

**From the P.A.'s Desk**

**Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults:**

Jesus once asked two of John the Baptist's disciples, "What are you looking for?" They replied, "Master, where do you stay?" Jesus answered, "Come and see." This same invitation to "come and see" is given to each and every one of us who are looking for Jesus. He wants us to find him and to be one with him. If you or someone you know is looking for Jesus you are invited to "Come and See". We will be starting the RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults) process in late September. This program is for anyone who has not been baptized or who was baptized in another faith and wants to become Catholic. It is also for anyone who has been baptized Catholic and wants to complete their sacramental journey or who wants to learn more about our faith. **In the past two months, I have talked to four people who are interested in possibly becoming Catholic.** Have you invited anyone lately?

When you were baptized you became part of a wonderful community learning to love and serve God. You can share that beautiful gift with a friend, neighbor, or relative. Have you noticed someone who is a bit curious about "those Catholics"? Perhaps you know someone, a baptized Catholic, who has drifted away, or isn't quite sure what to think about the Church anymore? The opportunity has arrived for you to extend that personal invitation to those adults and children to come and explore, ask questions, and perhaps begin their faith journey through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA).

All of us, even the best known people of the Church, began their faith journey because someone cared enough to respond to their spiritual needs and concerns. The RCIA doesn't happen by itself. It's a community event, and YOU are that community. Be aware of someone around you. Ask someone who may be interested in the Catholic faith to come and see what we are all about. Plant the seed of awakening to a life of Christ in someone's heart. Call Jerry for further information.

**Evangelization:**

Pope's from Paul VI in the mid-sixties, to Pope Francis and bishop Cistone today, have been talking about the need for a New Evangelization. A New Evangelization is needed because there needs to be a shift in our efforts towards bringing people back/into the Catholic Christian faith. The statistics across this country have shown a massive decline in Catholics who were practicing, and now are either not or have left the faith all together. This is a crisis which can no longer be ignored. We have to take up the mission.

Who is called to Evangelize? The broad answer is Everyone! Every single baptized Catholic is gifted with the mission of Jesus, and the Good News of spreading our faith. Vatican II stated, "There is a universal call to evangelization. The obligation of spreading the faith is imposed on every disciple of Christ; according to his/ her state in the Church, and because the Church exists to evangelize." The previous quote mentions an important idea for our consideration; the different states in the Church. Broadly, there are two states: the consecrated (priests, deacons, religious brothers and sisters) and the laity. I would like for us to focus on the laity's task of evangelizing. Not because the consecrated don't have an important role, but because the laity have the primary role.

The pastor, especially the parish priest, or the pastoral leader, has the duty of preparing and enriching the laity for work in the New Evangelization. However, the laity's place cannot and must not be taken by the professional church minister. The laity, in accordance with their state of life, exercises their apostolic mission in the midst of the world. Therefore, they have the unique responsibility of reaching others by bearing witness to Jesus. The laity, by their place in the everyday world, has the integral task of evangelizing the family, culture, social and political arenas. Jesus empowered the disciples, He is empowering us to "go out" and preach the Gospel by your daily actions and activities. Pope Francis has said, "The Church must come out of herself and go toward the outside. We must avoid the spiritual disease of the Church that can become self-referential: when this happens, the Church itself becomes sick. If the Church remains closed in on itself, it grows old". In our era and in so many places the faith is flickering like a dying flame. God has been removed and humanity is losing its bearings as a result. Our culture has either compartmentalized God or made God unimportant and irrelevant, but hope is not lost! We the laity have the grace of being empowered by the Holy Spirit to bring the light of faith back to the world. It will start with baby-steps, but if you trust in God the goal will be reached. Through evangelization we can bring the transcendent power of God to others.

Where do we start? **A good place to start is by attending some of the upcoming adult faith opportunities beginning next week on Sunday's after Mass.** These adult faith sessions are open to any adult in the parish, young or old, those with children and those without. You are welcome to come to all six beginning sessions, or just one or a few. Make no mistake, this is not the faith formation you remember from your childhood. Faith grows and develops throughout one's lifetime, and faith formation of adults is totally different than what you may have experienced as children. Come and see!

### **Today's Gospel:**

The second insert is about Jesus' Prodigal Son story, and it will change the way you understand Jesus' notion of God!