

St. Michael Church
Newark, NY



Evangelization and Apologetics

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Evangelization and Apologetics

Why are we here tonight?

Is there someone particular you
want to be able to talk *with* (not to)
about our Faith?

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Family

Friends

Neighbors

Co-workers

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How about our
parish?

We should not assume just
because people are coming,
they have a relationship
with Jesus.

(Weddell, *Forming Intentional Disciples*,
10)

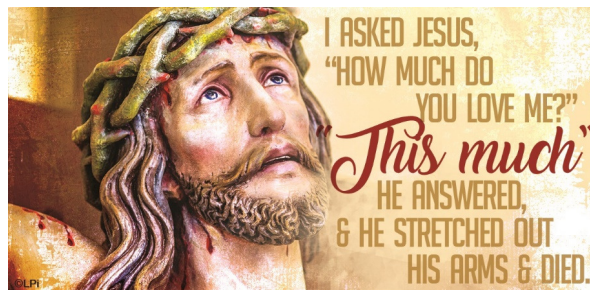
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How about the whole world?

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Who is Jesus to you?






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Who is Jesus to you?

- Police Officer
- Judge
- All Powerful
- Transcendent One
- Dictator
- Creator
- Physician
- Friend
- Brother
- Savior



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Describe your own relationship with Jesus

To evangelize others we must ask ourselves, “How has knowing Jesus changed my life?”

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Why are we here tonight? (cont'd)

The Parable of the Lost Sheep

The tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to listen to him, but the Pharisees and scribes began to complain, saying, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them." So to them he addressed this parable. "What man among you having a hundred sheep and losing one of them would not leave the ninety-nine in the desert and go after the lost one until he finds it? And when he does find it, he sets it on his shoulders with great joy and, upon his arrival home, he calls together his friends and neighbors and says to them, 'Rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep.' I tell you, in just the same way there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need of repentance.

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From Forming Intentional Disciples

- "The Pew "U.S. Religious Landscape Survey" of 2008 shows the fastest-growing religious demographic in the United States to be "unaffiliated" (aka "nones")." (19).
 - "It is essential that we grasp that "unaffiliated" today is *not* necessarily akin to "unbelief." (20)
 - Regarding "unaffiliated" in survey – "Thirty percent were formal members of a congregation." (21)

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From Forming Intentional Disciples (24-25)


- 30% born catholic still practicing with practicing defined as attending at least once a month
- 38% claim Catholic identify but seldom go
- 32 % no longer identify as Catholic

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So we need to do
some Evangelization
but **what is**
“Evangelization”?

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The early Church in
the Acts of the
Apostles

PENTECOST

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Evangelization vs. Proselytism

***“and the Church, as Pope Francis says, must
grow by attracting, not proselytizing.”***
(Ivereigh, *How to Defend the Faith*, 31)

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Pope Paul VI wrote in *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, “Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. *She exists in order to evangelize*, that is to say, ***in order to preach and teach, to be the channel of the gift of grace, to reconcile sinners with God, and to perpetuate Christ's sacrifice in the Mass***, which is the memorial of His death and glorious resurrection.” (14).

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Why evangelize?

“Because the eternal destinies – heaven or hell – of many millions of our fellow Catholics, not to mention, many millions of countless others, are hanging in the balance.”

(Martin, *The Urgency of the New Evangelization: Answering the Call*, 28)

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What about Apologetics?

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“Apologetics accomplishes this task by offering those who will listen rational explanations and defense of the truth, the highest and most important of all including the truth God exists, He loves you, He wants you to be happy.”

(Madrid, How to Do Apologetics, 14).

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“The goal of this book is not so much to *prove* the truth of Catholic teaching but to show how, using biblical, historical, and logical proofs, one can demonstrate confidently and effectively that Catholic teaching is reasonable, consistent, and compelling. The old saying is true, “You can lead a horse to water, but you can’t make him drink.”

(Madrid, *How to Do Apologetics*, 18)

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Think About Who You are Speaking To:

- Natural Apologetics – using logic and reason to show God exists
- Christian Apologetics – builds upon common belief there is a God
- Catholic Apologetics

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Pope Paul VI writes in *Evangelii Nuntiandi*

“Evangelization loses much of its force and effectiveness if it does not take into consideration the actual people to whom it is addresses, if it does not use their language, their signs and symbols, if it does not answer the questions they ask, and if it does not have an impact on their concrete life. But on the other hand, evangelization risks losing its power and disappearing altogether if one empties or adulterates its content under the context of translating it.” (63).

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Go and Make Disciples

46. Goal I: To bring about in all Catholics such an enthusiasm for their faith that, in living their faith in Jesus, they freely share it with others.

53. Goal II: To invite all people in the United States, whatever their social or cultural background, to hear the message of salvation in Jesus Christ so they may come to join us in the fullness of the Catholic faith.

56. Goal III: To foster gospel values *in our society*, promoting the dignity of the human person, the importance of the family, and the common good of our society, so that our nation may continue to be transformed by the saving power of Jesus Christ



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“*Transmitting the faith* means to create in every place and time the conditions for a *personal encounter* of individuals with Jesus Christ.” Synod on the New Evangelization, 2012



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Quote from Paul Wallace

“I am not a Christian because it “makes sense” or because someone sat down and diagrammed it for me. *I am a Christian because I have been loved deeply and unconditionally by Christians.*”

Paul Wallace, *Why I am a Christian* (online at psnt.net/blog/2010/12/why-i-am-a-christian/, as of May 8, 2012). (Weddell, *Forming Intentional Disciples*, 139)

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Evangelizing Ourselves

- I don't come to church because I don't get much out of it
- Reading the Bible and other spiritual works
- Pray for gifts of knowledge and courage from the Holy Spirit
- Attend adult faith learning opportunities

"I believe that God has made us with a powerful desire for truth, but also with a considerable capacity for self-delusion. We need to have our eyes *opened constantly*, so we can see things as they really are; it is an ongoing process. This is the struggle to conversion, and we are all called to it."

(Rivers, *From Maintenance to Mission*, 24)

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Samaritan Woman John 4:4-42

"One very effective RCIA director summed up her mission this way: "My job in the inquiry period is to help people fall in love with Jesus. My job in the catechumenate is to help people fall in love with the Church."

(Weddell, *Forming Intentional Disciples*, 143).

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How Do We Evangelize Others?

- St. Francis – Preach the Gospel always use words only when necessary
 - Think about why you come to church and share that with others
 - Be welcoming and friendly, not judgmental
 - Medicine of Mercy
- Practice what you preach
- Admitting our weaknesses can give credibility

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How Do We Evangelize Others? Cont'd

- When faced with a choice between Church and something else, choose Church
- Give someone a book/CD/dvd you have used (Martin, *The Urgency of the New Evangelization*, 93)

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“Dialogue is a form of evangelization. It is a way of making Christ and his Gospel known to others, while at the same time respecting their freedom of conscience and adherence to their own religious tradition”


(USCCB, United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, 131)

→ Small Christian Communities

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Small Christian Communities

- “Rather than aim at the conversion of individuals, Paul sought to establish communities of believers who could support one another in living a way of life that differed from their pagan neighbors. He recognized that the Holy Spirit dwells in such communities, gifting the members to “edify” or build up one another in their relationship with Christ (1 Cor 12).” (Martin, appendix, 122)
- Paul always had someone working with him. (Martin, appendix, 123)




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Five Thresholds

1. “Initial Trust: A person is able to *trust* or has a positive association with Jesus Christ, the Church, a Christian believer, or something identifiably Christian.”

(Weddell, *Forming Intentional Disciples*, 129)



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Five Thresholds

2. “Spiritual Curiosity: A person finds himself *intrigued* by or desiring to know more about Jesus, his life, and his teachings or some aspect of the Christian faith.”

(Weddell, *Forming Intentional Disciples*, 129)

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Five Thresholds

3. “Spiritual Openness: A person acknowledges to himself or herself and to God that he or she is open to the *possibility* of personal and spiritual change.” This is one of the most difficult transitions for a postmodern nonbeliever. Openness is not a commitment to change.”

(Weddell, *Forming Intentional Disciples, Forming*, 129)

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Five Thresholds

4. “Spiritual seeking: The person moves from essentially passive to actively seeking to know the God who is calling him or her. It is, if you will, “dating with a purpose” but not yet marriage.”

(Weddell, *Forming Intentional Disciples, Forming*, 129)

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Five Thresholds

5. “Intentional discipleship: This is the decision to “drop one’s nets,” to make a conscious commitment to follow Jesus in the midst of his Church as an obedient disciple to reorder one’s life accordingly.”

(Weddell, *Forming Intentional Disciples, Forming*, 130)

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But it’s hard.....

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Luke 12:49-53

“I have come to set the earth on fire, and how I wish it were already blazing! There is a baptism with which I must be baptized, and how great is my anguish until it is accomplished! Do you think that I have come to establish peace on the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. From now on a household of five will be divided, three against two and two against three; a father will be divided against his son and a son against his father, a mother against her daughter and a daughter against her mother, a mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.”

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Acts 5:41-42

“Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. And every day in the temple and at home they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ”

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- With regard to people's negative experiences with the Catholic Church

“But even these can be dismantled, little by little, with the right approach, which usually involves three ingredients:

1. Validating the other person's feeling of being wronged by Catholics
2. A sincere apology on your part for things other Catholics have done to cause hurt and alienation from the Church
3. A humble and since invitation to reconsider the Church in light of the evidence, rather than through the lens of past hurt”

(Madrid, *How to Do Apologetics*, 67)

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Final Thoughts



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- “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, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19-20)
- “The Pastor...is to make every effort **with the aid of the Christian faithful**, to bring the gospel message also to those who have ceased practicing their religion or who do not profess the truth faith. (Canon 528)” (Martin, *The Urgency*, 30)
- CCC 905 – lay people evangelize in the “ordinary circumstances of the world”

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“Our unconditional love can never mean doing the one we love the profound disservice of encouraging them in their sin, as painful as it may be. That would be like a doctor telling a patient that has cancer that “they’ll be alright” and not tell them the treatment that would actually save their life. Gross malpractice. Profoundly misguided compassion.” (Martin, *The Urgency*, 95)



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The Great Commission Page xiii – “The evangelist, however energetic and skillful he or she may be, **is powerless to accomplish anything without the grace of God.** As St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth” (1 Cor 3:6-7).”



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Resources

On my website (www.renewaloffaith.org)

- There is a whole section on Evangelization
- blog category “Images of God”

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Resources – Reference Sources

Catechism of the Catholic Church. Second Edition. Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997.

St. Joseph Edition of The New American Bible Revised Edition. New Jersey, Catholic Book Publishing Corp. 2010.

USCCB, United States Catholic Catechism for Adults. Washington, DC: USCCB, 2006.

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Resources – Vatican & USCCB

The Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization, “*I Desire Mercy*” (Mt 9:13): *24 Hours For the Lord, March 24-25 Pastoral Guide*

Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*. December 8, 1975. Available at www.vatican.va at http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi_en.html.

USCCB, *Go and Make Disciples*. 1992. Available online at <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/evangelization/go-and-make-disciples/go-and-make-disciples-a-national-plan-and-strategy-for-catholic-evangelization-in-the-united-states.cfm>

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Resources - Books

Byerley, Timothy, *The Great Commission: Models of Evangelization in American Catholicism*, Paulist Press, New York, 2008.

Ivereich, Austen and Kathryn Jean Lopez, *How to Defend the Faith Without Raising Your Voice: Civil Responses to Catholic Hot-button Issues, Revised and Updated*. Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, Huntington, IN. 2015

Madrid, Patrick, *How to Do Apologetics: Making the Case for our Faith*. Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, Huntington, IN. 2016.

Martin, Ralph *The Urgency of the New Evangelization: Answering the Call*. Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, Huntington, IN. 2013.

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Resources – Books cont'd

Rivers, Robert S. CSP, *From Maintenance to Mission: Evangelization and the Revitalization of the Parish*. Paulist Press, New York, 2005.

Steinfels Peter, *A People Adrift: The Crisis of the Roman Catholic Church in America*. Simon & Schuster, New York, 2003.

Weddell, Sherry A., *Forming Intentional Disciples: The Path to Knowing and Following Jesus*. Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., Huntington, IN. 2012.