

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

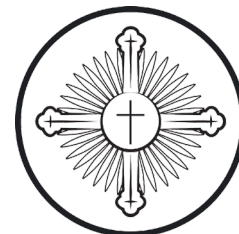
This resource was produced as a fruit of the **Proclaim '15 National Catholic Evangelisation Conference** in Birmingham on 11 July 2015. It captures key ideas, practical tips and learning taken from workshops that were delivered on the day to enable your local Catholic community to take new steps in 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).

CREATING A PARISH VISION AND STRATEGY

Learning from Pope Francis

"Of course, all of us are called to mature in our work as evangelisers. We want to have better training, a deepening love and a clearer witness to the Gospel. In this sense, we ought to let others be constantly evangelising us. But this does not mean that we should postpone the evangelising mission; rather, each of us should find ways to communicate Jesus wherever we are.

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 realise, what has helped you to live and given you hope, is what you also need to communicate to others. Our falling short of perfection should be no excuse; on the contrary, mission is a constant stimulus not to remain mired in mediocrity but to continue growing. The witness of faith that each Christian is called to offer leads us 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 own'. (Philippians 3:12-13)."

Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 121



Tip

CHRIST AT THE CENTRE

Provide constant reminders, invitations and opportunities for people to encounter Jesus and to talk about that encounter with others. Any strategy must be directed toward this endeavour and rooted in it. Pentecost and Home Mission Sunday (September) present us with opportunities to encourage prayer for missionary vision and strategy.



Tip

A VISION STATEMENT

Call the parish to an open event to construct a vision statement which is simple, short and inspirational. Even though our vision as Catholics is already found in the Gospels and in the Church's teaching, the writing of a local statement, as a community, gives clarity and generates fresh zeal for the work of evangelisation.



Tip

FORM A TEAM

Emerging from the vision statement, bring together a focus team of 6-12 people from very different backgrounds who, with the parish clergy and pastoral worker, will redirect the energy of the community towards the agreed vision statement.



Tip

FORMATION

Invite the team to visit other places and projects, to investigate resources, listen to speakers and undergo a period of formation. Encourage it to conduct local research to inform planning; this should include an analysis of demographical information and identifying social and economic needs.

CREATING A PARISH VISION AND STRATEGY



Tip

FIND OUT

Enable the team to initiate an audit of talents and gifts among the parishioners. Consider, too, doing an audit of existing needs and resources - in your parish, in neighbouring parishes, in new movements, other Christian churches, in the deanery and through diocesan provision - to support the work of local evangelisation. Finally, audit parish property to see how it can be used more effectively in service of parish mission.



Tip

GET FOCUSED

On the basis of the audit of needs and resources, devise your strategy to meet your priorities. This will mean considering how to focus time, energy, creativity, and resources into a specific direction, rather than trying to do everything at once. Keep it achievable and avoid trying to do too much.



Tip

START WITH WHAT YOU HAVE

Grace builds on nature. Invite those already running parish events and activities to consider how their existing efforts can serve best the new vision statement. For ideas and inspiration about new evangelisation events look at <http://bit.ly/evang-spectrum>



Tip

PRESENTATION MATTERS

Involve people who can design leaflets, newsletters and use website technology to communicate more effectively. Promote your initiatives with careful attention to how people will receive the information.



Tip

RECONSIDER

Pray, reflect, evaluate and change. Every team which achieves progress also makes mistakes. Use mistakes. Learn from them.



Tip

THE WHEEL HAS BEEN INVENTED!

Take a look at the resources sheet also available in this series and benefit from other people's experience.

Learning from Saint John Paul II

“With its universal and indispensable provisions, the programme of the Gospel must continue to take root, as it has always done, in the life of the Church everywhere. It is in the local churches that the specific features of a detailed pastoral plan can be identified — goals and methods, formation and enrichment of the people involved, the search for the necessary resources — which will enable the proclamation of Christ to reach people, mould communities, and have a deep and incisive influence in bringing Gospel values to bear in society and culture.”

Saint John Paul II, *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (2001), 29