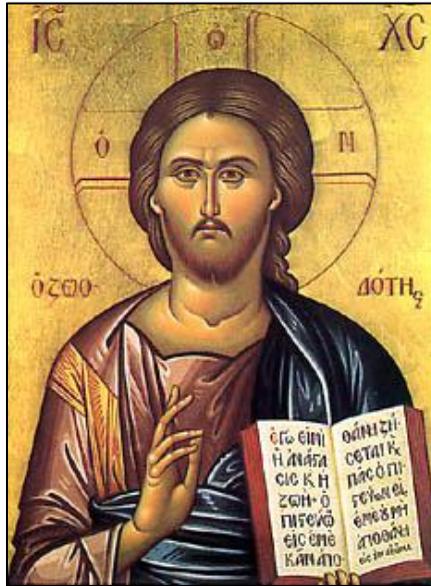


Teaching the Faith

Evangelization



*“What you heard from me through many witnesses
entrust to faithful people who will have
the ability to teach others as well.”*
(2 Tim 2:2)

Catholic Education & Formation
Diocese of Fargo

Teaching the Faith
Evangelization



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*“The eleven disciples went to Galilee,
to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them.
When they saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted.
Then Jesus approached and said to them,
‘All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me.
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 28:16-20)

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Introduction

The work of spreading the Gospel has been a constant characteristic of the Church's life for twenty centuries. Many of the great saints expended their lives in bringing the Good News to many peoples and cultures. We typically refer to these efforts as the missionary work of the Church and commonly think of them as being in far-off countries and places. This is somewhat understandable given that the Church has already been implanted in our culture and society and the missionary efforts which brought it about occurred in our recent or even more distant past. One of the main efforts of our present Holy Father, however, has been to bring a keen awareness to the whole Church of the ongoing necessity and urgency to be missionary, in short to evangelize. On many occasions, he has called for a renewed effort in this field, for a "new evangelization".

It is this call for the new evangelization and the needs perceived here in our own diocese that has been at the origin of this evangelization booklet. It is our hope that it will provide some practical help in furthering this mission of the Church in our area. It is not intended to be a complete "program", but rather a stimulus for each parish community to reflect and choose those means which are best suited to their concrete circumstances.

I. Principles of Evangelization

A. Where does the mission to evangelize come from?

B. What is evangelization?

C. Why is this important?

A. *Where does this mission come from?*

The mission to evangelize is rooted in the mission of the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world.

Plan of the Father

In His plan of loving goodness, God created us and our world, giving us a share in His life. Desiring to draw all to Himself, He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, as our Redeemer and Savior.

Mission of the Son, Our Redeemer

The mission of Our Lord Jesus Christ was to bear witness to the truth about God and man, and by the giving of His life, to save us for eternal life. The heart of the Savior burns with a consuming love and desire to accomplish His mission: “I have come to light a fire on the earth. How I wish the blaze were ignited!” (Lk 12,49).

*“I have come to light a
fire on the earth.
How I wish the blaze
were ignited!”
(Lk 12,49)*

Mission of the Holy Spirit

The Father and the Son send forth the Holy Spirit to continue the work of Christ in the hearts of the disciples. As the One who reminds us of all that Jesus said and did, the Holy Spirit guides, inspires, and directs the life and mission of the Church. He is the principal agent of evangelization.

Mission of the Church

The mission of the Church flows directly from the commission which Christ gave to His apostles: “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations.” (Mt 28,19). Christ sends the apostles and all the disciples to bring the Good News to others. This task of evangelizing constitutes the essential mission of the Church and her deepest identity. Having been evangelized herself, the Church sends out evangelizers. As baptized members of the Church, each of us is called to be an evangelizer.

Mission of the parish

Each parish is the local incarnation of the particular and universal Church. It is in the parish where the essentials of Christian life are to be lived. It follows that the mission of the universal Church is therefore the mission of each parish community. Thus, the most fundamental and permanent mission of any parish is to participate in its own characteristic ways in the mission of evangelization.

B. What is evangelization?

Act of evangelization and its methods

The act of evangelization consists in the sum total of efforts to make disciples of Christ of all people. It involves three major steps, each one leading to the other (although it is clear that each can be done simultaneously):

1. *The witness of holiness*
2. *Making disciples*
 - a. *Going forth and explicitly proclaiming the Gospel*
 - b. *Call to conversion and faith*
 - c. *Sacramental initiation (RCIA)*
 - d. *Institutional missionary program*
3. *Transformation of culture*

1. The witness of holiness

The most effective teachers are witnesses, those who teach by example. In order to draw others to Christ, we need to show in our lives how Christ has transformed us by His grace. This step will involve education for the parish community on the universal call to holiness, the promotion of personal conversion, and the sanctification of both clergy and faithful in their vocations in life.

*“Be holy, for I, the Lord,
your God, am holy”
Lev 19,2*

2. Making disciples

The making of disciples follows upon the witness of holiness as a sign of our gratitude to God for what He has done for us. Having been blessed by the gift of faith, we reach out to others in charity that they too might receive the gift of salvation in Christ. Our faith is not only an individual personal adherence to Christ, it is also living as a member of His Mystical Body, the Church - in short, it is both personal and communal. In every stage of evangelization, the person-to-person contact is the most effective and realistic. There are four essential activities which form the backbone of this apostolic effort.

a. Going forth and explicitly proclaiming the Gospel

The witness of holiness by itself is insufficient to adequately proclaim Christ. Therefore, imitating the example of Christ and His apostles, we need to go forth and seek out those who are not fully united to Christ and invite them to a personal, saving encounter with Christ.

Common to the many ways in which this can be done are the following efforts:

- seeking out others, befriending persons with genuine concern for their well-being
- sharing one's faith
- explicitly proclaiming the Gospel, announcing the "kerygma"*

b. Call to conversion and faith

Once a person has heard the Good News announced, we need to invite them to respond to the call of Christ. This call includes the invitation to conversion from sin and an embracing of the life of discipleship. This invitation must be done in fidelity to the truth, with ardent charity, and authentic respect for the dignity and freedom of the person. This is where authentic evangelization distinguishes itself from proselytism which does not respect the freedom of the person to decide for Christ. Speaking the truth in love is the way of Christ.

* What is the "kerygma"?

The fundamental content of the proclamation of the Gospel in evangelization is referred to as the "kerygma". It contains the essential truths of salvation as they were proclaimed by Christ. The following points are the key elements of this kerygma:

- witness to the Holy Trinity and God's salvific love for all
- salvation is offered to all in Jesus Christ, the Son of God who died and rose for us, and made us adopted children of the Father
- Christ founded the Church to draw all to Himself and extend to all the means of salvation as the seed and beginning of the kingdom of God
- all have a vocation to true freedom and a destiny which transcends time / life on earth

c. Sacramental initiation (RCIA)

When there is a positive response on the part of the person being evangelized, it is vital that their openness to Christ be nurtured and strengthened by the proper incorporation of the new believer into the life of the Church. Although inquiry classes may serve as a means of providing catechetical and even pastoral formation, the full and proper method for enabling the new believer to enter into a formal relationship with the Church is the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA). In fact, evangelization is effectively the same as what the RCIA calls the pre-catechumenate. The parish needs to have in place a way of welcoming and properly incorporating new believers so that they experience the fullness of the gifts of Christ in the Church.

d. Institutional missionary program

The act of making disciples would not be complete if there were not a permanent, ongoing effort to carry out this mission. Evangelization is not a one-time or occasional “program”—it must be a permanent characteristic of the life of every parish. Hence, a stable process of evangelization needs to be established and maintained which continually reaches out in this missionary way.

3. Transformation of culture

Evangelization not only seeks to bring individuals to Christ but also involves the effort to transform the culture of the community in which we live in order to bring it into harmony with the Gospel. Those institutions, practices, values, etc., of the surrounding culture need to be confronted with the Gospel in innovative ways. This social dimension is vitally important for the long-term effectiveness of the evangelization effort.

All the various methods which can be employed in evangelizing (i.e., door-to-door visitations, use of mass media, study groups, etc.) are intended to foster these fundamental steps.

Beneficiaries

To whom is this effort of evangelization directed? While God wills all to be saved, our approach to persons needs to take into account their diverse spiritual and life situations. We can distinguish three major categories.

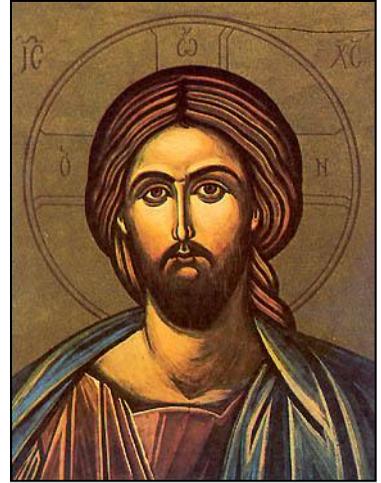
1. Non-believers: those who do not know Christ (including members of non-Christian religions) nor have effectively heard the Gospel proclaimed. This is what the Church calls the *mission ad gentes*. Although we do not tend to think of this group as prevalent here in America, in fact, in our increasingly secular and post-Christian world, increasing numbers of our contemporaries have truly no real knowledge of religion, Christ or the Gospel He proclaimed.
2. Non-practicing Christians: those who have lapsed in the practice of their faith due to various causes of dechristianization so prevalent today, and thus have lost a living sense of the faith.
3. Practicing believing Christians: it is also necessary to continually call to conversion and to the fullness of the faith all Christians. We evangelize Catholics in order to deepen, consolidate, nourish, and make ever more mature their active faith. We strive for unity with our fellow Christians through various efforts of ecumenism.

C. Why is this important?

Novo Millennio Inuente (At the Beginning of the New Millennium)

Although the mission of evangelization is always important, it is especially urgent and vital at this point in the Church's life. The beginning of the new millennium was marked by the Great Jubilee celebrating the 2000th anniversary of the birth of Jesus Christ, Our Saviour and Lord. Now we need to profit from the immeasurable graces received, by firm conviction and action. Wordless witness is insufficient.

Pope John Paul II exhorts us, "We must revive in ourselves the burning conviction of Paul, who cried out, 'Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel' (1 Cor 9:16, NMI 40)." Repeatedly, our Holy Father has insisted that now is the time to commit all of the Church's energies to a new evangelization and to the *mission ad gentes*. In other words, the Church needs to engage all her members, resources, and finances with new ardor, methods, and expression to answer the call to evangelize. Why? God wills all to be saved and many do not know Jesus Christ, quite simply because no one has told them (cf. Rom 10:14).



Crossroads of post-modern world

Not only is this an important moment in the life of the Church, but the world also finds itself at a crossroads of significance. There is much turmoil in families, communities and nations. A crucial choice is before humanity: in choosing God over self, we can usher in a new springtime of hope but if we choose ourselves against God, we will see a new age of barbarism. As disciples of the Lord, we have a great treasure to offer to our contemporaries - the Good News that we have seen, heard, and touched Jesus Christ, who has made it possible for each person to be with Him forever (cf. 1 Jn 1:1-4)!

Statistical Information for the Diocese of Fargo - Fall 2001

County	Pop. 2000	Pop. 1990	1990 data of # of Catholics	1990 data of # other religions	Unchurched % in 1990	Unchurched Estimates 2000
Barnes	11,775	12,545	2624	7188	22%	2,565
Benson	6,964	7,198	4785	3,029	-9%	-596
Bottineau	7,149	8,011	912	5,911	15%	1,060
Cass	123,138	102,874	21,488	46,464	34%	41,801
Cavalier	4,831	6,064	2,389	2,928	12%	595
Dickey	5,757	6,107	930	3,934	20%	1,172
Eddy	2,757	2,951	570	1,748	21%	591
Foster	3,759	3,983	959	2,666	9%	338
Grand Forks	66,109	70,683	14,650	26,291	42%	27,817
Griggs	2,754	3,303	415	2,081	24%	673
Kidder	2,753	3,332	460	2,492	11%	314
La Moure	4,701	6,383	1,387	4,145	13%	627
Logan	2,308	2,847	1,125	1,634	3%	71
McHenry	5,987	6,528	2,034	4,242	4%	231
*McIntosh	3,390	4,021	528	3,758	-7%	-223
Nelson	3,715	4,410	836	3,197	9%	318
Pembina	8,585	9,238	2,124	5,735	15%	1,282
Pierce	4,657	6,052	2,017	2,084	32%	1,501
Ramsey	12,066	12,681	4,675	6,340	13%	1,585
Ransom	5,890	5,921	1,181	4,431	5%	307
Richland	17,998	18,148	6,451	9,832	10%	1,850
*Rolette	13,674	12,772	14,850	2,499	-36%	-4,900
Sargent	4,366	4,549	972	3,308	6%	258
Sheridan	1,710	2,148	96	1,509	25%	432
*Steele	2,258	2,420	286	2,272	-6%	-129
Stutsman	21,908	22,241	4,311	12,090	26%	5,753
Towner	2,876	3,627	861	2,316	12%	357
Traill	8,477	8,752	748	7,000	11%	972
Walsh	12,389	13,840	5,503	6,539	13%	1,609
Wells	5,102	5,864	1,656	3,769	7%	382

* Negative numbers are attributed to the membership being greater than the population. Reasons for this discrepancy are given as such: U.S. Census undercount, church membership overcount, or county of residence differing from county of membership.

References

Bradley, M.; Green, N.; Jones, D.; Lynn, M.; McNeil, L, (1990) Churches and Church Membership in the United States 1990. Glenmary Research Center: Atlanta.

United States Census Bureau Population statistics 1990 and 2000.

II. Pastoral Plan for Catholic Evangelization

1. Spiritual Preparation
2. Initial Parish Formation
3. Personal Evangelization
4. Establishment of
Parish Evangelization Teams
5. Implementation of
Evangelization Action Plan

The following is a step-by-step process which can guide the parish in the effort to establish or widen the apostolate of evangelization. To the degree that it is helpful, it is offered for your reflection.

1. Spiritual Preparation

Why spiritual preparation? Given the fact that the Holy Spirit is the principal agent of evangelization, it is important to prepare the way by invoking the grace of God and asking His blessings upon all those involved. The success of evangelization depends in large part upon the spiritual participation of all (even if only a percentage of parishioners are actively and visibly involved in evangelization).

a. Communal prayer:

- call for more frequent reception of sacraments (i.e. daily Mass, frequent confession)
- include evangelization efforts in the petitions at Mass
- special preparatory novena
- offer special times of Eucharistic adoration for the intention of evangelization
- consecration of parish/family to the Sacred Heart of Jesus
- foster devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, especially under the title of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Star of the New Evangelization
- increase prayer time within families, e.g. family Rosary

b. Personal prayer

- prayer cards for individual, family, or group use
- encouragement of various groups within parish to pray for this intention

The focus of the prayer is essentially twofold:

1. to discern the will of God specific to this parish community as concerns evangelization (what exactly does God want us to do),
2. to ask God for the grace to be able to carry out His will generously.

This focus should not only occur at the beginning of evangelization efforts but should remain as an ongoing pattern of parish prayer life.

2. Initial Parish Formation

The entire parish needs to be educated and formed with respect to the mission of evangelization. Since the parish participates on the local level in the mission of the universal Church, evangelization needs to be seen as the foundational and all-encompassing mission of the local parish. A number of means can be employed to communicate this message:

- evangelizing homilies (emphasis on profound conversion)
- homilies regarding the mission of evangelization
- study/discussion groups which focus on Church documents that teach about evangelization (see resources listed below)
- adult education classes on the new evangelization
- incorporation of evangelization mission into all parish meetings, e.g. Knights of Columbus, Catholic Daughters, altar societies, committees, parish councils, etc.
- incorporation of evangelization mission into all catechetical efforts, including catechesis for children and youth ministry

Resources:

Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi (On Evangelization in the Modern World)*, study guide available from Diocese

John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio (Mission of the Redeemer)*

John Paul II, *Ecclesia in America (The Church in America)*

John Paul II, *Novo Millennio Inuente (At the Beginning of the New Millennium)*

USCCB, *Go & Make Disciples: A National Plan and Strategy for Catholic Evangelization in the United States*

3. Personal Evangelization

Since the first necessary step of evangelization is the witness of holiness, it will be important to promote the universal call to holiness among parishioners, in short to evangelize ourselves. Helping all to see how this call flows from our Baptismal vocation as members of Christ's Body, His Family, the Church, will be an encouragement for all to more earnestly seek to grow in holiness.

- homilies on the call to be holy and what that means, i.e. adherence to Church teaching, faithful practice of the sacraments, living the moral life, prayerful personal following of Christ, active evangelizing
- parish missions/retreats focusing upon holiness as the specific call of the Christian, including ongoing conversion and the imitation of Christ; sanctification of time
- encourage individual, family, and parish prayer for the sanctification of individuals, families, and the parish and local community
- practical homilies and adult education on how to live call to holiness in specific vocations or states, i.e. in marriage and family life, as a youth, in the work place, in the local community (social or political sense), in religious life, in the priesthood, etc.
- encouragement of personal reflection on how God has worked / works in one's life
- practical encouragement on how to live essentials of spiritual life, i.e. prayer, penance, service

Resources:

Fr. Benedict Groeschel, C.F.R., *The Reform of the Renewal*, Ignatius Press

4. Establishment of Parish Evangelization Team

Although the work of evangelization concerns everyone in the parish, it is practical to spearhead the work by establishing an evangelization team. This team does NOT do all the evangelization for the parish, but rather facilitates and coordinates the whole parish for the mission of evangelization. They keep in the forefront the need to bring the Gospel to everyone. The following sequential steps identify the essential action items:

- a. Identify and specify purpose of team (something like a written mission statement)
- b. Select team members (according to qualifications and needs of the mission)
- c. Form team members
 - formation sessions could comprise spiritual, educational, and social elements
 - in the spiritual life: prayer, conversion, personal holiness
 - deepening of catechesis in 7-fold foundation:
 - Salvation history: Old Testament, New Testament, Church History
 - Catechism: Creed, Sacraments, Moral life, Prayer
 - in the theological/pastoral principles and methods of Catholic evangelization
 - formation must be Christocentric and ongoing
- d. Discern prayerfully an action plan for parish (pastor and team)*
 - assess local needs and situation of parish community (churched and unchurched)
 - choose methods of evangelization most appropriate for local circumstances, e.g.
 - home visitation
 - distribution of pamphlets on Catholic life, faith and practice
 - welcome packets for persons new to the community
 - media campaign (billboards, radio, television, mailings, email, newspapers)
- e. Lead other parish entities to evangelization outlook and approach

**** See following pages for questions to assist with action plan***

Assessment questions

1. Socio-cultural situation

- What is the ethnic background and history of our people? Our basic characteristics?
- What is the situation of family life presently? (i.e., number of intact families, divorces, etc.)
- What are some of the major characteristics of our mentality / basic attitudes?
- What is the general economic situation of our parishioners? (i.e., local contours of rural crisis, etc.)

2. Religious situation

- What is the sense of the sacred among our people?
- What is the sense of the need for religion? What is the religious makeup of our local community (i.e. percentage of Catholics, Protestants, unchurched, etc.)? What are the current trends?
- What is the level of faithful practice of faith? How strongly does the faith influence our people's lives?
- What is the intensity and maturity of spiritual life in the parish?
- What is the level of morality within the community? With respect to morality, what are the strengths and problem-areas of our community?

3. Pastoral action

- What are we doing now in the parish to evangelize? What level of success are we having with these efforts?
- What specific action are we already taking to implement the universal call to holiness, the call to make disciples, and to transform the culture in which we live?
- What level of adult education exists in the parish to prepare the faithful to take up this mission?
- How do we presently incorporate new members into the Church?

Questions to assist in formulation of action plan

1. The witness to holiness

- What can we do to help all in parish know and embrace their vocation to holiness?
- What are some ways to encourage personal conversion? how can the parish be an effective example of conversion? How can we help parishioners to grow in a personal vital relationship with Christ?
- In what ways can our parish promote the holiness of marriage and family life? of youth?
- How does one sanctify work?
- What can we do to promote the sense of following God's call in life? What promotion can be done for vocations to the priesthood, religious life, consecrated lay state?

2. Making disciples

- Are we a welcoming parish? How can we insure that newcomers are welcome and befriended?
- What would be the best ways for us to seek out those who do not come to church? Those who might be alienated from any faith?
- How should we share our faith with those who do not believe? how do we tell them about salvation in Christ?
- What would be some ways of communicating the kerygma to another person while being both faithful to the truth of the Gospel and generous in loving the person? How should we invite them to faith?
- What is the process now in place in the parish to integrate new (or returned) believers into the parish? How can we implement the RCIA in our circumstances?
- How can we maintain a constant effort to evangelize others in our community?

3. Transforming culture

- What can we do in our local community to foster a wider diffusion of Christian values?
- In what ways can we be of service to others in the community that will possibly open the doors to Christ more fully?

5. Implementation of Evangelization Action Plan

The commitment of the whole parish is needed to accomplish the mission. Emphasis should be given to the **permanency and urgency** of the mission to evangelize. It should also be stressed that it is the concern of all, not just those who have directly volunteered to assist.

- a. Continue spiritual preparation, continuing public prayer for evangelization
- b. Communicate to the whole parish the action plan decided upon
- c. Recruit evangelizers from the whole parish (leadership from the core team)
- d. Implement plan
- e. Evaluate plan after specified time and make necessary adjustments

Appendix 1

Bishop James S. Sullivan

Springtime in North Dakota &
“The New Springtime of Christianity”

New Earth Column, April 1999

“Behold, I make all things new!”

“Behold, I make all things new”! (Rev 21:5). The central event of our Faith, the resurrection of Our Lord from the dead, is also the event which so clearly shows us the meaning of other smaller “resurrections”. I am thinking particularly of the resurrection miracle which happens once every year—the miracle of Spring, the almost incredible fact that the apparently dead springs back to life. Trees, to all appearances dead, are clothed once again in the finery of splendid green leaves. Flowers of many colors begin to dot a landscape only recently without color. Hibernating, or semi-hibernating mammals emerge from their winter holes—often displaying to the world their new offspring. And, we all get “spring fever”—which has always seemed to me a misnomer. Our minds and bodies seem to take on a new life, as we rejoice in the new life all around us.

THE NEW LIFE OF SPRING, NEW LIFE WITH THE RESURRECTED CHRIST

What happens on earth is always pointing us heavenwards. I said a moment ago that Our Lord’s resurrection shows us the meaning of other smaller “resurrections”. It is also true that these springtime resurrections help to make credible for us that “a Man should rise from the dead” (cf. Lk 16:31).

Now, I know you are reading these lines in April. And, yes, I know that North Dakota is often said to be a State which bypasses Spring, going instead immediately from winter to summer. But, think a moment. The best things are often the briefest things (at least this side of heaven). And there are certainly a few weeks in North Dakota when the fragrance from blossoming lilacs and other flowering trees send out a loveliness which seems to call out to all of our senses: especially sight, smell, and touch. As for hearing, some people claim to be able to hear the greenery grow. And it is said that taste is largely smell.

Only poets, really, are able to capture the lifeblood of Spring. Listen to the priest-poet Gerard Manley Hopkins:

*Nothing is so beautiful as spring —
When weeds, in wheels, shoot long and lovely and lush;
Thrush's eggs look little low heavens, and thrush
Through the echoing timber does so rinse and wring
The ear, it strikes like lightnings to hear him sing;
The glassy peartree leaves and blooms, they brush
The descending blue ... with richness
What is all this juice and all this joy?
A strain of the earth's sweet being in the beginning
In Eden's garden*

The saints, too, seem to have more adequate words than most of us to express the new life which Christ, in his Resurrection, has inaugurated for us. Listen to this prayer of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux. “Lord, you have passed over into new life, and you now invite us to pass over also. In these past days we have grieved at your suffering and mourned at your death. We have given ourselves over to repentance and prayer, to abstinence and serious resolve. Now at Easter you tell us that we have died to sin. Yet, if this be true, how can we remain on earth? How can we pass over to your risen life, while we are still in this world? Will we not be just as meddlesome, just as lazy, just as selfish as before? Will we not still be bad-tempered and stubborn, enmeshed in all the vices of the past? We pray that as we pass over to you, our faces will never look back. **Instead, let us, like you, make heaven on earth**”.

I have emphasized especially the last phrase of St. Bernard. I think it is something for all of us to think about doing—and 1999 is a very good time to start!

A NEW SPRINGTIME FOR CHRISTIANITY

Our Holy Father is certainly thinking along these lines. So often in the last few years Pope John Paul II has spoken about the **“new Springtime of Christianity”** which we are to prepare for and expect as the new millennium dawns. Two of the most important documents about the Great Jubilee Year 2,000, namely (1) *Tertio millennio adveniente (On the Coming of the New Millennium)*, issued in 1994, and containing complete information on the meaning of the Great Jubilee Year, together with directives for how 1997, 1998, and 1999 are to be years of preparation for the Jubilee Year, and (2) *Incarnationis mysterium (The Mystery of the Incarnation)*, issued this past November, known as a “Bull of Indiction”, and decreeing that the Great Jubilee begins on Christmas Eve 1999 and concludes January 6, 2001 -- both of these very recent documents speak, almost in a prophetic tone, about the **“new Springtime of Christianity”** which we are to expect as the new millennium dawns.

But, even earlier than this we find the Pope speaking in all confidence about the coming new springtime of Christianity. In his 1990 encyclical, *Redemptoris Missio (The Mission of the Redeemer)*, John Paul II writes: “If we look at today’s world, we are struck by many negative factors that can lead to pessimism. But this feeling is unjustified: we have faith in God our Father and Lord, in his goodness and mercy. As the third millennium of the Redemption draws near, God is preparing a **great springtime for Christianity**, and we can already see its

first signs. In fact, both in the non-Christian world and in the traditionally Christian world, people are gradually drawing closer to Gospel ideals and values, a development which the Church seeks to encourage. Today in fact there is a new consensus among peoples about these values: the rejection of violence and war; respect for the human person and for human rights; the desire for freedom, justice and brotherhood; the surmounting of different forms of racism and nationalism; the affirmation of the dignity and role of women.”

*“As the third millennium of the
Redemption draws near,
God is preparing
a great springtime for
Christianity,
and we can already
see its first signs.”*

In *Tertio millennio adveniente*, John Paul draws attention to the great works accomplished by his predecessors John XXIII, Paul VI, and John Paul 1, and remarks: “What these Popes have accomplished during and since the Council, in their Magisterium no less than in their pastoral activity, has certainly made a significant contribution to the preparation of that **new springtime of Christian life** which will be revealed by the Great Jubilee, if Christians are docile to the action of the Holy Spirit.”

A NEW SPRINGTIME OF CHRISTIANITY, OR A NEW ERA OF BARBARISM?

A moment ago, I wrote of the Pope speaking ‘in all confidence’ and ‘almost in a prophetic tone’ about this expected new springtime. But, note the “**if**” in the just above passage: “... **if** Christians are docile to the action of the Holy Spirit”. Of course, the Pope expects us to be docile, but his “**if**” is once again reflected in a recent talk to a group of bishops from the United States. The Pope said to them: “In my talks to the bishops ... I have tried to reflect on aspects of your episcopal ministry which can open the door **to the great springtime of Christianity** which God is preparing as we enter the third Christian millennium, and of which we can already see the first signs [But] at the end of the second millennium, humanity stands at a kind of crossroads. As pastors responsible for the life of the church, we need to meditate deeply on the signs of a new spiritual crisis whose dangers are apparent not only at the personal level but regarding civilization itself. **If** this crisis deepens, utilitarianism will increasingly reduce human beings to objects for manipulation. **If** the moral truth revealed in the dignity of the human person does not discipline and direct the explosive energies of technology, a **new era of barbarism** rather than a **springtime of hope** may well follow this century of tears.”

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You may wonder, as I did at first, how the Pope reconciles his optimism about the coming of a new springtime, with his “if” passages which seem to reflect a fear that, instead of a new springtime, we may experience “a new era of barbarism”. Reading so many of the Pope’s texts on this topic convinces me that John Paul’s prediction of a “new springtime of Christianity” weighs heavier on the scale than his concern that “a new era of barbarism” might instead be in the offing. And I am convinced, too, that the words of St. Paul, which the Pope himself has quoted in similar contexts, explain how the Pope can be aware of both possibilities, yet give much the greater weight to the expectation of a new springtime for the Church. Paul’s words to the Romans say it all: “Where sin abounds, grace abounds the more”.

THE NEW SPRINGTIME, AND THE NEW EVANGELIZATION

Even more often than the Pope refers to the “new Springtime of Christianity” he speaks of “**the new evangelization**”. These two really go hand in hand. The new Springtime of Christianity is, however, dependent upon the effectiveness of the new evangelization.

WHAT IS EVANGELIZATION?

What, then, is “the new evangelization”? First of all, what is **evangelization**? Evangelization is the zealous proclamation of the Gospel in order to bring others to Christ and his Church. *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (*On Evangelization in the Modern World*) is the document of Pope Paul VI which Pope John Paul II continually refers to when he speaks of evangelization. In this document we read that “evangelizing means to bring the Good News into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new ... But there is no new humanity if there are not first of all new persons renewed by baptism, and by lives lived according to the Gospel”. Evangelization, therefore, includes three things: (1) interior conversion to Christ and his Church, (2) affecting not only the individual person but the whole culture, and (3) as a result, changing this culture and its institutions to make them Christian and Catholic.

WHAT IS “THE NEW EVANGELIZATION”?

Finally, then, what is “**the new evangelization**”? *Ecclesia in America (The Church in America)*, the Pope’s apostolic exhortation issued in Mexico City in January of this year (just prior to his visit to St. Louis), helps answer our question. The central message of *Ecclesia in America* is precisely the new evangelization. The Holy Father writes that “to evangelize is the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her most profound identity. ... The new and unique situation in which the world and the Church find themselves at the threshold of the Third Millennium, and the urgent needs which result, means that the mission of evangelization today calls for a new program which can be defined as a ‘new evangelization’. As the Church’s Supreme Pastor, I urgently desire to encourage all the members of God’s People, particularly those living in America—where I first appealed for a commitment ‘new in its ardor, methods and expression,—to take up this project and to cooperate in carrying it out. In accepting this mission, everyone should keep in mind that the *vital core of the new evangelization* must be a clear and unequivocal proclamation of the person of Jesus Christ, that is, the preaching of his name, his teaching, his life, his promises and the Kingdom which he has gained for us by his Paschal Mystery.”

WHY IS THE NEW EVANGELIZATION NEEDED?

When the Pope was asked by a reporter what “the new evangelization” meant the Pope referred the reporter to Paul VI’s *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, and to his own encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*. He pointed out that these two documents represent a new synthesis of the Church’s teaching about evangelization. (I would be happy to send a copy of *Redemptoris Missio* to anyone who writes to me requesting a copy.) The Pope did go on to answer the reporter’s question at some length. Quite succinctly, he said that the new evangelization is a response to the new challenges that the contemporary world creates for the mission of the Church. We can all think of what these challenges are. They are all the elements of the latter part of the 20th century which cause fear and uncertainty, skepticism and self-centeredness, violence and despair, around the

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world. Even those countries which have once been evangelized are now in need of a re-evangelization, given the strong pressures which secular society exerts upon all of us—especially given the instantaneity of worldwide communications technology. One could just as well say: given the new pressures which “the world, the flesh, and the devil” exert upon us. But, you may object, these are nothing new. Oh, but they are! The world, the flesh, and the devil assume ever new forms. If we do not admit their ‘newness’ we are not ‘giving the devil his due’ as the old expression goes.

“DO NOT BE AFRAID”

But in the midst of all this, Pope John Paul II repeats again and again the message with which he began his pastoral ministry: “Do not be afraid”. “The merciful Father”, says the Pope, “is now doing something new, and in the love which forgives he anticipates the new heavens and the new earth. Therefore, so that there may be a renewed commitment to Christian witness in the world to the next millennium, let faith be refreshed, let hope increase and let charity exert itself still more” (*Incarnationis Misterium*, 11). Notice how often the word ‘new’ appears in just this one sentence!

*“The merciful Father ...
is now doing
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THE NEW MILLENNIUM, A NEW SPRINGTIME OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT

Almost four years ago our Holy Father addressed the United Nations General Assembly in New York. As my concluding words to you this month, I give you the marvelous gift of the Pope’s concluding words to the U.N.: “We must not be afraid of the future. We must not be afraid of man. It is no accident that we are here. Each and every human person has been created in the ‘image and likeness’ of the One who is the origin of all that is. We have within us the capacities for wisdom and virtue. With these gifts, and with the help of God’s grace, we can build in the next century and the next millennium a civilization worthy of the human person, a true culture of freedom. We can and must do so! And in doing so, we shall see that the tears of this century have prepared the ground for **a new springtime of the human spirit**”.

Appendix 2

History of Evangelization

The history of the Church is marked by examples of great dedication and heroism in those who responded to the call of Christ to proclaim the Gospel to all nations. As we consider the ways in which we too may respond to the call to “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations” (Mt 28:19), we can draw inspiration from a survey of evangelization throughout history. In the lives of the great evangelizers, we see the principles of evangelization made manifest. They were active in seeking out and inviting others to Christ. The witness of a holy life was instrumental in their proclamation of the Gospel. And, the call to conversion and to transform culture were an essential part of the message they proclaimed.

St. Paul is a premiere example of an evangelizer who was tireless in proclaiming the Gospel of Christ to all, seeking others out and inviting them to faith. His story is familiar to us. Traveling widely throughout Asia Minor, he preached, established churches, and called persons to conversion through his 14 canonical epistles. Like so many to follow him, he died for his faith in Christ; he was beheaded in the year 67 A.D.

Among the many pictures we have of **St. Peter** is one of evangelizer intent upon calling all to conversion and faith. On the day of Pentecost, he preached the Gospel of Christ with ardor to the crowds. In response, “they were cut to the heart, and they asked Peter and the other apostles, “What are we to do, my brothers?” Peter (said) to them, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the holy Spirit.” (Act 2:37-38) As St. Paul, he did not limit the proclamation of the Gospel to the Jews. Instead, he recognized and proclaimed “I see that God shows no partiality.” He initiated the Gentiles into the life of the Church along with his fellow Jews, saying “Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people, who have received the holy Spirit even as we have?” (cf. Acts 10)

The continuing spread of the Gospel throughout the world was made possible by the efforts of other dedicated souls such as **St. Columba**, who spent 15 years preaching throughout Ireland and areas of Scotland in the sixth century A.D. At close to the same time period, **St. Augustine of Canterbury** was chosen by **St. Gregory the Great** to evangelize in England. Through the efforts of St. Augustine, the faith brought about transformation of culture in the areas it touched. For example, pagan temples were consecrated for Christian worship and pagan feast days became instead feast days for martyrs.

The spread of the Gospel of Christ was advanced in Germany through the efforts of **St. Boniface of Mainz** (675-754). In his missionary endeavors, St. Boniface encountered a population that had been evangelized, yet was subject to heresy and superstition, and clung to aspects of old pagan religions. To bolster his efforts, he spent three years training with a fellow missionary with long-time experience in Holland, before returning to work with the Christian faithful, calling them to reform and conversion.



One of the saints recognized as a patron of evangelization, the Spanish born Jesuit **St. Francis Xavier**, converted tens of thousands to Christianity, going forth to preach in Mozambique, India, New Guinea, the Phillipines, and Japan. St. Francis proclaimed the Gospel both to natives and to his fellow Europeans. In spite of difficulties of language, lack of funds and lack of cooperation, he brought about encounters between faith and culture as he lived among the natives and adopted their customs. Although he had aspirations to go on to China to preach the Gospel, he died before this hope was realized.

Among the heroic missionaries of the faith are those who proclaimed the Gospel on our own continent. For instance, **Sts. Isaac Joques, Rene Goupil, and John de Brebeuf** were French Jesuits who lived among the Hurons in the 1600's. Although their efforts of evangelization among the Hurons met with success, their work among the Iroquois did not. At one point in their travels, they were ambushed by Iroquois, and later tortured and martyred.

The first established missionary endeavors to North Dakota were carried out by **Frs. Joseph Provencher and Sever Dumoulin**, who were sent from Quebec upon request from the director of a fur-trading company. They evangelized the French-Indians of the area, establishing a settlement in Pembina, ND in the early decades of the 1800's. Here, a log Church was erected and dedicated to the patron of evangelization, St. Francis Xavier. The bishop of Quebec who sent them to North Dakota issued instructions that mirror the principles of evangelization; they were to attend to their own interior conversion, call others to conversion, go forth to preach, and provide service to others.

“Persuaded that the preaching of the Gospel is the most assured means of obtaining these happy results they shall neglect no occasion to inculcate the Gospel’s principles and maxims, whether in their private conversations or in their public instructions.”

Bishop Octave Plessis
of Quebec, to priests sent
to North Dakota

The next priest to spend an extended period of time at the parish in Pembina was **Fr. George A. Belcourt**, who took up residence there in 1848. Fr. Belcourt learned the Algonquin and Ojibway languages, and traveled many miles on missionary endeavors throughout the territory. He also started schools, and began an order of teaching sisters, the Sisters of the Propagation of the Faith, to staff them. Although Belcourt had many struggles with his superiors and others, he nonetheless had a positive influence in promoting the Gospel in North Dakota.

Another prominent character in the history of evangelization in North Dakota was **Bishop John Shanley**, who became the first bishop of the area in 1889. Shanley exhibited many characteristics of an ardent evangelizer. He was very involved in bringing the Gospel to bear upon the culture, being outspoken against the easy divorce laws of the state, and against uncontrolled production and use of alcoholic beverages. He was also a leader in actively going forth to proclaim the Gospel. He frequently wrote letters to editors of state papers, and inaugurated his own Diocesan paper in 1909. Further, when he traveled to visit parishes, he would preach at the Churches in the morning, then offer a lecture to the public in the evening.¹

More recently, a number of Catholic faithful of the Diocese made themselves available to evangelize to families throughout North Dakota. The goal of the Opening Doors/Opening Hearts program, inaugurated in the Diocese in 1991, was to reach every Catholic home with the message of the Gospel. Two-person teams went door to door, visiting with individuals and families about the faith, at times providing an avenue for reconciliation with the Church, at times helping others to understand teachings of the Church. A second phase of the program has provided educational opportunities for people to grow in their knowledge of the faith.

Our survey has highlighted some of the most prominent of the evangelizers throughout history. Doubtless, many others, priests, religious, teachers, and laity of all walks of life evangelized in many effective, though perhaps more hidden ways. May we follow their lead, and the example of Our Lady, the patron of the new evangelization, in our own efforts to bring Christ to others.

¹Material on North Dakota history drawn from *Beyond Red River*, Chapters 1-3

Appendix 3

Additional Resources for Evangelization

Note: The following are resources that you may find helpful; it is by no means an exhaustive list. Contact information for the sources indicated is listed under Part II.

I. For Implementing Pastoral Plan of Catholic Evangelization

A. Spiritual Preparation

1. ***Praying in the Presence of Our Lord: Prayers for Eucharistic Adoration***, by Fr. Benedict Groeschel, C.F.R. Available from Our Sunday Visitor

B. Initial Parish Formation

1. ***Church documents on Evangelization***, available from Pauline Books & Media
2. The ***USCCB Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis*** has resources at <http://www.usccb.org/about/evangelization-and-catechesis/index.cfm>
3. ***Thy Kingdom Come: A Manual for Evangelization*** from the USCCB
4. ***John Paul II & the New Evangelization***, available from Ignatius Press

Teachers, theologians, and evangelizers spell out a vision and strategies for implementing evangelization at the local level;

5. ***Springtime of Evangelization***, available from Ignatius Press

The Complete Texts of the Holy Father's 1998 ad Limina Addresses to the Bishops of the United States

6. ***"The Task of Evangelization in Secular America,"*** *Daily Catholic*, March 4, 1998

Available at <http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?recnum=286>

7. ***"Speaking the Truth in Love,"*** *The Catholic Faith*, September/October 1999, pp. 9-15.

Articles by Archbishop Charles Chaput, OFM Cap. address evangelization in our culture, noting themes such as silence, freedom, truth, personal relationship with God, persecution, etc.

8. ***Evangelization: Job of All Christians Pope John Paul II and the New Evangelization How to Evangelize*** all available from Evangelization 2000

These are video presentations by Fr. Tom Forrest, C.S.R., Director of Evangelization 2000. His presentation is rich in content, as he draws from the principles put forth by Church documents and applies them to the situation of Church in America. He applies principles to concrete situations in an engaging manner.

9. ***Summary of Evangelization in the Modern World*** available from Paulist National Catholic Evangelization Association

This is a small, easy to read, but unofficial summary of the larger document.

10. ***Study Guide on Evangelii Nuntiandi***, by Stella Jeffrey, available from Catholic Education & Formation, Diocese of Fargo.

Contains complete text, Liturgy of the Word, study notes, and discussion guide.

C. Personal Evangelization

1. ***The Reform of the Renewal***, by Fr. Benedict Groeschel, C.F.R., available from Ignatius Press

Addresses personal conversion in midst of culture of the present day.

D. Establishment of Parish Evangelization Team

1. ***Creating the Evangelizing Parish*** by Kenneth Boyack, C.S.P., & Frank DeSiano, C.S.P., available from Paulist Press

Chapters cover definitions, principles of evangelization, imaging the evangelizing parish, and strategies for parish evangelization. Among topics covered are formation of evangelization teams and evangelization of the unchurched and inactive Catholics. Discussion questions at the end of each chapter aid the reader to apply content to their parish situation. Practical suggestions are provided. A chapter entitled “A Potpourri of Evangelizing Projects” offers about 20 suggested activities.

2. ***12 Painless Ways to Evangelize***, available from Catholic Answers

Small, inexpensive booklet which provides ideas for individuals or parish evangelization teams.

E. Implementation of Evangelization Action Plan

1. ***Creating the Evangelizing Parish*** by Kenneth Boyack, C.S.P., & Frank DeSiano, C.S.P., available from Paulist Press

This book has many practical ideas. (It is described in greater detail above)

2. ***Pillar of Fire, Pillar of Truth*** available from Catholic Answers

This small, inexpensive booklet could be used as a handout in evangelization efforts. It covers basic Catholic beliefs including the foundation of the Church by Christ, four marks of the Church, Revelation, the sacraments, prayer, salvation, heaven.

3. ***Envoy*** subscription information available at <http://www.envoymagazine.com/>

Envoy is a magazine of Catholic apologetics and evangelization. It is true to its mission statement, “to present the truth of the Catholic Faith in a fresh, contemporary style, featuring today’s top Catholic writers, full-color graphics and an upbeat and innovative format ... a charitable and winsome presentation of the Catholic Faith.”

4. ***Catholic Answers Magazine*** published by Catholic Answers available at <http://www.catholic.com/magazine>

Catholic Answers Magazine (formerly called *This Rock*) is a magazine of Catholic apologetics and evangelization. Its concentration seems to be on apologetics, with emphasis on the scriptural, historical, and rational grounds for Catholic teachings.

Catholic Answers also published *BE*, a magazine for evangelization to marginal, non-practicing or other Catholics who know little of the content of their faith. It is no longer printed.

5. ***Apologetics Tracts***, available from Catholic Answers (<http://www.catholic.com/tracts>)

This is a collection of small pamphlets which cover topics such as Revelation, the Church, Mass, Justification, and Mary.

6. ***Handbook for Catholics***, available from Loyola Press

This book contains prayers, Bible and Church history, information on the liturgical year, saints, examination of conscience, etc.

7. ***Handbook for Today’s Catholic***, available from Liguori

Indexed to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, this booklet has sections on beliefs, practices, prayers, and the moral life.

II. Organizations / Apostolates

- A. *The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis*, 3211 4th Street, N.E., Washington, DC 20017-1194, (202) 541-3000. Web page: <http://www.usccb.org/about/evangelization-and-catechesis/>

Their web page has a listing and description of many other organizations, including Cultivation Ministries, International Catholic Program of Evangelization, Isaiah Ministries, National Council for Catholic Evangelization, National Evangelization Teams, and others.

- B. *Evangelization 2000*, 3112 7th Street NE, Washington, DC 20017-1498, 202-526-2814

This organization has many materials, coordinates schools of Catholic evangelization, and promotes a worldwide prayer campaign.

- C. *Paulist National Catholic Evangelization Association (PNCEA)*, 3031 Fourth Street NE, Washington, DC 20017-1102, 202-832-5022.

PNCEA provides many books, videos and publications. Among their materials are *Go and Make Disciples*, and the *Evangelization Update* newsletter

- D. *Catholic Evidence Guild*: One contact address is P.O. Box 55, Larchmont, New York, 10538 web page: <http://www.catholicvidence.org/>

This is an association of lay apologists whose purpose is to defend and explain teachings of Church and prepare persons for public speaking on basic topics of the Church

- E. *Basilica Press*, P.O. Box 675205, Rancho Santa Fe, CA 92067, 1-888-396-2339.

This publisher has book titles on apologetics and evangelization topics.

- F. *Catholic Answers*, P.O. Box 17490, San Diego, CA 92177, 1-888-291-8000.

Resource for magazines, tracts, books, etc.

- G. *Our Sunday Visitor*, 200 Noll Plaza, Huntington, IN 46750, 1-800-348-2440.

They have a pamphlet series called *Why Be A Catholic?* along with pamphlets on prayer, Catholic basics, and sharing the faith.

- H. *Liguori*, One Liguori Drive, Liguori, MO 63057-9999, 1-800-325-9521.

Liguori has many pamphlets on a range of topics including Catholic basics, family life, prayer, marriage, sacraments, and Scripture

- I. *Ignatius Press*, P.O. Box 1339, Fort Collins, CO 80522, 1-800-360-1714

Books on evangelization topics

- J. *Paulist Press*, 997 Macarthur Blvd, Mahwah, NJ 07430, 1-800-218-1903.

Books on evangelization topics

- K. *Apostleship of Prayer*, 7303 West 7 Mile Road, Detroit, MI 48221, 313-861-7500

Prayer resources

III. Evangelization Programs

- A. ***Go & Make Disciples: A National Plan and Strategy for Catholic Evangelization in the United States***, from the NCCB.
- B. ***Disciples in Mission***, from Paulist National Evangelization Association, is designed to help equip dioceses and parishes to implement Go and Make Disciples
- C. ***Systematic Integral New Evangelization*** (SINE)