

Proclaim'15

building missionary parishes



COMPANION FOR THE JOURNEY

"With Christ joy is constantly born anew... I wish to encourage the Christian faithful to embark on a new chapter of evangelisation marked with this joy, while pointing out new paths for the Church's journey in years to come." (*Evangelii Gaudium* 1). These words of Pope Francis are addressed to us all. Through the Proclaim '15 initiative, we are invited to respond generously to the Holy Father's request to make a new beginning in support of the building of missionary parishes. This ongoing missionary task takes us on an exciting, inspiring and, at times, challenging journey with the Lord. The Proclaim '15 resources provided have been produced as a **companion** to support you in the confident sharing of the joy of the Gospel, in your own way, at your own pace, according to the individual needs of your parish and community.

CHRIST at the CENTRE

"...someone who listens and does nothing is like the man who built a house on soil, with no foundations; as soon as the river bore down on it, it collapsed; and what a ruin that house became!" Luke 6: 49
These challenging words speak directly to those seeking to evangelise effectively. The Scriptures teach us again and again that Christ must be the source of all our endeavours if we are to successfully build local missionary communities and parishes. The parish missionary journey is always a movement for and with Christ – from him and to him.

How to use this resource

This resource was produced as a fruit of the **Proclaim '15 National Catholic Evangelisation Conference** in Birmingham on 11 July 2015. It captures key ideas, practical tips and learning taken from workshops that were delivered on the day to enable your local Catholic community to take new steps in service of parish mission. There are eleven packs in total, each offering insights and tips from a particular workshop. You are invited to explore the workshop topics, reflect how these will be beneficial to your parish and then consider the following:

- **Share this information with others in your parish - you are welcome to photocopy all the materials provided here**
- **Say the Proclaim '15 prayer together**
- **Choose one or two of the topics provided as a focus for your parish's mission**
- **Read and discuss the *Learning from Pope Francis* text provided in each pack**
- **Decide some new steps that you will take locally in response to what you read.**



PRAYER

Your Constant Companion



Food and Fuel for the Journey

Throughout Jesus's public ministry we observe that prayer was central to his life and mission. He frequently withdrew to pray. He taught his disciples how to pray, so that they would not only experience God's love and mercy, but would be fed spiritually for the great work of evangelisation that was being asked of them. Two thousand years on, it is the same for us today. We are also invited to recommit to the life of prayer as food and fuel for our journey with the Lord, and so become missionary disciples. This theme is repeated in all the Proclaim '15 resources.

Start with Prayer

It is no coincidence that Cardinal Vincent Nichols (Westminster) made prioritising prayer a central theme of his keynote address at the Proclaim '15 National Catholic Evangelisation Conference, saying: "To understand our mission then we have to go to the heart of God, the very mystery of the Holy Trinity, the inner life of God. This is spoken of as the Divine *'communio'* – the sharing within the mystery of the persons of God of divine life, love, truth, goodness and beauty. Only from within that inner heart of God does our mission arise. Only from that inner heart of God does our mission find its shape, its purpose, its energy. We are to do something beautiful; something that is of God; something that is for God. So, our mission always starts in our prayer, flows from prayer, from our daily openness to the great mystery of the life of God. It cannot start anywhere else."

Proclaim '15 Conference, 11 July 2015

Pray Before You Do

In the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) we read: "The Gospel according to St Luke emphasises the action of the Holy Spirit and the meaning of prayer in Christ's ministry. Jesus prays before the decisive moments of his mission: before his Father's witness to him during his Baptism and Transfiguration, and before his own fulfillment of the Father's plan of love by his Passion. He also prays before the decisive moments involving the mission of his apostles: at his election and call of the Twelve, before Peter's confession of him as 'the Christ of God,' and again that the faith of the chief of the Apostles may not fail when tempted. Jesus' prayer before the events of salvation that the Father has asked him to fulfill is a humble and trusting commitment of his human will to the loving will of the Father." (CCC 2600)

Proclaim Prayer

Please join Catholics all over England and Wales in making a humble and trusting commitment to the Lord by saying the Proclaim '15 prayer for the building of missionary parishes:

**Loving Father,
you so loved the world that you sent us
your only Son, that we might believe in
him and have eternal life.**

**May we encounter Jesus Christ anew this
day and live the Good News with joy.**

**Through the power of your Holy Spirit,
help us to "go out to the whole world and
proclaim" our faith with confidence.**

**Give us the courage to witness to the Joy
of the Gospel by our words and actions.**

**Help our parish to become more
welcoming and missionary, so that you
may be known and loved by all people.**

**We make this prayer through Our Lord
Jesus Christ your Son, who lives and reigns
with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for
ever and ever, Amen.**

**Our Lady, Star of the New Evangelisation,
Pray for us.**

**Blessed John Henry Newman, Pray for us.
St Thérèse of Lisieux, Pray for us.**

**Be persevering in your prayers
and be thankful as you stay
awake and pray.**

Colossians 4:2

KEYS TO BECOMING A MISSIONARY PARISH

**Key****CALLED AND CHOSEN**

Remember that God has called and chosen you to share the Good News of the Gospel. He is inviting you every day to be renewed through a personal encounter with his Son, Jesus Christ.

**Key****ALWAYS PRAY**

Prayer should underpin the start, middle and end points of your missionary efforts. Prayer will sustain you throughout your journey.

**Key****GOD IS PRESENT**

Your journey to becoming a missionary parish is not a search for Jesus; you are being called to walk alongside him. He is already here. Everywhere. All the time. He is your constant companion.

**Key****SHARE THE JOY OF THE GOSPEL**

The Gospel is the Word of the Lord. Be mindful of, and respect it, at all times. Read the Gospel, reflect upon it and be confident in sharing it joyfully with others.

**Key****INVITE OTHERS ON THE JOURNEY**

Be open to everyone and invite them to join you on the journey of faith in a welcoming, friendly and non-judgemental way. Create opportunities for people to engage in ways that are appropriate to them and their needs.

**Key****LOVE IN ACTION**

A loving action always bears fruit. God acts through you in every act of kindness great or small. Remember to live the message openly by being joyful when you help others.

**Key****SIMPLE ACTS DONE WELL**

St Thérèse of Lisieux reminds us there is great evangelising power in simplicity. Avoid over complicating things and focus instead on doing simple things in the best possible way.

**Key****COMMUNICATION**

Think about how the world is communicating today. If needed, enlist the help of those with "know how" to embrace and make the most of new media (e.g. website, Facebook, Twitter).

A CHURCH FOR THE POOR AND THOSE IN NEED

Learning from Pope Francis

"I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security. I do not want a Church concerned with being at the centre and which then ends by being caught up in a web of obsessions and procedures. If something should rightly disturb us and trouble

our consciences, it is the fact that so many of our brothers and sisters are living without the strength, light and consolation born of friendship with Jesus Christ, without a community of faith to support them, without meaning and a goal in life. More than by fear of going astray, my hope is that we will be moved by the fear of remaining shut up within structures which give us a false sense of security, within rules which make us harsh judges, within habits which make us feel safe, while at our door people are starving and Jesus does not tire of saying to us: 'Give them something to eat' (Mark 6:37)."

Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 49



Tip

FIND OUT AND MEET

Meet with local community leaders, Council representatives and others to explore what the needs of local people are, and how your parish might support existing local projects to help them.



Tip

CHANGING PERCEPTIONS

Avoid a narrow definition and stereotyping of the word "poor" because sometimes poverty is invisible and not material.



Tip

PARTNERSHIP

Create a partnership with other local parishes, churches, diocesan structures and bodies to alleviate poverty in its varying forms. Support existing projects rather than reinvent wheels.



Tip

PRAY AND READ

Pray, as a parish, for the needs of people in your area and for opportunities to serve those in need as Jesus did. Read the lives of the saints for inspiration, especially those who dedicated themselves to the service of the poor. Invite members of your parish to make a practical response to their reading.



Tip

FORMATION

Offer some times of formation in your parish to introduce people to the example set by Jesus in the Gospel, when he came to the service of the poor. Look particularly at the Church's social teaching and the relevant parts of *Evangelii Gaudium*.

A CHURCH FOR THE POOR AND THOSE IN NEED



Tip

DIALOGUE AND INCLUSION

Create or join a forum for conversation and dialogue, where the needs of the local community are regularly discussed and considered. Be sure to involve in the discussion those who are experiencing poverty.



Tip

PARISH GROUP

Form and/or help promote a parish social action group to take forward the parish's service of the poor. This work often appeals to the young, so seek ways to include them.



Tip

AUDIT OF SKILLS AND RESOURCES

Name and list the resources and skills in your parish that could be offered in service of the poor in your area. Then make a list of simple services that your parish community can offer by arrangement.



Tip

MEASURED AND REALISTIC

Consider carefully what your parish, with partners, can achieve. Focus on one or two achievable and specific projects only.



Tip

COMMUNICATE AND CELEBRATE ACTS OF KINDNESS

Joyfully tell people, in a way that safeguards personal privacy, about the ways in which your parish has helped those in need. Give thanks to God for the lives helped in his name.

Learning from Pope Francis

"Valuing them [the poor], however, also means being ready to learn from them. The poor have much to teach us about humanity, goodness, sacrifice and solidarity. As Christians, moreover, we have an additional reason to love and serve the poor; for in them we see the face and the flesh of Christ, who made himself poor so to enrich us with his poverty

(cf. 2 Corinthians 8:9). The poor are the flesh of Christ. When people come to me to confession – and I have less opportunities to hear confessions than when I was in the diocese – I like to ask them: 'Do you help people?'. 'Yes, I give alms to the poor'. 'I see, and tell me, when you give alms, do you touch the hand of the person you're giving alms to or do you throw the money to them?' We are speaking of attitudes here. 'When you offer alms, do you look into their eyes or do you look the other way?' This demeans the poor person. They are poor. Let us reflect carefully. The poor person is just like me and, if he or she is going through a difficult time for many reasons, be they economic, political, social or personal, it could be me in their place, me longing for someone to help me. As well as desiring this help, if I am in their shoes, I have the right to be respected. We must respect the poor. We must not use the poor person merely as an instrument to placate my guilt. To learn from the poor, with all the realities they experience, all of the values they uphold. This is the inspiration for Christians, that the poor are the flesh of Jesus."

Pope Francis, Meeting with representatives of Civil Authorities, Paraguay, 11 July 2015