



**PRESENTATION TO THOSE WHO PARTICIPATED IN PARISH MISSIONARY DISCIPLES  
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2019**

**PART I** Starting with the big picture: A parish that helps people fall in love and *stay* in love

- The difference between a new *program* versus a new *process* of discipleship
- What is required?
  1. A unified vision
  2. Everyone, together staying anchored and focused on the Formation Life Cycle
  3. The calendar: everything fitting together for a singular purpose
  4. Looking for movement in peoples lives
  5. Meeting people where they are and helping the take next steps
  6. Understanding the *Art of Living* as an essential part of the process
  7. On-going assessment of the practical details
  8. On-going assessment of fruitfulness
  9. On-going assessment of how to support ongoing growth

**PART II** Adult Formation: Getting organized and getting started in your parish

- Leadership
  1. Pastor
  2. Parish Implementation Team
  3. Adult Formation Team
  4. Pastoral Council
  5. Staff
  6. Office of Parish Support
- Forming your Adult Formation Team
  1. Considering generational preferences
  2. Who should be on the team?
  3. What is your focus
  4. How to get organized







# PLANS OF HOPE

HOUMA-THIBODAUX ADULT FORMATION

## PART ONE









**AS YOU LISTEN TO THIS MORNING'S CASE STUDY  
CONSIDER THE DISCUSSION AFTERWARDS**

1. Generally speaking, what's in your heart as the presentation of St. Agnes concludes?  
What gives you hope?  
What is intimidating?
2. What similarities do you see between your parish and St. Agnes?
3. What did St. Agnes do that you have done yourself? What similarities do you see in your approach?
4. What did St. Agnes do that you have not done yourself? What differences do you see in your approach?
5. What can "take away" from this morning's presentation that can help you as you move forward?





## SAINT AGNES CATHOLIC CHURCH



### A CASE STUDY

## GETTING TO KNOW ST. AGNES CATHOLIC CHURCH

### HISTORY.

- Mid-size parish “not far from town”
- Today: 2019 weekend Mass attendance: 700
- 20 years ago: 1999 weekend Mass attendance: 1,300
- Pride themselves as being a “community” and a “home”
- Rich history, with lots to be proud of



## ST. AGNES TODAY

- Core group of really committed parishioners
- Strong volunteer leadership; however, median age of the core leadership is 60
- “Same people always say ‘yes’”
- “Where is the younger generation?”
- Lots of “younger” people in the pew, but few of them are “involved”
- Hard to get new volunteers
- Aging facilities
- Many worry about finances
- Want to do more, but need more money and volunteers
- Try lots of “new things” but nothing seems to “stick” and sustain itself

## ST. AGNES’ TRENDS AS PREDICTORS OF THE FUTURE.

- Mass attendance rises or falls dependent up on the priest
- “Older” generation is faithful and steady, whereas the “younger” generation is busy and fluid
- Less than 10% of parishioners are engaged outside of Sunday Mass
- 10% of the parishioners account for 50% of the weekend collection
- A new non-denominational church has opened less than two miles from the church

## FALLING IN LOVE VERSUS STAYING IN LOVE.

- Fr. Pedro Arrupe, S.J. (1907—1991), Superior General of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) from 1965—1983
- 41st International Eucharistic Congress in August 1976:  
“Nothing is more practical than  
finding God,  
than falling in love  
in a quite absolute, final way.  
What you are in love with,  
what seizes your imagination, will affect everything.  
It will decide what will get you out of bed in the morning,  
what you do with your evenings,  
how you spend your weekends,  
what you read,  
whom you know,  
what breaks your heart,  
and what amazes you with joy and gratitude.  
Fall in love,  
stay in love,  
and it will decide everything.”
- It’s one thing to fall in love. It’s much harder to **stay** in love.







While the crowd was pressing in on Jesus and listening to the word of God, he was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret. He saw two boats there alongside the lake; the fishermen had disembarked and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, he asked him to put out a short distance from the shore. After he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch." Simon said in reply, **"Master, we have worked hard all night and have caught nothing, but at your command I will lower the nets."** When they had done this, they caught a great number of fish and their nets were tearing.

— *Luke 5:1-6*

**"IF WE ALWAYS DO WHAT WE'VE ALWAYS DONE WE'LL ALWAYS GET WHAT WE ALWAYS GOT"**  
**"WE HAVE WORKED HARD ALL NIGHT AND HAVE CAUGHT LITTLE"**

#### PROGRAMS VERSUS PROCESS

- St. Agnes "sold" that process helps people *stay* in love

#### PROGRAMS

- Focused on what happens during the event
- Focused on content
- Finding God on "Tuesday night"
- Come to know about God
- Has a beginning and an end
- Tailored to the vision of the presenter
- Attractive because you can serve the many
- Leadership has to know how to use program
- Doesn't require leadership to "get involved" in lives
- May help me "fall" in love

#### PROCESS

- Focused on what happening in people's lives
- Focused on people
- Finding God in the details of life
- Come to know God ... and why I might resist
- Ongoing
- Tailored to the needs of the person
- Difficult because you have to focus on the one
- Leadership has to know how to notice God
- Requires leadership to "get involved" in lives
- Focused on helping me "stay" in love



- *Simple Church* by Thom Rainer and Eric Geiger
- The significance is that, in general, simple churches are growing and vibrant. **Churches with a simple process for reaching and maturing people are expanding the kingdom. Church leaders who have designed a simple biblical process to make disciples are effectively advancing the movement of the gospel.** Simple churches are making a big impact. Conversely, complex churches are struggling and anemic. Churches **without a process** or with a **complicated process** for making disciples are floundering. As a whole, cluttered and complex churches are not alive. Our research shows that these churches are not growing. Unfortunately, the overprogrammed and busy church is the norm. The simple church is the exception, yet our research shows that should not be the case.  
*Simple Church* (page 14)
- **Spiritual growth (sanctification) is the process of a believer being transformed into the image of Christ.** Simple churches have chosen to align themselves with the way God works. They have chosen to partner with the discipleship process revealed in Scripture. **They have chosen to structure their churches around a simple process.**  
*Simple Church* (page 16)
- **Ministry will never be easy. It is messy and difficult because people are messy and difficult.** A simple process is not easy to implement or maintain. Leadership in the local church is extremely challenging. Leading a local church is neither easy nor simple, but the church strategy does not need to be complicated. The ministry design can and should be simple.  
*Simple Church* (page 16)
- **Alignment is the arrangement of all ministries and staff around the same simple process.**
  1. Alignment to the process means that all ministry departments submit and attach themselves to the same overarching process.
  2. Alignment ensures the entire church body is moving in the same direction, and in the same manner.
  3. When a church is fully aligned, all ministries are operating from the same ministry blueprint.
  4. The ministries not only embrace the simple process, but they are engaged in it.
  5. Each ministry department mirrors the process in that particular area.
  6. Without alignment, the church can be a multitude of sub-ministries. In this case each ministry has its own leaders who are only passionate about their specific ministry. They rarely identify with the entire church but are deeply committed to their own philosophy of ministry.
  7. In a church that lacks alignment, everyone is competing for the same space, resources, volunteers, and time on the calendar.
  8. In a church that lacks alignment, it does not feel like one body. It feels more like a building that houses a wide variety of ministries.
  9. All churches naturally drift away from alignment.

*Simple Church* (pages 74-75)





- St. Agnes team mantra: “Every purpose has a process”
- **One** vision. **One** purpose. **One** process.
- Every person, every ministry, every resource, every event is aimed at the process:  
**How do we get people in and through the process?**



# Formation LIFE CYCLE



## STEPS, NOT PROGRAMS

Most churches are fairly effective at designing programs to meet needs.

And the church staff usually feels like it is their responsibility to understand the needs of their congregation and community and establish the appropriate programs to meet those needs.

**When you “think programs,”** your inclination tends to create something in order to meet specific needs that have surfaced in your attendee base or target group.

**When you “think steps”** there is a fundamental difference in your perspective.

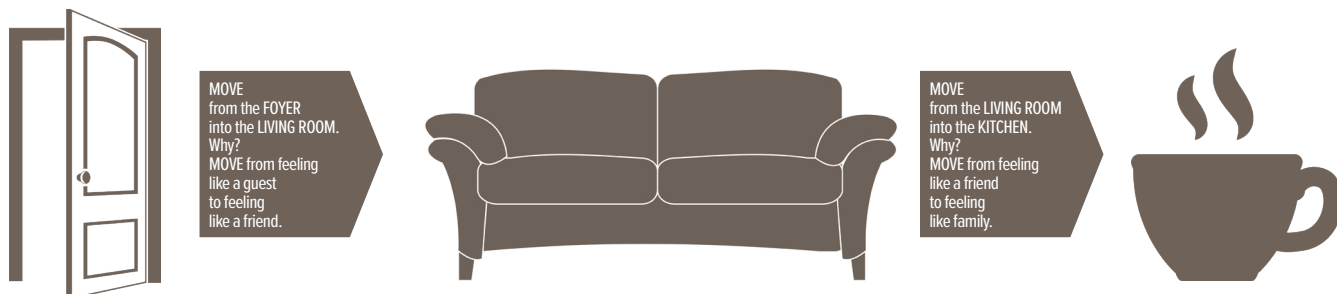
Now the primary goal is not to meet someone’s need but rather to help someone **get where they need to go.**

When you think steps you start by asking, “Where do we want people to be?” That question is followed by a second, more strategic question: “How are we going to get them there?” The result is a ministry that works as a step—it has been created to lead someone somewhere.

Andy Stanley, *Creating Community: Five Keys to Building a Small Group Culture* (pages. 115-116)

### STEPS MUST BE

SIMPLE  
OBVIOUS  
STRATEGIC



#### THE FOYER

It's where **guests** enter  
The goal?

Change people's minds about **church**

Everyone enters.  
Largest group.  
Open to anyone.

#### THE LIVING ROOM

It's where guests begin to feel like **friends**  
The goal?

Change people's minds about **connecting**

Larger groups.  
Organized by what people have in common.  
Seasonal, "spurts" during the year.

#### THE KITCHEN

It's where friends begin to feel more like **family**  
The goal?

Change their **priorities**

Starter or community groups.  
Smallest setting.  
The goal is to get people here.

Sunday Mass  
Weekday Mass  
Baptisms  
Weddings  
Funerals

Date Night  
Men's (women's) "One-Day" gatherings  
Topic Nights (bereaved)  
Topic Nights (couples)  
Topic Nights (parenting)  
Topic Nights (hot issues)

Men's group  
Women's group  
Bereavement group

Baptism prep  
Marriage prep  
Knights of Columbus  
Navigate  
ACTS retreat  
Mission trip

Marriage issues (6-8 week experience)  
Parenting issues (6-8 week experience)  
Divorced (6-8 week experience)

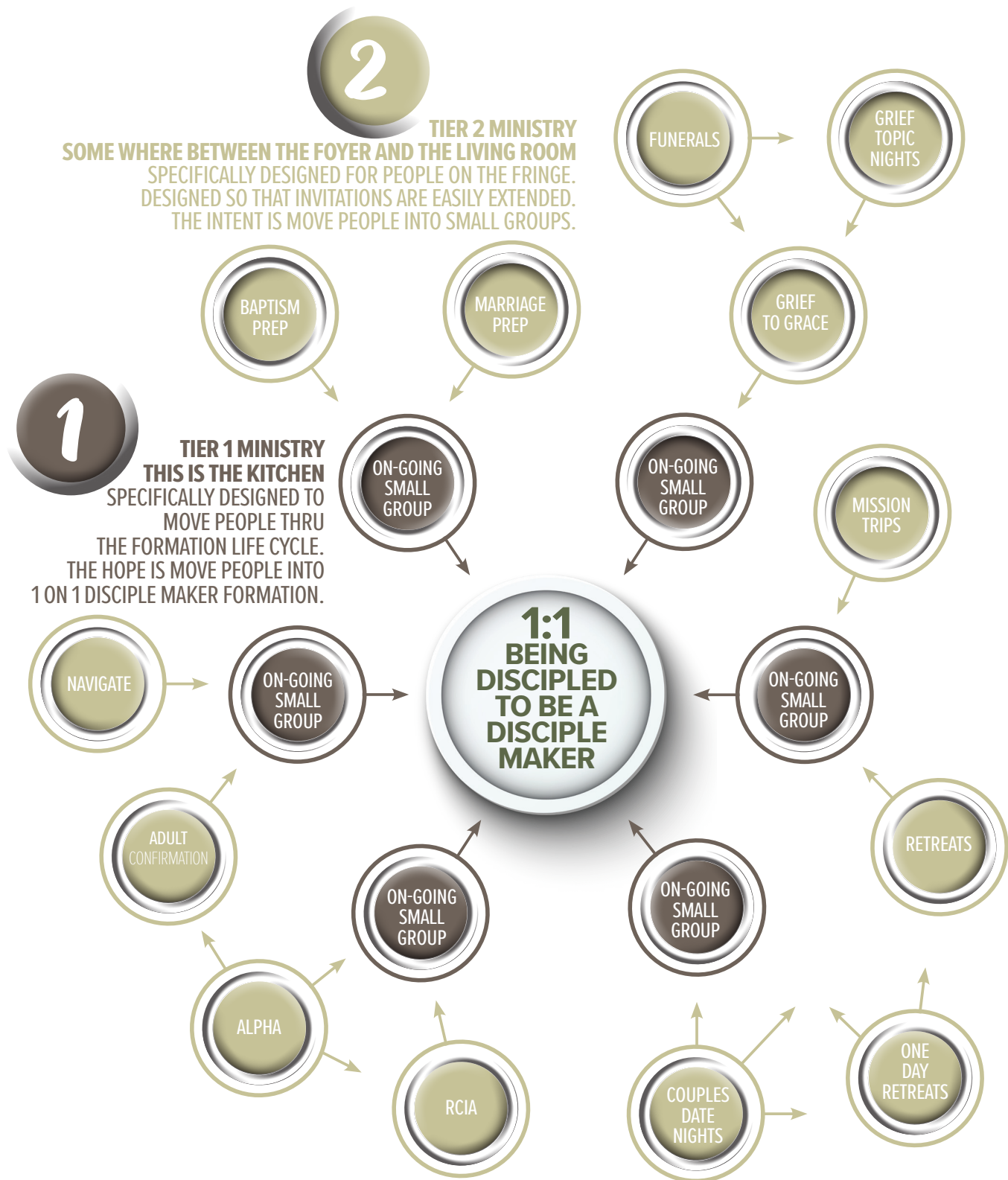
Alpha (starter group)  
Art of Living (small group)  
Ongoing small groups





# HOW DOES IT ALL FIT TOGETHER?

THE CALENDAR MUST BE INTENTIONAL.  
THE CALENDAR MUST BE DISCIPLINED.



# WHAT'S POSSIBLE? WHAT COULD HAPPEN?

- 2019 weekend Mass attendance is 700 ... and if Fr. Adam teaches a class, “about” 40-50 adults show up
- Estimated no more than 70 adults are actively engaged in on-going faith formation: 10% of the parish
- During Lent of 2019, Fr. Adam organizes an Adult Formation Team comprised four (4) PMD participants and four (4) new volunteers who are recruited with the help of his implementation team. This totals eight (8) people who will eventually be trained as small group leaders.
- Fr. Adam recruits Eve as the volunteer leader of the Adult Formation Team. She said “yes”.
- Fr. Adam asks the Office of Parish Support to train Eve and she begins to receive additional formation.

## MAY THRU JULY 2019

- 8 people trained as small group leaders

## AUGUST OF 2019

- 8 small group leaders each recruit 7 *unique* people to be in *their* small group

## FALL OF 2019

- 8 small groups, each with eight (8) people, begin semester I of *Art of Living*

☞ 64 people in small groups

## EASTER 2020

- St. Agnes hosts an ACTS retreat, mainly thru invitations from the 64 in small groups
- 30 “new” people attend the retreat

## MAY THRU JULY 2020

- 20 of the 30 retreatants agree to “keep it going” via small group

## FALL OF 2020

- 8 small groups from fall of 2019 continue *Art of Living*
- 3 new groups formed after the ACTS retreat begin semester I of *Art of Living*
- 11 total small groups

☞ 88 people in small groups

## EASTER 2021

- St. Agnes hosts a ACTS retreat, mainly thru invitations from the 88 in small groups
- 30 “new” people attend the retreat

## MAY THRU JULY 2021

- 20 of the 30 retreatants agree to “keep it going” via small group

## FALL OF 2021

- 11 small groups from fall of 2019 continue *Art of Living*
- 3 new groups formed after the ACTS retreat begin semester I of *Art of Living*
- 14 total small groups

☞ 112 people in small groups

## EASTER 2022

- St. Agnes hosts a ACTS retreat, mainly thru invitations from the 112 in small groups
- 30 “new” people attend the retreat

## MAY THRU JULY 2022

- 20 of the 30 retreatants agree to “keep it going” via small group

## FALL OF 2022

- 14 small groups from fall of 2019 continue *Art of Living*
- 3 new groups formed after the ACTS retreat begin semester I of *Art of Living*
- 17 total small groups

☞ 136 people in small groups

*\*A comment on attrition vs. growth ...*

## WHAT'S POSSIBLE? WHAT COULD HAPPEN?

- Look at the fruit: **quantity**. In January 2019, we estimated that no more than 70 adults were actively engaged in on-going faith formation. That is 10% of the parish. Presuming all things remain equal, three years later, by Christmas of 2022, **St. Agnes doubled the number of adults engaged in on-going faith formation.**
- Look at the fruit: **quality**. The small group based formation is not merely intellectual. St. Agnes small groups are using the resource *The Art of Living*. They are intentionally being formed by both the resource and the small groups while progressing through the Formation Life Cycle. The fruit is seen in how they are experiencing first hand the grace of “connect, encounter, conversion, grow, mission.” Relationships among the small groups are forming tight bonds of spiritual friendship. The growth has become more personal. The growth is more sustainable. Most importantly, none of the 112 parishioners are dependent on Fr. Adam. (Again, see page 10 for other advantages)



### “WHAT DO WE WANT?” VS. “WHAT DO WE WANT NOW?”

- Fr. Adam, his Implementation Team, and Adult Formation Team are as concerned with what is happening by Christmas of 2022 as they are what’s happening during Lent 2019.
- Fr. Adam, his Implementation Team, and Adult Formation Team understand that they’ll never see the growth by Christmas of 2022 if they don’t invest during Lent of 2019.
- Instead of grasping at “good ideas” that aren’t leading to the next step, Fr. Adam, his Implementation Team, and Adult Formation Team understand the difference between “what do we want?” vs. “what do we want now?”

### WINNING LATER INSTEAD OF GRASPING NOW

- Fr. Adam partners with the Office of Parish Support in providing lots of formation of his staff, Implementation Team, and Adult Formation Team. They believe in the vision of adult formation and understand its potential impact on the parish as a whole.
- Fr. Adam, his staff, Implementation Team, and Adult Formation Team resist the temptation to get “something” started in order to remain focused on building a foundation that will bear fruit later.
- Fr. Adam, his staff, Implementation Team, and Adult Formation Team team often say: “We need to stay focused on staying focused.”

### THE INTENTIONAL PROCESS NEEDS AN INTENTIONAL PROCESS, NOT MEMORIZATION OF THE WORDS

- Fr. Adam has already presented “the nine” and “the five” to the parish. It was received well, but the parishioners didn’t know what to do with it.
- Fr. Adam, his staff, Implementation Team, and Adult Formation Team realized that the concept of the Formation Life Cycle sounds good, but they need concrete ways to help parishioners get parishioners through the process.
- Working with the Office of Parish Support, Fr. Adam, his staff, Implementation Team, and Adult Formation Team team came up with a plan to systematically move parishioners through the Formation Life Cycle using *The Art of Living*.

## ST. AGNES’ TOP TEN

1. A unified vision: “If we not unified in vision we’re competing with each other”
2. Everyone is focused on the Formation Life Cycle: “If it doesn’t feed the five why are we doing it?”
3. The calendar is focused on a singular purpose: “The calendar must focus, not distract”
4. Looking for movement in people’s lives: “We want movement, not membership”
5. Meeting people where they are: “It has to be easy for people to know where they can start”
6. Helping people take next steps: “Once people start they have to know where they are going”
7. *Art of Living* starts the process: “We don’t have to use this, we just can’t use something worse”
8. There is on-going assessment of the practical details: “We no longer just get it done”
9. There is on-going assessment of fruitfulness: “There’s a difference between good and God”
10. There is on-going assessment of how to support ongoing growth: “People are having conversions without us”







# PLANS OF HOPE

HOUMA-THIBODAUX ADULT FORMATION

## PART TWO





## ADULT FORMATION LEADERSHIP AT ST. AGNES

### ADULT FORMATION TEAM (AFT)

- With pastor and Implementation Team help recruit small group leaders and hosts
- Provide initial training to small group leaders and hosts
- Facilitate their own small groups
- With help of Office of Parish Support, provide ongoing training to small group leaders and hosts
- Evaluate and assess at the end of each semester

#### PARISH IMPLEMENTATION TEAM (PIT)

- With AFT and pastor help recruit small group leaders and hosts leaders and hosts
- Serve as liaison between pastor and AFT
- Two members of PIT meet once a month with AFT to assess fruitfulness, needs, and pace within the overall plan
- With help of Office of Parish Support, provide support to AFT

#### PASTOR

- With AFT and PIT help recruit small group leaders and hosts leaders and hosts
- With help of Office of Parish Support, provide support to AFT

#### OFFICE OF PARISH SUPPORT (OPS) FORMERLY STRATEGIC PLANNING

- Provide resources to help recruit small group leaders and hosts
- Provide initial training to small group leaders and hosts
- Provide resources for adult formation (example: *Art of Living, Why We*, etc.)
- With help of Office of Parish Support, provide ongoing training to small group leaders and hosts

#### PASTORAL COUNCIL

- Provide counsel and consultation to pastor regarding all matters of parish life
- Serve as discernment and problem solving consultation to pastor

#### STAFF

- Facilitate the day to day operation of the parish
- “Front line of communication” for parishioners
- Execute logistics to support the mission

#### FINANCE COUNCIL

- Provide counsel and consultation to pastor regarding all matters of finance
- Assist in finding financial and capital resources needed for the mission



## WHO'S IN THE PEW

- The Parish Implementation Team organized pre-Mass index cards to be filled in before all weekend Masses on one designated weekend.
- Results indicated:
  - 30% ages 65 and above
  - 35% ages 50-65
  - 25% ages 20-50
  - 10% ages 0-20
- The Parish Implementation Team and the Adult Formation Team then researched communication and learning styles for each generation group







# SENIORS

- BORN 1945 AND EARLIER
- IN 2018, AGES 73 AND ABOVE
- COMPRISE 26% OF CHARITABLE GIVING
- 51% VOLUNTEER IN THEIR PARISH
- COMMUNICATIONS PREFERENCES: PREFER BULLETIN OR A WRITTEN LETTER

**THEIR SEASON IN LIFE.** It's the practical things in life that have an influence. Many seniors will respond to the same opportunities as other generations. However, some prefer days over nights such that some may not participate in adult formation in the traditional evening format. If you host something at night, try hosting a second session during the day. You'll be surprised how many may respond.

**DON'T UNDERESTIMATE.** Our image of God has a lot to do with how we experience God. Adult formation for those born before 1945 impressed upon Catholics a certain image of God that still has an influence.

**CONSIDER THIS:** Most seniors are retired. They have more time than any of the generations. Many are looking for their place in the Church. Many would respond to more formation, they have the time.

**HOW THEY THINK.** Seniors are most likely to be involved in traditional ministries and historical parish structures. The vocabulary of "making disciples" or small groups may need some translation if they are going to feel comfortable engaging.

**WHAT PASTORS NEED TO KNOW.** While they can be perceived as the least likely to embrace change, they'll "follow" the pastor's lead more than others. Their great respect for the Office of the priesthood is a gift. Communicate well and give them time to adjust and they'll follow.



# BABY BOOMERS

- BORN 1946 THRU 1964
- IN 2018, AGES 54-72
- COMPRISE 43% OF CHARITABLE GIVING
- 48% VOLUNTEER IN THEIR PARISH
- COMMUNICATIONS PREFERENCES: PREFER FACE TO FACE OR TELEPHONE COMMUNICATION

**THEIR SEASON IN LIFE.** Baby boomers may be retired or in the busiest time of their professional life. Their ages span 54-72. However, research indicates that they are both thinking about their future, as well as looking back on their life. The "second half of life" has taught them a few things. The "building" and "proving" of the first half of life has been confronted with all that one faces in the second half of life. They are more in touch with their need for God at least as much as any other generation.

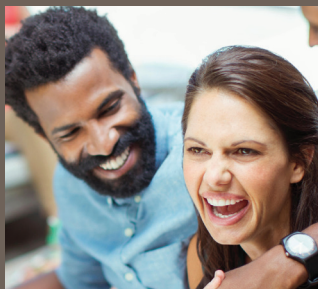
**WHAT ARE THEY INTERESTED IN?** They are the first generation raised during the theological crisis immediately following the Second Vatican Council. They'll say, "We never learned this." They respond well to apologetics and spiritual formation.

**THEY ARE MOST LIKELY TO:** Attend adult formation, on campus, at night. They also respond well to gatherings on weekdays before work.

**THEY RESPOND WELL TO:** Traditional forms of parish-based adult formation

**DON'T MISTAKE THEM.** Contrary to popular opinion, baby boomers *are* tech savvy. Facebook is by far their favorite online platform. They check it and will respond to uploads and posts. They, like Generation X behind them, are likely to listen to homilies posted on Facebook, 3:00-9:00 p Sundays.





# GENERATION X

- BORN 1965 THRU 1980
- IN 2018, AGES 38-53
- COMPRISE 20% OF CHARITABLE GIVING
- 30% VOLUNTEER IN THEIR PARISH
- COMMUNICATIONS PREFERENCES: PREFER COMMUNICATION VIA TEXT MESSAGE OR EMAIL

**THEIR SEASON IN LIFE.** They are in the thick of their professional life. They comprise the largest percentage of any generation in the work force. They work hard, but they want to enjoy it at the same time. They have boats and camps and illustrate the greatest migration on the weekend. They'll spend the weekend at the camp or traveling with their kids for baseball.

**WHAT'S ON THEIR HEART.** They want to find God in the midst of "real life". They are searching for balance between work, marriage, family, etc.

**WHAT ARE THEY INTERESTED IN?** Human formation issues: anxiety, balance, stress, etc.

**WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:** They are searching for a relevant message. This age group, just as much as millennials, will "search" for a good message. They'll leave one parish for another, just because of preaching.

**WHAT DO THEY RESPOND WELL TO?** They have the highest response as any generation to things such as daily podcasts. They also like homily uploads on Facebook or other social media apps.

**WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN FOR ADULT FORMATION?** They want to be connected to the parish, but they want to be fed. They do not have the same interest as senior or baby boomers in "getting involved" in the parish. They probably won't show up for the "Tuesday night Bible study", but they will join a small group.



# MILLENNIALS

- BORN 1981 THRU 1996
- IN 2018, AGES 22-37
- COMPRISE 11% OF CHARITABLE GIVING
- LESS THAN 15% VOLUNTEER IN THEIR PARISH
- COMMUNICATIONS PREFERENCES: PREFER TEXT MESSAGES OR SOCIAL MEDIA

**WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW.** We must reach them. Millennials comprise the largest generation in the United States of America, 76 million strong and now 25% of the nation's population. Many of them don't take the Catholic Church seriously. They don't "see" the Gospel in the lives of the people preaching it or listening to it. They have tremendous potential; however, the scandal and hypocrisy in the Church is a turnoff.

**HOW THEY THINK.** They grew up in a world of tolerance, inclusivity, and technology. They are used to being written off by a society that struggles to understand them. Millennial couples are dealing with some of the same issues as are those older than them. Of any generation, they live over their means and this adds stress. Couples are raising young children and trying to figure out what it means to be married.

**WHAT'S ON THEIR HEART.** While all generations are searching for God, millennials articulate their desires with different language. They want to be happy. They are searching for meaning and direction.

**WHAT ARE THEY INTERESTED IN?** Human formation issues: anxiety, balance, stress, etc.

**THEY ARE LEAST LIKELY TO:** Attend Mass consistently, much less adult formation, on campus, at night.

**THEY RESPOND WELL TO:** Small groups. Their generation grew up feeling "connected" to everyone but knowing (at a substantial level) no one.



ADULT FAITH FORMATION GROUP

# SENIORS

AGES: 70 AND ABOVE

LET'S GET TO KNOW

## SUSAN

74 YEARS OLD

MARRIED TO ROBERT

FIVE KIDS

23 GRANDCHILDREN

RETIRED SCHOOL TEACHER

PARISHIONER FOR 50 YEARS



**HER PERSONAL CHALLENGES.** Has her diabetes under control, health is good. Worries about her husband Robert and his health. They enjoy a good marriage. Worries about her kids who “went to Catholic schools” but don’t go to Church and neither do her grandkids.

**RELIGIOUS HISTORY.** Born and raised Catholic. Has always been committed and faithful.

**RELIGIOUS PRACTICE.** Daily Mass, three times a week. Confession once every eight weeks. Volunteers in almost everything.

**HER RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CHURCH.** Loves being Catholic.

**HER RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PARISH.** Loves St. Agnes, was there “in the good old days”. Would never leave, for “this is my parish.” Generous and faithful. Gracefully at a cautious relational distance since Fr. Adam arrived. There’s been “too much change” that she doesn’t understand.

**WHAT SHE WANTS FROM ST. AGNES.** Community ... the “kind” of community she “used to feel” when the previous pastor was here. She doesn’t know where she fits in any more. She thinks the “new people” get too much attention.

**WHAT IT WOULD TAKE FOR HER TO BELIEVE IN THE VISION.** She needs to be heard. She needs to understand “why”. Get her to understand why her kids don’t go to Mass and you’ve got her.

**WHAT IT WOULD TAKE FOR HER TO JOIN A SMALL GROUP.** Personal invitation from a veteran parishioner. In and through small groups, help her “feel” what it used to “feel” like.

**HOW DO WE REACH SUSAN?** Homilies and bulletins are okay, but Susan responds to face to face and a cup of coffee “like things used to be.”

**HER PREFERRED FORM OF COMMUNICATION?** Reads the bulletin cover to cover. Appreciates the personal touch with a phone call.





ADULT FAITH FORMATION GROUP

# RETIRED

RETIRED AND STILL ACTIVE

LET'S GET TO KNOW

## REED

62 YEARS OLD

MARRIED TO GWEN

THREE KIDS

SEVEN GRANDCHILDREN

RETIRED OFFSHORE OPERATOR

JOINED THE PARISH IN 1993



**HIS PERSONAL CHALLENGES.** Loves being retired. Loves the time to hunt, fish, and be with his grandkids. His wife Gwen says often “I liked him better when he was still working.” ☺ He worries about if he’ll get to Heaven because of his “past”. He doesn’t feel worthy, he’s just happy he’s been blessed the way he has.

**RELIGIOUS HISTORY.** Born and raised Catholic, although he’s never really had an encounter with the Lord.

**RELIGIOUS PRACTICE.** Sunday Mass

**HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CHURCH.** Doesn’t really think about questions like this. He’s fed up with all the scandal in the Church. Doesn’t think religion should be “this complicated”.

**HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PARISH.** Loves St. Agnes because it’s not formal or stuffy. Likes the people.

**WHAT HE WANTS FROM ST. AGNES.** Doesn’t ask that kind of question. However, he’d do anything we’d ask of him; however, we never really ask him. He doesn’t “see” where he really fits in. Struggling to really find a sense of purpose and direction since he’s retired.

**WHAT IT WOULD TAKE FOR HIM TO BELIEVE IN THE VISION.** Two things. First, Fr. Adam has to “sell” him that this is “for real”. Second, if he saw someone “like him” having a real conversion it would convince him that this is real. He’s not into gimmicks; this needs to be “legit.”

**WHAT IT WOULD TAKE FOR HIM TO JOIN A SMALL GROUP.** Some “real” guy he respects would need to ask him.

**HOW DO WE REACH REED?** Homilies and one on one at the house, with a beer and watching the game.

**HIS PREFERRED FORM OF COMMUNICATION?** Bulletin. Email. Phone call.



ADULT FAITH FORMATION GROUP

# BOOMERS

AGES 50 AND ABOVE AND STILL WORKING

LET'S GET TO KNOW

## BRUCE

53 YEARS OLD

DIVORCED TWICE AND SINGLE

2 KIDS

ACCOUNTANT

JOINED THE PARISH IN 2013

CAME, AND STAYS, FOR PREACHING



**HIS PERSONAL CHALLENGES.** Bruce is driven. His professional focus has compromised both broken marriages. He's mellowed a bit as time passes. He's reconnected with his kids after a distant fatherhood when they were younger. He's searching and hungry.

**RELIGIOUS HISTORY.** Disengaged with the Church after his Confirmation at 15 years old. Just started coming back to Mass when Fr. Adam first arrived. He's been pretty steady since then.

**RELIGIOUS PRACTICE.** Sunday Mass only

**HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CHURCH.** Has never really considered himself religious; however, is growing more and more fascinated with Catholicism. Is a voracious reader and loves C.S. Lewis.

**HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PARISH.** Doesn't really think about "St. Agnes". He really follows the preaching. He came because Fr. Adam and stay because of the preaching.

**WHAT HE WANTS FROM ST. AGNES.** More than ever, he's hungry and searching for substance and meaning. He's reached a point where he's asking: "There has to be more to life than what I've tasted." He wants to be fed. Quietly wants to be challenged. Doesn't want to commit to anything other than his personal journey with the Lord.

**WHAT IT WOULD TAKE FOR HIM TO BELIEVE IN THE VISION.** Fr. Adam has to "sell" him that the vision will connect to what he's searching for. He doesn't care about unifying the parish. He will, however, be all in if he "sees" how this will help him continue to grow.

**WHAT IT WOULD TAKE FOR HIM TO JOIN A SMALL GROUP.** Bruce is already over committed to civic responsibilities. He'd be open to trying a smaller small group or even one on one mentoring.

**HOW DO WE REACH BRUCE?** He loves preaching. He quietly critiques it. Preaching well will help. He respects Fr. Adam, and really likes the Deacon. A personal invitation from one of them.

**HIS PREFERRED FORM OF COMMUNICATION?** Email. Text message. Facebook.





ADULT FAITH FORMATION GROUP

# COUPLES

WITH CHILDREN, BUT WHO DO NOT NEED CHILDCARE

LET'S GET TO KNOW

## KEITH & KAT

BOTH 46 YEARS OLD

THREE KIDS

BOTH ARE

NURSES



**THEIR PERSONAL CHALLENGES.** Rediscovering who they are as a couple. All three of their kids are in high school and they have noticed that the last 17 years of their marriage has been focused on the kids. They have been married through the kids. They now have to rediscover who they are. In addition, teenagers are expensive. Their finances are stretched to the limit with three kids in Catholic high school.

**RELIGIOUS HISTORY.** Kat was raised non-denominational. Keith grew up atheist. Everything changed when their first child was born. They started asking questions like never before. Their neighbors, a Catholic couple, began to reach out to them. Keith and Kat eventually went through RCIA, Kat first and then Keith three years later.

**RELIGIOUS PRACTICE.** Sunday Mass, at least three times a month.

**THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CHURCH.** Fragile. They are Catholic; however, they aren't really connected to anyone in the parish. They like Fr. Adam, but too much is dependent upon who the priest is.

**WHAT THEY WANT FROM ST. AGNES.** They want "to be fed". They are really hungry to learn, after RCIA they both feel off the radar. There was nothing at St. Agnes that helped direct their desire for more.

**WHAT IT WOULD TAKE FOR THEM TO BELIEVE IN THE VISION.** Clarity. If someone clearly laid out the vision they would be very open to taking another step.

**WHAT IT WOULD TAKE FOR THEM TO JOIN A SMALL GROUP.** Clarity. Make it easy and clear and Kat will sign up ... and she'll drag Keith with her. 😊

**HOW DO WE REACH THEM?** Homilies and social media.

**THEIR PREFERRED FORM OF COMMUNICATION?** Email. Text message. Facebook.





ADULT FAITH FORMATION GROUP

# COUPLES

WITH CHILDREN IN NEED OF CHILDCARE

LET'S GET TO KNOW

## COOPER

33 YEARS OLD

MARRIED TO TIM

2 KIDS

OFFICE MANAGER AT A LAW FIRM

PARISHIONER SINCE BIRTH

HAS KIDS AT CATHOLIC SCHOOL

**HER PERSONAL CHALLENGES.** Balance. She often complains she doesn't have time. Her kids keep her super busy. She wants to be a great mom and a good wife, but feels she can never catch up. Her and Tim are good people but live a bit over their means. Financial pressure adds pressure to her life and their marriage.

**RELIGIOUS HISTORY.** Grew up at St. Agnes. Was active in youth ministry. Strayed a bit from the Church in college. Has never stopped going to Mass, but isn't where she used to be.

**RELIGIOUS PRACTICE.** Sunday Mass

**HER RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CHURCH.** Would never leave the Church, but wishes we had stuff like other non-denominational churches. She wishes we offered more for women like her.

**HER RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PARISH.** Loves St. Agnes because it's home. She sometimes invites a friend for the preaching.

**WHAT SHE WANTS FROM ST. AGNES.** Has a pride in the parish but feels pressured when people invite her to "get involved." She thinks: "I'm already too busy, I can't get involved." She wants "to be fed". She wants St. Agnes to make it easier for families and couples.

**WHAT IT WOULD TAKE FOR HER TO BELIEVE IN THE VISION.** Getting the vision wouldn't take much, committing to the vision would. She longs for the Lord and loves the vision focused on Jesus.

**WHAT IT WOULD TAKE FOR HER TO JOIN A SMALL GROUP.** Because of her struggles with time, she would have to see how a small group could fit into her schedule. And, then there's Tim. He'd have to be on board too and he's not really engaged with his faith. And, we have to address her concerns for child care.

**HOW DO WE REACH COOPER?** She'll respond from a general, impassioned plea from the pulpit. But, will also need to hear it from a mom like her who faces what she faces.

**HER PREFERRED FORM OF COMMUNICATION?** Email. Text message. Facebook. Instagram. All on iPhone.



ADULT FAITH FORMATION GROUP

# MILLENNIALS

AGES 18-30 AND SINGLE

LET'S GET TO KNOW

## MINDY

25 YEARS OLD

DATING CASUALLY, LIKES BEING "FREE"

MARKETING ASSISTANT AT NICHOLLS STATE

JOINED THE PARISH IN 2016

BOUNCES BETWEEN ST. AGNES

AND A NON-DENOMINATIONAL CHURCH



**HER PERSONAL MINDSET.** Wants direction in life. Looking for guidance about her life and her future. Feels like she has an endless future that is in front of her.

**RELIGIOUS HISTORY.** Graduated from Catholic school. Never really thought much about it all. "I really just focus on me and being a good person."

**RELIGIOUS PRACTICE.** Sunday Mass twice a month. Once a month at a local non-denominational church. Once a month "misses" Mass.

**HER RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CHURCH.** Doesn't think religion should be "this complicated". Loves the feeling and Catholicism of St. Agnes, but loves the ease and lack of structure of a non-denominational church. Her cousin, and childhood friend, is gay and Mindy thinks the Church's teaching on same sex attraction is intolerant and outdated.

**HER RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PARISH.** Comes for the preaching. But, that's it. She knows no one else and sees "a bunch of older people" at St. Agnes that she can't connect with.

**WHAT SHE WANTS FROM ST. AGNES.** A relevant message. She wants direction in life. She responds to human formation. She quietly longs for depth and direction in the homily when it teaches her how to live.

**WHAT IT WOULD TAKE FOR HER TO BELIEVE IN THE VISION.** She thinks religion needs to be about love. Tell her that the vision is simplifying religion and you've got her.

**WHAT IT WOULD TAKE FOR HER TO JOIN A SMALL GROUP.** First, it has to be authentic. She's not a number or merely someone to "finish the quota" for the group. Second, she has to see the connection between her desire for direction in life and what she might benefit from in small group. Third, she'll have to see other people her age, "like her", who are in small group.

**HOW DO WE REACH MINDY?** Homilies and personal invitation, if possible.

**HER PREFERRED FORM OF COMMUNICATION?** Text message. Facebook. Instagram. All on iPhone.





## HOW TO FORM YOUR ADULT FORMATION TEAM

- Consider generational preferences
- Consider a blend of “old” and “new” faces
- Who should be on the team?
  1. Discern, don’t brainstorm
  2. Watch with eye of recruitment (at Mass, after Mass, in the parish)
  3. Believe in the vision or will believe in the vision
  4. Basic spiritual maturity
  5. Open to being formed
  6. Basic leadership skills
- What is your focus
  1. With the pastor and Parish Implementation Team help recruit small group leaders and hosts
  2. Provide initial training to small group leaders and hosts
  3. Facilitate your own small groups
  4. With help of Office of Parish Support, provide ongoing training to small group leaders and hosts
  5. Evaluate and assess at the end of each semester
- How to get organized
  1. With the pastor and Parish Implementation Team designate a leader of the Adult Formation Team
  2. With the pastor and Parish Implementation Team determine who from PMD is and is not going to continue with the Adult Formation Team
  3. With the pastor and Parish Implementation Team recruit additional members of Adult Formation Team
  4. Clarify that each member of the Adult Formation Team understands their role
  5. With the pastor and Parish Implementation Team identify possible small group leaders and hosts
  6. Host “pitch” meeting for potential small group leaders and hosts
  7. After period of discernment, confirm commitment from small group leaders and hosts
  8. Organize Adult Formation Team and additional small group leaders and hosts into 8-person small groups (“training groups”)
  9. Complete first semester of *Art of Living* within these “training groups”
  10. After “training groups” complete first semester of *Art of Living*, using Office of Parish Support online videos provide further training to all small group leaders and hosts
  11. Small group leaders and hosts recruit 6 additional people and form their own small group (pilot groups)
  12. At designated time, all pilot groups begin first semester of *Art of Living*



## SAMPLE GOAL FOR ADULT FORMATION

### ST. AGNES' FIRST SMART GOAL

By Christmas 2021 at least 10% of adults within each generational group will be engaged in ongoing faith formation.

LENT THRU LABOR DAY 2019 | Develop small group leaders before we launch pilot small groups

1. Recruit small group leaders (Accomplished by May 1, 2019)
2. Form small group leaders (Accomplished by August 1, 2019)
3. Small group leaders recruit parishioners into their own unique small group (Accomplished by September 1, 2019)

FALL 2019 | Pilot small groups

1. 8 pilot small groups (GROUPS A) complete semester no. 1 of *Art of Living* (Accomplished by November 15, 2019)
2. Evaluate health of small groups (GROUPS A) (Accomplished by December 15, 2019)
3. Determine which, if any participants, have the capacity, desire, or “calling” to start their own new small group (Accomplished by December 15, 2019)

JANUARY THRU FEBRUARY 2020 | If applicable (from December 2019), train new small group leader(s)

1. Form small group leader(s) (Accomplished by February 15, 2020)
2. Small group leader(s) recruit parishioners into their own unique small group (GROUPS B) (Accomplished by February 25, 2020)

LENT 2020 | Small groups continue

1. Pilot small groups (GROUPS A) complete semester no. 2 of *Art of Living* (Accomplished by May 1, 2020)
2. New small groups (GROUPS B) complete semester no. 1 of *Art of Living* (Accomplished by May 1, 2020)
3. Evaluate health of small groups (GROUPS A-B) (Accomplished by June 1, 2020)
4. Determine which, if any participants, have the capacity, desire, or “calling” to start their own new small group (Accomplished by June 1, 2020)

EASTER 2020 | ACTS retreat

1. Secure commitment from ACTS international leadership team (Accomplished by August 1, 2019)
2. Recruit ACTS retreat core team (Accomplished by August 1, 2019)
3. ACTS retreat core team participates in an ACTS retreat (Accomplished by January 1, 2020)
4. Additional formation of ACTS retreat core team (Accomplished by April 1, 2020)
5. Recruit (and promote) ACTS retreat registration (Accomplished by April 18, 2020)
6. Host ACTS retreat (April 24-26, 2020)
7. Facilitate ACTS retreat follow-up (April 29, May 6, 13, 20, 27, 2020)
8. Enroll ACTS retreat participants into small groups (Accomplished by May 27, 2020)
9. Determine which, if any participants, have the capacity, desire, or “calling” to start their own new small group (Accomplished by June 1, 2020)



## CONTINUING ... ST. AGNES' FIRST SMART GOAL

By Christmas 2021 at least 10% of adults within each generational group will be engaged in ongoing faith formation.

### JULY THRU AUGUST 2020 | Train new small group leader(s)

1. Form small group leaders (Accomplished by September 1, 2020)
2. Small group leader(s) recruit parishioners into their own unique small group (GROUPS C)  
(Accomplished by September 1, 2020)

### FALL 2020 | Small groups continue

1. Pilot small groups (GROUPS A) complete semester no. 3 of *Art of Living* (Accomplished by November 15, 2020)
2. Small groups (GROUPS B) complete semester no. 2 of *Art of Living* (Accomplished by November 15, 2020)
3. New small groups (GROUPS C) complete semester no. 1 of *Art of Living* (Accomplished by November 15, 2020)
4. Evaluate health of small groups (GROUPS A-C) (Accomplished by December 15, 2020)
5. Determine which, if any participants, have the capacity, desire, or “calling” to start their own new small group (Accomplished by December 15, 2020)

### JANUARY THRU FEBRUARY 2021 | If applicable (from December 2020), train new small group leader(s)

1. Form small group leader(s) (Accomplished by February 15, 2021)
2. Small group leader(s) recruit parishioners into their own unique small group (GROUPS D)  
(Accomplished by February 15, 2021)

### LENT 2021 | Small groups continue

1. Pilot small groups (GROUPS A) complete semester no. 4 of *Art of Living* (Accomplished by May 1, 2021)
2. Small groups (GROUPS B) complete semester no. 3 of *Art of Living* (Accomplished by May 1, 2021)
3. Small groups (GROUPS C) complete semester no. 2 of *Art of Living* (Accomplished by May 1, 2021)
4. New small groups (GROUPS D) complete semester no. 1 of *Art of Living* (Accomplished by May 1, 2021)
5. Evaluate health of small groups (GROUPS A-D) (Accomplished by June 1, 2020)
6. Determine which, if any participants, have the capacity, desire, or “calling” to start their own new small group (Accomplished by June 1, 2020)

### EASTER 2021 | ACTS retreat

1. Ongoing formation of ACTS retreat core team (Accomplished by March 15, 2021)
2. Recruit (and promote) ACTS retreat registration (Accomplished by April 11, 2020)
3. Host ACTS retreat (April 23-25, 2021)
4. Facilitate ACTS retreat follow-up (April 28, May 5, 12, 19, 26, 2021)
5. Enroll ACTS retreat participants into small groups (Accomplished by May 26, 2021)
6. Determine which, if any participants, have the capacity, desire, or “calling” to start their own new small group (Accomplished by June 1, 2021)



## CONTINUING ... ST. AGNES' FIRST SMART GOAL

By Christmas 2021 at least 10% of adults within each generational group will be engaged in ongoing faith formation.

### SUMMER 2021 | *Called and Gifted*

1. One-day retreat for pilot small groups (GROUPS A) who completed semester no. 4 of *Art of Living* (Accomplished by June 1, 2021)
2. Pilot small groups (GROUPS A) complete *Called and Gifted* (Accomplished by August 1, 2021)
3. Determine which, if any participants, have the capacity, desire, or “calling” to start their own new small group (Accomplished by August 1, 2021)

### JULY THRU AUGUST 2021 | Train new small group leader(s)

1. Form small group leaders (Accomplished by September 1, 2021)
2. Small group leader(s) recruit parishioners into their own unique small group (GROUPS E) (Accomplished by September 1, 2021)

### FALL 2021 | Small groups continue

1. Small groups (GROUPS B) complete semester no. 4 of *Art of Living* (Accomplished by November 15, 2021)
2. Small groups (GROUPS C) complete semester no. 3 of *Art of Living* (Accomplished by November 15, 2021)
3. Small groups (GROUPS D) complete semester no. 2 of *Art of Living* (Accomplished by November 15, 2021)
4. New small groups (GROUPS E) complete semester no. 1 of *Art of Living* (Accomplished by November 15, 2021)
5. Evaluate health of small groups (GROUPS B-E) (Accomplished by December 15, 2021)
6. Determine which, if any participants, have the capacity, desire, or “calling” to start their own new small group (Accomplished by December 15, 2021)





# PLANS OF HOPE

HOUMA-THIBODAUX PARISH PLANNING

## PART THREE







# THE DIOCESE OF HOUMA-THIBODAUX OFFICE OF PARISH SUPPORT

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[www.htdiocese.org](http://www.htdiocese.org)

**Fr. Mark Toups.** As the most important part of his serving as Vicar General for Parish Life, he will have two primary roles. First, he will continue to monitor the big picture, set vision, and keep our service focused on the parishes. He will lead our team in discerning the vision, direction and needs so that we serve you well. Second, and most importantly, he will soon begin to focus specifically on resource development for priests. In doing so, his role is to anticipate what priests might need with hopes in providing that for them through our team. He will also serve as a liaison for a few parishes.

**Trudy Clement** has been hired as the Director for the Office of Parish Support. Trudy will be tending to all executive coordination and logistical leadership for the Office of Parish Support. Most importantly, she will serve as a bridge of communication and increased collaboration between the Office of Parish Support and both the Office of the Vicars General and the Office of the Bishop.

**Kristin Niedbala** has been hired as the Associate Director for the Office of Parish Support. Kristin's role centers on the heart of the Office of Parish Support: our liaisons. Kristin will oversee the formation of the liaison team and will oversee coordination of liaison support for parish-based implementation. She will also co-coordinate resources needed for parish-based initiatives of adult and youth formation. Kristin will continue to assist in resource development for implementation and will serve as a liaison for a few parishes.

**Joe Klapatch** has been hired as Parish Liaison for the Office of Parish Support and our in-house co-leader for adult formation. Joe has recently moved here from Omaha, Nebraska with his wife Kristen. He will be serving as a Parish Liaison. Joe's focus on the team will start with adult formation and eventually he'll transition to focus on Sacramental preparation and major life moments.

**Fr. John David Matherne** received a new title of Parish Liaison for the Office of Parish Support and will remain our in-house co-leader for youth formation. He will be serving as a Parish Liaison. Fr. John David will also continue to serve our diocese as Vocations Director. As an aside, Fr. JD is doing great work already with five guys already in the application process for this fall!

**Roch Gernon** received a new title of Resource Specialist for the Office of Parish Support and will now be focusing his effort full-time within the Office of Parish Support. As Resource Specialist, Roch will have two primary roles. First, he will be freed to focus his attention more readily to our adult formation video resource entitled *The Art of Living* and will also begin sketching the vision for a similar video resource curriculum for youth formation. Secondly, Roch will coordinate the production of video resources that will be necessary in assisting parishes during the implementation of parish plans.

The diocese also signed a project agreement with **Tyler Neil**. Tyler, who remains an independent contract videographer, has been contracted to complete: semesters two, three, and four of *The Art of Living*; three modules needed within the new youth formation curriculum; and a series of video resources to assist you during your implementation of your parish plans.

Finally, the Office of Parish Support hopes to hire additional Parish Liaisons in the coming one to two years. We are currently working to secure additional funding to support the additional staff. Our Office of Parish Support team very much looks forward to serving you. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please let us know.





## WE'RE HERE TO HELP YOU SUCCEED!

1. **SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2019!**  
Reclaiming investment in those formed through the Parish Missionary Disciple (PMD) training and Adult Formation Teams!
2. **COMING SUMMER 2019!**  
Introducing new discipleship formation for volunteer leaders who will help with **youth formation!**
4. **COMING SUMMER 2019!**  
Introducing new discipleship formation for volunteer leaders who will help with **adult formation!**
5. **COMING FALL 2019!**  
Introducing new discipleship formation for volunteer leaders who will help with both **youth and adult formation!**
6. **NEW!**  
A **communications plan** designed to unite your parish around a common vision, mission, and purpose!







PLANS OF HOPE

HOUMA-THIBODAUX PARISH PLANNING

# COMMUNICATIONS PLAN





JOIN US!

# DIVINE RENOVATION

A BOOK STUDY

**WHY ARE WE READING A BOOK?** We, as a parish family, find ourselves at an important moment in our history. What lies before us is an opportunity to unite our parish family around a common vision and mission. *Where are we going as a parish?* What will our future bring? What is "the plan?" Reading this book is our first step forward. If we are going to embrace our future we must do so **together**.

**WHAT WOULD BE THE ADVANTAGE FOR US READING THE BOOK?** Reading the book will help put things into context. It will help us understand where we are now. It will help us appreciate the reality of where the Catholic Church is now. It will also unite us in a common language as we have conversations about the future of our parish family.

**HOW CAN YOU GET A COPY OF THE BOOK?** Books are available after Mass. If you *can* afford the investment, we appreciate you purchasing the book. If you *cannot* afford the purchase we are happy to let you have one for free. If you would like to purchase a book for someone who cannot afford one, let us know. However, please pick up a copy of the book today.

**WHAT HAPPENS AS WE READ THE BOOK?** Start reading the book. Jump in now. We'll give you a few weeks to get started. Beginning February 24, 2019 we will begin to summarize each chapter, one week at a time, in a special inclusion in the bulletin.

**WHAT HAPPENS AFTER WE READ THE BOOK?** We'll have opportunities to unpack your thoughts so that you can tell us what you think about the book.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR FR. JAMES MALLON

Fr. James Mallon was ordained a priest in 1997 for the Archdiocese of Halifax in Canada. He was pastor of St. Benedict Parish where he saw unprecedented spiritual growth in his parishioners by uniting the entire parish around a common mission.



# THE WAY

YOU WANT MORE. YOU WANT TO TAKE THE NEXT STEP.  
WHAT IF GOD COULD SHOW YOU THE WAY?

## HOMILY NOTES FOR SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 10 WEEK 1 OF THE SERIES

**THIS WEEK | WEEK 1 | WHAT'S THE ONE THING WE NEED TO KNOW THIS WEEK?** Jesus pulled Peter out of Simon. There's a Peter inside of every Simon. Jesus wants to pull the "Peter" out of your "Simon."

**WHY DO WE NEED TO KNOW IT?** God wants this more than you do. The burden is not on you, it's on God. You don't have to figure out "the way". God knows *how* your growth should happen. *God knows the way.*

### NO. 1: PETER'S JOURNEY

- First, Simon [Peter] hears about Jesus from his brother Andrew. Then, from the beginning, Andrew introduces Simon to Jesus. From the first moment, Jesus sees Simon. Jesus knows Simon. And He already knows the Rock whom He's calling Simon to be.
- One of the two who heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means Christ). He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "So you are Simon the son of John? You shall be called Cephas" (which means Peter). (John 1:40-42)

### NO. 2: SIMON AND JESUS

- He encounters Jesus again (probably more than once), even receiving Jesus into his own home. Maybe this Jesus is the Messiah? Surely, He has power which comes from God.
- And he arose and left the synagogue, and entered Simon's house. Now Simon's mother-in-law was ill with a high fever, and they asked him about her. And he stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her; and immediately she rose and served them. (Luke 4:38-39)

### NO. 3: PULLING PETER OUT OF SIMON

- When Jesus first saw Simon, He saw Peter *in* Simon. When Jesus first saw the fisherman, He saw the Pope in the fisherman. Simon still has a long way to go. He still has much growing to do. God saw who Simon was. And, God saw who He was calling Simon to be.

### NO. 4: THERE'S A "PETER" INSIDE EVERY "SIMON"

- If God can do that for Peter, imagine what God might do for you.
- Of course, you're asking "How?" Come back next week and we'll introduce you to the way how.





JOIN US!

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# THE WAY

YOU WANT MORE. YOU WANT TO TAKE THE NEXT STEP.  
WHAT IF GOD COULD SHOW YOU THE WAY?

**HOMILY NOTES FOR SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 17  
WEEK 2 OF THE SERIES**

**RECAPPING LAST WEEK.** Jesus pulled Peter out of Simon. There's a Peter inside of every Simon. Jesus wants to pull the "Peter" out of your "Simon."

**WHY DID WE NEED TO KNOW IT?** God wants this more than you do. The burden is not on you, it's on God. You don't have to figure out "the way". God knows *how* your growth should happen. *God knows the way.*

**WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS IF WE DON'T UNDERSTAND THIS?**

- One: We may believe that "this is as good as it gets". To be "a nice person" was never what God intended for you.
- Two: We'll put too much pressure on ourselves.
- Three: We'll grasp at attempts for personal growth that will not bear the same fruit as God's *way*.

**WHY IS GOD'S WAY THE WAY? THIS WEEK'S CORE MESSAGE. WHAT'S THE ONE THING WE NEED TO KNOW THIS WEEK?**

☞ God **does** have a plan for your spiritual growth: it's called being a **disciple**. The "way" is the way of being a disciple.

**WHY DO WE NEED TO KNOW IT?** When we know *who* we are (disciple) we know *whose* we are (Jesus'). If we fail to recognize the call to be a disciple then we won't know *how* to be a disciple. To be a disciple: it is what Jesus is calling to us to and is also *the map* for our spiritual growth.

**WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS IF WE DON'T KNOW THIS?** If Catholicism is not about being a disciple, then what is it about? Without understanding what it means to be a disciple, Catholics "settle" for being "a nice person." Religion then becomes something you do rather than something that changes your life. With this posture, Catholicism is stripped of its power. We are then tempted to go to Mass on Sunday ... and live the rest of our lives on our own.

**NO. 1: JESUS SPEAKS TO THE DISCIPLES**

- In today's readings, we hear an important excerpt of Jesus teaching his *disciples*. "And he lifted up his eyes on his *disciples*, and said ..." (Luke 6:20)



## NO. 2: WHAT IS A DISCIPLE?

- Unfortunately, the word “disciple” may not sound familiar and personal to many Catholics. **So, what is a disciple?**
- **Disciples** are those who learn from a master. The master teaches them how to live. The master models for them how to live. In turn, disciples want to live like the master.
- “Luke views the disciples [in the Bible] as **modeling the essential characteristics of Christian discipleship**. It is not their failures that he highlights. Rather, **what he emphasizes are the new commitments, orientation, and lifestyle that they reflected in their lives by association with Jesus their Master**. And so, as Luke reports it, Jesus’ statement about discipleship applies not only to his immediate disciples, but also to all succeeding believers who identify with them: ‘**Disciples are not above their teachers, but all those who are fully trained will be like their teachers**’ (6:40; cf. Matt 10:24-25).” (Richard N. Longenecker, “Taking Up the Cross Daily: Discipleship in Luke-Acts,” in *Patterns of Discipleship in the New Testament*, page 57)

## NO. 3: THE WAY

- Believers in Jesus originally called themselves “**Those of the Way**”
- Acts 9:1-2: “Now Saul, still breathing murderous threats against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, that, **if he should find any men or women who belonged to the Way**, he might bring them back to Jerusalem in chains.”
- Acts 19:9 and 23: “But when some in their obstinacy and disbelief disparaged **the Way** before the assembly, he (Paul) withdrew and took his disciples with him and began to hold daily discussions in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. ... About that time a serious disturbance broke out concerning **the Way**.”
- Acts 22:4: “I (Paul) persecuted **this Way** to death, binding both men and women and delivering them to prison.”
- Acts 24:14: “But this I do admit to you, that according to **the Way**, which they call a sect, I worship the God of our ancestors and I believe everything that is in accordance with the law and written in the prophets.”

## NO. 4: WHAT DOES THAT MEAN FOR US?

- “The church is only faithful to its calling as it perseveres in the teaching and tradition of the apostles, who constitute the human link with Jesus. And **Christian discipleship is only authentic as it does likewise**.”  
(Richard N. Longenecker, “Taking Up the Cross Daily: Discipleship in Luke-Acts,” in *Patterns of Discipleship in the New Testament*, page 59)

## THE ONE THING. WHAT IS ONE THING YOU CAN DO THIS WEEK?

- **MONDAY, FEBRUARY 18 AND TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 19** | Read chapter 1 of *Divine Renovation*: “House of Prayer: Remembering Our Identity and Purpose”
- **WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 20 AND THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 21** | Read chapter 2 of *Divine Renovation*: “Rebuild my House: From Vatican II to Pope Francis”
- **FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 22** | Answer the following question: What was the one or two most significant things you took away from chapters one and two of *Divine Renovation*?
- **SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23** | Read the Scripture readings for Mass on Sunday, February 24. [www.usccb.org/readings](http://www.usccb.org/readings)

## COME BACK FOR MORE. NEXT WEEK, WEEK 3 IN THE SERIES.

- “If God does have a plan for me ... why haven’t I seen *real* change or transformation in my life?”

**WHAT DID GOD SAY TO YOU AT MASS TODAY?** God spoke to you through the readings and the homily and in your prayer. Write a few things down in the space below. What’s on your heart? What is God saying to you?





# THE WAY

YOU WANT MORE. YOU WANT TO TAKE THE NEXT STEP.  
WHAT IF GOD COULD SHOW YOU THE WAY?

## HOMILY NOTES FOR SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 24 WEEK 3 OF THE SERIES

**RECAPPING LAST WEEK.** God **does** have a plan for your spiritual growth: it's called being a **disciple**. The "way" is the way of being a disciple.

### **WHY IS GOD'S WAY THE WAY? THIS WEEK'S CORE MESSAGE. WHAT'S THE ONE THING WE NEED TO KNOW THIS WEEK?**

☞ Saying "**no**" is the key to living "**yes**".

**WHY DO WE NEED TO KNOW IT?** For most people, it isn't our *desire* that prevents our growth. Instead, it's that ***we don't want what we want more than we want other things***. If we never learn how to say "no" we'll never receive what we really want.

**WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO?** Courageously identify the things you need to say "no" to that keep preventing your "yes" to spiritual growth.

**WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS IF WE DON'T DO THIS?** We'll miss out on most of what God wants to give us. We'll become content with the *occasional moments* of joy, peace, freedom, and happiness, thinking that's good enough. However, ***we'll miss out on so much more***. Remember: disciples learn from the master and live like the master. If we don't learn how to say "no", we won't live *like* the Master. ***We won't live with the Master***. Instead, we'll live like we always have, with glimpses of spiritual freedom ... begging Jesus to save us from our self-induced spiritual treadmill.

### **DAVID CHOOSES TO CHOOSE.**

"David stood on a remote hilltop at a great distance from Abner, son of Ner, and the troops. He said: 'Here is the king's spear. Let an attendant come over to get it. The LORD will reward each man for his justice and faithfulness. Today, though the LORD delivered you into my grasp, I would not harm the LORD's anointed.'" (1st Samuel 26:22-23)

### **THE ONE THING. WHAT IS ONE THING YOU CAN DO THIS WEEK?**

- MONDAY, FEBRUARY 25 | Pray with Psalm 51. What is the biggest sin that you need to remove from your life?
- TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 26 | Pray with Romans 7:15-20. Consider: Why do you do what you do?
- WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 27 | Identify someone you trust. Ask to speak with them. Ask them: What do you see in my lifestyle that prevents me from taking the next step? What do I need to say "no" to?
- THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 28 | Pray with Psalm 139:1-16. Ask the Lord to speak to you about the answers to the above questions from Monday thru Wednesday.
- FRIDAY, MARCH 1 | Pray with Revelation 3:14-22. Be patient. Be open. Let the Lord speak to your heart. Be honest.
- SATURDAY, MARCH 2 | Read the Scripture readings for Mass on Sunday, March 3. [www.usccb.org/readings](http://www.usccb.org/readings)





# DIVINE RENOVATION

## SUMMARIZING CHAPTER ONE

### “House of Prayer: Remembering Our Identity and Purpose”

**LEARNING FROM THE TITANIC.** “April 14, 2012, was the 100th anniversary of the sinking of the Titanic. ... *many of the lifeboats launched from the stricken vessel that night were no more than half filled.* In fact, in the eighteen lifeboats that launched from the ship, there were a total of 472 unused spaces. After the ship disappeared below the water, around 1,500 people floundered in the icy waters while the lifeboats sat at a safe distance and watched. *Only two of the eighteen lifeboats went to rescue survivors.* They transferred passengers to maximize free space, and it is a recorded fact that some of the first-class passengers complained about terrible the inconvenience. By the time those in the lifeboats had recalled their purpose and had gone among the victims, only nine people were found alive, and three of these eventually succumbed to hypothermia. As I watched the movie, it struck me that this was a metaphor for the Church. *We exist for mission.* Like Jesus, we have been sent to ‘seek and save’ those who are perishing, and there are plenty of seats available in the lifeboats. Yet, so often as a Church, we sit at a safe distance, more concerned with our own needs and comfort. Perhaps if a few people swam over to us, we would help them, but going to them? This is not just a question of our comfort zones being challenged—it is totally outside of our frame of reference, because we have so thoroughly forgotten our identity. Lifeboats exist to rescue people. So does the Church. We maintain our lifeboats, we paint them, we serve the people in them and keep them in good order and hold card socials, but we do not use them for the purpose for which they were created. Any crew member who would dare to disrupt life on the lifeboat will quickly hear a chorus of complaints from the passengers who are adverse to being inconvenienced in any way. We lament the tragedy of the loss of faith, secularization, church closures and so on, but it does not occur to us to pick up the oars and row.”

**A CHURCH WITH A MISSION OR A MISSION WITH A CHURCH?** “The identity crisis in our Church today is not unlike the one that existed at the time of Jesus. It is said that it’s not so much that the Church of Christ has a mission, as that the mission of Jesus Christ has a Church. We, however, have so forgotten our essential missionary calling that we have contented ourselves with maintenance and serving ourselves. That the Church exists for the sake of mission has been asserted by popes and theologians continuously for the last 50 years, but most Catholics perceive mission as something that a select few carry out in far-off places, and most parishes, crippled by a culture of maintenance, focus at best on meeting the needs of parishioners. Like Israel at the time of Jesus, we have become robbers of the people God has appointed us to reach, that his ‘salvation may reach to the end of the earth.’ (Isaiah 49:6)”

**WHAT'S THE MISSION?** “So, if we exist for mission, what is the mission of the Church? To answer this question, we turn to the last verses of Matthew’s Gospel, to the passage known as the Great Commission. (Matthew 28:19-20) Here, the wavering disciples are told to ‘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, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.’”

**WHAT IS A DISCIPLE?** “To be a disciple is to be a learner. To be a disciple of Jesus Christ is to be engaged in a lifelong process of learning from and about Jesus the master, Jesus the teacher. The English term ‘disciple’ comes from the Latin *discipulus*, and provides the connotation that this learning process is not haphazard, but intentional and disciplined. To become a disciple is to commit to such a process of growth.”



# THE WAY

YOU WANT MORE. YOU WANT TO TAKE THE NEXT STEP.  
WHAT IF GOD COULD SHOW YOU THE WAY?

HOMILY NOTES FOR SUNDAY, MARCH 3  
WEEK 4 OF THE SERIES

**RECAPPING LAST WEEK.** Saying “no” is the first step to living “yes”.

**WHY DID WE NEED TO KNOW IT?** For most people, it isn’t our *desire* that prevents our growth. Instead, it’s that *we don’t want what we want more than we want other things*. If we never learn how to say “no” we’ll never receive what we really want.

**WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS IF WE DON'T KNOW THIS?** We’ll miss out on most of what God wants to give us. We’ll become content with the *occasional moments* of joy, peace, freedom, and happiness, thinking that’s good enough. However, *we’ll miss out on so much more*. Remember: disciples learn from the master and live like the master. If we don’t learn how to say “no”, we won’t live *like* the Master. *We won’t live with the Master*. Instead, we’ll live like we always have, with glimpses of spiritual freedom ... begging Jesus to save us from our self-induced spiritual treadmill.

**WHY IS GOD'S WAY THE WAY? THIS WEEK'S CORE MESSAGE. WHAT'S THE ONE THING WE NEED TO KNOW THIS WEEK?**

☞ If we are going to live the “yes” we *must be intentional*.

**WHY DO WE NEED TO KNOW IT?** Disciples learn from a master. They begin to want to live like the master. And, disciples begin to see “fruit” in their life. *That just doesn’t happen*. If we want to see fruit then we have to **choose to choose**, we have to start to live intentional. **The number one reason most people don’t make movement in their spiritual life is because they aren’t intentional about their spiritual life.**

**WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO?** Form habits around “spiritual exercise”, especially when we don’t want to.

**WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS IF WE DON'T DO THIS?** Our spiritual life will become dependent upon *externals* or *emotions*. First, the external circumstances of life will dictate if you “feel” joy, freedom, happiness, and God Himself. Things like the weather, the Saints, traffic, how well other people meet your expectations, the drama of life, etc. Second, your emotions will dictate receptivity. When you “feel” God with you things will be good. However, when you don’t “feel” God with you, not only will you struggle, but your commitment will struggle. You’ll become susceptible to sin. You’ll be tempted to give up on the “how hard this is”





# DIVINE RENOVATION

## SUMMARIZING CHAPTER TWO

“Rebuild my house: From Vatican II to Pope Francis”

**ACTUALLY, SAINT FRANCIS DIDN'T SAY THAT.** “Pope Paul also reminds us that we must avoid the temptation of thinking that the witness of our lives alone is sufficient to evangelize. As he says, ‘the Good News proclaimed by the witness of life, sooner or later has to be proclaimed by the word of life.’ (*On Evangelization in the Modern World*. 1975, no. 22) This is a very important principle for us today, as it emphasizes the proclamation or *kerygmatic* dimension of Paul VI’s definition. **There is much confusion today about the necessity of using words to achieve the goal of evangelization.** We have all heard that saying attributed to Saint Francis of Assisi: ‘Preach the Gospel at all times and if necessary, use words.’ **In spite of the popularity of this phrase, it appears to be a kind of ecclesiastical urban myth.** A search of the Franciscan Omnibus of Sources will not turn up this quote. **Saint Francis appears never to have said this, and, in any case, it is erroneous.** Saint Paul tells us that ‘Faith comes from what is heard’ (Romans 10:17) Certainly, however, there is a primacy to the witness of life. We instinctively cringe when we encounter someone who is not living it but is spouting it. However, it is not an either/or situation, it is both/and, and both/and is a sound Catholic principle. The witness of life must come first, but it must lead to the word of life being proclaimed. Without actions, our words are not believed by our cynical post-modern, post-Christian society, but without words, our actions are not understood.”

**WE ARE CALLED TO HOLINESS. ALL OF US. NOT JUST THE PRIESTS. ALL OF US.** “The idea that the call to holiness and mission is rooted not in ordination or in religious profession but in baptism had been so forgotten that it was revolutionary. We are called to holiness because we are baptized. We are called to mission, to evangelize, to share the Good News because we are baptized.”

**WOW.** “Evangelization is now a moral obligation. It’s almost a selfish thing to not evangelize. If we find something wonderful and we keep it for ourselves, then we would be morally culpable.”

**IS THIS CATHOLIC?** “For many traditionally minded Catholics, the recurrence of terms such as evangelization and personal relationship with Jesus seems, well, not quite Catholic. In my first months at my present parish, when I would speak in this way, many parishioners would say, ‘Father, this just doesn’t sound very Catholic.’ That the average Catholic struggles even today with evangelization is seen in the reason for the synod topic given in the *Lineamenta* document: ‘That despite the fact that the expression [the New Evangelization] is widely known in the Church it has failed to be accepted fully and totally.’ (no. 5) The document says this in spite of the fact that 30 years had passed since Pope John Paul II first spoke about it. What more can we do to demonstrate that this language is quintessentially ‘Catholic’? Being Christian and ‘being Church’ means being missionary; one is or is not. Loving one’s faith implies bearing witness to it, bringing it to others and allowing others to participate in it.”





#### THE PURPOSE OF THE SERIES?

“Okay, I want to change, but I don’t know how.  
And, I can barely keep up with life now, so don’t make it too hard.  
Give me some little things to do in the midst of my busy life.  
Help me build some confidence.”

**Sunday, March 10, 2019**

#### INTENTIONAL | 1

1st Sunday of Lent

Small steps ...

... when we face temptation

Gospel: Jesus is driven to face temptation.

The experience: We all face temptation.

The pattern: Most of us, when facing temptation, give in. Especially to our favorite sins.

The hope: Muscles only grow when they resist.

Temptation is there, to teach us how to resist.

The small steps: First of all, know your greatest weakness. Secondly, know when your weakest. Introduce them to HALT (hungry, angry, lonely, tired). Pick *one* sin this Lent, your biggest one. Now, let me teach you how to do a daily examination of conscience.

**Sunday, March 17, 2019**

#### INTENTIONAL | 2

2nd Sunday of Lent

Small steps ...

... when God’s too slow

1st Reading: God makes the promise to Abram,  
and eventually Abram will take matters into his own hands.

The experience: How many of us having been waiting on God to do something in our life, or someone else’s, and He’s too slow?

The pattern: We, like Abram take control.

Or, we deduce that God has forgotten about us. We presume God won’t come through.  
So, we quit, we give up.

We move to something that helps us forget about our disappointment.

The hope: When God makes a promise, He always comes through on His promise.

The small steps: First, aim small, miss small. Evaluate what you’ve asked God to do. Maybe the request is too big. “Before your husband goes to church *every* Sunday maybe he could listen to one podcast, etc.” Second, instead of focusing on what God isn’t doing, slow down and ask yourself: “What are the little things God *is* doing.” Find the movement of God in the little things and then we become more cooperative and in alignment. Those little things become big things. Third, pay attention to what is stirring within you. Perhaps before God answers the prayer He first wants to do something *in you*.



**Sunday, March 24, 2019**

**INTENTIONAL | 3**

3rd Sunday of Lent

Small steps ...

... when you feel stuck

**Gospel:** The Samaritan woman at the well.

**The experience:** How many of us feel or have felt, stuck?

Stuck in life or stuck in sin ... or stuck at “this stage” in my spiritual life?

**The pattern:** The desolation claims our past, present, and future.

We become discouraged. We give up.

In fact, it's week three of Lent and this is when most of us struggle, cheat, or give up.

That's the pattern.

**The hope:** Jesus didn't judge the Samaritan woman. He won't judge you.

He only wants her, and your, freedom.

**The small steps:** First, start with the mirror: is there anything you're doing that you can change? In other words, don't blame God for the lack of growth when you keep turning towards sin. Second, get help. The temptation is to do it alone. The more we attempt to navigate the spiritual life in isolation, the more we will fail and feel stuck. Tell someone you trust. Third, remove temptation. Alcoholics don't attempt sobriety when there's liquor in the cabinet. Burn the ships.

**Tie in to the Pastoral Letter on Reconciliation:** This is why Bishop Fabre wrote the letter, to help us take the first steps.

**Sunday, March 31, 2019**

**INTENTIONAL | 4**

4th Sunday of Lent

Small steps ...

... with our secrets

**2nd Reading:** “Take no part in the fruitless works of darkness; rather expose them”

**The experience:** We are as free as our secrets.

**The pattern:** When we have secrets, or unconfessed sin, it chains us.

We find it difficult to move on because we fear being found out.

**The hope:** “Everyone's heart is like a house. And, you don't have a roof.”

**The small steps:** Okay, this is a big step, but, it's time to go to Confession.

**Tie in to the Pastoral Letter on Reconciliation:** The Sacrament of Reconciliation.

**Sunday, April 7, 2019**

**INTENTIONAL | 5**

5th Sunday of Lent

Small steps ...

... with our upset

**Gospel:** Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead.

**The experience:** We get upset. It's a part of life.

**The pattern:** People often say “Bring your upset to God.”

I don't know how to do that. Sounds good, but I don't know how.

**The hope:** “Even Jesus was upset. Notice how He turns to the Father and prays.”

**The small steps:** First, start with you. Is there something about the other person or situation that actually points to something within you that you don't like? Second, start with you. How much of the upset is because of unmet expectations? Were you expecting something different, and, if so, based off of where “they” are, or where “life” is, were those expectations realistic? Third, pray. Take your heart to the Lord. “On your way out of Mass you can pick up a postcard with tips on *how* to pray.”

**Tie in to the Pastoral Letter on Reconciliation:** Upset within families or parish families and the need for reconciliation.





## LANDING THE PLANE PREACHING GUIDE FROM EASTER TO PENTECOST

APRIL 14	Palm Sunday. No series. Preach as usual
APRIL 21	Easter Sunday. No series. Preach as usual.
APRIL 28	Divine Mercy Sunday. No series. Preach as usual.
MAY 5	Third Sunday of Easter. MESSAGE: "What does it mean to be entrusted?"
MAY 12	Fourth Sunday of Easter. MESSAGE: "We have been entrusted with a mission to make disciples."
MAY 19	Fifth Sunday of Easter. MESSAGE: "Our first priority is ... and this is why ... and this is what's possible for us if we succeed. I need you with me. Let's do this together."
MAY 26	Sixth Sunday of Easter. MESSAGE: "Our second priority is ... and this is why ... and this is what's possible for us if we succeed. I need you with me. Let's do this together."
JUNE 2	Ascension. MESSAGE: "Our third priority is ... and this is why ... and this is what's possible for us if we succeed. I need you with me. Let's do this together."
JUNE 8	Penetcost Vigil. <i>Special evening of prayer, <b>repentance</b>, and intercession.</i>
JUNE 9	Penetcost Sunday. MESSAGE: "I need you with me. Let's do this together. And, may the Holy Spirit guide us."