

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).

OFFERING PRAYER EXPERIENCES

Learning from Pope Francis

"We live in the Church at a privileged moment of the Spirit. Everywhere people are trying to know Him better, as the Scripture reveals Him. They are happy to place themselves under His inspiration. They are gathering about Him; they want to let themselves be led by Him. Now if the Spirit of God has a pre-eminent place in the whole life of the Church, it is in

her evangelising mission that He is most active. It is not by chance that the great inauguration of evangelisation took place on the morning of Pentecost, under the inspiration of the Spirit.

It must be said that the Holy Spirit is the principal agent of evangelisation: it is He who impels each individual to proclaim the Gospel, and it is He who in the depths of consciences causes the word of salvation to be accepted and understood. But it can equally be said that He is the goal of evangelisation: He alone stirs up the new creation, the new humanity of which evangelization is to be the result, with that unity in variety which evangelisation wishes to achieve within the Christian community. Through the Holy Spirit the Gospel penetrates to the heart of the world, for it is He who causes people to discern the signs of the times - signs willed by God - which evangelisation reveals and puts to use within history."

Pope Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975), 75



Tip

HAVE A GO

Understand that you are being called to radiate the presence of Christ in the world today. Waiting for someone else to start the work of evangelisation will mean that opportunities will be missed.



Tip

OPEN DOORS

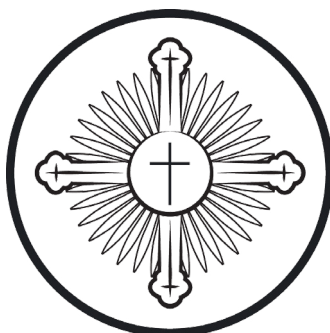
Open the doors to your church every day and all day. Invite people to come in. Prepare a welcome and suggest to visitors what they might do: sit quietly, light a candle and / or use a prayer card.



Tip

USE OPPORTUNITIES

At weddings and funerals, and at Christmas and Easter, offer people a prayer card or an invitation to join you at the services. Gather members of the parish to help produce these materials. See, for example, 'Christmas materials', at www.catholicnews.org.uk



OFFERING PRAYER EXPERIENCES



Tip

RESPOND TO NEED

Establish a group that prays for needs of the world, such as for displaced people and those affected by natural disasters. Tell people in the wider community about the group and invite suggestions of things to pray for. Advertise in the local press.



Tip

TALK ABOUT PRAYER

Share your passion for prayer, your experiences of it and what prayer has taught you, as you would about your favourite hobby or pastime. Learn how to communicate effectively about what brings you joy and hope. This could begin in a parish prayer group.



Tip

GO OUT

Venture beyond the walls of the church to visit people's homes and invite them to pray. Be brave and arrange a time to visit, rather than randomly pushing invitation materials through the letterbox.



Tip

BE CREATIVE

Once permission is secured, put on a Nativity tableau in your local shopping centre. Use Powerpoint presentations to encourage prayer with images and music. Use language which draws people in rather than confuses or alienates.



Learning from Pope Francis

"This is what praying is, opening the door to the Lord, so that he can do something. If we close the door, God can do nothing! Let us think on this Mary. Who has chosen the better part, and makes us see the way, as the door is opened to the Lord."

Pope Francis, Morning Homily, 8 October 2013