

Archdiocesan Pastoral Council  
of the Archdiocese of Boston  
Faith Formation and Evangelization Committee

Relating “Evangelii Gaudium” to  
Disciples in Mission

27 May 2014

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# The Joy of the Gospel

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APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION  
*EVANGELII GAUDIUM*  
OF THE HOLY FATHER FRANCIS  
TO THE BISHOPS, CLERGY,  
CONSECRATED PERSONS  
AND THE LAY FAITHFUL  
ON THE PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL  
IN TODAY'S WORLD

# Our Task

In “The Joy of the Gospel”  
does Pope Francis have anything to say  
about Disciples in Mission?



# Our Task

Does Pope Francis  
in “The Joy of the Gospel”  
have anything to say  
about Disciples in Mission?

YES!



# Pope Francis calls all to conversion...transformation...renewal

- “The joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus.
- Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness, and loneliness.
- With Christ joy is constantly born anew.
- In this *Exhortation* I wish to encourage the Christian faithful to embark upon a new chapter of evangelization marked by this joy while pointing out new paths for the Church’s journey in years to come.”

# What is an *Apostolic Exhortation*?

- It written by the Pope “... to synthesize the thinking of a recently held Synod of Bishops.
- in this case, the Bishops’ Synod of October, 2012, that focused on the New Evangelization.
- Typically an Exhortation draws heavily from the propositions put forth by the Bishops.
- In this case the Synod took place under Pope Benedict XVI but the preparation of the Exhortation fell to Pope Francis.”

*(from Joe Paprocki , 12/1/13, Loyola Press)*



# Pope Francis' intent and focus

- The Bishops propositions focused on pointing out the problems and challenges of proclaiming the Gospel in the light of increasing secularism and relativism.
- Pope Francis indicated that while “reaping the fruits of the Synod’s labors, ... I intend to express my own concerns about this chapter in the Church’s work of evangelization”
- “... an evangelization marked by a spirit of enthusiasm and joy,” and reflecting the spirit and teaching of the Vatican II document *Lumen Gentium*.

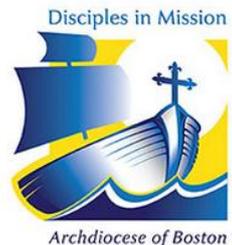
# The Pope's 7 key themes

1. The reform of the Church in her missionary outreach
2. The temptations faced by pastoral workers
3. A Church, the entire people of God, which evangelizes
4. The homily and its preparation
5. The inclusion of the poor in society
6. Peace and dialogue within society
7. The spiritual motivations for mission

# Evangelizing with a joyful missionary spirit

**“The new evangelization is addressed to all and is carried out in 3 principal settings...”**

- 1. in ordinary pastoral ministry that seeks to help believers who have a sincere and deep faith to grow spiritually**
- 2. in ministries of outreach to the baptized whose lives do not reflect the demands of Baptism**
- 3. in ministries of outreach to those who have never known Christ**

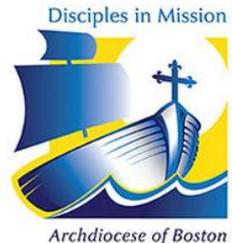


# Forming Intentional Disciples

The Faith Formation and Evangelization Committee reviewed Sherry Waddell's Forming Intentional Disciples at the September 2013 APC meeting.

“In calling Catholics to a **deliberate discipleship** and **intentional faith**, our goal is not to create a community of spiritual elites. Rather it is to create *a spiritual culture that recognizes, openly talks about, and honors both the inward and outward dimensions of the sacraments and the liturgy.*”

Forming Intentional Disciples, p.123 cont.



# Forming Intentional Disciples

**[When the Lord said], “By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples’ (John 15:8) [He] urges us to build a community that fosters disciples, encourages all the baptized to bear fruit, and is structured to help all the baptized to become open to and receive God’s grace in all its fullness.”**

Forming Intentional Disciples, p.123



# Four Sample Pastoral Priorities

***from the Archdiocese of Los Angeles 2012***

1. To seek out and draw in the unbelieving and the unchurched.
2. To foster lifelong discipleship and spiritual growth.
3. To assist all the baptized in the discernment of their spiritual gifts (charisms) and vocations.
4. To equip and support extraordinary apostles.

Forming Intentional Disciples p.239



# Some sample programmatic elements\*

1. Prayer
2. Identifying the Unbelieving and Unchurched
3. Sharing the Good News
4. Evangelizing: How and Where?
5. Forming and Equipping Disciples
6. Transforming Society: Compassion and Mercy
7. Parish Resources

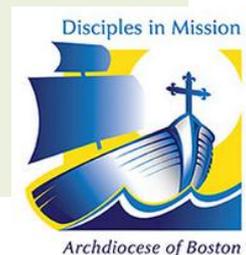
Forming Intentional Disciples p. 239 – 240, work of Katherine Coolidge



# 1. Prayer

- Identify ways to invite existing prayer groups to pray for the on-going work of evangelization in our parish.
- Provide opportunities for new prayer initiatives to form.
- Network prayer groups so that they support one another.
- Utilize technology and a prayer network to ask for the support of the intercessors in our community for the mission of the parish.
- The Eucharist, the source and summit of the Christian life, is our ultimate prayer.

Forming Intentional Disciples, pp. 240-241



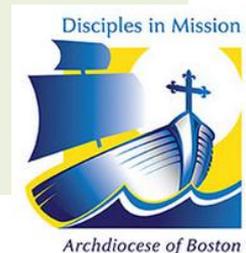
# 1. Prayer

*Far from being suspicious, negative, and despairing, it (intercessory prayer) is a spiritual gaze born of deep faith which acknowledges the work God is doing in the lives of others. At the same time, it is the gratitude which flows from a heart which is attentive to others. When evangelizers arise from prayer, their hearts are more open; freed from self-absorption, they are desirous of doing good and sharing their lives with others. (Section 282, "The Joy of the Gospel")*

## 2. Identifying the Believing, the Unbelieving and the Unchurched

- Develop ways to strategically identify those to whom we are sent: people in the community, occasional Mass attendees, and regular members of the parish.
- Develop a welcoming ministry in concert with this vision.
- Identify those with gifts, and provide them with the formation, resources, and support to launch a comprehensive welcoming ministry, such as parish partners, “welcome wagon”, and/or newcomer gatherings.

Forming Intentional Disciples, p. 241



## 2. Identifying the Believing, Unbelieving and Unchurched

- *“... in recent decades there has been a breakdown in the way Catholics pass down the Christian faith to the young. It is undeniable that many people feel disillusioned and no longer identify with the Catholic tradition.*
- *Growing numbers of parents do not bring their children for baptism or teach them how to pray.*
- *There is also a certain exo-dus towards other faith communities.*
- *The causes of this breakdown include: a lack of opportunity for dialogue in families, the influence of the communications media, a relativistic subjectivism, unbridled consumerism which feeds the market, lack of pastoral care among the poor, the failure of our institutions to be welcoming, and our difficulty in restoring a mystical adherence to the faith in a pluralistic religious landscape. (Section.70, “The Joy of the Gospel”)*

### 3. Sharing the Good News

- **Develop a sustainable, on-going program to form and train parishioners in the evangelization vision and skills offered in Making Disciples Workshops, in small groups, day or night courses in formation**
- **Developing on-going formation opportunities to share stories and practice skills for all catechists – CCD, adult, RCIA**
- **Goal: every person in faith formation is able to share their own relationship with Christ**
- **Explore Catholic Vacation Bible School as part of evangelizing**

**Forming Intentional Disciples, pp. 241 - 242**

### **3. Sharing the Good News**

- The parish is not an outdated institution; precisely because it possesses great the flexibility, it can assume quite different contours depending on the openness and missionary creativity of the pastor and the community...If the parish proves capable of self-renewal and constant adaptivity it continues to be “the Church living in the midst of the homes of her sons and daughters.” (The Joy of the Gospel) continued....***

### 3. Sharing the Good News (continued)

- ***“...in all its activities the parish [should] encourage and train its members to be evangelizers....”***
- ***“It is a community of communities, a sanctuary where the thirsty come to drink in the midst of their journey, and a center of constant missionary outreach.”***
- ***We must admit, though, that the call to review and renew our parishes has not yet sufficed to bring them nearer to people, to make them environments of living communion, to make them completely mission-oriented....”*** (Section 28, “The Joy of the Gospel”)

## 4. Evangelizing: How and Where?

- Our mission is to evangelize where we live: in marketplace, in our homes, in the workplace, at church.
- We expect that our ministries and organizations are evangelizing.
- Every event is an opportunity to evangelize.
- Offer the curious, open, and seeking an opportunity for a lived relationship with Christ. (Forming Intentional Disciples, pp. 242-243)

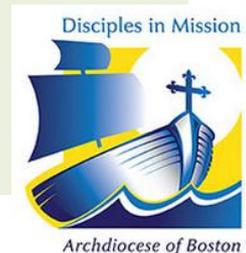
## 4. Evangelizing: How and Where?

- *“... all of us are called to mature in our work as evangelizers... to have better training, to a deepening love and giving a clearer witness to the Gospel. We ought to let others evangelize us!*
- *But this does not mean that we should postpone the evangelizing mission.... All of us are called to offer others an explicit witness to the saving love of the Lord, who despite our imperfections offers us his closeness, his word and his strength, and gives meaning to our lives.*
- *In your heart you know that it is not the same to live without him; what you have come to realize, what has helped you to live and given you hope, is what you also need to communicate to others. ...*
- *...mission is a constant stim-ulus not to remain mired in mediocrity but to continue growing “...Each Christian is called to say with Saint Paul: “Not that I have already obtained this, or am already perfect; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his (Phil 3:12-13). (Section 121, “The Joy of the Gospel”*

# 5. Forming and Equipping Disciples

- Offer a program to train and form spiritual companions to walk with and mentor new disciples (as Ananias did for Paul, in Acts 9).
- Provide opportunities for disciples to discern their giftedness and call from God.
- Explore the support structure necessary for the on-going support and formation of disciples.

Forming Intentional Disciples p.243



# 5. Forming and Equipping Disciples

- *“Spirit-filled evangelizers means evangeliz-ers fearlessly open to the working of the Holy Spirit.*
- *At Pentecost, the Spirit made the apos-tles go forth from themselves and turned them into heralds of God’s wondrous deeds, capable of speaking to each person in his or her own language.*
- *The Holy Spirit also grants the cour-age to proclaim the newness of the Gospel with boldness (parrhesía) in every time and place, even when it meets with opposition.*
- *Let us call upon him today, firmly rooted in prayer, for without prayer all our activity risks being fruitless and our message empty. Jesus wants evangelizers who proclaim the good news not only with words, but above all by a life transfigured by God’s presence.”* (Section 259, “The Joy of The Gospel”)

# 6. Transforming Society

## Compassion and Mercy

- Explore how to connect the Gospel to what we do, re: outreach and pastoral care ministries.
- Explore how we communicate to those we serve, that what we do is part of living out our call as a disciple of Jesus Christ.
- Offer spiritual and formation opportunities to those who serve so that they can see what they do as living out their call as a disciple of Jesus Christ.
- Provide the means and support to mission-focused groups as they explore, discern, and launch apostolates.
- Consider how to support disciples who are trying to live as such in their workplace .

Forming Intentional Disciples p. 244

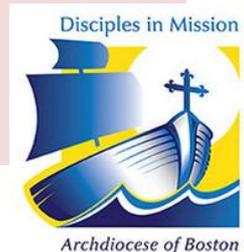


# 6. Transforming Society:

## Compassion and Mercy (continued)

*“...The Church which “goes forth” is a community of missionary disciples who take the first step, who are involved and supportive, who bear fruit and rejoice.*

- An evangelizing community knows that the Lord has taken the initiative, he has loved us first (cf. 1 Jn 4:19), and therefore we can move forward, boldly take the initiative, go out to others, seek those who have fallen away, stand at the crossroads and welcome the out-cast. Such a community has an endless desire to show mercy, the fruit of its own experience of the power of the Father’s infinite mercy.*
- Let us try a little harder to take the first step and to become involved. Jesus washed the feet of his disciples. The Lord gets involved and he involves his own, as he kneels to wash their feet. He tells his disciples: “You will be blessed if you do this.” (Jn 13:17). (“The Joy of the Gospel”) (continued)*

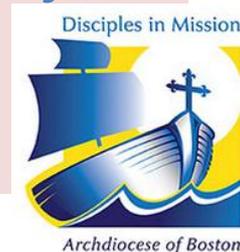


# 6. Transforming Society

## Compassion and Mercy (continued)

- *An evangelizing community gets in-volved by word and deed in people's daily lives; it bridges distances, it is willing to abase itself if necessary, and it embraces human life, touching the suffering flesh of Christ in others.*
- *An evangelizing community is also supportive, standing by people at every step of the way, no matter how difficult or lengthy this may prove to be. ...Evangelization consists mostly of patience and disregard for constraints of time.*
- *Faithful to the Lord's gift, it also bears fruit. An evangelizing community is always con-cerned with fruit, because the Lord wants her to be fruitful. It cares for the grain and does not grow impatient at the weeds.*
- *The sower, when he sees weeds sprouting among the grain does not grumble or overreact. He or she finds a way to let the word take flesh in a particular situation and bear fruits of new life, however imperfect or incomplete these may appear. (continued)*

[The Joy of the Gospel]



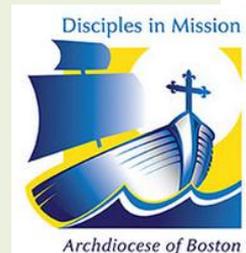
## 6. Transforming Society: Compassion and Love

- *The disciple is ready to put his or her whole life on the line, even to accepting martyrdom, in bearing witness to Jesus Christ, yet the goal is not to make enemies but to see God's word accepted and its capacity for liberation and renewal revealed.*
- *"...An evangelizing community is filled with joy; it knows how to rejoice always. It celebrates every small victory, every step forward in the work of evangelization.*
- *Evangelization with joy becomes beauty in the liturgy, as part of our daily concern to spread goodness. The Church evangelizes and is herself evangelized through the beauty of the liturgy, which is both a celebration of the task of evangelization and the source of her renewed self-giving. (Section 24, "The Joy of the Gospel")*

# 7. Parish Resources

- Identify existing resources that already support this vision.
- Research and identify untapped resources in our community.
- Engage technology experts to explore how to reduce the maintenance burden so that more energy can be allocated to mission.
- All efforts include the collaborative efforts of staff and leadership councils dedicated to faith formation, stewardship, as well as evangelization.

Forming Intentional Disciples p. 245



# 7. Parish Resources

- *“Proclaiming the Gospel message to different cultures also involves proclaiming it to professional, scientific and academic circles....*
- *“This means an encounter between faith, reason and the sciences with a view to developing new approaches and arguments on the issue of credibility, a creative apologetics which would encourage greater openness to the Gospel on the part of all....*
- *“When certain categories of reason and the sciences are taken up into the proclamation of the message, these categories then become tools of evangelization lightening and renewing the world. (Section 132, “The Joy of the Gospel”)*

# Archdiocesan Resources

- Archdiocese of Boston

Secretariat for the New Evangelization

[www.catholicfaithessentials.com](http://www.catholicfaithessentials.com)

- Episcopal Vicar: Most Rev. Arthur Kennedy
- Cabinet Secretary: Janet Benestad  
[jbenestad@rcab.org](mailto:jbenestad@rcab.org)

# Archdiocesan Resources

(continued)

- **Bishop Kennedy met with the subcommittee and provided an outline of the key ideas in *The Joy of the Gospel* along with specific suggestions for program ideas and materials that parishes might consider as they develop their Pastoral Plans. The subcommittee will be reviewing these and will make a summary available to APC members in the near future.**
- **Bishop Kennedy also alerted us to the Secretariat's website which is building a list of Best Practices for parishes to reference as they develop activities related to the new evangelization.**

# Summary

Our Pope Francis has significant, important, passionate, based-on-reality, and supportive things to say about Disciples in Mission.

# Closing

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

USCCB 2013 Strategic Plan “The New Evangelization – Journey with Christ:  
Faith – Worship - Witness



# Our closing prayer to Mary Star of the New Evangelization

Please see the handout  
left at your places....