

# EVANGELIZATION: 'THE CHURCH'S DEEPEST IDENTITY'

## EVANGELIZATION SUPPLEMENT

# Evangelization as a commission of love

By Theresa Inoue

Jesus replied, "The first is this: 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.'



Theresa Inoue

The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these" (Mk 12:29-31).

Love God and love your neighbor: these are the greatest commandments of the Christian faith.

The archdiocesan Office of Evangelization hosted an evangelization workshop at the end of October. L'Alto Catholic Institute president Tim Glemkowski and Father Todd Riebe, pastor of Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis, both discussed evangelization at the service of love.

In Glemkowski's primary address, he identified one root cause behind a lack of contemporary evangelization: a lack of contemporary love. Were we to truly understand the immense gift of the faith, and then to love as we are called to love, we would effectively proclaim the Good News to everyone we encounter.

Glemkowski translated love into a concrete calling: our vocations are founded upon the discovery of freedom, hope and joy sourced from God's truth. Equipped with powerful tools for Christian renewal, we introduce restoration into a world that desperately craves real love.

Glemkowski proposed a question: "Do we care more about avoiding the awkwardness of evangelization than we do about loving our neighbors?"

It was in that moment that I realized for the first time my own selfishness in keeping Jesus to myself because of my own pride, manifested in avoiding the awkwardness of approaching the topic with others and in not wanting to "impose" on others by proclaiming the Gospel. He reminded the participants of the difference faith is supposed to make in our lives. I know that I am better off because of my relationship with Christ; why should I hide others from knowing Jesus like I do?

Both Glemkowski and Father Riebe shared personal stories regarding individuals in their own lives who desired to hear about and be invited into the faith. In each of their shared experiences, there was expressed remorse and regret in not providing that opportunity sooner.

Father Riebe discussed a non-Catholic neighbor who simply desired an invitation to Mass—only an invitation!

This neighbor had for years witnessed the Riebe family's weekly departure for Sunday morning Mass, and she longed to be invited too. It was not until she approached her final days that she asked to be received into the Church, telling Father Riebe of her long-ago secret desire for a welcome.

I often struggle with the notion that people are simply turned off by the Gospel, but that is a lie on my own part. We can definitely pinpoint the desire to know and to love Christ in each of our hearts, despite the drive of the evil one to keep our witness confined inside.

We as the Catholic Church remember the souls of the faithful departed each November. Only weeks ago, I traveled home for the funeral of a close uncle. While I still needed to grieve over the loss, I did not despair because of my hope in the resurrection. I have hope that Christ will keep true to his promise, that if we live a life committed to faith in him, by his grace we will be counted among the saints.

While I am continuing to pray for my uncle, in the meantime I can assure you that he lived a life of discipleship to our Lord. He suffered immensely in the weeks before his death, but he radiated joy,

knowing that he ran his race in faith. In his life on Earth, my uncle was better off because of his relationship with Christ. Because he lived a life committed to our Lord, I pray and hope that he is rejoicing among the saints in heaven.

Reflecting on his life, I saw that my uncle heard and shared the Good News in word and in deed, followed the footsteps of Christ, and maintained joy in the Christian faith, despite his suffering.

And so we circle back to the question: Do we love enough? Do we love enough to challenge the fear of awkwardness to share the Good News? Do we love enough to share the hope and joy found in Christ? Do we love enough to invite our neighbors, family and friends into the life of the Blessed Trinity? Do we love enough to evangelize?

If and when we forget, let us remember the very call of Christ: to love God and our neighbor.

As we close this month of All Souls, let us continue to pray for those who have gone before us. But at the same time, let's proclaim the Good News to the living. Let us continue to foster a place of encounter with Christ Jesus, our Savior!

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# Workshop identifies evangelization as 'Church's identity,' explains process

By Natalie Hoefler

At a recent workshop sponsored by the archdiocesan Office of Evangelization, Diane Sutton made a confession.

"Being a cradle Catholic, evangelization was never anything I really thought about," said the member of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis. "I always equated evangelization to the Jehovah's Witness or Baptist faith."

After the workshop, she now sees things differently.

"I feel like I can now see the big picture of evangelization and how important it is in our individual faith life, and how that carries over into our parish life."

Such a change in understanding was one of the goals of the workshop led by L'Alto Catholic Institute president Tim Glemkowski on Oct. 27 at St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus. Roughly 75 people from 26 parishes attended. They represented 15 cities and towns throughout central and southern Indiana, from Terre Haute to Milan, Fortville to Scottsburg and many places in between.

"We wanted attendees to get clarity on evangelization, what it is and is not," said archdiocesan director of catechesis Ken Ogorek. "We wanted them to get practical tips for things they could start doing if they want to focus more intently on evangelization, and wanted them to leave feeling very motivated, especially about starting a parish evangelization team."

This article reviews some of the highlights of the workshop.

### Evangelization is the Church's identity

To emphasize the importance of

evangelization in the Catholic Church, Glemkowski turned to "*Evangelii nuntiandi*" ("Evangelization in the Modern World"), an apostolic exhortation issued by St. Pope Paul VI in 1975:

"Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize, that is to say, in order to preach and teach, to be the channel of the gift of grace, to reconcile sinners with God ... " (#14).

In other words, Glemkowski said, "If you take evangelization out of the Church, the Church is no longer the Church."

He did note the increased challenge of evangelizing in the midst of the current crises in the Church. But he noted that "God chose the time when you would live. God chose you for this moment in time."

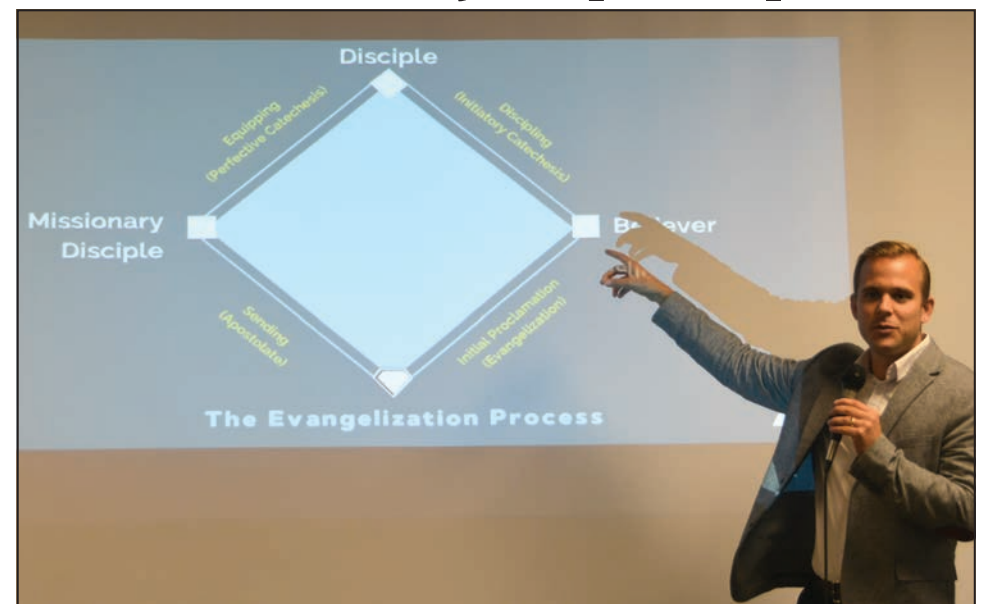
Glemkowski also defined evangelization as a process and a moment. The process is anything done "to seek conversion, either initial or ongoing. It's how the Church helps people to be what God called them to be."

The moment is the instant within the process that someone is led from being a non-believer or disengaged believer to being a believer in the essential truth that "in Jesus Christ ... salvation is offered as a gift of God's grace," he explained.

That message is the proclamation of all evangelization efforts, he said, "the Good News that "God is hopelessly in love with all of us."

### A Church of the 'frozen chosen'?

But in the Catholic Church, Glemkowski said, "We have baptized people who don't believe that core proclamation that salvation is offered to



At an archdiocesan evangelization workshop at St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus on Oct. 27, L'Alto Catholic Institute president Tim Glemkowski uses an image of a baseball diamond to explain the steps of forming missionary disciples. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

all. ... They have no personal attachment to Jesus Christ. They have no connection to his presence in the sacraments."

Glemkowski said this situation creates a Church of the "frozen chosen."

So for many parishes, evangelization must first be directed at the people in the pews, he explained.

Once parishioners come to their own "moment" in the evangelization process, then they have the essential element needed to evangelize their community and bring others to Christ, he said.

Even then, some hesitate to evangelize because they think they're not holy or smart enough—neither of which matters because "God can work with brokenness"

and "most people want a conversation, not a debate," Glemkowski said.

"At the end of the day," he continued, "the reason we don't evangelize is we don't love [others] enough ... to bring up religion. We're more concerned about being polite and not offending anyone. ... We don't take Jesus seriously enough to believe he is the way, the truth and the life, and the source of all joy."

### 'The end of Mass is just the beginning'

Whether geared toward the unchurched or Christians, evangelization is something each of us is called to do, said Glemkowski. He points to Christ's words as proof.

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# Christmas video and door-to-door outreach capture heart of parish evangelization efforts: ‘We welcome you’

By John Shaughnessy

With the Advent and Christmas seasons approaching, Jonathan Helt wanted to create a special message to entice non-Christians and fallen-away Catholics to come to his parish church at this time of year.

So the 37-year-old father of four put together a one-minute video for his parish that features “O Come, All Ye Faithful” playing as the following message is shared:

“This Christmas Season  
Come Home  
To Jesus  
And His Church.  
We Welcome You  
With Open Arms  
And Open Hearts.  
Come Home  
To the Catholic Church.”

The video ends with an image of Helt’s home church in the Terre Haute Deanery—Sacred Heart in Clinton. The closing image also provides the parish’s address and phone number.

“It will be worth it if it brings even just one person into a relationship with Christ,” Helt says. “I want as many people in his Church—that he founded—to know the peace and love that he offers.”

Helt’s video is just one way that he and other individuals and groups in parishes across the archdiocese are making grassroot efforts of evangelization—hoping to bring more people into the Catholic faith.

Helt is also working to start a parish evangelization team at Sacred Heart.

“Initially, what I’d like to have is for the existing parishioners to have more



Jonathan Helt of Sacred Heart Parish in Clinton has created a Christmas-related video designed to bring more people into the Church. (Submitted photo)

fellowship. Then I’d like to extend it to fallen-away Catholics. And as you see the love of our parish spreading outward, maybe it will draw non-Christians and Protestants to that light and that love. I urge other parishes to do the same.”

## ‘I want people to know Jesus’

If evangelizing sounds frightening to you or out of your comfort zone, then Gwen O’Connor understands that feeling.

“It’s a little scary for me because I’m not good at making conversation,” says O’Connor, a member of St. Philip Neri Parish in Indianapolis.

Still, she and four other people from the parish have been going door-to-door in the neighborhood around the church, inviting people to Mass and different parish events.

“We’ve gone out about eight times on a Sunday afternoon within the past year,” she says. “We go in pairs when we can. We’ll knock on the door, introduce ourselves, tell them we’re from St. Philip’s down the street, and ask them if they have a church home.”

They share a flyer that has a list of parish activities and the archdiocesan Office of Evangelization’s card “Catholic Faith, 10 Things We Want You to Know.” Sometimes, they also offer small crucifixes.

“People really like that,” O’Connor says. “It’s a symbol of who we are.”

“People are mostly friendly. Sometimes, we get into a conversation. And we come across some sad situations at times. Sometimes, we ask if we could pray for them or someone in their family. When we’re done, we pray for them in the church.”

As far as she knows, no one has come to the church because of their efforts, but that hasn’t stopped their group.

“Only God can open their hearts,” O’Connor says. “We just keep doing what we’re doing and letting them know we are there. I want people to know Jesus. That’s the most important thing in life.”

## ‘I was hungry for more’

Edy Ballard’s invitations to help people discover the beauty of the Catholic faith come from an unusual perspective.

She had been away from the Church for more than 40 years, before choosing to return to the faith three years ago.

“I think it was just the Holy Spirit,” says Ballard, a member of St. Joseph Parish in Shelbyville. “I was going to a Methodist church, and I felt I needed something more authentic. It was a natural



Father Aaron Pfaff, then-pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Shelbyville, poses with newly confirmed Catholic Edy Ballard, center, and her sponsor, Carol McElroy, in St. Joseph Church after the parish’s Easter Vigil Mass on March 26, 2016. Returning to the Church after being away for 40 years, Edy Ballard of St. Joseph Parish in Shelbyville became involved in starting evangelization outreach efforts for her faith community. (Submitted photo)

progression of my spiritual growth. I was hungry for more.”

Her return has brought her joy.

“I felt like I went up to my attic and found a trunk that I had forgotten since 1969, and found these beautiful gemstones that were there all along.”

Rediscovering that treasure, she wanted to share it. So she approached Father Michael Keucher, pastor of St. Joseph Parish, and their conversation led to the idea of starting an evangelization and outreach effort in Shelby County, with the assistance of members of nearby St. Vincent de Paul Parish.

Since its beginning a year ago, the effort has led to evangelization outreaches at the St. Joseph Parish Festival and during the Shelbyville Chamber of Commerce’s “First Fridays on the Circle.”

The group also set up a “You’re Welcomed Back with Love” table inside St. Joseph Church, where returning Catholics have been offered gift bags that include a rosary, the parish directory and an information card for contacting a priest.

“There’s a perception from people outside the Church that it’s hard to get into the Church,” Ballard says. “I don’t think we do a good job of letting people know they’re welcomed.”

“Evangelization is not just for a committee or a dozen people in the congregation. It’s every single person in the Church. We, as Catholics, have a responsibility. We’re the face of the Catholic Church. In a day and a time when there’s so much bad publicity about our Church, we need to let people know there’s a beautiful Church here for them.”

## ‘Our marching orders from Jesus’

These efforts at the parish level to evangelize are just what the Church needs, and what more parishes need to do, says Ken Ogorek, the archdiocese’s director of catechesis.

“Parish evangelization teams help reach the unchurched, the alienated and the practicing Catholics in a direct way that draws them deeper into the worship, teaching and stewardship ministries of the parish faith community.”

“Without a specific plan to make disciples, a parish is essentially saying, ‘We’re OK with staying at our current size,’ or worse yet, ‘Shrinking is OK with us.’”

Christ calls his followers to do more, Ogorek says. He cites “our marching orders from Jesus” in the Bible.

“All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age” (Mt 28:18-20).

Parish evangelization teams can have that power to make a difference in people’s lives, Ogorek says.

“There is so much untapped potential—so many souls in need of Jesus—throughout our parish territories.”

(To view the video that Jonathan Helt created go to [bit.ly/2PDWtKs](http://bit.ly/2PDWtKs). For more information on the archdiocese’s “10 Things We Want You to Know...” card or to download a copy, go to [www.archindy.org/yearoffaith/10things.html](http://www.archindy.org/yearoffaith/10things.html). To order free copies in English or Spanish, call 800-382-9836, ext.1550, or 317-236-1550. ¶)

# Abuse crisis is a moment for the Church to share the Gospel in challenging times

By Sean Gallagher

The faithful of the Church are called to proclaim the Gospel at all times.

That can be fairly easy to do when life is going well. But when crosses come our way, sharing the Good News can be more

difficult, but no less necessary.

Priests, deacons, religious and laity who reach out to families experiencing tragic deaths or illnesses know this.

It’s also the case with the family of the Church at present in the current clergy

sexual abuse crisis.

How do the faithful bring the Gospel into people’s lives, especially other Catholics, in this challenging time for the Church?

Three parishes in the Indianapolis North Deanery sought to do this in recent weeks by holding listening sessions or a holy hour related to the abuse crisis.

Immaculate Heart of Mary and St. Pius X parishes hosted listening sessions attended by several dozen parishioners. Christ the King Parish held a holy hour in which parishioners were invited to offer prayers related to the crisis.

Father James Farrell, pastor of St. Pius X, attended the two listening sessions in his faith community and witnessed the sharp emotions that the crisis has brought about in his parishioners. Their reaction nonetheless encouraged him about their faith.

“The passion and outrage expressed were a testimony to how deeply these people love the Church,” he said, “how much they want the Church to get it right and how anxious and concerned they are that their children and grandchildren have either already walked away from the Church, or now have another reason to walk away from the Church.”

“So, in one sense, I was encouraged to see how much these people love the Church.”

Being present to parishioners as they expressed their strong feelings is a

necessary part of evangelization in any difficult situation, Father Farrell said.

“If you don’t meet people where they are in suffering, you can’t bring the Gospel to them,” he said. “Prior to evangelization is being with the people wherever they are, whether they’re in pain, suffering, hopelessness, depression, or whether they’re in joy. How do I bring the Gospel to them if I’m not willing to listen to them, hear them out, see what’s going on in their lives?”

Father Todd Riebe, pastor of Christ the King Parish, did this at a personal level with several parishioners who were angry with Church leaders about the abuse crisis.

One of them was Chris Herschfeld. He said learning of the decades-long instances of abuse reported by a Pennsylvania grand jury in August “hit me right at the core.”

Hirschfeld was angered by the actions of priest abusers, of Church leaders who mishandled abuse claims, and even how allegations of abuse have been handled at times in the archdiocese.

Father Riebe met with Hirschfeld personally and invited him to participate in the holy hour at Christ the King. He did, and he offered a prayer.

“I expressed that I’m angry about the volume of the incidents, and how they’ve been handled,” Hirschfeld said. “But I first prayed for the victims, the healing of the Church and the honorable priests who probably lack support right now given what’s going on.”

Although Father Riebe has been in contact with people who are distancing themselves from the Church in response to the crisis, most of those he has spoken with continue to practice their faith, even in the midst of the difficult feelings this challenging time has caused.

“The experience has taught me how resilient Catholics are,” Father Riebe said. “In spite of the failings of priests and



Fr. James Farrell



Fr. Todd Riebe





# Pastors speak on role of priests, parish teams in evangelization

By Natalie Hoefler

Those who know Scripture know there are 10 commandments in the Old Testament. But in the New Testament, Jesus offers one final command, a command so crucial that he chose it as his final words on Earth: “Go and make disciples” (Mt 28:19).

Priests embrace these commands in a special way, both to evangelize their parish members, and then to encourage and equip their parishioners in evangelizing the local community and beyond. After all, Christ’s command was for all Christians, not just shepherds.

Recently, the archdiocesan Office of Evangelization conducted a survey of nine parish priests in central and southern Indiana regarding evangelization.

“Each of our pastors bears at least some responsibility for every soul in his parish territory,” said archdiocesan director of catechesis Ken Ogorek. But he also notes the importance of “parishioners being involved in evangelization efforts. It’s not just the pastor’s responsibility.”

To that end, the archdiocesan Office of Catechesis is creating a booklet designed to help parishes form evangelization teams.

Information about the booklet will be shared at the end of this article, after highlighting the priests’ response to two of the survey questions: what the priests surveyed are currently doing in terms of evangelization, and what traits they recommend members of a parish evangelization team have.

## Priest’s role is ‘comparable to a conductor’

Among the nine priests, efforts to evangelize ranged from within their parish to the local community, and even as far as a radio station’s airwaves will allow.

Several of the priests made a comment similar to that of Father John McCaslin, pastor of St. Simon the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis, that “as pastor, I am the first evangelizer of the parish.”

That effort to evangelize internally is then extended to help parishioners evangelize as well. As Father Todd Riebe, pastor of Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis, put it, the priest’s role in evangelization is “comparable to the conductor of an orchestra by empowering parishioners to evangelize and equipping them with the proper tools to do so.”

One of those tools is knowledge. While evangelizers must have a fire for spreading the Good News of salvation

that is lit by their relationship with Christ, knowledge of the faith is also key.

Father John Hollowell, pastor of Annunciation Parish in Brazil and St. Paul the Apostle Parish in Greencastle, saw that need not being met among students in his parishes, because “not many students were participating in a class offered by a catechist,” he said in the survey.

So he decided to reach them in a territory they as students are familiar with: online.

Father Hollowell now uses videos and PowerPoint slides to teach online classes to students in seventh through 12th grade in his two parishes.

How does Father Hollowell know if anyone is participating, let alone learning?

“They respond to my questions through e-mail,” he noted.

Another way to both catechize and evangelize is radio. Both Father Hollowell and Father Thomas Kovatch, pastor of St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Bloomington, noted that they use this medium to spread the Gospel.

Father Kovatch pointed out that his parish owns Bloomington’s WCYI 104.1 FM, which airs programming through the Relevant Radio Catholic network. And Father Hollowell hosts “Fr. Hollowell & Friends,” which airs on another Relevant Radio channel, W281BG 104.1 FM out of Knightsville, on Tuesdays at 4 p.m., Fridays at 2:30 p.m. and Saturdays at noon.

While he is not evangelizing on the airwaves, Father Dustin Boehm, pastor of St. Gabriel Parish in Connersville and St. Bridget of Ireland in Liberty, has led his parishioners in evangelization efforts on the ground, creating means of connection between parishioners and the community in several ways.

In 2014, he began an annual “Novena of Rosaries” walk—praying the rosary while processing in Connersville’s city park for nine consecutive Sundays—as a witness to the community in response to the community’s opioid crisis.

He noted that “many of the social events are geared to getting people on the campus in order to encounter and connect with the neighbors of the area.” And through a grant, parishioners can be reimbursed up to \$50 for performing a random act of kindness in their community.

## ‘Open arms’ and not a ‘baseball bat’

To help priests in spreading the Good News to all who live in their parish boundaries, “We feel strongly



Father John Hollowell, pastor of Annunciation Parish in Brazil and St. Paul the Apostle Parish in Greencastle, is shown teaching an online religious education class for students in grades 7-12 in his parishes. (Submitted photo)

that every parish ought to have an evangelization team of some sort,” said Ogorek.

So the priests surveyed were asked for input on what type of people such a team should include.

The responses primarily held three themes: people who are joyful, people who are welcoming, and people who are on fire for their faith.

On that last point, Father Robert Robeson, pastor of Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Beech Grove, noted that team members should be “deeply rooted in a relationship with Christ and Mary. If there is no commitment to Christ, it really won’t matter how great the team members’ social skills are.”

That being said, he added that team members should not be “afraid to engage, people who like people and who want to form relationships with others.”

Father Riebe’s comments were similar. He said the team should consist of “people who are on fire for their faith,” but who also must evangelize “with open arms” and not a “baseball bat.”

In addition to being “joyful and inviting,” Father Eric Johnson said the members need to know the message they are proclaiming “with a steady and firm conviction.”

The pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in New Albany went on to say that there can be no “ambiguity” for an evangelization team, but rather “practical efforts to move from vision to action.”

To maximize that action, there should be a “discernment and inventory of the charisms of the team [members],” said Father Sengole Thomas, administrator of St. Michael Parish in Cannelton and St. Pius V Parish in Troy.

“Recognizing the different gifts the Lord has provided will allow for a strong unity of the members and the ability to reach out with fuller potential,” he added.

Another helpful component for an evangelization team to accomplish the highest potential is for it to have members of “a wide demographic with a variety of stages of life, including someone who can speak intelligibly about youth culture, in addition to speaking to youths themselves,”

said Father Daniel Bedel, pastor of St. Margaret Mary and St. Patrick parishes in Terre Haute.

## ‘No magic bullet’

Ogorek notes that parish evangelization efforts cannot rely on a fad or trend.

“There are resources and programs

that can be helpful,” he said. “But there’s no magic bullet. Programs come and go. New resources come all time. No one program or kit is likely to help an evangelization and discipleship effort put down deep roots in a parish.

“You need a core group of people who are going to help shepherd an ongoing process.”

In addition to such a group, said Ogorek, parishes also need “what people call ‘spiritual multiplicity’—

the power of a small group of people spending a finite amount of time together helping each other grow in discipleship, with the understanding that at a certain point, each of them will gather a small group around them, help them grow in discipleship, and so on, and so on, and so on.”

Such ideas and tips will be put forth in a booklet the Office of Catechesis is developing to help parishes with evangelization. It is expected to be completed next spring, and will be sent to each pastor and to each person on an evangelization contact list the office maintains. (See below for how to be added to this list.)

“Our intent is to provide a brief, practical document that will help people hit the ground running with parish evangelization efforts,” said Ogorek.

“I’m not a fan of big, thick binders that end up as a door stop. There will be substance—people need to know what evangelization is and be formed to some degree.

“We want people within six months of getting this resource to start diving into some serious discipleship and evangelization efforts.”

(Anyone wishing to be added to the Office of Catechesis’ list to regularly receive information about evangelization in general, including the upcoming booklet, can email [evangelization@archindy.org](mailto:evangelization@archindy.org).) †



Father Dustin Boehm, pastor of St. Gabriel Parish in Connersville and St. Bridget of Ireland Parish in Liberty, poses with altar servers, members of the parish’s Knights of Columbus and others prior to one of St. Gabriel’s “Novena of Sundays” rosary walk evenings. (Submitted photo)



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“When Christ gave his great commission, he didn’t say, ‘Somebody go and make disciples.’ You have to take the great commission personally: ‘Bill, go and make disciples. Ann, go and make disciples.’ ... The great commission is the prism through which we see our purpose as Christians.”

And these weren’t just any words of Christ, but his last words, and “last words have weight,” Glemkowski said. Likewise, the last words of the Mass have weight, and they mirror the last words of Christ.

“At the end of Mass, the dispersal is so important to the Church,” he noted, “After being reminded of the love of God through the love of Jesus, we are sent to take that love into the world. The end of Mass is just the beginning.”

## ‘Baby giraffes with wobbly legs’

But how do we go about evangelizing, spreading the Good News memorialized in the Mass? Glemkowski answered the question on two fronts: parish evangelization, and personal evangelization.

At the parish level, evangelization should not be “silo-ed” into one commission because “it won’t bear fruit,” Glemkowski said. “When a parish’s real goal is to evangelize in all they do, that’s when they become successful. ... It shouldn’t be one of the things we do, but all we do. ... All programs and ministries should have some strategic part in that mission.”

In practical terms, he likened the evangelization process to a baseball diamond that starts at home base, creates believers at first base, then catechizes and offers opportunities to reinforce a personal relationship with Christ, which leads to becoming a disciple at second base. From there, people are equipped with more knowledge to help them reach third base—being a missionary disciple.

“We think someone is on fire after being baptized at the Easter Vigil or

after a retreat, so now they’ll become involved in the parish and we’re done,” Glemkowski said. “But they’re like baby giraffes with wobbly legs. We need to help them grow spiritually.”

To do that, he said, parishes need to encourage newly evangelized or re-evangelized Catholics to frequent the sacraments and to develop a personal prayer life to continue growing in their relationship with Christ. And they need to provide opportunities to accomplish this.

“Every parish should have perpetual adoration if they want their evangelization to be a success, and more opportunities for confession,” Glemkowski advised.

And the evangelized “need to have it explained to them that their discipleship must bear fruit, that their relationship with Christ isn’t just about them,” he added.

## ‘Be relatable’

Once disciples have been fully evangelized and catechized at the parish level, they are ready to become evangelizers themselves.

To accomplish this, said Glemkowski, Catholics need to learn the “art of accompaniment.”

He offered an example he called “growth by multiplication.”

“Say you have three people meet for one year to help each other grow spiritually,” he said. “Then after a year, each person goes out and starts a new group of three, and so on. It becomes exponential.”

What is Glemkowski’s advice to personal evangelizers to begin this process? It’s simpler than one might think.

“Pray daily,” he said. “Frequent the sacraments. If people recognize the Holy Spirit in you, you’ll have an impact. Holiness is attractive.”

This is not to say evangelizers must be perfect.

“The best way to build trust with someone is to be relatable,” Glemkowski said. “Remain close to Christ and he will make you who you were meant to be.”

He also cautioned evangelizers to be aware of others’ spiritual wounds.



Father Todd Riebe, pastor of Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis, elevates the Eucharist and chalice during Mass at St. Bartholomew Church in Columbus on Oct. 27, while Deacon Juan Carlos Ramirez looks on. The Mass was part of an archdiocesan evangelization workshop at St. Bartholomew Parish. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

“Not all trust that the Church is a good thing,” he noted. “Sometimes you won’t be the best person to bring someone back, but keep praying.”

The surest way to evangelize, Glemkowski said, is to “share your story. Share with them a time in your life when you felt like the sinful woman [who was about to be stoned], that you knew you needed a savior, and that you found there was one, and he is Christ, and he loves each of us more than we can possibly know.”

## ‘Just an invitation’

Father Todd Riebe, pastor of Christ the King Parish in Indianapolis, gave a reflection during the workshop. His personal story drove home the importance of the simplest of evangelization: inviting someone to Mass.

He spoke of how, when growing up, his family would “pile into the car” and head off to Mass every Sunday morning. And every Sunday morning a neighbor was there on her porch. She would wave to them, and they would wave to her.

Decades later, Father Riebe visited her in the hospital shortly before she died.

She shared the memory of waving to his family every Sunday morning, and how she had longed each time that they would stop and invite her to Mass.

She was welcomed into full communion of the Church before she died.

“But how sad that she spent her whole life longing for Christ, when all she needed was for us to invite her,” Father Riebe reflected. “Just an invitation.”

That message stuck with Deacon Russell Woodard, parish life coordinator of Holy Trinity Parish in Edinburg.

“It really made people aware of saying to a co-worker or other people around them that, ‘If you want to go to church with me, you’re more than welcome,’” he said.

“It’s in the little things we do in our daily lives. We need to be open to the Holy Spirit, and when an opportunity presents itself, speak to that neighbor or co-worker. Find out if they go to a church, and if not tell them that they’re always welcome to join you, and that Jesus came for us all.” †

# LISTENING

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bishops, their faith and love for the Church is strong.”

Sharing the Gospel in difficult times can be challenging even for priests who have been ordained for decades. This was the case for Father Robert Sims, pastor of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish. He had mixed feelings in the time leading up to the listening session held in his faith community.

“Frankly, there was a part of me that didn’t want to do it,” Father Sims said. “But I felt that it really was important for people to have a venue in which they could validate their feelings. Before you can heal, you have to get those feelings out. I think there was a benefit for people to get those feelings out and look at them.

“I’m not saying that we can move on after the feelings were explained. But it was step on the road to healing, to get the feelings out.”

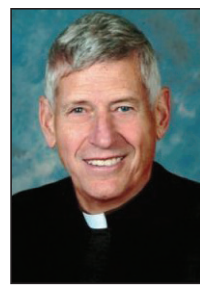
Like people who experience a tragedy in their lives who ask questions of a priest about what it all means, some of the people who attended the listening session at Immaculate Heart asked Father Sims about his thoughts regarding the abuse crisis.

Joe Klein, a member of the parish who attended the session, came away satisfied with his pastor’s honest responses.

“He didn’t try to sway us,” Klein said. “He was direct in answering questions to the best of his ability. I think we walked away thinking that our pastor has the same feelings we do, and that he doesn’t have the answers. I’m not sure who has the answers. It’s hurting him as badly as anyone who was in that room.”

Father Riebe said simply offering a caring, listening presence is at the heart of sharing the Gospel with people in difficult personal circumstances, as well as during this challenging time in the Church.

“Give people the chance to vent, to express their disappointment, frustration and hurts,” Father Riebe said. “The fact that someone from the Church says very little but instead listens to their hurt is probably the most healing thing we can do.” †



Fr. Robert Sims



People pray on Sept. 15 in SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis during a “Holy Hour for Prayer, Penance and Healing” for victims of sexual abuse. Three parishes in the Indianapolis North Deanery held listening sessions or a similar holy hour in response to the current clergy sexual abuse crisis. (Photo by Natalie Hoefler)

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**REPORT SEXUAL MISCONDUCT NOW**

If you are a victim of sexual misconduct by a person ministering on behalf of the Church, or if you know of anyone who has been a victim of such misconduct, please contact the archdiocesan victim assistance coordinator. There are *two* ways to make a report:

- 1 Ethics Point**  
 Confidential, Online Reporting  
[www.archdioceseofindianapolis.ethicspoint.com](http://www.archdioceseofindianapolis.ethicspoint.com) or 888-393-6810
- 2 Carla Hill, Archdiocese of Indianapolis, Victim Assistance Coordinator**  
 P.O. Box 1410, Indianapolis, IN 46206-1410  
**317-236-1548 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1548**  
[carlahill@archindy.org](mailto:carlahill@archindy.org)