

Pastoral Initiative #4:
Missionary Parishes

Joy of the Gospel

Prayer for Evangelization

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.

Scripture

Luke 10: 1-9

After this the Lord appointed seventy[-two] others whom he sent ahead of him in pairs to every town and place he intended to visit. He said to them, "The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest. Go on your way; behold, I am sending you like lambs among wolves. Carry no money bag, no sack, no sandals; and greet no one along the way. Into whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this household.' If a peaceful person lives there, your peace will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you. Stay in the same house and eat and drink what is offered to you, for the laborer deserves his payment. Do not move about from one house to another. Whatever town you enter and they welcome you, eat what is set before you, cure the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God is at hand for you.'

Joy of the Gospel

27. 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 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.



Doors Open

47. The Church is called to be the house of the Father, with doors always wide open. One concrete sign of such openness is that our church doors should always be open, so that if someone, moved by the Spirit, comes there looking for God, he or she will not find a closed door. There are other doors that should not be closed either. Everyone can share in some way in the life of the Church; everyone can be part of the community, nor should the doors of the sacraments be closed for simply any reason.



Sacramental Doors Open

47. This is especially true of the sacrament which is itself "the door": baptism. The Eucharist, although it is the fullness of sacramental life, is not a prize for the perfect but a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak.

These convictions have pastoral consequences that we are called to consider with prudence and boldness. Frequently, we act as arbiters of grace rather than its facilitators. But the Church is not a tollhouse; it is the house of the Father, where there is a place for everyone, with all their problems.



Stop and ask . . .

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 meaning “very” and 1 meaning “not at all,” how OPEN are the various DOORS of your parish in terms of welcome and sacramental welcome?

1

2

3

4

5

Explain your ranking.



Parish

28. 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”.



Parish

28. 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.



Parish

28. 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.



Mission-oriented

28. We must admit, though, that the call to review and renew our parishes has not yet sufficed to bring them nearer to people, to make them environments of living communion and participation, and to make them completely mission-oriented.

The Call to Review and Renew Our Parishes

On a scale of 1 through 5, with five being the “most,” where would you rank your parish in terms of being MISSION ORIENTED

1

2

3

4

5

Explain your ranking.

List the ways in which your parish . . .

Is mission-oriented now?

Could be more mission oriented?

List the people your parish . . .

Easily meets and engages with . . .

Least meets and engages with . . .

List the ways your parish and parish staff . . .

Is a ready resource for people to come

Creates ways to meet and engage new people . . .

Welcomes and involves people . . .

Seems remote for people to meet and engage with . . .

Discourages, one way or another, new people from involvement . . .

Doesn't welcome and involve people very well . . .

How would you describe your parish in terms of being a place of:

Dialogue

Worship

Proclamation

Celebration

Charitable outreach

Describe and explain your observation. . .

To what extent . . .

Rank from 1 to 5, with 5 meaning the very much, **your parishes connection with the homes and the lives of people:**

1

2

3

4

5

Explain your ranking.



The Poor . . .

198. This is why I want a Church which is poor and for the poor. They have much to teach us. Not only do they share in the *sensus fidei*, but in their difficulties they know the suffering Christ. We need to let ourselves be evangelized by them.

The Poor and Our Parish

Rank, from 1 to 5, with 5 being “very much,” **your parishes involvement with the poor:**

1

2

3

4

5

Explain your ranking.

If you were to talk to parishioners about evangelization . . .

- What would most peak their curiosity?
- What outreach would they ask parish leadership to concentrate on?
- What would scare them? What would ease their fears?
- What would most involve them in personal outreach?

Of the following directions, which one(s) should your parish first concentrate on?

- Outreach to inactive Catholics?
- Outreach to those without faith?
- Outreach to people without a church family?
- Formation of parishioners in Scripture sharing?
- New efforts toward making our parish known to others?
- Spiritual renewal program?
- Home visitation (a) to parishioners; (b) to everyone?
- Youth and Young Adult Ministry?
- Other directions?

Think of
people . . .

Who would be good on an evangelization
team . . .

Who might be gifted in accomplishing new
directions . . .

Who would be willing to be trained . . .

Who could lead an evangelization effort . . .

Who can liaison well with the pastoral
staff . . .



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