

Summary of Encounter the Joy of the Gospel: Set the World Ablaze

5 -Year Plan

Preface

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- Sharing the Gospel – both Word and Deed
- Encountering the Risen Christ anew
- Inspiring rethinking of “business as usual”
 - Individuals and parishes finding new ways to unleash stories of justice, mercy and compassion
- Self examination

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- To implement
 - To stop and pray and reflect on
 - Personal relationship with Christ
 - Honest individual and communal discernment regarding the degree to which our relationship with Jesus is transforming how we relate to others
- A Conversion Journey
 - A way of life – Jesus’ way
- Everyone has a role to share the joy of the Gospel
 - Given methods, opportunities and encouragement through the work of the parish so they share the joy of the Gospel in word and work

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- Vision anchored in
 - Jesus’ joyful message
 - Call of Pope Francis
 - Local adaption of US Bishops *Disciples Called to Witness*
- 2 movements
 - Internal conversion of individuals and parishes
 - External proclamation of Good News to the World

Chapter One: The Missionary Nature of the Church: A Call to All the Faithful

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- Task of evangelizing all people is the essential mission of the church

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- Each of us is called to witness to the person and message of Jesus in the daily tasks of our lives
- Everyone’s responsibility
- No one is excluded from the joy brought by the Lord
- The Lord does not disappoint those who take risk

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- What's "new" about the New Evangelization
 - It's focus on participation of all the faithful in its call to conversion and action
 - Identification of new audience
 - Call to new ardor, methods, expressions
- Call to proclaim the Gospel anew
- Call to all the baptized
- New Ardor – fresh focus on each person's individual relationship with Jesus from which flows peace and joy
- From this flows the desire to share the source of this peace and joy

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- **Focus**
 - On those already coming to church who may have become lukewarm in their faith
 - Inactive parishioners
 - Those alienated by the Church
 - Those Unchurched
 - Spouses, children, extended family members, friends, neighbors
 - Those who have lost a living sense of the faith
 - Consider themselves no longer members of the church
 - Live a life removed from Christ and His Gospel
- New Evangelization (NE) – a special emphasis on welcoming back all those who are absent because they are greatly missed and are needed to build up the Body of Christ
- NE = work of hospitality, healing, embrace and reconciliation

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- To discover hospitable, creative and life giving ways to call the lost home
- To embrace Christ in the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist
- And to faith, hope, love and the gift of new life in Christ
- Entering into dialogue with those who have stopped listening to Christ and the Church
- To listen to the ways in which the Spirit is already at work in the lives of those who have wandered from home
- And in that listening to affirm whatever is good and holy
- Faithful need to become fluent in the culture, language and values of those with whom they are called to listen
- Not an easy process, not about technology or media
- Learning language of love, learning to listen with Christ's heart, learning to speak with Christ's wisdom

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- **Authority**
- Primacy always belongs to God who has called us
- The newness which God mysteriously brings about and inspires, provokes, guides and accompanies
- God has loved us first, He alone gives growth

- This conviction enables us to maintain a spirit of joy in the midst of a task so demanding
- **Why a New Evangelization**
 - To open a path to communion of life between God and those elements of our human family who have grown resistant to that path
 - To teach the art of living

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- **How do we Proceed?** We Walk by Faith
- Biblical Categories of:
 - Word to
 - Worship guide
 - Service parish
 - Community life and
 - Now we add Witness work
- To weave elements of NE into each of 4 categories and at the same time to recognize explicit nature of Witness

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- Read Gospel example of Christ on the Road to Emmaus
 - Example of all 5 categories
- The weakest among any community are the most in need of His witness
- Pope Francis leading Church towards a joyful journey of faith
 - Challenging the faithful to seek change within
 - Then allow change to become an offer of rest and comfort to those who are weary

Chapter Two: An Overview of the Pastoral Approach

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- Each year a theme that builds on previous years
 - Not a list of tasks
 - But infusing parish life with efforts undertaken and entrusted to the Spirit's power
1. Parishes are expected to:
 - a. Share with one another effective methods, igniters of new ardor, signs of the Holy spirit's fire
 - b. Set measurable goals for the year
 - c. Report goals, steps taken to reach goals, signs of the Spirit's movement
 2. Diocese will support parish efforts by:
 - a. Providing prayer resources
 - b. Providing resources tied to each year's theme
 - c. Sharing inspiring practices already happening
 - d. Mentoring from Evangelization commission

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- YEAR ONE – PERSONAL ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS
- Fruit of Year One = Genuine, transformed, impassioned disciples (pg 17)
 - Focused inward on those already coming through the doors
 - Already celebrating Mass and the sacraments
 - Already giving time, talent and treasure
 - Element that distinguishes NE = Initial internal focus
 - To address lukewarm faith
 - When church loses courage, the church enters a lukewarm atmosphere
 - Tepid atmosphere draws you inside, problems arise among us, no longer pray towards heaven or courage to proclaim the Gospel

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- Internal focus concerns Catholics who have relationship with the church but have not fallen in love with Jesus
- The NE seeks to offer every Catholic the challenge and the opportunity to encounter the Risen Lord
- The NE is first and foremost about us
 - We are liberated from our narrowness and self-absorption
 - If we receive love that restores meaning to our lives, how can we fail to share that love with others

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- Outside comfort zone characterized by habits, practices, activities
- Jesus came to set earth on fire and we are looking for that fire
- Those already attached must allow this fire to be lit in their spirits before they can go out to gather in the lost
- 1st year will draw heavily upon the work of catechesis (pg 34)

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- YEAR TWO – FOCUS ON THE DOMESTIC CHURCH – MARRIAGE AND FAMILY
- Fruit of Year Two = Jesus encountered in daily life within the domestic church, so that the Holy Spirit gently blows upon the faith of everyone in the family, turning sparks to embers and embers to flame! (pg 19)
 - Focus on close human relationships
 - In the context of the family we first learn who God is and how to prayerfully seek His will for us
 - Through family life – wondrous discovery of God-with-us can be made over and over
 - Through family life – countless encounters with the Risen Lord, beauty of Paschal Mystery

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- Helps to develop the marriage covenant
- Christian homes are places of healing and havens for stranger and guests

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- YEAR THREE – EQUIPPING THE PARISH
- Fruit of Year Three = Parishes that are beacons, lighthouses, healing hearths, and radically an intentionally welcoming homes for the poor, the stranger, and the alienated. (pg 22)
- If the parish proves capable of self-renewal and constant adaptivity it continues to be “the Church living in the midst of the homes of her sons and daughters”
- NE seeks to animate parishes with the Spirit's fire
- Jesus made it clear that to follow Him is to belong to a community like no other

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- See how they love one another
- Parish offers opportunities to live out corporal and spiritual works of mercy
- To co-create God's kingdom on earth through social justice
- How to love beyond domestic church/family
- Parish intended to be a place of inordinate hospitality to poor and vulnerable
 - Unwed mothers, prisoners, abused, addicts
 - Home to undocumented worker, migrant, visitor, stranger

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- The Parish –
 - Unites in His name
 - Come to give thanks and praise
 - To encounter Christ in the Eucharist
 - Sacramental encounters
 - Covenants of Baptism and Marriage
 - Meets Christ's healing touch
 - Fosters vocations
 - Unites sick and suffering

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- YEAR FOUR – MISSIONING DISCIPLES – LOCALLY
- Fruit of Year Four = Loving, animated and accurate dialogues, open invitations to learn, grow, and serve, and the spiritual strength to maintain a relationship with Christ and His Church (pg 27)
- NE = igniting the faithful for the mission of gathering in the lost and forsaken
 - Welcoming home the prodigal children, embracing the seeker, engaging the skeptic, dialoguing with the atheist
 - Followers are to share good news with all people
 - Genuine faith compels an outward focus

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- 2 audiences
 - 1) Catholics who no longer affiliate with the Church
 - 2) Christians of other denominations

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- Yearning hearts must yield parishioners equipped to find the lost, to engage them in reconciling relationships and to have courage and skill to invite them home
- Year Four is about forming parishioners who are eager, courageous
- and prepared with word and Spirit to welcome them back

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- Ecumenical – well versed in Scripture and Tradition to be able to engage in meaningful dialogue with other Christians
 - To identify real differences
 - Learn from one another
 - Live in the community

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- YEAR FIVE –MISSIONING DISCIPLES GLOBALLY
- Fruit of Year Five = the earth ablaze with the love of Christ, the poor being cared for with Jesus' compassion, and God's kingdom breaking forth in joy (pg 31)
- An inseparable bond between our faith the poor

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- In **Year One**, the New Evangelization focuses on awakening the faith of the already baptized, giving both opportunities to enkindle hearts with the flame of faith, and opportunities to live more fully into the baptism the faithful have received. It is a year of hearts both burning in love for Christ and breaking for the suffering of others. It is a year to focus on Christ's Sacred Heart, loving all while also loving individually. Baptism created kinship relationships, and those kinship relationships were then the focus of years two and three.
- In **Year Two**, the pastoral plan for the New Evangelization turns to the domestic church, the role of marriage and family as signs of Christ's loving, forgiving presence. Missionary discipleship depends on the daily nurturing and challenge of living life in Christ at home. This apprenticeship in the domestic church builds the capacity for agape love, and for living that love through justice and mercy. It lays the foundation for the deep concern for the little ones, the anawim, as they are called in the Scriptures, who are close to Christ's heart.
- **Year Three** extends the locus of the New Evangelization to the attitudes and actions of the parish. For disciples to continue to mature, they must have apprentice opportunities outside those provided by the domestic church. Parishes are the places committed to providing the invitation to and preparation for missionary discipleship. They are the first training ground, providing opportunities to practice love of neighbor across boundaries and to reflect on how Christ is alive now. If this difficult work of adjusting long-held and perhaps dearly-held practices is not done, it will not be possible to birth disciples equipped for a global mission.

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- **Year Four** invites ever-growing disciples to extend compassion and justice to those they encounter outside of their homes and parishes. Now maturing members of the Body of Christ are equipped to speak of the source of their hope, and the joyful meaning of life in Christ. Now maturing disciples invite others to “come and see” and are equipped to enter into respectful dialogue with those who believe differently.
- Each of these movements precedes the focus of Year Five: the sending forth of maturing missionary disciples across even greater boundaries and barriers.
 - An ever-deepening personal relationship with Jesus Christ that results in a call to join Christ in crossing the boundaries of culture, nation, and politics, to live out His merciful care for the poor;
 - An appropriation of the effects of baptism, especially the kinship with all other baptized people across the world, and the responsibility to be in a relationship to them through the Body of Christ, the Church;
 - A sense of being called to embrace more concretely the marks of the Church as one, holy, catholic (universal) and apostolic;
 - A call from God to go out to all the world to proclaim the Good News in word and deed;
 - An embrace of Catholic Social Teaching and jubilee justice, with a passion for the dignity of all God’s beloved creation, especially humankind and a clear vision that God has provided enough for all of humanity to live in dignity across the globe;
 - A sense of the urgency of this work for the Kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven and as a measure of eternal judgment.

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- Year Five – advocates for various populations using technology
- Reaching across geopolitical and national divides, embracing cultures
- Using the power of modern technology to build God’s kingdom of mercy and compassion
- Focus on the various ways mature disciples engage this work, far and wide

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- IMPLEMENTATION

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- The Principles
 - Enter into work because it is a free heartfelt response to God who loves us
 - Know the theological and ecclesial ground upon which this call rests

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- Evangelization is the most precious service the Church can render to humanity and to all individuals who are seeking the profound reasons to live their life to the full

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- Catechesis, a particular moment in the work of Evangelization, can provide other areas of parish life inspiration and methods

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- Work together within the Diocese as Christ's body, united in one work
- Trust the Holy Spirit gifts of understanding, right judgment and courage
- Implement as an integral part of parish life – accountability

Pastoral Plan with benchmarks and metrics - submitted on a yearly basis

Yearly Themes Year One (2014): Individuals transformed by encounters with Jesus Christ.

Year Two (2015): Marriages and families wherein the flame of faith is tenderly blown upon by God's Spirit.

Year Three (2016): Parishes that are beacons, intentionally guiding the lost home to God's embrace

Year Four (2017): Disciples enabled to engage in loving dialogue, learning, service, and gaining spiritual strength

Year Five (2018): Disciples setting the world ablaze as they live joyfully and care for the poor, creating God's kingdom now while they wait in joyful hope for its coming in fullness.

2013-2016 - USCCB STRATEGIC PLAN THE NEW EVANGELIZATION JOURNEY WITH CHRIST: FAITH – WORSHIP – WITNESS

To make the New Evangelization a reality is to become pilgrims on a journey or pilgrimage with Jesus Christ- much like the journey of Jesus meeting the disciples along the road to Emmaus. The journey or pilgrimage includes moments for a deepening of our faith, increasing our participation in the sacramental life of the Church, and leads finally to our destination of being Christian witnesses.

The *New Evangelization* is an opportunity, a pilgrimage (journey) to rediscover the joy and confidence of believing in the Triune God and to enthusiastically profess that faith as "a true encounter and relationship with Jesus Christ. Transmitting the faith means to create in every place and time the conditions which lead to his encounter between the person and Jesus Christ." (*Instrumentum Laboris*, #18)

The New Evangelization/Journey With Christ: Faith-Worship-Witness has a natural progression that engages the work of the Church and the USCCB in a three-fold movement during 2013-2016 through a focus on:

1. Faith: Inviting Catholics to a deeper relationship with Christ, and a deeper understanding of and relationship with his Church, and knowledge of the faith.
2. Worship: Inspiring confidence in the gospel and the teachings of the faith expressed in a vibrant community and sacramental life, most intensively in the Eucharist and Penance, but also through Marriage and greater appreciation of the family as the domestic church.
3. Witness: Strengthening of our understanding of the Christian vocation lived through a public witness to Jesus Christ and to the life and dignity of the human person where believers, living out their vocation to be witnesses, affirm the freedom of religion and work to transform society through living and sharing their faith in Jesus Christ and giving recognition to the life and dignity of the human person.

Focus on Worship & Parish Life:

During the years 2014 - 2015 in particular the USCCB plans support initiatives that focus on:

- Strengthening parish life and worship and create greater awareness of the need for communities of faith that are evangelizing;
- 4. Strengthening participation in sacramental practice, especially inviting people to rediscover the sacrament of penance and strengthen our participation in and understanding of the sacrament of the Eucharist;
- 5. Creating parishes as welcoming communities including specific outreach to youth and young adults, parents, and people on the move;
- 6. Strengthening the initial & ongoing formation of clergy to more effectively respond to the challenges of the New Evangelization. [PPF and National Directory revisions; establish annual themes for the ongoing formation of priests and deacons];
- 7. Strengthening marriage and family life, and increasing the number of people participating in the Sacrament of Marriage
- 8. Increasing understanding of the Mass and attendance at Mass

Focus on Witness:

- Plans support the initiatives around efforts to increase Christian witness and the priority on the Life and Dignity of the Human Person:
- Finalizing the research on effective communication messages to actively engage Catholics in the Church's promotion of the life and dignity of the human person;
- Convening in 2016 a conference to engage and motivate a broad cross section of Catholics to become active in promoting and supporting the Life and dignity of the Human Person;
- Strengthening and encouraging Catholic laity in their role as witnesses in the public square;
- Forming and training laity to understand the Christian faith and become engaged as evangelizers and witnesses;
- Continuing to foster and support married couples and families as Christian witnesses;

- For consecrated life, seeking to strengthen the relationship of the religious with the local ordinary through an increase the number of bishops who meet annually with religious;
- Increasing the encouragement youth and young adults receive from youth, campus and young adult ministers to consider a vocation to priesthood or religious life.

Suggested Best Practices that inform New Evangelization efforts

In addition to the four conference-wide priority initiatives, the Committees and offices of the USCCB are asked to integrate four planning strategies into the outcome objectives and projects. The four strategies:

1. Engage culturally diverse and age diverse communities (Who);
 2. Call, form and develop leaders-especially clergy (Who);
 3. Create effective communications (How);
 4. Encourage collaboration and working together (How).
1. To assist the church to engage culturally diverse communities the Committee on Cultural Diversity has developed and will engage staff and leaders in Intercultural Competency training in collaboration with Human Resources and the General Secretariat. The Committee on Migration continues its mission to these culturally diverse communities through its outreach to those who are new arrivals in our country. Divine Worship attends to this strategy through its continuing work on the Spanish Roman Missal and Lectionary.
 2. To guide committees and staff to be more effective communicators the Committee on Communications is focusing on developing best practices for effective communications and creating training opportunities to communicate more effectively. A number of Conference committees' and offices are already taking advantage of new media to increase the effectiveness and outreach of their work via webinars, e-newsletters, "push technology," video conferencing, members only websites, blogs, Facebook, etc. Ways to measure the effectiveness of these media tools will be an important best practice.
 3. For the strategy which focuses on calling and forming leaders, especially priests and those in consecrated life, there are major projects from Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations, Child and Youth Protection, and from Catholic Education to name just three.

For the lens that urges a continued strategy of developing collaborative relationships this strategy can literally be found in the work of each and every committee. In 2006, we moved to a more organic way of working together and the operational plans clearly demonstrate a strengthening and institutionalizing of this approach.

2014-2015: Focus on Worship and Parish Life

During the years 2014 through 2015 in particular diocesan and parish planning can focus on:

9. Strengthening parish life and worship and creating evangelizing and welcoming parishes;

10. Strengthening participation in sacramental practice, especially inviting people to rediscover the sacrament of penance and strengthening participation in and understanding of the sacrament of the Eucharist;
11. Creating parishes as welcoming communities including specific outreach to youth and young adults, parents, and people on the move;
12. Continuing the formation of clergy to effectively respond to the challenges of the New Evangelization. [PPF and National Directory revisions; establish annual themes for the ongoing formation of priests and deacons];
13. Strengthening marriage and family life, and increasing the number of people participating in the Sacrament of Marriage;
14. Increasing understanding of the Mass and attendance at Mass.

2015-2016: Focus on Witness

Diocesan and parish efforts during 2015 and 2016 can have a special focus on initiatives that seek to increase Christian witness and the support the bishops priority on the Life and Dignity of the Human Person:

- Communicating and engaging diocesan and parish leaders on effective communication messages to actively engage Catholics in the Church's promotion of the life and dignity of the human person;
- Participating in the national convening in 2016 to engage and motivate a broad cross section of Catholics to become active in promoting and supporting the Life and dignity of the Human Person;
- Strengthening and encouraging Catholic laity in their role as witnesses in the public square.
- Forming and training laity to understand and become engaged as evangelizers and witnesses to Christian faith;
- Strengthening the local relationship and communion between religious and the local ordinary through by increasing the number of bishops who meet annually with religious;
- Increasing the encouragement youth and young adults receive from youth, campus and young adult ministers to consider a vocation to priesthood or religious life.

Suggested Best Practices to Implement the New Evangelization

5. To assist the church to **engage culturally diverse communities** the Committee on Cultural Diversity has developed Intercultural Competency Guidelines that reflect best practices for the multicultural Church today.
6. To guide committees and staff to be **more effective communicators** the Committee on Communications is focusing on developing best practices for effective communications and creating training opportunities to communicate more effectively.
7. For the strategy which focuses on **calling and forming leaders, especially priests** and those in consecrated life, there are major projects from various USCCB committees to assist diocesan and parish leaders, including resources from Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations, Child and Youth Protection, Evangelization & Catechesis, Divine Worship, and Catholic Education.

The final best practice reflects the value of continuing to strengthen strategies of **developing collaborative relationships**.