



**Becoming a
Missionary Parish
Informational Gathering with Prayer**

Immaculate Conception Church

Wednesday, September 13, 2017 at 7:00 PM

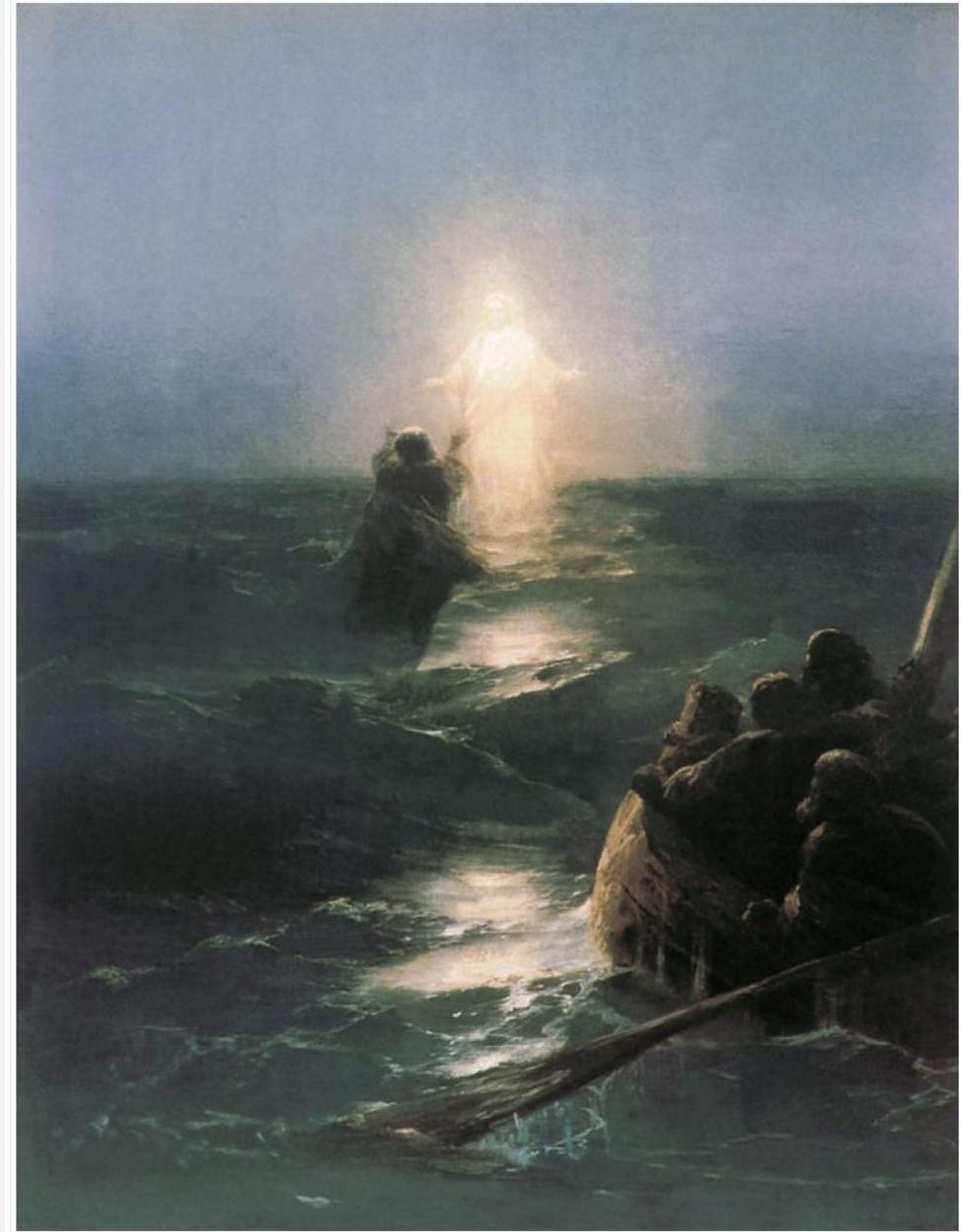
As we Begin

- Welcome to everyone, in particular to any visitors new to our parish
- Thank you to all who helped planning this event
- We must do all things in prayer!

Our prayers this evening will mostly be sung, and please pray for me, now and as we go forward on our journey to a missionary parish!

Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew

The Walking on the Water (Matthew 14:22-33)



Why Do We Come Together Tonight – The Present Moment



- A time of transition.
- Pope Francis's calls “for a new chapter of evangelization”.
- A new Strategic Pastoral Plan for our Parish is under development that will help us to answer this call.
- Importance to update the parish community and get feedback.
- We are graced with many resources.
- Calls forth our wisdom and reliance on the Lord.

So let us rise, and let us pray ...

Send us your Spirit

by David Haas



Come Lord Jesus. Send us your Spirit. Renew the face of the earth (2x)

Come to us, Spirit of God. Breathe in us now. We sing together.

Spirit of hope and of light, fill our lives.

Come to us, Spirit of God.

Come Lord Jesus. Send us your Spirit. Renew the face of the earth (2x)

Fill us with the fire of your love. Burn in us now. Bring us together.

Come to us; dwell in us. Change our lives, oh Lord. Come to us, Spirit of God.

Come Lord Jesus. Send us your Spirit. Renew the face of the earth (2x)

Send us the wings of new birth.

Fill all the earth with the love you have taught us.

Let all creation now be shaken with love. Come to us, Spirit of God.

Come Lord Jesus. Send us your Spirit. Renew the face of the earth (2x)

Our Focus this Evening in a Nutshell

Reorienting Ourselves and our Parish

from Maintenance

to Mission

Reorientation in Human Life

- Reorientation is an ongoing process through-out our life ...
... it is based on new experiences in every stage of our life.
- Discovering that special person in our life ...
... love emerges and changes everything ...
... it changes hearts, relationships, and behavior

Andrew Lloyd Webber – Love Changes Everything

Love, love changes everything
Hands and faces, earth and sky
Love, love changes everything
How you live and how you die

- Marriage and Children ... we reorient again based on experience

Many Ways to Express our Experience

- Reorient
- Realign
- Turn
- Paradigm shift
- Reordering priorities
- Conversion (of hearts, peoples, systems, and structures, ...)

Reorientation

- Internal: Changes hearts and minds
- External: changes behavior
- Relational: changes how we are toward others
- Institutional: Changes families, businesses, parishes

Reorientation is comprehensive, personal, dynamic!

Agenda for Tonight

- Current situation in our Parish
- Our decision & what's at stake
- Mission and what it comprises
- Where we go from here
 - As persons
 - As a community
 - Our parish
- Q&A

Before we continue, let us pray

Open my eyes, Lord



Open my eyes, Lord
Help me to see your face
Open my eyes, Lord
Help me to see

Open my ears, Lord
Help me to hear your voice
Open my ears, Lord
Help me to hear

Open my heart, Lord
Help me to love like you
Open my heart, Lord
Help me to love

And the last shall be first
And our eyes are opened
And we'll hear like never before
And we'll speak in new ways
And we'll see God's face in places we've
never known

I live within you
Deep in your heart, O Love
I live within you
Rest now in me.

Open my eyes, Lord
Help me to see your face
Open my eyes, Lord
Help me to see, Help me to see.

Current Situation

Many people doing good things, e.g.:

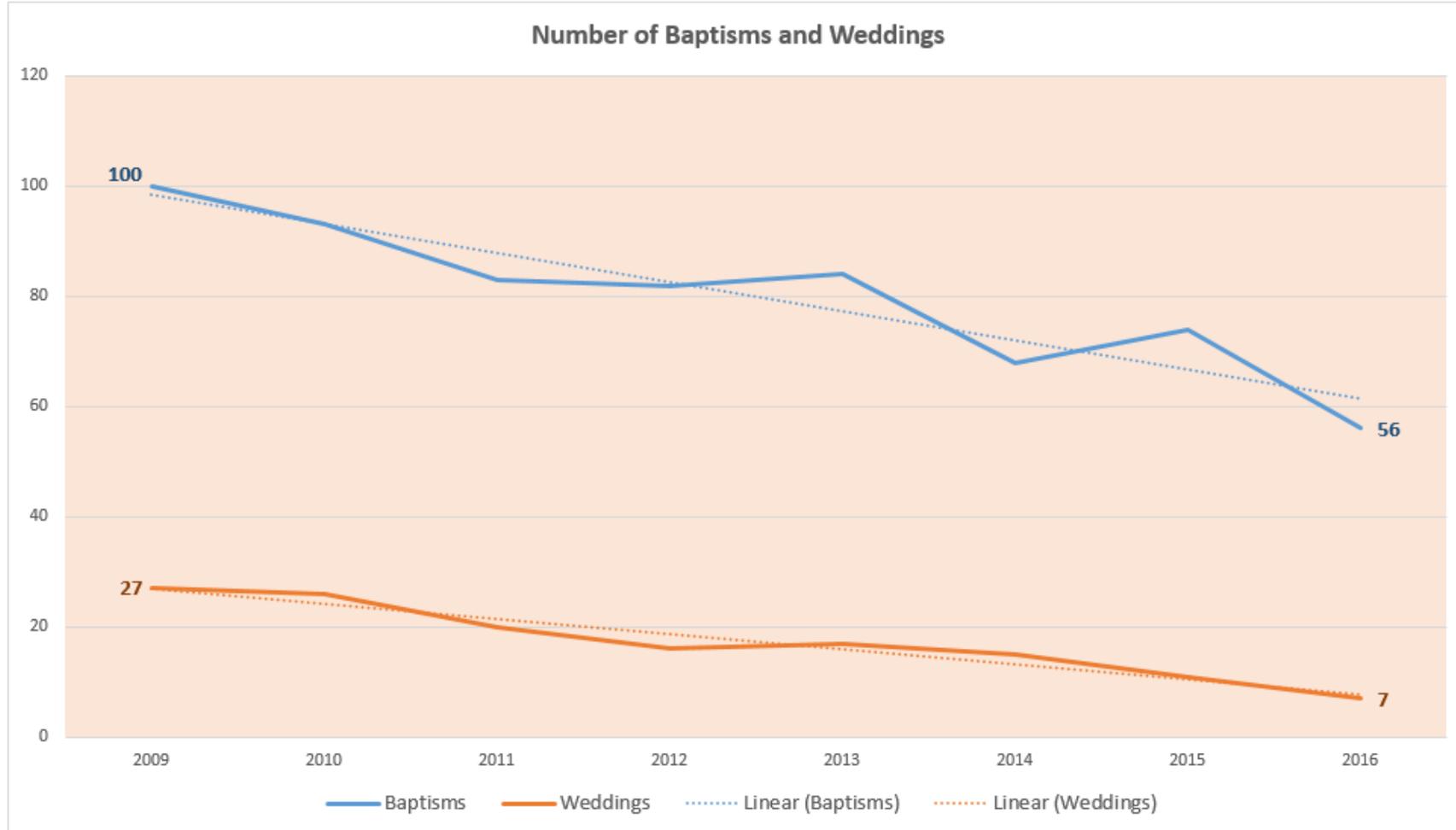
- Prayer and liturgical worship
 - Faith formation
 - Youth ministry
 - Councils, committees, Bible study
 - Service to neighbor
-
- Strength of community, drawing our parish together
 - Pope Francis, pastoral plan, wide support for mission
 - and so much more

But All Is Not Well

- Financial stresses and worries
 - Attendance and participation went down over the years
 - Participation only on “state occasions”
 - and **attendance is not the same than participation!**
 - Fall-off in Catholic weddings and
 - Decrease in baptisms
- with implications for next generation(s)?

Some of the numbers are sobering

Baptisms and Weddings per Year



One Brief Summary



- Our elders are moving away and passing away – normal and expected.
- Too many of our teens and young adults are walking away.
- Too many of their parents are fading away.
- These trends forecast a poor future for our parish and the catholic church in general!

What are our Choices, what could we do about it?

- Hang on and hope for better times?
- Do better on what we're already doing? For example
 - Religious education, youth ministry, etc.?
 - Music & other liturgical ministries?
 - Welcome & Hospitality?
 - Service opportunities?
 - Participation, especially at Mass?
 - Financial support?

**Our best efforts at ICC over the past few years
are slowly “turning to the better”, but ...
the improvements are not sufficient!**

We need to continue reorienting ourselves!

A Basic Questions:

Why is that and why are we doing what we are doing without more positive outcomes?

Society and Culture Have Changed

- Cultural Catholicism is long gone, it is not coming back.
- Society and culture no longer support faith & worship.
- Church affiliation/faith trends in USA are unfavorable
(check out www.pewforum.org)
- Generally-shared values & ways of thinking have changed

Another Basic Questions:

Why Does a Parish Exist, what is it for?

One Answer:

A parish is there to serve its parishioners

Pastor and staff make decisions with the parishioners' expectations in mind.

Examples: Mass schedules and religious education.

The Serve-the Parishioners View of Parish Ministry



This orientation has governed our expectations and decisions on budgeting, worship, programs, staffing, schedules, the use of our buildings, the bulletin, the website, in short:

It has governed everything!

The Serve-the Parishioners View of Parish Ministry...



Has many important implications and consequences:

- It biases and even paralyzes pastoral deliberations,
- short-circuits creative thinking in the face of challenges,
- and distracts from the cost of failing to act

But that's not all

It Entails No Overall Purpose ...

- Parishes have no overall goal or purpose to direct interactions and ministries. They become self-focused & aimless.
- Without a common purpose that is substantive, shared, public, and appropriate, no organization can be healthy or effective.

This Serve-the-Parishioners Orientation has a Name

“Maintenance Church”

Why Does a Parish Exist? – Another Answer

- A parish exists to serve the mission of Jesus Christ.
- If so, then every aspect of parish life and work has to be mission-oriented and mission-driven.

Budgeting, worship, programs & ministries, staffing, schedules, the use of our buildings, the bulletin, the website,

Everything!

Here is the Decision that we faced

Remain maintenance-oriented

OR

become mission-oriented.

We Can Stay the Course – One Option

- Continue primary orientation to serving parishioners.
- Continue our customary ministries and activities.
- This approach is known, understood, and yes, it does good things.
- It honors people's expectations; no push-back.
- Routine, habits, and personal piety remain undisturbed.
- Avoids the stress, anxiety, and dislocation that change brings.
- Appreciate the cogency and force of these considerations!

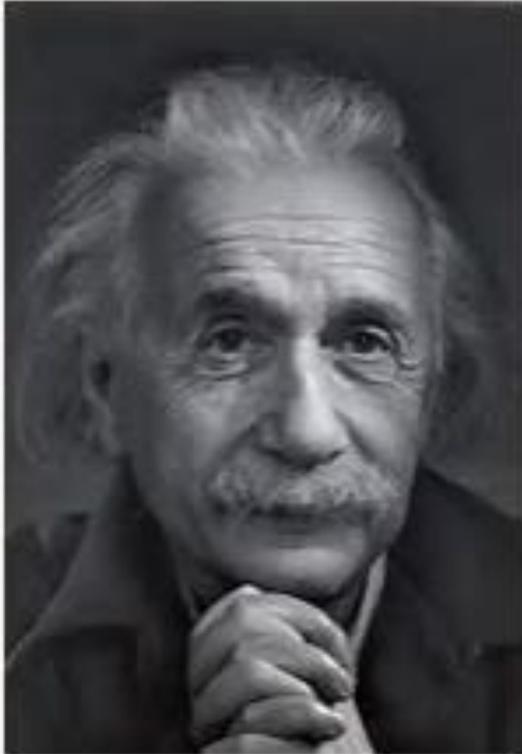
BUT ...

If we keep on doing what we're doing,
we'll keep on getting what we're getting:

- The slow, relentless decline of our parish/church
- and increasingly sharp pangs of guilt ...

... for not doing the good we ought to do.

Definition of Insanity



“Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.”

Albert Einstein

OR

We can seize a kairos moment: a heaven-sent time of grace and opportunity

- to renew our parish life and ministry
- to respond to our own call
- to recommit ourselves to Jesus Christ and
- to feed and refresh the spirit within our lives

“For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the spiritual gift which is in you through the laying on of my hands.”

(Timothy 1:6)

Joy of the Gospel Message

In *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis calls Catholics

- to be “an evangelizing community filled with joy” (24).
- to be a community that is “permanently in a state of mission” (25),
- to be a community that practices “a fraternal communion and missionary fruitfulness” (89)
- Pope Francis urges Catholics to “live in fraternity” (91) and to share “a fraternal love capable of seeing the sacred grandeur of our neighbor, of finding God in every human being” (92).

We Decided: It's Time to Embrace Our Mission!

Not simply as a response to negative trends, but
as a matter of faithfulness and to align ourselves and
our community to the move of the Holy Spirit!

That's what I intend to do.

That's what I invite you to do!

We need God's help with this. So let us pray

Lead Me Lord, Lead me Lord by the Light ...

Blessed are the poor in spirit, longing for their Lord,
for God's coming kingdom shall be theirs.

Blessed are the sorrowing, for they shall be consoled,
and the meek shall come to rule the world.

**Lead me, Lord, lead me, Lord, by the light of truth
to seek and to find the narrow way.**

**Be my way; be my truth; be my life, my Lord,
and lead me, Lord, today.**

Blessed are the merciful, for mercy shall be theirs,
and the pure in heart shall see their God.

Blest are they whose hunger only holiness can fill,
for I say they shall be satisfied.

**Lead me, Lord, lead me, Lord, by the light of truth
to seek and to find the narrow way.**

**Be my way; be my truth; be my life, my Lord,
and lead me, Lord, today.**

Blest are they who through their lifetimes sow the
seeds of peace;

all will call them children of the Lord.

Blest are you, though persecuted in your holy life,
for in heaven, great is your reward.

**Lead me, Lord, lead me, Lord, by the light of truth
to seek and to find the narrow way.**

**Be my way; be my truth; be my life, my Lord,
and lead me, Lord, today.**

The Great Commission

“ 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, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

(Matthew 28:19-20)

Go and make Disciples ... This is our Mission!

Our Mission Is NOT Just

- Proselytizing
- Door-to-door visiting
- Pushy, in-your-face approaches

There is much more to it!

Instead, Our Mission Is

Know the Lord, and

Live his life in community.

So simple! Let's take the pieces one-by-one:

Know the Lord Jesus

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son,
so that everyone who believes in him might not perish
but might have eternal life. (John 3:16)

Know the Lord Jesus



He loved his own in the world and
he loved them to the end. (John 13:1)

Know the Lord Jesus

Now this is eternal life, that thy should know you,
the only true God, and the one whom you sent, Jesus Christ
(John 17:3).

Know the Lord Jesus

It's not what you know, but whom you know.

This knowing is personal and charged with love.

This is where it starts – the only place it can start.

Know the Lord Jesus

Being a Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction.

Pope Benedict XVI, God is Love, 2005

Know the Lord Jesus

I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unfailingly each day.

Pope Francis, Joy of the Gospel, 3

Live His Life in Community

“I give you a new command: love one another.

As I have loved you, so you also should love one another.

This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

(John 13: 34-35)

Live His Life in Community



“I pray ... that they may be one as we are one ...
that they may be brought to perfection as one,
that the world may know that you sent me and
that you loved them even as you loved me.”

(John 17: 22-23)

In summary: Live His Life in Community

Community arises from God's own life – and how Jesus has loved us.

Community formed in faith and charity is attractive.

Community life, church & parish life are essential to evangelization.

Eucharist takes its place and comes alive here.

Its mission-orientation also comes to the forefront.

Make Disciples for the Lord Jesus

Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commended you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.

(Matt. 28: 18-20)

But you will receive power when the holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and the ends of the earth.

(Acts 1:8)

Make Disciples for the Lord Jesus

- Scriptures emphasize the importance and urgency of mission
- Disciples must be fruitful (e.g., parables of the talents, vine & branches)
- Calling the disciples to be “fishers of men”
- Commissioning to proclaim repentance and forgiveness
- Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles show mission in action.

Our Call and Mission



Know the Lord Jesus.

Live his life in community.

Make disciples for the Lord Jesus.

So simple. But we cannot do it by ourselves.

So let us rise and pray ...

Lead me Lord ...

Blessed are the poor in spirit,
longing for their Lord,
for God's coming kingdom shall be theirs.

Blessed are the sorrowing,
for they shall be consoled,
and the meek shall come to rule the world.

**Lead me, Lord, lead me, Lord,
by the light of truth
to seek and to find the narrow way.
Be my way; be my truth;
be my life, my Lord,
and lead me, Lord, today.**

Blessed are the merciful,
for mercy shall be theirs,
and the pure in heart shall see their God.
Blest are they whose hunger only holiness can fill,
for I say they shall be satisfied.

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Blest are they who through their lifetimes
sow the seeds of peace;
all will call them children of the Lord.
Blest are you, though persecuted in your holy
life, for in heaven, great is your reward.

**Lead me, Lord, lead me, Lord,
by the light of truth
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be my life, my Lord,
and lead me, Lord, today.**

Maintenance to Mission For Persons

- Each one is loved. Each one is called.
- Each one is empowered and trusted.
- Accept the Lord's personal love for you.

The First Proclamation

Jesus Christ loves you; he gave his life to Save you;
... and now he is living at your side every day to
enlighten, strengthen and free you.

Pope Francis, Joy of the Gospel, 164

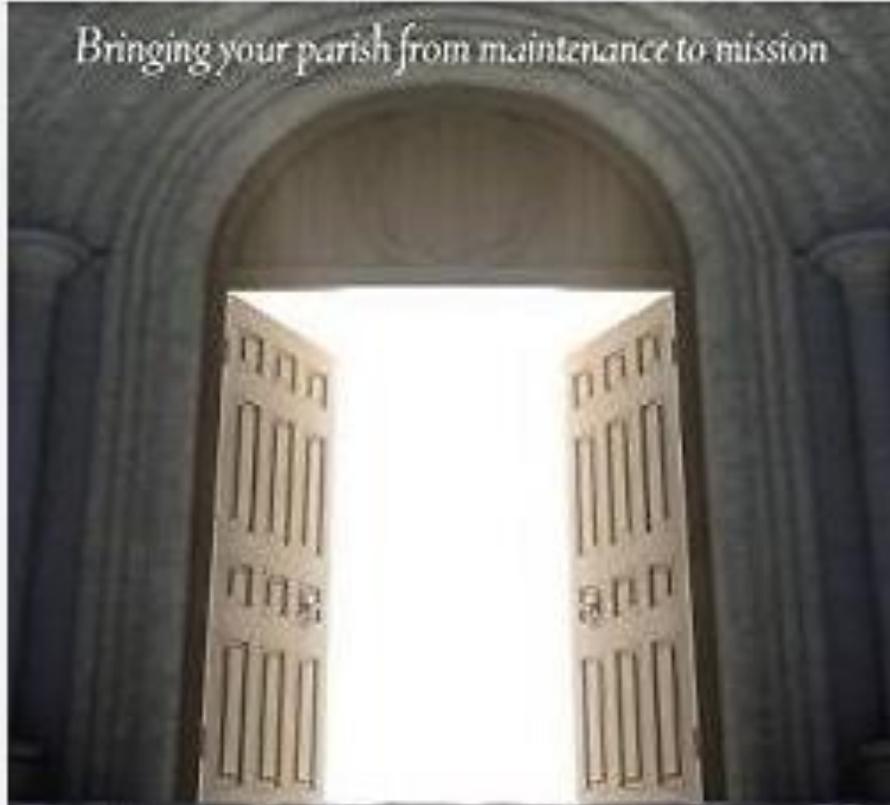
Maintenance to Mission For Persons

- Take time to understand and internalize what mission means.
- This is about our lives. This is about our walking in faith.
- Be committed, be patient, never stop moving ahead.
- Support one another. Do some reading

.... take a look at the NorthEast Parish Revitalization Conference web site at <https://www.alphanewengland.org/> for a lot of helpful information!

DIVINE RENOVATION

Bringing your parish from maintenance to mission



FR. JAMES MALLON

"If you love your parish, read this book!"
Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan
Archbishop of New York



The Story
of a
Catholic
Parish

rebuilt

Awakening the Faithful
Reaching the Lost
Making Church Matter

Michael White and Tom Corcoran

FORMING INTENTIONAL DISCIPLES



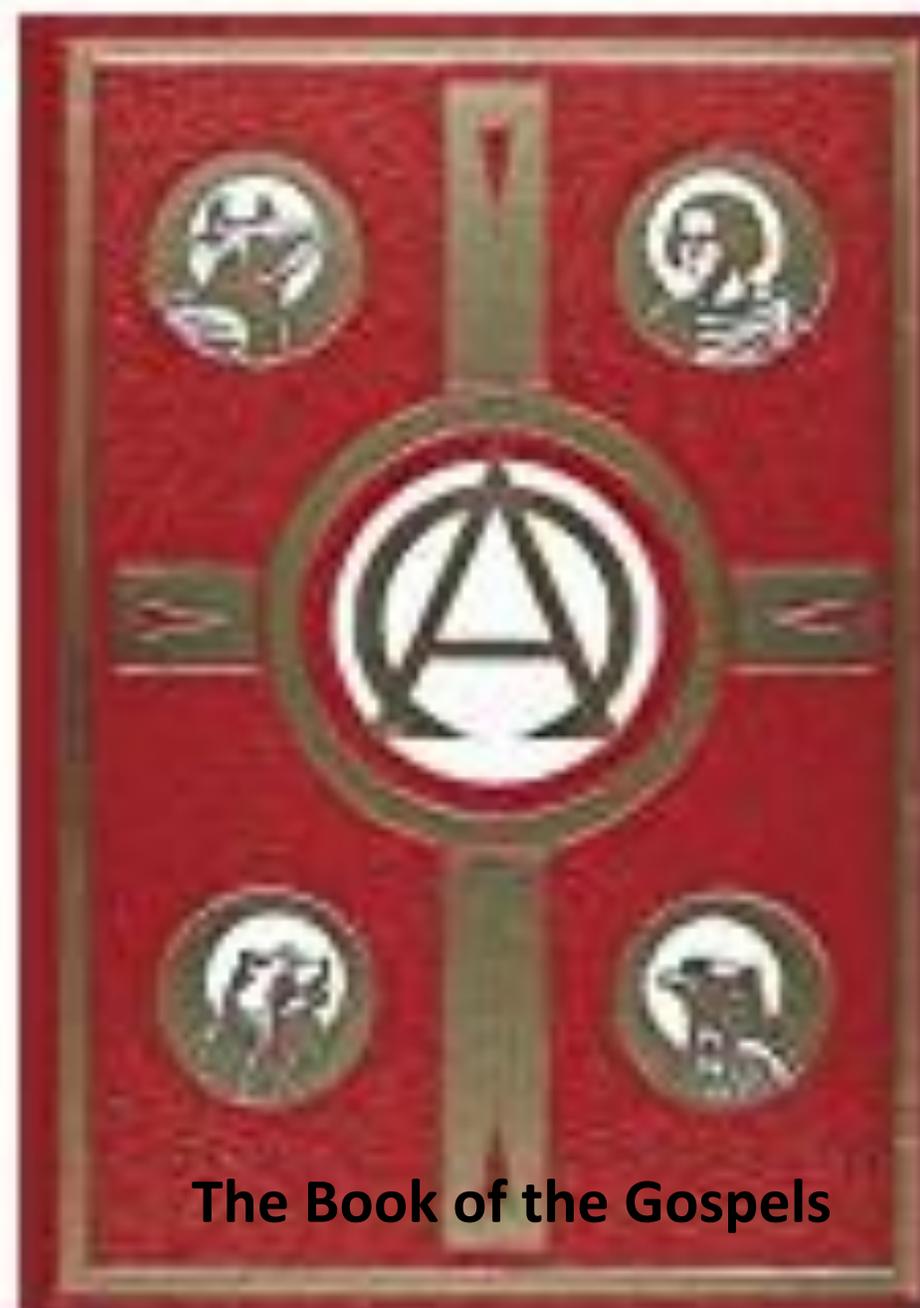
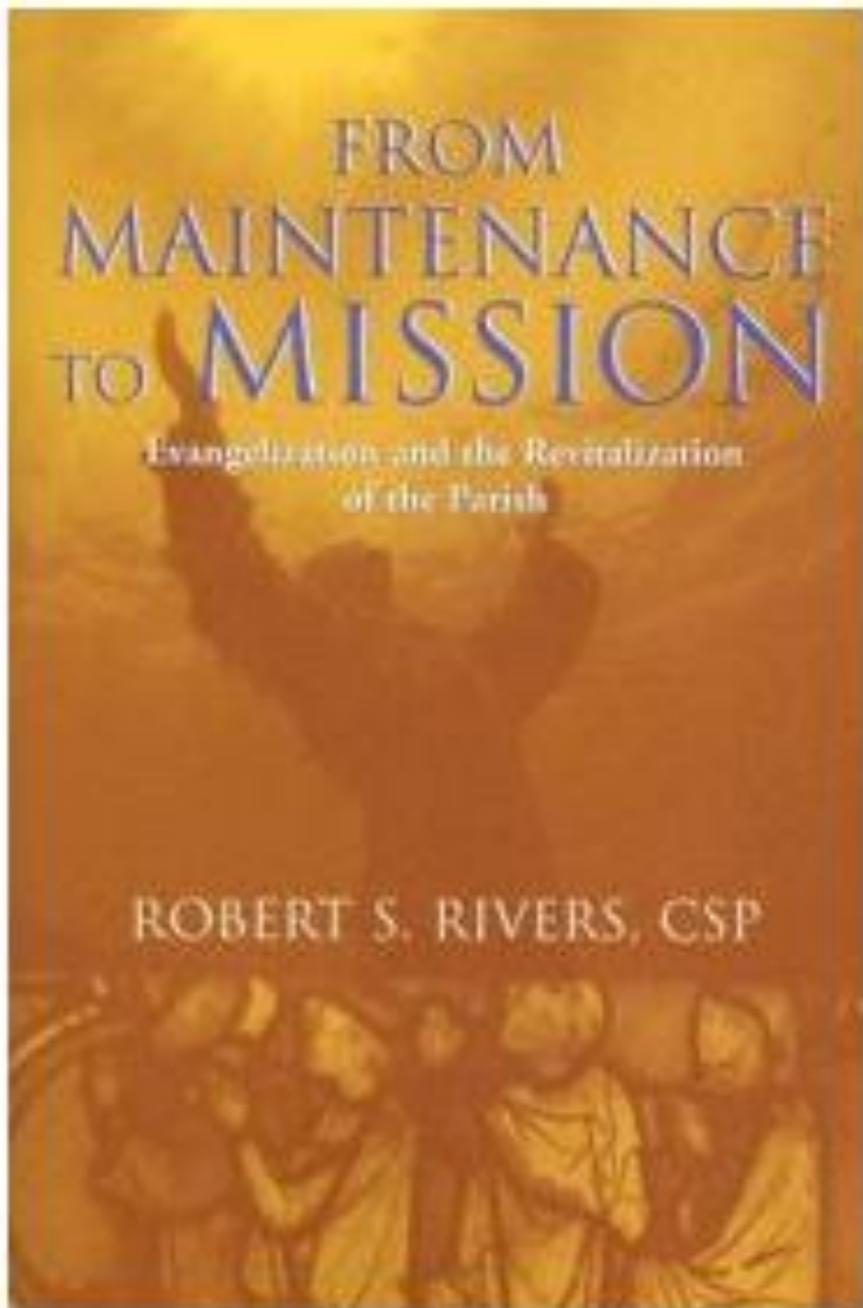
The Path to Knowing
and Following Jesus

Sherry A. Weddell

THE JOY OF THE GOSPEL



POPE FRANCIS



Maintenance to Mission: Our Community



Hospitality, hospitality, hospitality in the name of the Lord

Calls us to turn from the private, individual piety we inherited to one that is community-based and mission-oriented.

Many of us will find a cutting edge of growth here.

Be committed, be patient, never stop moving ahead.

In other words ...

The parish is the presence of the Church in any given territory, an environment for hearing God's word, for growth in Christian life, for dialogue, proclamation, charitable outreach, worship and celebration.

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 center of constant missionary outreach (Pope Francis, Joy of the Gospel, 28).

Maintenance to Mission for Parishes

Reorienting our parish will take time – lots of time.

We have a mission and support, but no real user's manual.

There will be missteps and mistakes.

We will be committed, patient, always moving ahead ...

... just like raising children!

What have we done so far (1)

- Implemented a new operating model for our Parish Pastoral Council
- As the primary visioning body of the parish, the PPC assists the pastor
 - assessing adequately the needs of the whole parish and its members, and developing and implementing a pastoral plan which will promote the common good of the parish,
 - fostering unity and a sense of community in the parish and coordinating all parish activities in a manner that will best serve the interests of the parish, and
 - promoting programs and activities in the parish as recommended by the Pastor, PPC, the Bishop, or diocesan offices.
- An essential aspect of such visioning is the work of evangelization.

Evangelization invites all people to a full and active life of faith, sharing in the mission of the Church.

What have we done so far (2)



Reflected on and updated our Mission Statement

***We, the Roman Catholic community of the Immaculate Conception Parish,
strive to love and trust God completely and unconditionally.
We evangelize with compassion, continue the works of Jesus Christ,
and welcome all who seek Him.***

What have we done so far (3)

Started to assess the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threads for our parish

Results are the baseline for one, three and five year strategic planning

Purpose: reorient everything we do to Jesus Christ and his mission

Values: faith in Jesus Christ, hospitable community, stewardship

Launched a new Greeter ministry - major step to become a more Welcoming community

We are “doing” Alpha, this Monday we have started our fifth program

What have we done so far (4)

Announcing a new Hospitality Ministry to strengthen these efforts

- Combining several ministries like Social Committee, Welcome Committee and Greeter Ministry

Introducing tonight our “Information & Welcome Booth”

- the go to place for all, new and “established” parishioners to obtain information about ICC
- Will be part long-term as part of our Greeter Ministry
- Place to register, obtain information about ministries and to get engaged in the parish
- It will be open the first and third weekend of a month

What's Next

We will continue with our pastoral planning activities in order to renew our parish life and ministry, recommit ourselves to Jesus Christ and to feed and refresh the spirit within our lives. In doing so,

- we will take it seriously and implement it as best as we can,
 - we will always exercise good judgment, and
 - we will provide regular updates and seek your feedback
- We ask for your patience on this long journey towards becoming a missionary church
 - We ask you to consider your engagement with us in becoming a more welcoming and missionary church
 - Immaculate Conception offers many opportunities to get engaged.
 - Joining our Greeter Ministry could be a first step ... please contact the parish office if interested or sign-up at our Information & Welcome Booth.

In Brief

Jesus Christ personally loves each and every one,
he calls us into his graced community of disciples,
and sends us to invite others to be his disciples too.

May we be committed, patient,
and go forth together and in charity.

Let Us Walk on Water

- We know the Gospel passage (Matt. 14:22-33).
- That passage is about us!
- If we walk toward him in fear, we will sink.
- But if we walk in faith, the eyes on the Lord, we will be safe.
- Let us walk boldly, fearlessly, faithfully as we do the work of mission!

In bringing tonight's event to an end, let us rise one more time, and let us pray ...

Go out in the world gotta go out in the world.

Go out in the world tell ev'ryone the good news

Go out in the world gotta go out in the world.

Go out in the world tell ev'ryone the good good news

Go out in the world gotta go out in the world.

Go out in the world tell ev'ryone the good news

Go out in the world gotta go out in the world.

Go out in the world tell ev'ryone the good good news

Go and make disciples of all the nations. Go out in the world tell everyone the good news

Go and make disciples of all his people. Go out in the world tell everyone the good good news

Go out in the world gotta go out in the world.

Go out in the world tell ev'ryone the good news



Go out in the world gotta go out in the world.

Go out in the world tell ev'ryone the good good news

See the Lord is faithful to all his people. Go out in the world tell everyone the good news

See the Lord is faithful He loves his people. Go out in the world tell everyone the good good news

Go out in the world gotta go out in the world.

Go out in the world tell ev'ryone the good news

Go out in the world gotta go out in the world.

Go out in the world tell ev'ryone the good good news

Go out in the world gotta go out in the world.

Go out in the world tell ev'ryone the good news

Go out in the world gotta go out in the world.

Go out in the world tell ev'ryone the good good news

Questions?