

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.” (*Evangeli 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

**Tip****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.

**Tip****ALWAYS PRAY**

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

**Tip****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.

**Tip****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.

**Tip****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.

**Tip****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.

**Tip****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.

**Tip****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).

PRAYER AS THE FOUNDATION

Learning from Pope Francis

“There is a Marian ‘style’ to the Church’s work of evangelisation. Whenever we look to Mary, we come to believe once again in the revolutionary nature of love and tenderness. In her we see that humility and tenderness are not virtues of the weak but of the strong who need not treat others poorly in order to feel important themselves. Contemplating Mary, we realize that she who praised God for ‘bringing down the mighty from their thrones’ and ‘sending the rich away empty’ (Luke 1:52-53) is also the one who brings a homely warmth to our pursuit of justice. She is also the one who carefully keeps ‘all these things, pondering them in her heart’ (Luke 2:19). Mary is able to recognize the traces of God’s Spirit in events great and small. She constantly contemplates the mystery of God in our world, in human history and in our daily lives. She is the woman of prayer and work in Nazareth, and she is also Our Lady of Help, who sets out from her town ‘with haste’ (Luke 1:39) to be of service to others. This interplay of justice and tenderness, of contemplation and concern for others, is what makes the ecclesial community look to Mary as a model of evangelisation. We implore her maternal intercession that the Church may become a home for many peoples, a mother for all peoples, and that the way may be opened to the birth of a new world. It is the Risen Christ who tells us, with a power that fills us with confidence and unshakeable hope: ‘Behold, I make all things new’ (Revelation 21:5).”

Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 288



Tip

START WITH PRAYER

Rededicate yourself and the parish community to prayer. Pray for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit on your parish and all that it does. Create a parish evangelisation prayer card and invite everyone to use it daily.



Tip

CHOOSE CHRIST

Make a definite choice for Christ and his mission, and invite others to do the same. This could be done through the renewing of baptismal promises, as a community, on Home Mission Sunday or at Pentecost. Relate this renewal to the mission of the parish and the Church, and invite people to share their gifts and talents in service of it.



Tip

PERSEVERE

Start a prayer group in your parish. Praying together will strengthen and sustain parishioners in their outreach to others. Whatever the outcome of your evangelistic efforts, ask the Lord, prayerfully, “What can we learn from this experience?”



Tip

MAKE TIME AND SPACE

Invite parishioners to make an annual retreat, pilgrimage or day of recollection, to deepen their relationship with Jesus Christ and in support of their ongoing conversion. Encourage use of the Proclaim '15 prayer.



Tip

CREATE A PRAYER AUDIT AND DIARY

Making a list of the times when your parish prays and what form this takes will help you to identify foundations on which to build. It may also surprise and delight you. Create and publish an annual prayer diary which has, as its intention, the building of your missionary parish.

PRAYER AS THE FOUNDATION


Tip

RUN SCHOOLS OF PRAYER

Creating opportunities for people to experience God afresh and then to become fluent in sharing those experiences with others in the parish will help to build confidence. Start a faith-sharing group which allows people to experience prayer informally, learn from others and talk about their relationship with God.


Tip

OFFER VARIETY

Pope Paul VI said we should feel 'serenely free' about which forms of prayer suit us. 'Pray as you can - not as you ought.' Praying in different ways will enrich you and your community and help you become a more confident missionary disciple.


Tip

MAKE IT MARIAN

Our Lady, Star of the New Evangelisation, is the patroness of all missionary activity. Create an opportunity for your parish to dedicate your mission to Our Lady.


Tip

USE NEW MEDIA

Be aware of, and utilise, the new media and technology available. Access prayer websites and other resources which will help you to pray individually and as a parish. Invite others who have more experience in using New Media to help you.

Learning from Pope Francis

"The primary reason for evangelising is the love of Jesus which we have received, the experience of salvation which urges us to ever greater love of him. What kind of love would not feel the need to speak of the beloved, to point him out, to make him known? If we do not feel an intense desire to share this love, we need to pray insistently that he will once more touch our hearts. We need to implore his grace daily, asking

him to open our cold hearts and shake up our lukewarm and superficial existence. Standing before him with open hearts, letting him look at us, we see that gaze of love which Nathaniel glimpsed on the day when Jesus said to him: 'I saw you under the fig tree' (John 1:48). How good it is to stand before a crucifix, or on our knees before the Blessed Sacrament, and simply to be in his presence! How much good it does us when he once more touches our lives and impels us to share his new life! What then happens is that 'we speak of what we have seen and heard' (1 John 1:3). The best incentive for sharing the Gospel comes from contemplating it with love, lingering over its pages and reading it with the heart. If we approach it in this way, its beauty will amaze and constantly excite us. But if this is to come about, we need to recover a contemplative spirit which can help us to realise ever anew that we have been entrusted with a treasure which makes us more human and helps us to lead a new life. There is nothing more precious which we can give to others."

Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 264