

When Jesus commissioned his followers to “Go, make disciples of all nations,” he included us at St. Matthew the Evangelist parish to participate in his loving and merciful work for the salvation of souls. Jesus directs us to evangelize. Accordingly, Archbishop Lucas set forth a vision for all parishes within the archdiocese to respond to Jesus’ call by becoming missional parishes. Of course, Archbishop McGovern continues this apostolic mission to evangelize as set forth by Archbishop Lucas, who envisioned that all people within the archdiocese’s borders would have the opportunity to encounter Jesus and develop a more profound personal relationship with him. To accomplish this vision, he challenged each parish in the archdiocese to establish a clear path of evangelization that inspires, equips, and missionizes disciples to go forth and make more disciples. Consequently, last summer, St. Matthew established a team to develop a path for most faithfully and fruitfully evangelizing within our parish's borders.

Admittedly, the word evangelize, which is “the proclamation of Christ and his Gospel by word and the testimony of life, in fulfillment of Christ’s command,” as the *Catechism* teaches, might make us uncomfortable. We might imagine that Jesus is asking us to go knocking door-to-door or engaging strangers on our streets, talking to them about God. And, to some of us, he is. However, not all of us are called to that role in evangelization; instead, we’re called to recognize and respond to our uniquely inspired charisms. St. Paul describes our charisms as being given to us, “To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit” in order to build up the Kingdom of God through evangelization.



If Jesus commissions us to evangelize, why don’t we embrace this mission? Among the top reasons Catholics frequently give for discomfort in evangelizing are:

- We’re not taught how to recognize our unique role in evangelization.
- Lack of a personal relationship with God through relational prayer.
- Fear of not knowing enough or the fear of being wrong.
- Fear of failure, perhaps based on previous attempts to evangelize loved ones.

Our St. Matthew’s evangelization team has worked hard for over a year to develop a vision and a path to address and overcome these challenges to evangelization. In the paragraphs below, Deacon Mark White will highlight St. Matthew’s path to evangelization, a path that will lead us to become a more faithful and fruitful missionary parish. Hopefully, you’ll see the great opportunities coming up for growing in your own faith journey as well as being better equipped to personally respond to Jesus’ call to go and make disciples. Let’s go on mission with Jesus and the Holy Spirit!

Fr. Leo

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant searching for fine pearls. When he finds a pearl of great price, he goes and sells all that he has and buys it. Matthew 13:45-46

Father Leo addressed how the call to evangelize might be intimidating or evoke images of someone yelling on a street corner at unsuspecting passersby. However, realistically, a simple understanding of evangelization is about “making God known” to those whom God places in our sphere of influence, whether in the home, workplace, marketplace, or elsewhere. We make God known by witnessing to what he has personally and intimately done in our everyday lives. We might liken “making God known” to being the



parent who sees something beautiful, perhaps a colorful cardinal or the first heavy snowfall of the year. That parent is eager to grasp their little ones by the elbow and bring them to the window, and excitedly share the beauty with these loved ones. Such should be our relationship with the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. We can't wait to share the beautiful relationship that we've developed with the Holy Trinity. Jesus describes this personal, intimate encounter as the “pearl of great price” and that once one finds it, they'll “sell all that he has” to be in it. Jesus wants us all to have this deep relationship with him. If we're honest, perhaps we

question whether we have this type of relationship with Jesus. If so, we wouldn't be alone. Surveys reflect that only about 10% of Catholics claim to have a personal relationship with Jesus. Accordingly, the St. Matthew's path to becoming missionary disciples begins with inspiring and equipping ourselves for a deeper encounter with Christ. We're excited to share some of the highlights of our discernment and look forward to sharing even more details with the parish in the upcoming weeks and months. We'll announce opportunities to learn more.

St. Matt's path to becoming a parish of missionary disciples has five phases. Each phase builds upon the previous one, while also allowing newcomers to join our parish's ongoing journey. As a parish, we'll walk through these phases over the next five years.

- Phases 1 to 3 – A New Evangelization for current Catholics.
 1. 2025 “The Reason for Our Hope, Emmanuel, God is With Us.”
 2. 2026 “Why THE Church?”
 3. 2027 “I Love Being Catholic! Can I Share My Story with You?”
- Phases 4 & 5 – Becoming a parish of missionary disciples.
 4. 2028 “The Invitation to All Within Our Parish's Borders.”
 5. 2029 “A Mature Parish of Faithful and Fruitful Missionary Disciples.”

What a blessing it is to be a Catholic and to recognize that God invites us into an intimate and personal relationship with him through his Church! Such understanding is truly the pearl of great price. Please watch for upcoming opportunities to learn more about St. Matthew the Evangelist parish's path to evangelizing and making missionary disciples. I look forward to journeying with you.

Peace, Deacon Mark
 MHWhite@ArchOmaha.org

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 When he finds a pearl of great price, he goes and sells all that he has and buys it.* Matthew 13:45-46