

## Chaplain's Bulletin January 8, 2023



Dear Folks,

We celebrate Epiphany, which celebrates the light of the Gospel coming to the outside world. We remember that the story of Jesus is not just for us, but to be shared with all nations.

One of the big and most essential tasks of our generation is shifting many Catholics' paradigm from Catholics as customers for spiritual services, to Catholics as coworkers in mission, ambassadors of the Gospel. Catholics have long not seen themselves as missionaries, nor have we been taught how to share the faith. Even in the seminary they never taught us to share the faith with those who don't already believe. Of course, we can't all be as talented as Fulton Sheen, and the challenge can be intimidating, but there are simple ways for us to start.

To share the faith, it is important to be seekers of God's goodness, beauty, and truth.

The US Catholic Bishops did a document called, "Go Make Disciples" which suggested three basic tasks:

1. Grow in enthusiasm for the faith ourselves until it spills out of us (Continue to evangelize ourselves).
2. Invite everyone everywhere to share the fullness of the Catholic faith (Evangelize people: invite those outside the faith to come inside; invite those on the margins to come deeper; invite those in deep to come even deeper)
3. Transform society according to Gospel values (Evangelize society).

We can start by planting very small seeds. Some very simple things we can do to help draw people to the faith:

1. Learn something new about the faith and share it with someone
2. Tell someone something good about your faith community
3. Introduce yourself to someone you don't know at church
4. Create a holy moment (an action that shows the love of God)

We, of course, can grow with learning and practice, and set things up for the next generation to go farther than we can. The more we learn about the goodness, beauty, and truth of the faith the more we have to share. We also remember that sharing is a separate skill that must be developed. We can all start where we are at. I would suggest that it would be good to consider how we might answer some key questions:

1. Why are you glad to have Jesus in your life?
2. Why is it a good thing to be a practicing Catholic Christian?
3. How does my life show that I believe in Jesus?

There is a lot of concern for the future of the Catholic Church, and for the future of our parishes. There is a lot of talk about what the Pope should do, what the bishop should do and so on. That energy could be better spent sharing the faith. The more people who are intentional about being ambassadors of the Gospel, the greater the hopes for the future. The first step is always to fall more deeply in love with Jesus.

Blessings,

Fr. Jim