parish Emphases

- Reinforcing Catholic identity today
- Focus on less-than-active Catholics
- Increased fuzziness of belonging
- Broader outreach to people without a faith identity



Catholic Identity and Culture

Up to 1960

Catholics are a “minority” and without much social esteem; Catholics stick among themselves and create a “ghetto” culture which revolves around the parish. Priests, nuns, schools, rules.



After 1960

Catholics no longer seen as a minority; Catholics move increasingly to the suburbs. Loss of ethnic cohesion and sense of neighborhood. Fewer priests, nuns, schools, rules.



Reinforcing Catholic Identity Today

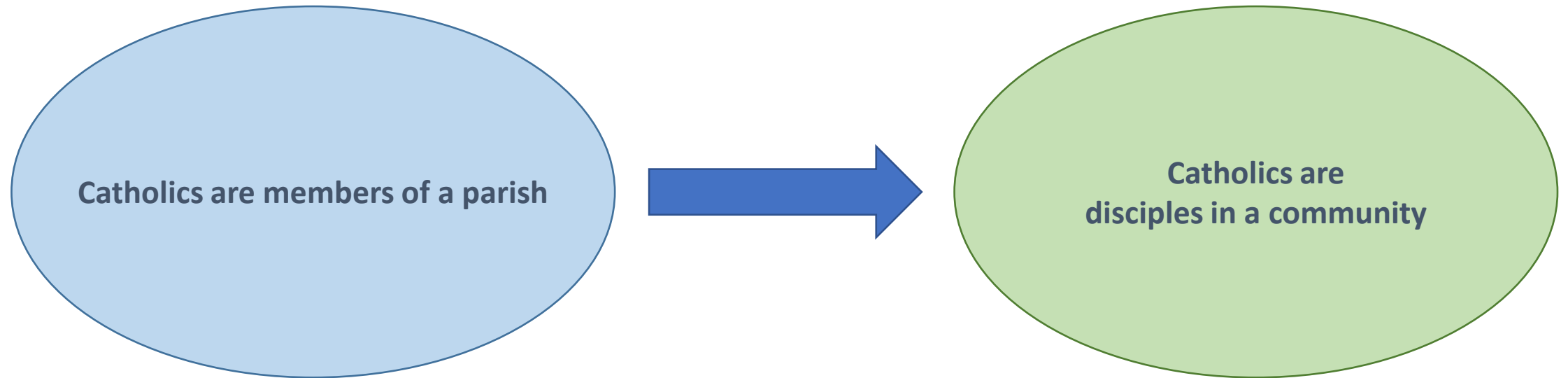
What are the ways we create a greater sense of community and belonging in a world where people have many options at their disposal?

What is the center of “community” in parish?



Community: Future

Shift of focus for Catholic identity:





Focus on “Less-Than-Active Catholics”

- Identifying these people in our parish
- Creating space for some of these people to begin to engage
- Offering consistent programming





Broader outreach to people without a faith identity

- What is the mission of R.C.I.A. in the parish?
- What is the role of “Inquiry” in the R.C.I.A.?
- How do we create “space” for non-Catholics to mingle with us?





See, Judge, Act Parish Organization

Parish Staff



Pastoral council

Committees



Evangelization team

Active Parishioners

Less-than-Active
Parishioners

People without a
Faith Community



Articulating a Vision, a Mission, and a Plan

Kingdom

Mercy

Forgiveness

Inclusion, esp. the poor

Healing

Wholeness-Integrity

Community

Prayer

Parish

How do these emphases
find a place in
the parish community?



Poll:

Check the two qualities you would like to see MORE of in your parish:

- Mercy
- Forgiveness
- Inclusion, esp. the poor
- Healing
- Wholeness-Integrity
- Community
- Prayer



Inviting Everyone into the Vision

“Synodality”

- On the level of parish leadership
- Among organizations of the parish
- Among various “constituencies”--
all parishioners



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