


What are we doing here?

Mission & Identity


Kristin Bird, Burning Hearts Disciples



Catholic Identity

As Catholics involved in the life of the Church if we are going to “think properly” we need to ask:

- Who are we?
- Why do we exist?
- What is our purpose?



“Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize.”

Evangelii Nuntiandi, 14

“The agent for transmitting the faith is the universal Church...In past decades; the local Churches have done their utmost in this field. Yet, “the cultural climate and the general state of fatigue in many Christian communities in our local Churches is endangering the proclamation of the faith, its transmission to others and instruction in the faith”

Linamenta for the 2012 Synod on the New Evangelization, 15

1. Revitalized Parishes



“For in the Church’s history, missionary drive has always been a sign of vitality just as it’s lessening is a sign of crisis of faith.”

Redemptoris Missio, 2

2. Revitalized Faith



“..only by becoming missionary will the Christian community be able to overcome its internal divisions and tensions, and rediscover its unity and its strength of faith. ”

Redemptoris Missio, 49

3. Unity



It Is Normal

- to have a living, growing love relationship with God.
- to be knowledgeable about the faith.
- to know what your charisms of service are and to use them
- to know that you have a vocation/mission given by God.
- to be actively engaged in discerning & living that vocation.
- to have fellowship of other committed lay Catholics available.

IT IS **NORMAL**...

For the local parish to function consciously as a house of formation that enables and empowers lay Catholics to do all of these.



For discussion

- What would happen if every parish member, every student, every family understood their deepest identity as Catholics?
- What obstacles do you see preventing revitalized parishes, revitalized faith, and unity from being a reality?

The Need for A Shift

How do our parishes, families, schools, and ministries support making disciples, baptizing them, teaching all he commands us, and demonstrating & experiencing the reality that he is with us always?

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We cannot continue to do business as usual.

“Today, a "business as usual" attitude can no longer be the case.”
Synod on the New Evangelization, *Lineamenta*, par. 10

Over 85% of our youth leave the Church, and 75% of those who enter the Church through the RCIA process leave the Church after five years.

Missio Nostra, pg 13



There are 6.5 former Catholics in the U.S. for every convert to the faith.

Pew Research Religious Landscape Study, 2014

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The Culture Problem

- Consumerism
- Individualism
- Skepticism
- Casual/recreational sexuality
- Autonomy
- Constant activity
- Instantly accessible information
- Glogalization
- Disassociation

You cannot evangelize that which you do not love.



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Intellectual Culture in Transition

Former Intellectual Context

- Definitions / Laws = point of departure for the way we live our lives
 - E.G. Definition of human person = point of departure for moral conversation
 - Scholasticism
 - Rationality / Ideology / “Matching the ideal” = dominant

Current Intellectual Context

- LIFE = point of departure for definitions / laws
 - E.G. Human experience = point of departure for moral choices
 - Highly creative time
 - Poetry / images / “creating the ideal” = dominant

From Sr. Marie Kébo Zamora

A Time of Hard Truths

- Young people are leaving the faith more rapidly and at a younger age than ever before
 - 13 - typical age at which young people interviewed decided to leave the Church
- 2/3 said they stopped being Catholic between 10 and 17
23% said they left the faith by the age of 10
- 42 % of millennials report never having had any kind of Catholic education (Catholic schools, religious ed)
 - Only 13 % said that they would ever consider returning to the Church
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Moving Forward as One Body in Christ



In truth, everything in our parishes, schools, and ministries needs to be aligned with the vision of Jesus, which is his Great Commission.

-Bishop Kihneman

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Diocese of Biloxi

In the 17 counties of the Diocese of Biloxi, the population is 767,375. Of that number approximately 58,000 are registered Catholics (2019).

In the Past 9 Years	Diocese	Nationally
Infant Baptisms	-38%	-25%
First Communion	-26%	-10%
Catechesis/RE students	-28%	-23%
Catholic School students	-21%	-21%
Confirmations	-25%	-7%
Marriages	-12%	-58%

54% of Catholics do not believe in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

Moving Forward as One Body in Christ



Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age."

-Matthew 28:19-10

How do we start moving?

Primacy of Witness of LIFE (incarnation)

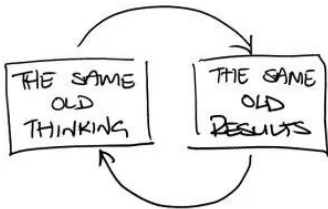
Outward focus & movement

Pastoral Program need to center on the essential

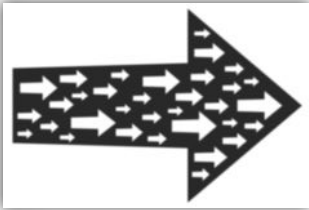


A Time for Crucial Questions

Are we willing to confront the possibility that our models, tools, strategies, culture, leadership, and structures might need a significant overhaul?



Moving Forward on Mission



Where have you been?
Where are you now?
Where do you want to go?
How are you going to get where you want to go?
How will you know when you have arrived?

From Seek the Living God by Nick Wagner
