
Re-engaging The Young Church in Parish Life



**A Resource for
helping those that
walk with the
young church
to re-engage our
young people in
the sacramental
life of our Parishes**

“The parish should be at the center of the community, a place where God’s presence is felt and hope and love are shared with the world”

**Pope Francis
May 2019**

Greetings!

Social distancing, face coverings, temperature checks, quarantine, Zoom! Over the last year these have all become regular words in our “new” vocabulary. The way we do ministry might have changed, but as we continue to navigate these uncharted waters of the ongoing Covid-19 Pandemic our role in accompanying young people as they become missionary disciples has not.

As you read through this resource guide remember that we need to be conscience of our young people and their families and the stress and situations this pandemic has, and is causing to them. Now more than ever our Youth Ministry Programs, our Athletic Program and our Catholic Scouting Units need to be relational, multidimensional, ministerial and pastoral.

FORWARD IN *Faith* TOGETHER *Our Road Ahead*



Forward in Faith Together: Our Road Ahead is Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin's pastoral vision for the Archdiocese of Newark. It seeks to establish a positive path forward for the faithful, the clergy, and the Archdiocese while simultaneously addressing crucial challenges of the past and present. It is a foundation for healing that addresses the hurt and mistrust within our community, reinforces the changes we have begun to implement, and provides a firm foundation for our lives as missionary disciples of Jesus. ***Forward in Faith Together*** will ensure that we flourish as a community of disciples, companions of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

This Resource Guide fits into each of the Six Pillars of this Pastoral Vision.



The Youth & Young Adult Ministry Office

The Office for Youth & Young Adult Ministry trains, equips and supports parishes for the tremendous challenge of ministering *to, with, by and for* the young church here in the Archdiocese of Newark. The Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry reaches hundreds of young Catholics each year throughout the parishes of the Archdiocese with the love and truth of Jesus and His Church. As result parishes come alive with enthusiasm, becoming faith communities; and most of all, young people hear Jesus' call to change this world for God.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

We, the Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry, advocate for the recognition, value and integration of young people into the life and mission of the Church as we educate and support the pastors, clergy, coordinators of youth and young adult ministry and the parish communities of the Archdiocese of Newark

During the Covid-19 times the Staff at the Office for Youth & Young Adult Ministry are just a phone call or email away. Please feel free to reach out to us, as we are here to help support you in your ministry.

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Preliminary Conversations

In September of 2020 the Pew Research Center released data that about a third of teens in the United States identify as religiously unaffiliated, higher than teens' parents. The number of teen "nones" – those that mostly identify their religion affiliation as "nothing in particular" continue to grow.

The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and the stay at home orders from last Spring, only have helped to add to this growth.

Now, almost a year after our parishes were reopened it is time for all of that walk with the young church— Youth Ministers, Coaches, Scout Leaders and more to look at how are we going to re-engage our young people into the life of our parishes!

Two documents that we HIGHLY encourage you to read are [Renewing the Vision](#) (RTV) and [Christus Vivit](#) (CV). These documents should be your road map for ministering to, with, by and for the young church.

Two of the Three Goals of RTV speak directly to engaging our Young People ...

Renewing the Vision: Goal #2

To draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission and work of the Catholic faith community. It is important for youth to engage the Parish community because parishes "are the place where God's people meet Jesus in word and sacrament" in a concrete way.

Renewing the Vision: Goal #3

To foster the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person. The Church is concerned for the whole person, addressing the young people's spiritual needs in the context of his or her whole life. Youth Ministry in the Church should promote holistic growth and development; that is, growth and development of the entire person. Ministers and leaders must listen to the specific developmental, social, and religious needs and nurture them accordingly.

Christus Vivit, the post-synodal apostolic exhortation of Pope Francis, is the first magisterial document written not just ABOUT young people, but directly TO them! *Christus Vivit* has a far reaching impact on all ministry involving young people!

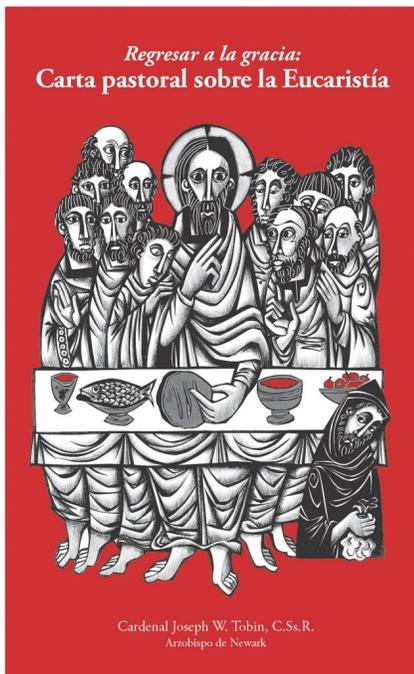
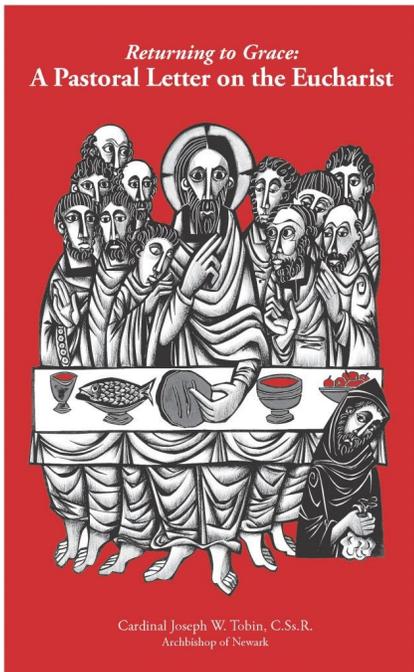


"The very first truth I would tell each of you is this: "God loves you". It makes no difference whether you have already heard it or not. I want to remind you of it. God loves you. Never doubt this, whatever may happen to you in life. At every moment, you are infinitely loved"

Pope Francis



Returning to Grace



Let's be honest. Access to weekly Mass via live-stream has been a great thing for many of us. But it is not, and cannot be, considered a permanent substitute for in-person participation and receiving of the Eucharist. As Catholics, we are invited by God to gather together in community, and participate fully in the Eucharist, which is the source and summit of the Christian life.

As the pace of vaccinations increases and restrictions are eased, we really need to start asking our young people whether the time is right to "come to the Lord's Table" once again.

For many young people they have begun socializing in downtowns, participating in sporting events, and returning to diners, coffee and ice cream shops and more.

For some the re-engaging into social life has been slow, and cautious. But for many of our young people the desire to gather in community is growing as our rates of transmission continue to drop.

Have you read Cardinal Tobin's Pastoral Letter on the Eucharist? Entitled "Returning to Grace". Cardinal Tobin speaks about while we still have a dispensation from Sunday Mass obligation, he urges us to consider, if we are now dining out, shopping and pursuing other errands and activities more freely, whether it is time for us to come back to regular in-person worship.

Here in the Archdiocese parishes are celebrating Mass every weekend! May Crownings, Confirmations, Communion and more are all taking place safely and under the guidelines of the Archdiocese and the State Covid-19 guidelines!



"What can each of us do to help our brothers and sisters here in northern New Jersey return to the Grace and Beauty of the Eucharist?"

**Cardinal Tobin
Returning to Grace**



Re-engaging the Young Church

So - how are we reconnecting our young people to the Sacramental and Spiritual life of our parish?
How are we helping the personal and spiritual growth of our young people?

If we are having Youth Ministry Meetings, Sport Practices and Events or Scouting Meetings and Activities, but none of these young people are involved in the sacramental life of our parishes then we really should stop and look at this.

As someone who “walks with the young church” as a Youth Minister, a Coach or a Scout Leader how are we trying to re-engage our young people in parish life?

- Are we letting them know when Mass times? For daily and Sunday Mass?
- Are we having conversations or inviting them to come back to Mass in person instead of virtually?
- If they or their family are not comfortable being in person for Mass, are we letting them know of virtual opportunities?
- Does your parish offer time that the Church is open for prayer? Are we sharing that with your young people?
- Does your parish offer Adoration? Are we inviting them to attend?
- Are we letting your young people know of time that Sacrament of Reconciliation is held?
- Does your Parish pray the Rosary during the week that young people can be involved in?
- Are we inviting/ encouraging young people to attend Mass together, or with their families?
- Are we inviting graduating 8th graders and High School Seniors with their families to come to Mass and set up with the priest to receive a special blessing at the Mass?
- Are we using our website, social media and more to “meet young people where they are” to invite them?

For some of us these conversations might not be our normal ones that we have with our young people, or that we might view as difficult. Many might have the idea in their head “well that’s the role of someone else to do”. But in your role as a Parish Youth Minister, Coach or Scout Leader we are all called to be “Youth Ministers” to those young people we are entrusted to. We see in Isaiah 41:10 *“Do not fear: I am with you; do not be anxious: I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand.”*

Pope Francis shares with us in *Christus Vivit* “The community has an important role in the accompaniment of young people; it should feel collectively responsible for accepting, motivating, encouraging and challenging them. All should regard young people with understanding, appreciation and affection, and avoid constantly judging them or demanding of them a perfection beyond their years”. (CV 243)

Furthermore the Holy Father shares “Youth ministry has to be synodal; it should involve a “journeying together” that values “the charisms that the Spirit bestows in accordance with the vocation and role of each of the Church’s members, through a process of co-responsibility... Motivated by this spirit, we can move towards a participatory and co-responsible Church, one capable of appreciating its own rich variety, gratefully accepting the contributions of the lay faithful, including young people and women, consecrated persons, as well as groups, associations and movements. No one should be excluded or exclude themselves” (CV 206)



Our Hope For You

If we are truly going to walk with the young church, then we need to encourage be active in parish life. Our Young People most definitely are the Church of Tomorrow—but they are just as much the Church of Today as anyone of us!

Our hope would be that as you re-engage young people in the life of our parishes that it will help to serve as a catalyst for your ministry – be it middle or high school youth ministry, scouting or athletics.

Please know we are here to help you as we all continue to navigate these uncharted Covid-19 waters.

We encourage you to view some of the resources we have here and on our website at www.newarkoym.com/re-engage



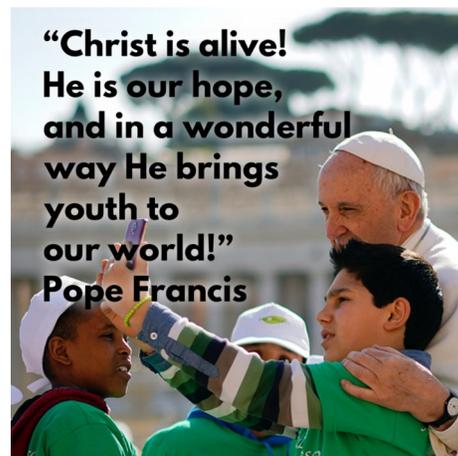
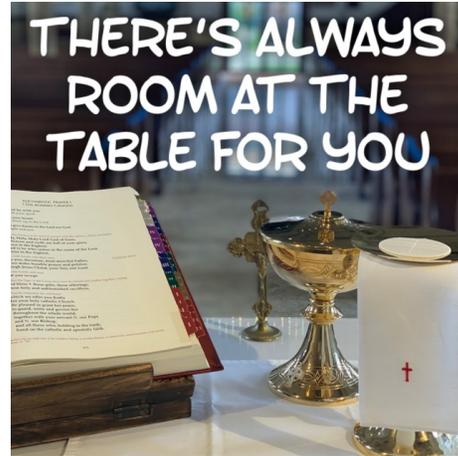
“Dear young people, make the most of these years of your youth. Don’t observe life from a balcony. Don’t confuse happiness with an armchair, or live your life behind a screen...”

**Pope Francis
Christus Vivit (143)**



Resources For You

Using Social Media is a GREAT way to invite young people . Here are some sample ideas. You can download copies of these at www.newarkoym.com/re-engaging or consider creating your ones!



Resources For You

All of these are also available at www.newarkoym.com/re-engaging

Returning to Grace

[Cardinals Tobin's Pastoral Letter on the Eucharist](#)

Video - [Why people don't go to Mass](#)

Everyday people share the reasons why they don't go to, or fear going to Mass

Video - [Motivation to Go to Catholic Mass](#)

You may have heard priests or devout Catholics say something like, "If only people knew what was happening at Mass, they'd be more willing to go." That may be true, but in this video, Fr. Mike also gets to the more practical—and painfully direct—heart of the matter. He points out that the heart of worship is sacrifice, and ultimately, it's not about how engaged or entertained we are. Mass isn't about us; it's about God and what he asks of us.

Video - [What if Catholics Find the Mass Boring?](#)

Bishop Barron answers this question in this short video.

Video - [The One Hour that will change your life](#)

Fr. Mike Schmitz shares his experiences and the true intimacy that the Lord offers us in the Eucharist.

Video - [5 ways to draw young people back to God](#)

Bishop Barron gave a presentation to all the American bishops on five ways to draw young people back to God. In this video he discusses what he shared with them.

Video - Ascension Programs on the Mass

[A Biblical Walk Through the Mass](#)

[Altaration: The Mystery of the Mass Revealed](#)

Journal Article - [Real Presence: Jesus Is Really Present in the Eucharist. Am I?](#)

by Sister Kieran Sawyer

The headlines were alarming: "Only 30% of Catholics believe in the Real Presence." A report on a recent survey from the Pew Research Center seemed to indicate that few Catholics accepted this basic doctrine. Many of those who responded to the report pointed accusatory fingers at us, the catechizing church.

Lifeteen Retreat/ Meeting Resource - The Summit

"[The Summit](#)," is Lifeteens new Curriculum Guide that leads teenagers into a rich understanding of the Mass, and challenges them to make worship at Mass the source and summit of their lives. A renewed understanding of the liturgy will transform the lives of the teens you serve, as well as transform the life of your parish.

Document - [10 Reasons To Go To Mass](#)





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