

Welcome and Invitation Campaign Post-Covid for the Parish & All Ministries

At a specially chosen weekend, and at *all* Sunday (including Sunday Vigil) masses, at the end of the pastor's/parochial vicar's/permanent deacon's homily on the Sunday readings he makes the following remarks:

Pope Francis has observed more than once that, "All the baptized, whatever their position in the Church or their level of instruction in the faith, are agents of evangelization" (EG, 120). Evangelization is not just the task of paid parish staff or the clergy, but of all members of the people of God – all of you [gestures to the congregation]. There is no distinction between the baptized, disciples and missionaries. If we are baptized, we are, by that fact, both disciples and missionaries. We are gifted with the "instinct of faith;" (*sensus fidei*), an intuitive access to the Holy Spirit's gift of wisdom that the Holy Father is asking that we put into practice. Archbishop Gustavo has also reminded us in his recent pastoral letter and in the annual Archdiocesan Assemblies that the work of evangelization is the right and responsibility not just of a few but of all. All are "missionary disciples" – we are all learning and training, maturing in and sharing the faith all the time – that's what missionary disciples do.

Missionary disciples help others take one step closer to God; and that's what we are all going to do for the next few weeks. Take a look around the church – do it now. [Give about 15 seconds] Who is missing? Who have you not seen at church in the past few months or weeks? Who of your friends and neighbors, even if they didn't attend Mass before the pandemic began, need to be invited back? Think about those three questions as the ministers of hospitality pass out index cards and pencils.

As soon as you get your card and pencil, write the names of 3 individuals that could be invited back to Mass.

Sunday of **Week 1**: At the end of the Homily, parishoners are asked (by the pastor/parochial vicar/permanent deacon from the ambo) to put their card with the three names on a mirror, refrigerator, coffeemaker, or some other place they will see every day. They are to pray for these 3 people – just pray for them, every day during the week.

The rest of **Week 1-4**: Parish and other Pastoral Leaders, including, but not limited to, the Catechetical Leader, Youth Minister, RCIA Coordinator, Heads of K of C, Guadalupanos, St. Vincent de Paul Society, Social Concerns, Bible Study Group(s), etc., gather their volunteers/participants (preferably in person) and ask them to do the same as the celebrants have asked in the Sunday homily. Remarks from the Sunday homily provided can be used to encourage the volunteers/participants or in the event that the celebrants are not using these remarks for whatever reason.

Sunday of **Week 2**: At the end of the Homily, parishoners are asked (by the pastor/parochial vicar/deacon from the ambo) to continue to pray for the 3 people they have, and add the intention to pray for an opportunity to encounter and speak to them.

Sunday of **Week 3**: At the end of the Homily, parishoners are asked (by the pastor or parochial vicar from the ambo) to continue to pray for the 3 people, and plan a day and time, putting it on their calendars, to reach out to them and invite them back to Mass – they can consider giving them a parish bulletin so they have something to refer to. The invitees can be told that you will meet them at the Mass of their choice next weekend. It is time to put "feet to our faith."

Sunday of **Week 4**: There will very likely be returning or new people in the pews this week. The whole community is to be particularly welcoming and hospitable to all. Within whatever health guidelines may be in place, a simple reception or similar event can take place after all Masses.

This is a step of faith; it is a challenge to parishoners, pastoral leaders, and volunteers but it is exponentially more effective than almost anything else. There is no better time than now to empower parishoners to live as missionary disciples – helping others to take one step closer to God and we have the opportunity to model it for them.

Once the parish opens up more fully, consider still setting a place aside (like the parish hall, side chapel, or gym) for persons and families who still may not be comfortable with no social distancing or masks. This space could serve as an area that still remains sanitized with all precautions kept in place.

As a follow-up, continue to livestream Masses, other events, and be intentional about inviting people back to the parish. Consider using evangelizations programs, like Alpha for Catholics (can be used in-person or online or hybrid) to invite those who are reluctant or struggling to come back. This model has proven to be effective – especially with young adults and those with questions.