



# Mission and Evangelization

*"Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this:  
to care for orphans and widows in their affliction."*

*~ James 1:27*

## Overview

Mission and evangelization are at the core of the life of the Church, and are, therefore, at the core of Partners in the Gospel. In *The Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis says:

*"I dream of a 'missionary option,' that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church's customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today's world rather than for her self-preservation. The renewal of structures demanded by pastoral conversion can only be understood in this light: as part of an effort to make them more mission-oriented, to make ordinary pastoral activity on every level more inclusive and open, to inspire in pastoral workers a constant desire to go forth, and in this way to elicit a positive response from all those Jesus summons to friendship with himself" (#27).*

It is this "missionary impulse" that is the driving force of Partners in the Gospel. God's Kingdom excludes no one and is not complete without everyone. Therefore, we are called to reach out to those beyond our church doors - especially those on the margins - in both word and deed, summoning them "to friendship with Jesus" through our love and care and concern.

Our archdiocesan [mission statement](#) is rooted in the Great Commission from Matthew 28, which reads "go and make disciples of all nations." We are called to encounter Jesus Christ, accompany others on their journey, and live the joy of the Gospel. This means we evangelize by sharing God's love with *everyone*, especially amongst the poor and suffering, allowing ourselves to be transformed by these sacred relationships and ensuring that all people know God and know God's infinite love.

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# Evangelization

Jesus said to his disciples, "All authority 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 obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

~Matthew 28:18-20

## What is evangelization?

Evangelization, at its core, is helping people encounter Jesus Christ in various ways, allowing them to tangibly experience the profound love of God radiating from his union with the Father and the Holy Spirit. It is the process of introducing people to God, through Christ, that they may come to know love itself. This infinite love is always inviting us to collapse into it, to receive it openly, to accept it fully, even though we might think ourselves unworthy. A relationship with Jesus helps us embrace the reality that we are acceptable to God, just as we are; we need only turn toward this love, freely given, to experience it. Evangelization is providing the needed **instrument** of God's love for another to turn towards. After all, without an instrument of some kind, how would anyone be able to hear beautiful music? Similarly, without evangelizers, how would anyone know the love of God?

This gift of divine love that we have received and accepted is so great, so important, so lifegiving, that we can't possibly keep it to ourselves. It must be shared. No one should think themselves outside of the wide embrace of God. And yet, many have not accepted this love, either because they don't know about it, don't believe it, or haven't experienced it enough to realize it's real. That is a significant form of poverty and suffering that many in our world are experiencing, sometimes without knowing it.

Evangelization - the core mission of the Church - wants to intentionally invite others (all others) to know God, which is to know love. We do this most effectively when we embody this kind of profound love, allowing others to have firsthand experiences of what it looks like, sounds like, and feels like. The work of evangelization allows others to know God experientially. God's love becomes perceptible to the senses, no longer invisible or inaudible, but physically present in the world.

As the living Body of Christ, it is the role of Christians to evangelize through embodiment of this love. Collectively, we are seeking to bring this love to every corner of the earth and to reach every soul without exception. And this work is not complete until everyone - EVERYONE is within the fold. "Todos, todos, todos!" as Pope Francis chanted recently with the world's young people: "Everyone, everyone, everyone!"

"There is space for everyone...and when there isn't, please, let's work so that there is."

~ Pope Francis

## **Evangelizing among the familiar**

As with most things, we begin our evangelizing efforts at home. Parents, as the primary catechists, begin this process by teaching their children about faith and bringing them into relationship with Jesus and the Church. Deeper still, they evangelize through every hug they offer, especially when the tears are falling. They evangelize when they sacrifice a good night's sleep to attend to a sick child. They evangelize with every meal cooked, every Christmas pageant costume sewed, every ride to soccer practice offered, and even every "time out" administered. These are acts of love, embodied. They are how children come to know what love even is. It is how they are introduced to the reality of God.

Having been loved in this way, the children become evangelizers too. Siblings evangelize each other when they share clothes or sacrifice that trip to the mall to instead play a board game with the youngest. They evangelize their parents when they gift them a colorful drawing that gets hung on the fridge or the infamous handmade coupon book for free chores and hugs. They evangelize when they load the dishwasher or take out the trash without being asked. There are countless examples within our families of love in action or love embodied. This giving and sharing of love mirrors the inner life of the Trinity, where we empty ourselves for the other and allow ourselves to be filled through the relationship.

However, we don't stay forever in our homes. We must venture out into the community, to our schools, our places of work, local hangouts with friends, and - of course - our parishes. Here too we evangelize and are evangelized, sharing love with others in these familiar settings. We evangelize when we buy a latte for the person behind us in line or nominate a colleague for a much-deserved award. We evangelize when we stay up late to listen to a friend talk about a difficulty in their life. We evangelize when we write a card of thanks to a teacher who impacted us or advocate for just policies in our nation and world. We evangelize when we pray for people who are suffering or accompany someone who left the Church and is struggling with faith. We evangelize when we give witness to our close relationship with Christ and maybe even invite someone to join us at Mass. Again, the examples of embodied love outside our homes are aplenty. People out in the community come to know love through our actions.

Our parishes too evangelize in numerous ways:

- Beautiful liturgy, which draws us very close to God through God's Word, God's people, and the source and summit of our faith, the Eucharist.
- Faith formation programs that catechize and introduce people to God's love through the sacraments.
- Active youth and young adult ministries that lovingly form our young people in the faith and send them forth to serve others.
- Small faith sharing groups such as bible studies, grief support, Alpha groups, prayer groups, and other gatherings that increase faith and share love.

The manifestations of good evangelization are limitless. And all are called to evangelize - that is to share God's love - with others.

However, there is a great temptation we all face: to limit our evangelizing efforts to the familiar and the comfortable. We absolutely evangelize well among those in our homes, families, and communities such as parishioners at our church, neighbors, colleagues, teammates and community members we encounter in familiar spaces. Today – however – we wish to shine light on the next step that all of us are called to take: To evangelize among the unfamiliar, often in uncomfortable places.

### **Preparing to move outward, among the unfamiliar**

Our faith continually reminds us that God’s love extends to EVERYONE - not just those in our families and known communities. For God, ALL people are God’s beloved children and all, therefore, need tangible experiences of that love.

Recalling how we first came to know love – to know God – through our families and through our parishes, we find ourselves within the fold, within God’s embrace. But what about those who didn’t have families and parishes like ours? Perhaps they never had loving experiences at home or meaningful church interactions. What about those who never experienced any sort of loving action directed toward them at all? How are they to know God and love?

Here, our faith will ask us to accept a difficult, but fruitful challenge: to go out beyond familiar places and toward unfamiliar people in order that they too may experience the love of God. In fact, it is in these places – the peripheries – where love is desperately needed.

**This external movement, known as missionary discipleship, is central to the mission of the Church.** We are called to “go out” to the margins and peripheries to encounter those people experiencing material and/or spiritual poverty - and we are called to evangelize, namely to share God’s love and healing with those who desperately need it, thus elevating their dignity and including them fully in God’s wide embrace. And we further evangelize by inviting others to do the same!

This is how we ensure that “Todos, todos, todos” experience the love of God and a relationship with God’s Church.

As Archbishop Etienne wrote in his blog: [Truth in Love](#):

“So, my friends, be a witness to Christ. It is not about knocking on doors or standing on street corners, but simply, respectfully, sharing your faith in Christ with others, one person at a time. In the words of St. Paul, do not be ashamed of the Gospel. (Romans 1:16) Be generous distributors of God’s grace. (1 Peter 4:10) This is our mission, which is a mission of love.”

# Missionary Discipleship

*"I tell you the truth, when you were young, you tied your own belt and went where you wanted. But when you are old, you will stretch out your hands and another will tie you and lead you where you do not want to go."*

~ John 21:18-19

Missionary discipleship is the intentional "going out" beyond our comfort zone to encounter and accompany Christ on the peripheries. Doing so allows the Holy Spirit's healing to reach others (*i.e. Christ in distressing disguise*) while simultaneously transforming the faithful into more loving, more sacrificial people. It is not proselytization intended to convert people to Catholicism, though it doesn't preclude that possibility as a natural fruit over time.

Through Partners in the Gospel, parish families have the chance to **reimagine** and **restructure** so that parishioners have an opportunity to encounter God's beloved on the margins, be Christ's healing presence for those feeling marginalized and be transformed themselves by these mutual relationships of love and care. Imagine the stories of kinship with marginalized people that parishioners will soon be able to share!

Parish families have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to dream about how to better align with the example of Jesus for our individual and communal lives. For example, what might happen if we took this moment to consider repurposing excess buildings for mission endeavors like homeless shelters, meal programs, or food banks, etc.? What might happen if we combined human and financial resources (*from the various churches in our families*) to draw near a periphery in need of Christ's embodied presence? How might the Kingdom of Heaven burst into being in ways not possible had we not come together in this most exceptional way? How might doing so conform us more to Christ?

Questions to consider:

1. What would our one, canonical parish look like as an effective hub of service, outreach, and evangelization?
2. How will we collectively attend to the [Corporal](#) and [Spiritual](#) Works of Mercy?
3. Who are we called to encounter and accompany as a parish community?
4. What ministries will we enhance or undertake to care for those beyond the church walls who are physically and/or spiritually impoverished, those experiencing pain and suffering?

## Jesus is the Blueprint

Missionary work is accomplished as members of the Body of Christ - not just social workers or well-intentioned volunteers. Jesus calls everyone to be ministers to carry forward his mission of compassion, healing, mercy, and love in the modern world today. We do this by ensuring our actions and activities are aligned with Jesus' most extraordinary examples. We are called

to be like Jesus, both individually and collectively. It is through our care and concern that we can invite people into friendship with Jesus Christ.

Jesus went to the margins to dine with despised tax collectors, to heal lepers who were untouchable, to elevate the status and dignity of women and children, and to care for the poor, sick, and disabled. He maintained an odd group of close friends, comprised of people who others ignored, belittled, or demonized. His final act before he died was to comfort a criminal who hung on a cross alongside him. Jesus wished to ensure that ALL people felt embraced and accepted by God, without exception – an astonishing and beautiful mission.

As Christians, we are called to conform our actions, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors to match the blueprint that Jesus modeled in first century Palestine. Doing so will make possible the same kind of miraculous results of healing and reconciliation in our own day. We recognize that as individuals and as communities of faith, conforming to the example of Jesus does not happen overnight. This is the “pastoral conversion” that Pope Francis refers to frequently. And like all conversion, it requires openness to allowing the Holy Spirit to bring us to a new, and perhaps unfamiliar place.

The foundation for missionary disciples who seek this ongoing pastoral conversion is the desire to continually grow in their own relationship with Jesus Christ. Such growth is nurtured by regular prayer, worship, and participation in the Eucharist. These are of paramount importance and central to all we do. We come to the table to be fed by the Body and Blood of our Lord, such that we BECOME what we consume and are empowered to be the living Body of Christ outside the church walls. As Fr. Michael Raschko once said:

*“I am never more a Eucharistic person than when I am serving a meal at the Cathedral Kitchen.”*

Striving to draw close to Jesus, and to allow his life, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to shape our lives, will empower us to draw close to his people, especially those who are marginalized and on the periphery. This gradual individual and pastoral conversion could draw us into relationships with people we would have never imagined. A close relationship with Jesus will help us understand his way of operating and relating to others.

Here are a few questions to consider:

1. How can we help people have a deeper and more meaningful encounter with Christ?
2. How do we help parishioners connect the sacrament of Eucharist to becoming living sacraments of Christ in the world?
3. How are we currently aligned with the example of Jesus and where could we do better?
4. How do we ensure that our missionary outreach, in whatever form it takes, is more than social work?

5. What approaches can we take to lean into evangelization as meeting people where they are and walking with them so that they are invited into relationship with Jesus through our care for them?

### **Outward focus**

In our efforts to encourage all the baptized to live the mission of Christ, *all* parishioners in the pews should be activated, including those whose faith has stagnated and needs reinvigoration. Everyone's gifts are needed in the vineyard of the Lord and everyone is encouraged to look beyond parish life to those experiencing poverty, homelessness, mental illness, addiction, incarceration, hospitalization, disability, or other hardships. This also includes outreach to nonbelievers and Catholics who left their faith. All Christians are called to this outreach mission in some way, shape, or form.

Focusing outward will share God's love with those outside of our doors, those who are experiencing some form of distress or struggle; people who are crying out for help and assistance, but whose voices are unheard and their situations unseen. Like a parent who responds instantly to the cries of a child, so too does God desire to move quickly toward those who hurt through members of the living Body of Christ today. This is the role of the Church and one reason why the Archdiocese of Seattle is on the Partners in the Gospel journey.

The purpose of Partners in the Gospel is to re-envision parish life for mission, which includes crafting new parishes that are effective hubs of service, outreach and evangelization in all its forms. Possible outreach efforts include:

- *Street outreach, safe parking, etc.*
- *Shelters for unhoused neighbors, women and children, domestic violence, etc.*
- *Food banks, hot meal programs, etc.*
- *Care for the dying, care for the grieving*
- *Outreach to lapsed Catholics and those who feel alienated from the Church*
- *Invitations to nonbelievers*
- *Jail and prison ministry, restorative justice, re-entry support*
- *Hospital and homebound ministry*
- *Care for elders, retirement homes, assisted living, rehab centers, etc.*
- *Immigrant and refugee ministry, welcome circles, etc.*
- *Port ministry*
- *Care for the unborn*
- *Mental health ministry, suicide prevention, etc.*
- *Disability inclusion*
- *International missions*
- *Care for creation*
- *Foster care ministry*
- *etc.*

This work actively attends to the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, with the overall goal to provide accompaniment to those experiencing pain and suffering.



“Everything a baptized person does every day should be directly or indirectly related to the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy.”

~ Dorothy Day

### **Closeness and proximity**

Pope Francis has championed the vision of the Church as a **field hospital**. This compelling image of the Church conjures imagery of pop-up tents on a battlefield, with medics rushing to critically wounded soldiers, providing urgent and immediate care meant to stabilize and comfort. Our mission and evangelization efforts are not unlike this exact response.

We go - with haste - to the side of anyone in the field who is seriously wounded and hurting. We encounter their physical or spiritual woundedness and suffering. We embrace their pain and feel alongside them. We provide immediate comfort and relief through our **listening, presence, and accompaniment**. We often provide a desperately needed lifeline that, over time, can grow into much longer-term healing, transformation and faith.

However, none of this can happen unless we *show up* on the scene. We need *closeness and proximity* to the people who have been impacted by various “battlefield” situations; people who are languishing and in need of urgent attention. We need to see, hear, and respond to their cries, just like field hospital medics.

Whenever we show up, we instantly erase the existence of a margin. If the Church is on scene, then a person - for that moment in time - is not marginalized. They are within the embrace of God and God’s Holy Church. They are no longer invisible or ignored. Showing up means nurturing a [Culture of Encounter](#). Such a presence transforms hearts and souls, inviting more and more people to allow themselves to be loved and held by God. This is the true essence of helpful evangelization.

Here are a few questions to consider:

1. How can our new canonical parish act as a field hospital in our region and in the world? What would it look like?
2. How can parishioners expand their scope of community? Do people regard the parish as comprised only of its registered parishioners? What can be done to include all the souls outside the doors as part of the community as well? Who is our neighbor?
3. What does it look like, in modern times, to embody Jesus who befriended tax collectors, drew close to the poor, and laid hands upon lepers? What does Jesus’ style of “closeness” and “nearness” look like today?

*“If the whole Church takes up this missionary impulse, she has to go forth to everyone without exception. But to whom should she go first? When we read the Gospel, we find a clear indication: Not so much to your friends and wealthy neighbors, but above all the poor and the sick, those who are usually despised and overlooked. Those who cannot repay you.”*  
~ Joy of the Gospel, 48

### **Welcome and inclusion**

To fulfill Pope Francis’ call to “go forth to everyone without exception,” we must embrace welcome and inclusion. The rich diversity in the Catholic Church in Western Washington is a strength as well as a challenge. A key question to ask as this process unfolds: *Who is not at the table?*

Diversity of every kind is a gift to be cherished and celebrated. Here are a few questions to consider:

1. How will our parish community elevate and celebrate the diversity both within - and outside of - our parish family?
2. How will we identify those who feel on the outskirts of Church life?
3. What methods will we deploy to reach those who are missing? How will we invite them to participate?
4. Are we intentionally opening leadership opportunities to people from different backgrounds? Does our leadership reflect the makeup of the community as a whole?
5. What accommodations do we need to make to ensure that everyone can fully and actively participate in the life of the Church?
6. If someone from the margins were to wander through our church doors, are we prepared to welcome them?

*"Just as a body, though one, has many parts,  
but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ."  
~ 1 Corinthians 12:12*

## **Mercy**

A key function of the Church is to usher God's mercy into the world. Our Church communities - and society in general - are certainly no stranger to instances of harm and injustice. Whenever we are hurt, the temptation to harden our hearts is strong. However, the Gospel calls us to something different. Jesus himself had the experience of being victimized at an extreme level, but his response differed drastically. His example offers an important template for us to consider whenever unwarranted suffering is inflicted upon us.

Even as Jesus is unjustly convicted and sentenced to death - and suffering makes an enormous appearance in his life - he refuses to perpetuate this unimaginable harm. Instead of exerting his divine power, he instead surrenders to the will of the Father. The effect is jaw dropping, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34) Jesus refuses to transmit harm, but instead, through his profound dependence on the Father, transforms it into forgiveness and, ultimately, new life. In so doing, he "takes away the sin of the world," replacing it only with goodness rather than more awfulness. Jesus, through the cross, literally disrupts the endless cycle of harm and revenge. Suffering is not transmitted and multiplied, but rather transformed into something new and beautiful. This is the work of mercy. Jesus held no vengeance in his heart for those who were hurting him.

Parishes too are called to facilitate this kind of mercy whenever harm or injustice surfaces. Imagine Catholic schools minimizing suspensions in favor of facilitated peace circles that nurture accountability through mutual understanding and empathy for all. Imagine navigating staff or parishioner conflict using a similar tool.

Here are a few questions to consider:

1. Whenever conflict, instances of harm, or difficulties emerge within our community, what are possible responses that bear witness to God's infinite compassion, tenderness, and forgiveness for all? (e.g. peace circles, synodal listening, etc.)
2. How can our community nurture the practice of "Seek first to understand," especially whenever staff or parishioner's anger or bitterness emerge for any reason? How do we allow our hearts to break, even for those who hurt or wrong us?
3. To mercifully handle these kind of difficult situations, would our community be willing to learn more about peace circles and [restorative justice](#), a Gospel-aligned structure of justice? An excellent resource for Catholic communities can be found [here](#).

*"You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord."  
~ Leviticus 19:18*

### **Mutuality and kinship**

Mutuality and kinship are the natural fruits of missionary outreach. People inevitably experience connection and friendship with people they were never supposed to meet. Upon encountering Christ in distressing disguises, people may experience how others have a remarkable ability to endure and an ability to love in astonishing ways - all of which may deeply and profoundly change them.

Often evangelization is understood as a conversion mission aimed at changing the people we encounter. A more accurate way to understand it is that we are changed *by* the people we approach. Their examples and witness will frequently convert *us* into more loving, more hospitable, more generous, and more sacrificial people.

We *need* relationships with the poor if we wish to fully experience the Kingdom of Heaven. Some have mused that all people will need a letter of recommendation from the poor to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. This is in reference to Matthew 25's teaching that "...to the extent that you did it for one of the least of these brothers *or* sisters of Mine, you did it for Me." The poor, however, first need to know us. If we make the movement toward them, they will often show us how we are to walk in communion with God. The relationship becomes mutually beneficial.

Here are key questions to consider:

1. Fr. Greg Boyle from Homeboy Industries notes that the Beatitudes are not a spirituality, but rather a geography that tells us where to stand. With whom does your parish wish to stand?
2. How will your parish's presence on a margin impact staff and parishioners?
3. What are common fears and barriers that prevent us from going to various margins? How can we overcome them?

# Embracing Missionary Discipleship as a Parish Family

“The poor have much to teach us.”  
~ Pope Francis

## Rhythm of parish life

Parish families are encouraged to embrace missionary discipleship through the regular rhythm of parish life. Throughout the liturgical year there are opportunities to regularly go to the margins and meet people on the peripheries. Here are some ideas about how a parish family can bring the Good News well beyond the doors of the church:

1. Use local, national and worldwide Catholic appeals to both raise consciousness and support those who are marginalized and in need. Go deeper than simply putting a notice in the bulletin or announcing a special collection at Mass. Special appeals come with materials to educate and inform people about how to be in solidarity with those impacted by the work and financial contributions. Here are the opportunities that present themselves for special collections throughout the year:
  - January: The Church in Latin America
  - February: Collection for PREPARES
  - March: Lenten CRS Rice Bowl and Special Collection for CRS
  - April: Good Friday Collection for those in the Holy Land
  - June: Peter’s Pence Collection for the Pope’s outreach to the poor
  - August: The Church in Africa
  - August: Catholic Home Missions for dioceses in the U.S. that are poor
  - September: Catholic Campaign for Human Development
  - October: Black and Indian Mission and World Mission Sunday
  - November: The Church in Central and Eastern Europe
  - December: Catholic Community Services of Western Washington
2. Many parishes support local St. Vincent de Paul Conferences. This presents an opportunity to share how St. Vincent de Paul reaches the poor and marginalized in the local community.
3. Use the Church’s celebration of the saints to educate, inform, and inspire parishioners with stories of those who went to the margins. Through praying to these saints, people can be empowered to go to the marginalized today.
4. Celebrate the annual World Day of the Poor on the 33<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time.
5. Sponsor and/or host a service day for those experiencing homelessness during the week of the annual [“Point in Time Count”](#) each January.

These are just few ideas about how to integrate missionary discipleship into the existing rhythm of parish life. Each parish family is encouraged to reflect on the existing opportunities and how, with only a little effort, people can go to the margins and share the Good News.

# Integral Human Development

The dignity of the human person is key to understanding [Catholic Social Teaching](#). Promoting that human dignity requires respect for the integrated development of the whole human person, covering all aspects of life: social, economic, political, cultural, spiritual and personal.

This integral human development can be threatened by challenges particular to certain times and places. Three challenges that are of particular importance to us today as missionary disciples in the Church include:

1. Addressing the sin of racism
2. Confronting the challenges of caring for creation
3. Attending to life, peace, and justice matters.

These issues provide an invitation for parish families to explore how to bring the healing presence of Christ to these significant threats to the dignity of the human person. People impacted by racism, climate change, war, abortion, etc. are very much marginalized and in need of missionary outreach and evangelization. These issues require *all* of our attention and engagement. We hope all parish families will find ways to address them.

## Work to end the sin of racism

According to the Pacific Northwest's 2023 synod report, "Catholic people of color spoke of routine encounters with racism, both inside and outside the Church." In the Archdiocese of Seattle, there are efforts at the parish, deanery, and archdiocesan levels to pray, learn and act to eradicate racism.

Shortly after the murder of George Floyd, Pope Francis said, "We cannot tolerate or turn a blind eye to racism and exclusion in any form and yet claim to defend the sacredness of every human life" (General Address, June 3, 2020). The U.S. bishops foreshadowed the Pope's remarks in the 2018 pastoral letter "[Open Wide Our Hearts](#)" writing, "What is needed, and what we are calling for, is a genuine conversion of heart, a conversion that will compel change, and the reform of our institutions and society."

Partners in the Gospel provides the opportunity for our local Church to work more ardently to overcome the sin of racism. Here are a few ways parish families may wish to engage:

- Explore intentional efforts to address racism in the community. Host a book group on the topic, consider utilizing consultants, etc.
- Encourage people to remember that every human has dignity given by God and to recognize when this dignity is threatened
- Attend a Chancery-facilitated intercultural competency training
- Attend cultural Masses such as the Swahili Mass at Holy Spirit, Kent or Mass at Vietnamese Martyrs
- Read more about [racial justice and cultural diversity](#) on the archdiocesan website
- Learn more about [black Catholics on the road to sainthood](#)

Contact the [Department of Intercultural Integration](#) for information about racial justice and equity. To learn more, please [click here](#).

## Care for creation

In [Laudato Si'](#), Pope Francis invites us to “discover what each of us can do” as we build a better future together. Responding to the call to care for our common home means embracing new ways of living, as our growing awareness of the connections between all things is translated to action.

There are a multitude of ways to care for creation and many parishes have already begun this work. To care for our common home, start by assessing existing programs, activities, liturgies, and facilities/grounds for adoption of the seven goals of *Laudato Si'*:

1. sustainable lifestyles
2. community resilience and empowerment
3. ecological economies
4. ecological education
5. response to the cry of the earth
6. response to the cry of the poor
7. ecological spirituality

After reviewing the seven goals of *Laudato Si'*, consider these same goals for any future efforts. This can be done through the development of a *Laudato Si'* Action Plan ([samples here](#)) that defines goals over the next five to seven years to become a more sustainable community that truly cares for creation in all aspects of parish life. This may include educational awareness efforts, campus-wide recycling, composting program, solar panel installation, neighborhood cleanups, community gardens, advocacy and much more! As we seek to care for the marginalized, may we remember that Mother Earth herself is suffering and often forgotten. The planet is also in need of our outreach and attention.

Contact the [Integral Human Development](#) ministry for information or for training leadership teams on *Laudato Si* and Care for Creation. To learn more, please [click here](#).

## Life, peace, and justice

As Catholic Christians, we are called to be advocates for human dignity and the sanctity of life for all persons, from conception to natural death. Many societal issues threaten life and dignity such as war, abortion, anti-immigrant sentiment, use of the death penalty, etc.

Pope Francis tells us, *“The Church is the salt of the earth, she is the light of the world. She is called to make present in society the leaven of the Kingdom of God and she does this primarily with her witness, the witness of brotherly love, of solidarity and of sharing with others.”*

Locally, one of the many ways we attend to this is through our peace efforts, stemming from Archbishop Etienne’s [Pilgrimage of Peace](#), where he and the Archbishop of Santa Fe, representing two nuclear strongholds in the U.S., joined with the bishops of Nagasaki and Hiroshima to collectively work toward the abolition of nuclear weapons. This is one way to be witnesses of peace. What life, peace, and justice efforts might your parish family undertake?

## Getting started: Tools and resources

### Reach out to the Department of Pastoral Care and Outreach

The [Pastoral Care and Outreach team](#) promotes missionary discipleship while developing mutuality and kinship with people on the margins. The team attends to the corporal and spiritual works of mercy with chaplains and ministers who are ready to assist parishes in the journey toward the margins.

A great way to start is by hosting a missionary discipleship retreat for a parish family's leadership and parishioners. The archdiocesan retreat is rooted in a curriculum developed by Maryknoll. This four-hour retreat invites staff and parishioners to understand and embrace a field hospital model of Church engagement on the margins. Reach out to the [Pastoral Care and Outreach team](#) to schedule or for more information.

Please take a moment to review ministry possibilities available to support parishes in their missionary discipleship efforts:

- **Agape Service Project**  
The Agape Service Project fosters service, community, and prayer as participants encounter Christ and uphold the dignity of our migrant brothers and sisters. To learn more, please [click here](#).
- **Criminal Justice Ministry**  
This ministry provides pastoral care for victims and survivors of crime, their families, as well as the incarcerated and their families. To learn more, please [click here](#).
- **Deaf Ministry**  
Ministry for the deaf provides occasional retreat opportunities and sign-language interpretation at select Catholic events, helping ensure full inclusion. To learn more, please [click here](#).
- **Disability Inclusion**  
The mission of Disability Inclusion is to work collaboratively with parishes and schools to promote the inclusion and meaningful participation of people with disabilities in the life of our Catholic faith community. To learn more, please [click here](#).
- **Grief Ministry**  
Grief Ministry provides resources and support to pastoral leaders serving those who are terminally ill or suffering loss due to death or divorce. To learn more, [click here](#).
- **Hospital and Healthcare Ministry**  
Hospital and Healthcare Ministry provides grants for deaneries to respond to the needs of the hospitals in its region. This model encourages parishes from each region to join together to serve patients and families in need of support and healing. In addition, the ministry operates the First Hill Hospital Ministry, providing chaplains and sacramental care for the sick and dying. To learn more, please [click here](#).



- **Immigrant and Refugee Ministry**

Grounded in Catholic teaching, Immigrant and Refugee Ministry fulfills the commitment of the U.S. Catholic bishops to protect the life and dignity of the human person. This ministry serves and advocates for immigrants, refugees, asylees, migrants, unaccompanied children, and victims of human trafficking. To learn more, please [click here](#).

- **Mental Health Ministry**

The Mental Health Ministry strives to provide parishes and schools with resources and trainings that will aid them in creating welcoming communities of compassion, support and education to reduce the stigma of mental illness and prevent suicide. To learn more, please [click here](#).

- **Seafarers Ministry**

This ministry aims to meet the spiritual and practical needs of seafarers who arrive in Puget Sound ports. The ministry provides ship visits, roundtrip transportation to shopping/tourist destinations, communication tools for seafarers to connect with loved ones around the world, and a "home from the sea" in the ecumenical [Seattle Seafarers Center](#). To learn more, please [click here](#).

Here are Pastoral Care and Outreach partners who can help a parish family grow in missionary discipleship:

- **Catholic Community Services (CCS)**

Rooted in the Gospel message of love and hope, CCS recognizes the sacredness and dignity of every human person. Their focus is on those individuals, children, families, and communities struggling with poverty and the effects of intolerance and racism. CCS offers a multitude of service projects for volunteers and engagement opportunities for parishes. Please connect with your local parish network builder. To learn more, please [click here](#).

- **St. Vincent de Paul (SVdP)**

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul harnesses the power of community and partnerships to feed, clothe, house, and heal individuals and families in our community who have nowhere else to turn for help. Our volunteer members - known as Vincentians - are women and men who are compelled by our Catholic faith to serve those who are needy and suffering. To learn more, please [click here](#).

- **Intercommunity Peace and Justice Center (IPJC)**

Grounded in Catholic Social Teaching, IPJC builds community to act for systemic change in our Church and world. IPJC is sponsored by 24 religious communities and collaborates with Catholic, ecumenical, interfaith and other organizations in carrying out this mission. To learn more, please [click here](#).

- **Catholic Mobilizing Network (CMN)**

CMN is a national organization that mobilizes Catholics and all people of goodwill to value life over death, to end the use of the death penalty, to transform the U.S. criminal legal system from punitive to restorative, and to build capacity in U.S. society to engage in restorative practices. To learn more, please [click here](#).

- **Catholic Prison Ministries Coalition (CPMC)**  
 CPMC promotes ministry to all people affected by incarceration and detention. The team recruits, trains, supports and empowers those called to this ministry creating a more just and merciful criminal justice system that upholds the dignity of every human person and advances restorative justice. To learn more, please [click here](#).
- **Underground Ministries: One Parish One Prisoner (OPOP)**  
 OPOP seeks to equip parishes to build supportive pre-release relationships with one person returning to their community from prison, thus creating a relationship of mutual transformation. To learn more, please [click here](#).
- **Community Partnership for Transition Solutions (CPTS)**  
 CPTS comprises a group of over 40 partners - including the Archdiocese of Seattle - that work with justice-involved individuals released from prison or jail who are transitioning to their families and community. CPTS has regional entities available beyond King County. To learn more, please [click here](#).
- **Justice for Immigrants (JFI)**  
 Creating a world where immigrants, refugees, and other people on the move are treated with dignity, respect, and welcome. To learn more, please [click here](#).
- **Missionary Discipleship Institute (MDI)**  
 MDI is a year-long, three-part faith and outreach experience unfolding in some Catholic schools. It provides a framework for students to *encounter* God in their lives and the lives of their neighbors on the margins and gain awareness of injustices that they face; reflect on how the Church is responding in love and the *disturbance* this creates in our own sense of discipleship; and discern, develop, and carry out a *response* rooted in God's mission. To learn more, please [click here](#).
- **National Association of Catholic Chaplains (NACC)**  
 The NACC advocates for the profession of spiritual care and educates, certifies, and supports chaplains, clinical pastoral educators and all members who continue the healing ministry of Jesus. To learn more, please [click here](#).
- **The Association of Catholic Mental Health Ministers (CMHM)**  
 CMHM supports parishes in establishing a Catholic mental health ministry, which provides vital spiritual accompaniment and pastoral care for people experiencing mental health challenges and mental illness, as well as those who care for them. It offers a healing presence in the lives of people with mental illness and helps overcome the stigma and discrimination that people living with a mental illness encounter in the Church and in society. To learn more, [click here](#).
- **National Catholic Partnership on Disability (NCPD)**  
 This group promotes meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in Church and society. To learn more, please [click here](#).

- **Olive Crest Host Family Program**

Olive Crest collaborates with parishes, volunteers and childcare professionals to support children and parents in crisis. This collaboration gives volunteers an opportunity to have a powerful impact in the lives of others while practicing biblical hospitality and extending the love of Christ to people in need – all from their own home! To learn more, please [click here](#).

- **Operation Nightwatch**

Operation Nightwatch reduces the impact of poverty and homelessness, in keeping with Jesus' teaching to love our neighbors. To learn more, please [click here](#).

- **MercyWatch**

We serve and are present to those living on the streets mired in addiction, mental health crisis and poverty, and to work with them for a better future. We do this by providing basic street medical care, emotional and spiritual support, and needed supplies (socks, blankets, sleeping bags, etc.) to homeless men, women and children surviving in the area. To learn more, please [click here](#).

### **Consider engagement with global missions**

The [Missions](#) ministry promotes the understanding of Catholic Social Teaching and how to live out our faith with people on the margins in our own communities and around the world. The Missions team provides support and resources to parishes so their parishioners can engage in global solidarity. Specifically, the team helps educate parishes about the needs of people around the world by creating opportunities for global relationships and action.

Support for parishes is available through Mission Cooperative Plan speakers, Rice Bowl promoters, CRS Chapters and Club support, JustFaith program funding and mission trips. Local poverty-alleviation efforts are supported by the Missions team through the Catholic Campaign for Human Development grants.

Here are a few Missions partners who can help parish families grow in global solidarity and provide opportunities for transformative global encounters:

- **Catholic Relief Services (CRS)**

CRS Chapters and Clubs are communities of people transforming the world. As part of a movement across the United States, thousands are taking meaningful action through CRS campaigns to eradicate global poverty and injustice. Adults and university and high school students take campaign work further by engaging their communities in advocacy. There are active chapters in Bellingham, Duvall, Seattle, Tacoma, and Lacey. Fill out an interest form [here](#) to connect. To learn more, please [click here](#).

- **Maryknoll Society**  
Maryknoll is a Catholic Society of priests and brothers based in the United States. They are dedicated to missionary work overseas in more than 20 countries. They animate Catholics in the United States to follow their own baptismal call to share God's compassion and love with the poor, the sick, and all those in need. To learn more, please [click here](#).
- **JustFaith Ministries**  
JustFaith Ministries creates transformative programs that inspire action to address the root causes of injustice while serving with love. JustFaith was created to invite and prepare people of faith for the life-changing and world-changing call of the Gospel to help heal the world and, in so doing, experience a deeper faith, a more fulfilling life, and a community of care and vitality. To learn more, please [click here](#).
- **Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos (NPH)**  
NPH cares for orphaned and abandoned children throughout Latin America and the Caribbean via homes, schools, medical care and outreach programs. For more than 70 years, NPH has empowered vulnerable children to break free from the cycle of poverty – building better futures for themselves and their community. Mission trips for parish groups available. To learn more, please [click here](#).
- **Education Across Borders (EAB)**  
EAB is transforming communities and forming new leaders, in Latin America and the U.S. through health, education and service-learning. To learn more, please [click here](#).

Contact the [Missions Ministry](#) for information on global engagement with international missions. To learn more, please [click here](#).

## Conclusion

*In our day, Jesus' command to 'go and make disciples' echoes in the changing scenarios and ever new challenges in the Church's mission of evangelization, and all of us are called to take part in this new missionary going forth. Each Christian and every community must discern the path that the Lord points out, but all of us are asked to obey his call to go forth from our own comfort zone in order to reach all the peripheries in need of the light of the Gospel."*

~ Joy of the Gospel, 20

To accomplish this vision, the Catholic Church in Western Washington can:

- Deploy *missionary creativity* in this grand pastoral effort. Pope Francis notes in the *Joy of the Gospel* that **"the parish is not an outdated institution; precisely because it possesses great flexibility and can assume quite different contours depending on the openness of the pastor and community."** (EG 28) A great opportunity exists with Partners in the Gospel to harness new resources and repurpose existing resources to respond to the needs of the marginalized in new and exciting ways.

- Embrace the principle of “*Be not afraid,*” often championed by Pope Saint John Paul II. Often, we refrain from going to the peripheries out of fear – fear of the unknown, fear of scarcity, fear of the other, etc. This is human. We seek to gently move beyond our comfort zone to care for God’s beloved on the margins and experience the associated mutual transformation.
- Lead with the beautiful, which means actively search for the Holy Spirit’s presence and movement rather than focusing on difficulties, disagreements, or divisions. Rather than *allowing differences to divide us*, we, seek to live in the tension and unite with a common identity in Christ.
- Take a disciplined approach to the practice of faith. Choose to take the long view, recognizing we’re on a spiritual marathon, not a sprint. Spiritual exercising and grounding in the Eucharist are key.
- Remain anchored in gratitude while collaborating with those already engaged in mission and evangelization. Remain committed to the Holy Spirit as our guide.

Responding to the call to missionary discipleship is at the heart of the Partners in the Gospel effort. All of us are invited to a deeper encounter with Jesus Christ; an encounter that can shape and form us after his example; an encounter that sends us out to be his healing and life-giving presence in the world, especially to those who are on the margins or hurting in any way. May the Lord, who has begun this good work in us, bring it to completion!

Through the Partners in the Gospel work, parishes will have the opportunity to offer robust, outreach ministries and individual parishioners will have the opportunity to push past their comfort zone to encounter and accompany Christ on various margins.

This re-envisioning encourages leaders and parishioners to reflect on creative ways to live as missionary disciples today. Parishes might opt to collectively sponsor a refugee via the welcome circle program or begin a mutually transformative relationship with a former prison resident via the One Parish One Prisoner model. Parishioners might engage in intentional climate care efforts aimed at conservation and sustainability in the parish’s daily functioning. A new parish may choose to repurpose an unused or underused building to serve as a foodbank, a shelter, a day care center for those who are poor, or other kinds of outreach ministries. Whatever the service, the hope is that all staff and parishioners are engaged in some way via direct service, time and talent, monetary support, in-kind donations, prayer, etc.

As parishes take up this missionary activity – the people in the pews will themselves become more aligned with the heart of God. The ultimate desired outcome is the elimination of all margins in a specific region and the emergence of transformed Christians evangelized by the poor. From there, people can “make disciples” by inviting others to join work on the margins and experience a similar conversion.

Only by understanding the full scope of evangelization as an effort geared toward “*Todos, todos, todos*” or “*Everyone, everyone, everyone,*” do we live out the fullness of the mission of the Church. We are called to share Christ’s love with others, but especially so on the margins.

## Outreach Prayer

May we visit Christ in prisons and hospitals.

May we welcome Him when he is a stranger in our land.

May we offer food, drink, clothing,  
and spiritual care when He is impoverished.

May we respect and care for the world God has created.

And may we comfort Christ whenever

He is suffering and in need.

Amen.

*"I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me."*

~ Matthew 25:35-36