



From Consumer Catholics to Evangelising Disciples: Lessons from the New Movements

Bernadette Toohey MGL

Missionaries of God's Love Sisters











From Consumer Catholics to Evangelising Disciples: Lessons from the New Movements

- 1. Some Definitions
- 2. Who are the New Movements?
- 3. The Evangelisation Process as an Evaluation and Planning Tool for Parish Evangelisation

What is a Consumer Catholic?



What is an Evangelising Disciple?



Who are the New Movements?



Who are the New Movements?

- “In modern times such lay groups have received a special stimulus, resulting in the birth and spread of a multiplicity of group forms: associations, groups, communities and movements. We can speak of a new era of group endeavours of the lay faithful.”

Pope John Paul II, *Christifideles laici*, 1988 n. 29

Who are the New Movements?

- Movements **formed before Vatican II** (eg: Society of St Vincent de Paul, Legion of Mary, L'Arche, Marriage Encounter, Opus Dei, Equipes Notre Dame)
- Movements emerging **after Vatican II** (mostly within the Catholic Charismatic Renewal – eg: Emmanuel Community, Word of God, Disciples of Jesus Covenant Community)

Who are the New Movements?

- Communities **founded by priests** (eg: Opus Dei, Legion of Christ)
- Communities **founded by lay people** (eg: Focolare Movement, Neocatechumenal Way)
- Movements that have taken the form of **religious life** (eg: Beatitudes Community)

Characteristics of the New Movements

- Apostolic activity
- Fidelity to the Church
- Involvement of the laity
- A 'surprise' of the Holy Spirit

*Julian Porteous, A New Wine & Fresh Skins:
Ecclesial Movements in the Church*

The Gift of the New Movements

- Revitalising the Church's mission
- Responding to the ecclesiology of Vatican II – the universal call to holiness and participation of all the baptised
- Strong counterforce to individualism in society
- A “new Pentecost” for the Church
 - JPII Redemptoris Missio (1990)
- Outworking of the Holy Spirit through charism
- Witness to a new vitality in Christian life

The 'New' Evangelisation

- Pope John Paul II called for an evangelisation that was new in ardour, methods, means of expression (1983)
- Christocentric
- Responsibility of the people of God
- Involves a re-evangelisation of people
- Not just about the kerygma but a comprehensive process of evangelisation
- Calls for a 'missionary spirituality' within the Church

Ecclesial Communities and the New Evangelisation

- At the forefront of the New Evangelisation
- God's antidote to secularisation
- A chance for a church and the world
- Contemporary responses to the call of the Gospel
- Fruit of the Holy Spirit's presence and activity in the Church
- A new wine!

Blessings of the New Movements for Parish Life

- Renewing faith and Christian living of Catholics
- Engagement with young people
- Liturgical expression/prayer
- Individual members are a source of inspiration for parish leaders and clergy
- Stimulus to parish life!

Criticisms of the New Movements

- Divisive within the Church – draws people away from parish, limits their involvement in parish life
- Superior relationship with wider Church – parishioners feel ‘second rate’
- Separation from the Church/parish (eg: charismatic spirituality)
- Controlling lay leaders
- ‘Sect’-type behaviour

Working with the New Movements

- Work in partnership – seek an exchange of gifts
- Accept that some parishioners may seek to join the new movements – and many will not
- Value the witness of strongly dedicated people
- “The witness of the movements is a challenge and inspiration to many in the Church. They reveal what is truly possible: how a believer can live more fully their life in the Church.” –

Julian Porteous

My Experience



The Church's Task of Evangelisation

- “Evangelising is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelise.”

Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 1975, n. 14

- The Church's mission of evangelisation “cannot be left to a group of ‘specialists’ but must involve the responsibility of all the members of the People of God.”

Pope John Paul II, *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 2001, n.40

The Church's Task of Evangelisation

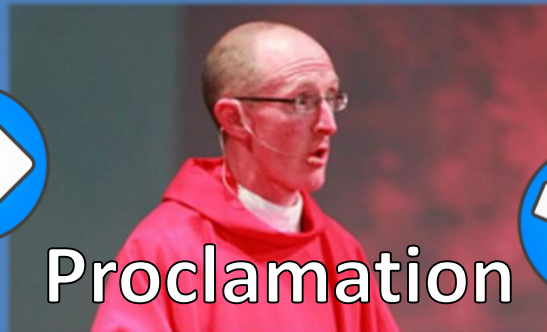
- “Many of the baptised live as if Christ did not exist: the gestures and signs of faith are repeated, especially as devotional practices, but they fail to correspond to a real acceptance of the content of the faith and fidelity to the person of Jesus.”

Pope John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Europa*, 2003, n.47

The Process of Evangelisation as an Evaluation and Planning Tool for Parish Evangelisation



Witness



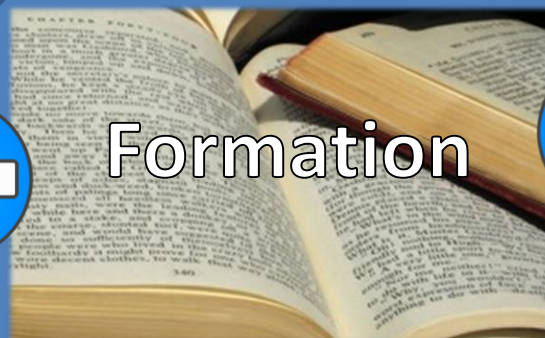
Proclamation



Conversion



Incorporation
into
Community



Formation



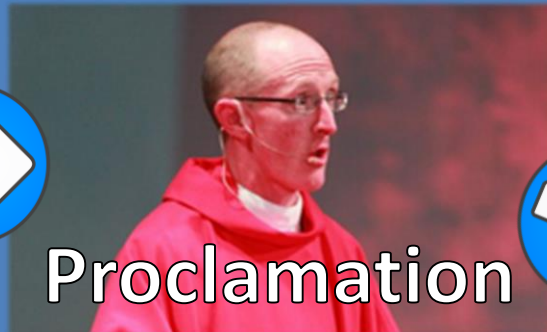
Evangelisation

The Process of Evangelisation

Adapted from
Evangelii Nuntiandi n.22-24,
Redemptoris Missio n. 41-62



Witness



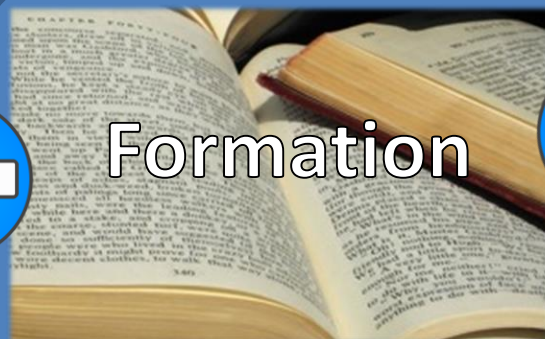
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Witness

- Showing God's love
- Showing concern for people
- Building relationships
- Acts of kindness and charity
- Going above and beyond
- Living in a way that attracts people!



Witness

“People today put more trust in witnesses than teachers...in life and action that theories...”

– John Paul II



Witness in a Parish Context

- How do we welcome newcomers?
- How do we engage with the wider community?
- Would someone coming for the first time feel comfortable here?
- Do we have a hospitality ministry?
- How would an outsider see us?





Witness



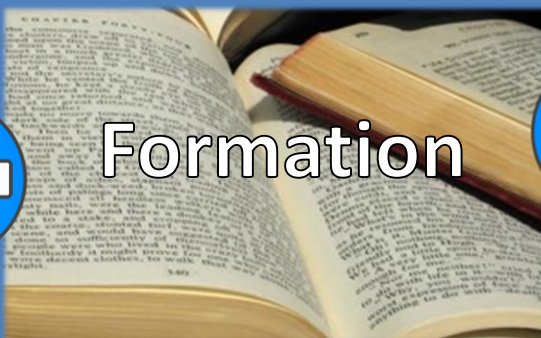
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Proclamation of the Gospel

“There is no true evangelisation if the name, the teaching, the life, the promises, the kingdom and the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God are not proclaimed”

– Pope Paul VI,
Evangelii Nuntiandi, 1975, n.22



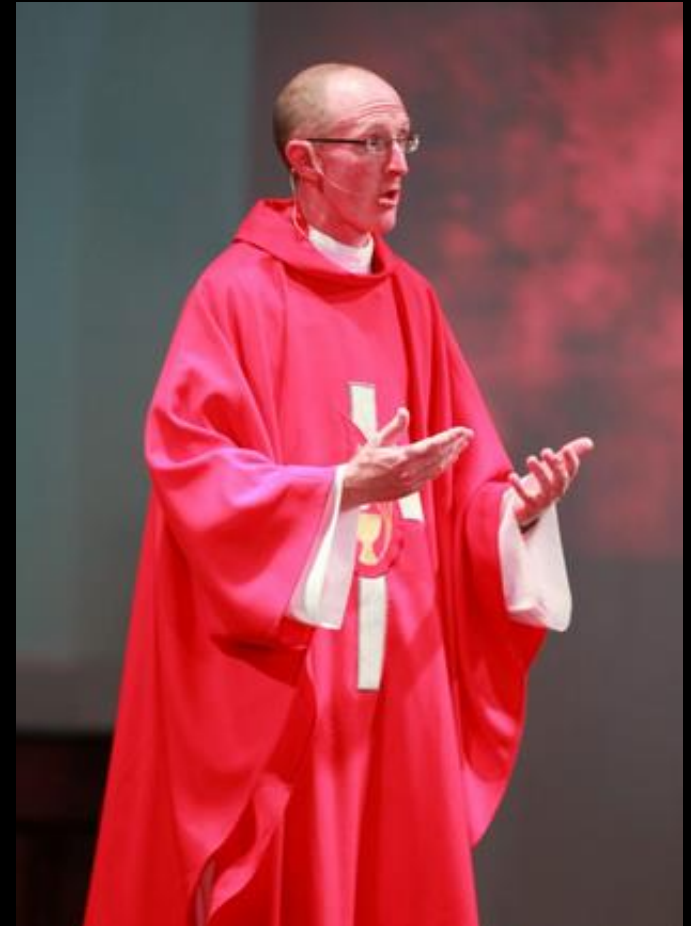
Proclamation of the Gospel

- We proclaim through words and actions
- Preach the Gospel always and, when necessary, use words – Francis of Assisi
- Proclamation tells the story of God, what he has done in the world & lives of Christians



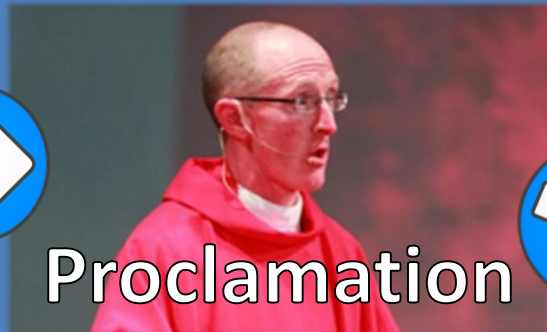
Proclamation in a Parish Context

- The homily!
- Retreat days
- Individual testimony
- Drama/creative expression
- Evangelisation programs (eg: RCIA, Alpha)
- Where do people have the opportunity to hear the kerygma proclaimed?





Witness



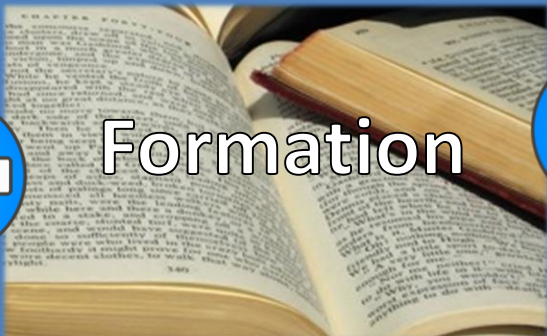
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Conversion

- Experiences of conversion
- Can be dramatic, can be gradual
- The work of the Holy Spirit
- Call to focus more on God and others and less on ourselves (metanoia – change of heart)



Conversion

- This is the aim of all proclamation and builds upon the witness of life that we offer
- What happens in a conversion – work of the Holy Spirit – scriptures come alive, Church teaching makes more sense, morality falls into place etc etc



Conversion in a Parish Context

- How often do we call people to a change of heart and a deeper love of Jesus?
- Are there opportunities where people feel deeply moved by the knowledge and experience of God's love and mercy?



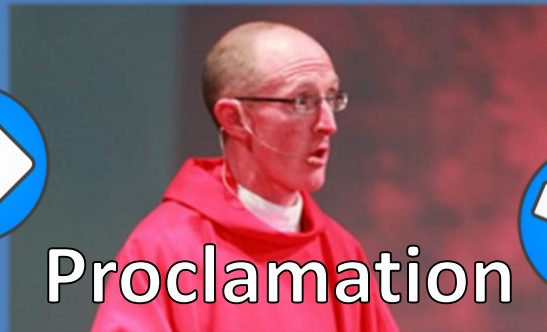
“Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction.”

Deus Caritas Est,
Pope Benedict XVI





Witness



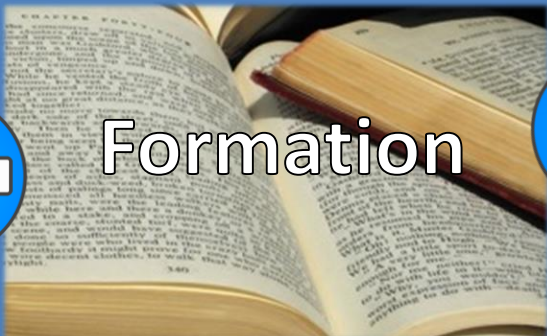
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Incorporation into the Community

- Essential part of remaining on the Christian journey
- A desire of those who have encountered Jesus
- Where faith grows and is nourished!
- Where we encounter Jesus again and again



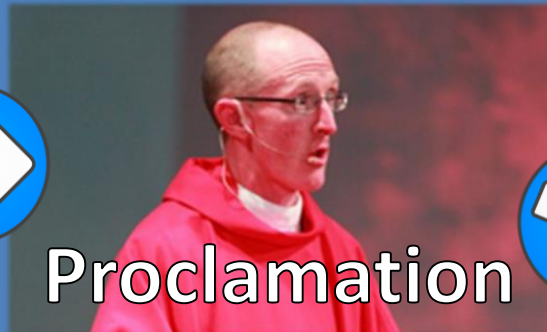
Parish as a Community

- What opportunities do people have to develop relationships with our parish community?
- Is there an openness to new friendships?





Witness



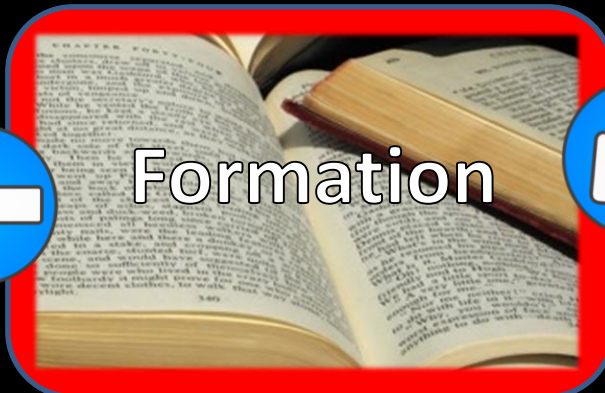
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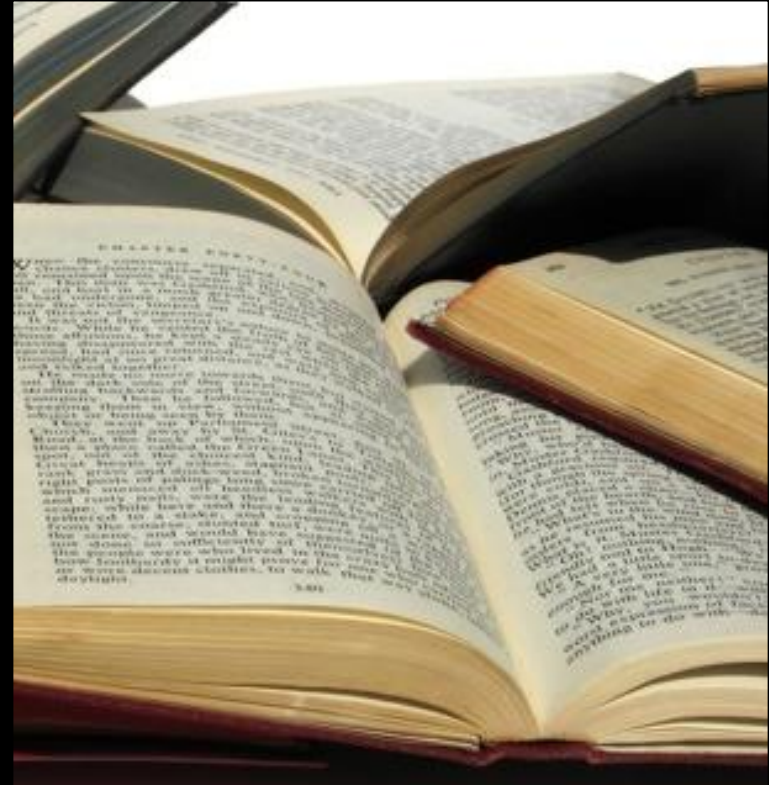
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- Becoming more informed about the Church's teachings
- Growing in the spiritual life
- Being open to the wisdom of the Church
- Learning and being formed as a follower of Jesus



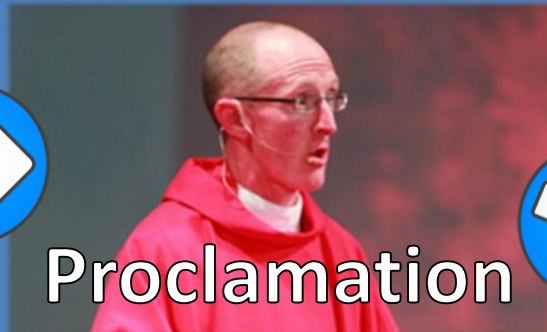
Formation in a Parish Context

- Eg: guest speakers, Lenten programs, bible studies, homilies
- What opportunities do people have to go deeper in their faith?
- How are we forming people spiritually, intellectually, emotionally for the Christian journey?
- Where are the gaps?





Witness



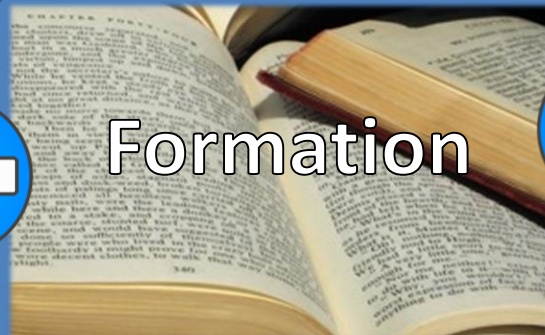
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Evangelisation

- The new Christian (or newly converted Christian) seeks to draw others to the Lord.
- The evangelisation process is not complete until the person evangelises someone else.



Evangelisation

- “We cannot be content when we consider the millions of our brothers and sisters...who live in ignorance of the love of God.”

– John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*,
1990, n. 86



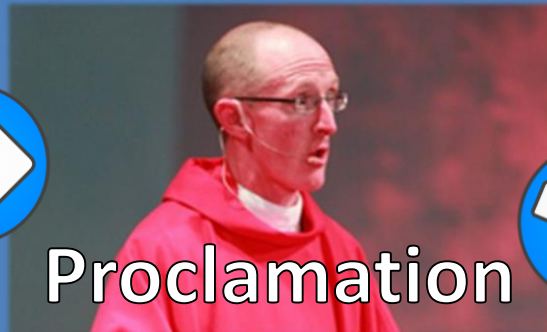
Evangelisation in a Parish Context

- Do we train and equip people for evangelisation?
- How often do we invite new people into our midst?
- How ready are we to receive them?
- What 'entry points' into our Community do we have?
- Are we bold about sharing the gift of our parish with others?





Witness



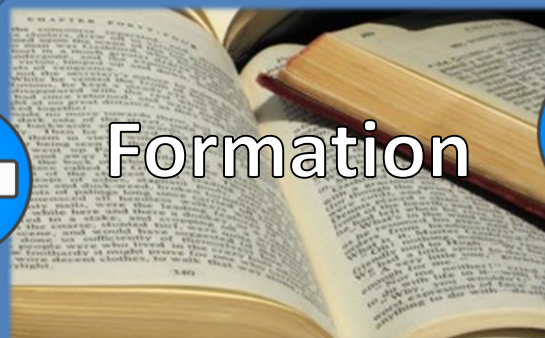
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The Process of Evangelisation: Some Considerations

- An an *evaluation* tool:
What do we do well?
Where are the gaps?
- As a *planning* tool:
How can we address the
gaps?
- For each initiative of our
parish: What part of the
process of evangelisation
are we seeking to address?



Summary:

- Let's make disciples of all consumer Catholics!
- Work together with new movements in your parish – use their passion, skills, charism and the dynamism they bring
- Trust that the parish is crucial as a centre of evangelisation
- Use the process of evangelisation for evaluation and planning!



Recommended Resources:

- Fr James Mallon, *Divine Renovation*
“From maintenance to mission”
- Michael White and Tom Corcoran, *Rebuilt*
“Awakening the Faithful, Reaching the Lost, Making Church Matter”
- Sherry Weddell, *Forming Intentional Disciples*
“The Path to Knowing and Following Jesus”
- *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, Pope Paul VI, 1975
- *Redemptoris Missio*, Pope John Paul II, 1990
- *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis, 2013
- Julian Porteous, *A New Wine & Fresh Skins: Ecclesial Movements in the Church*