

# Proclaim'15

building missionary parishes



## COMPANION FOR THE JOURNEY

“With Christ joy is constantly born anew... I wish to encourage the Christian faithful to embark on a new chapter of evangelisation marked with this joy, while pointing out new paths for the Church’s journey in years to come.” (*Evangelii Gaudium* 1). These words of Pope Francis are addressed to us all. Through the Proclaim '15 initiative, we are invited to respond generously to the Holy Father’s request to make a new beginning in support of the building of missionary parishes. This ongoing missionary task takes us on an exciting, inspiring and, at times, challenging journey with the Lord. The Proclaim '15 resources provided have been produced as a **companion** to support you in the confident sharing of the joy of the Gospel, in your own way, at your own pace, according to the individual needs of your parish and community.

### CHRIST at the CENTRE

“...someone who listens and does nothing is like the man who built a house on soil, with no foundations; as soon as the river bore down on it, it collapsed; and what a ruin that house became!” Luke 6: 49  
These challenging words speak directly to those seeking to evangelise effectively. The Scriptures teach us again and again that Christ must be the source of all our endeavours if we are to successfully build local missionary communities and parishes. The parish missionary journey is always a movement for and with Christ – from him and to him.

## How to use this resource

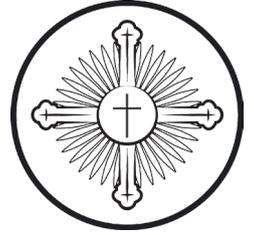
This resource was produced as a fruit of the **Proclaim '15 National Catholic Evangelisation Conference** in Birmingham on 11 July 2015. It captures key ideas, practical tips and learning taken from workshops that were delivered on the day to enable your local Catholic community to take new steps in service of parish mission. There are eleven packs in total, each offering insights and tips from a particular workshop. You are invited to explore the workshop topics, reflect how these will be beneficial to your parish and then consider the following:

- **Share this information with others in your parish - you are welcome to photocopy all the materials provided here**
- **Say the Proclaim '15 prayer together**
- **Choose one or two of the topics provided as a focus for your parish’s mission**
- **Read and discuss the *Learning from Pope Francis* text provided in each pack**
- **Decide some new steps that you will take locally in response to what you read.**



# PRAYER

## Your Constant Companion



### Food and Fuel for the Journey

Throughout Jesus's public ministry we observe that prayer was central to his life and mission. He frequently withdrew to pray. He taught his disciples how to pray, so that they would not only experience God's love and mercy, but would be fed spiritually for the great work of evangelisation that was being asked of them. Two thousand years on, it is the same for us today. We are also invited to recommit to the life of prayer as food and fuel for our journey with the Lord, and so become missionary disciples. This theme is repeated in all the Proclaim '15 resources.

### Start with Prayer

It is no coincidence that Cardinal Vincent Nichols (Westminster) made prioritising prayer a central theme of his keynote address at the Proclaim '15 National Catholic Evangelisation Conference, saying: "To understand our mission then we have to go to the heart of God, the very mystery of the Holy Trinity, the inner life of God. This is spoken of as the Divine *'communio'* – the sharing within the mystery of the persons of God of divine life, love, truth, goodness and beauty. Only from within that inner heart of God does our mission arise. Only from that inner heart of God does our mission find its shape, its purpose, its energy. We are to do something beautiful; something that is of God; something that is for God. So, our mission always starts in our prayer, flows from prayer, from our daily openness to the great mystery of the life of God. It cannot start anywhere else."

Proclaim '15 Conference, 11 July 2015

### Pray Before You Do

In the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) we read: "The Gospel according to St Luke emphasises the action of the Holy Spirit and the meaning of prayer in Christ's ministry. Jesus prays before the decisive moments of his mission: before his Father's witness to him during his Baptism and Transfiguration, and before his own fulfillment of the Father's plan of love by his Passion. He also prays before the decisive moments involving the mission of his apostles: at his election and call of the Twelve, before Peter's confession of him as 'the Christ of God,' and again that the faith of the chief of the Apostles may not fail when tempted. Jesus' prayer before the events of salvation that the Father has asked him to fulfill is a humble and trusting commitment of his human will to the loving will of the Father." (CCC 2600)

### Proclaim Prayer

**Please join Catholics all over England and Wales in making a humble and trusting commitment to the Lord by saying the Proclaim '15 prayer for the building of missionary parishes:**

**Loving Father,  
you so loved the world that you sent us  
your only Son, that we might believe in  
him and have eternal life.**

**May we encounter Jesus Christ anew this  
day and live the Good News with joy.**

**Through the power of your Holy Spirit,  
help us to "go out to the whole world and  
proclaim" our faith with confidence.**

**Give us the courage to witness to the Joy  
of the Gospel by our words and actions.**

**Help our parish to become more  
welcoming and missionary, so that you  
may be known and loved by all people.**

**We make this prayer through Our Lord  
Jesus Christ your Son, who lives and reigns  
with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for  
ever and ever, Amen.**

**Our Lady, Star of the New Evangelisation,  
Pray for us.**

**Blessed John Henry Newman, Pray for us.  
St Thérèse of Lisieux, Pray for us.**

**Be persevering in your prayers  
and be thankful as you stay  
awake and pray.**

Colossians 4:2

## KEYS TO BECOMING A MISSIONARY PARISH

**Key****CALLED AND CHOSEN**

Remember that God has called and chosen you to share the Good News of the Gospel. He is inviting you every day to be renewed through a personal encounter with his Son, Jesus Christ.

**Key****ALWAYS PRAY**

Prayer should underpin the start, middle and end points of your missionary efforts. Prayer will sustain you throughout your journey.

**Key****GOD IS PRESENT**

Your journey to becoming a missionary parish is not a search for Jesus; you are being called to walk alongside him. He is already here. Everywhere. All the time. He is your constant companion.

**Key****SHARE THE JOY OF THE GOSPEL**

The Gospel is the Word of the Lord. Be mindful of, and respect it, at all times. Read the Gospel, reflect upon it and be confident in sharing it joyfully with others.

**Key****INVITE OTHERS ON THE JOURNEY**

Be open to everyone and invite them to join you on the journey of faith in a welcoming, friendly and non-judgemental way. Create opportunities for people to engage in ways that are appropriate to them and their needs.

**Key****LOVE IN ACTION**

A loving action always bears fruit. God acts through you in every act of kindness great or small. Remember to live the message openly by being joyful when you help others.

**Key****SIMPLE ACTS DONE WELL**

St Thérèse of Lisieux reminds us there is great evangelising power in simplicity. Avoid over complicating things and focus instead on doing simple things in the best possible way.

**Key****COMMUNICATION**

Think about how the world is communicating today. If needed, enlist the help of those with "know how" to embrace and make the most of new media (e.g. website, Facebook, Twitter).

# FORMING A PARISH EVANGELISATION TEAM

## Learning from Pope Francis

“Of course, all of us are called to mature in our work as evangelisers. We want to have better training, a deepening love and a clearer witness to the Gospel. In this sense, we ought to let others be constantly evangelising us. But this does not mean that we should postpone the evangelising mission; rather, each of us should find ways to communicate Jesus wherever we are.

All of us are called to offer others an explicit witness to the saving love of the Lord, who despite our imperfections offers us his closeness, his word and his strength, and gives meaning to our lives. In your heart you know that it is not the same to live without him; what you have come to realise, what has helped you to live and given you hope, is what you also need to communicate to others. Our falling short of perfection should be no excuse; on the contrary, mission is a constant stimulus not to remain mired in mediocrity but to continue growing. The witness of faith that each Christian is called to offer leads us to say with Saint Paul: ‘Not that I have already obtained this, or am already perfect; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own’. (Philippians 3:12-13).”

Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 121



**Tip**

## GETTING STARTED

Take time to consider who should be involved in deciding the membership and purpose of the evangelisation team. A small group, led or nominated by the parish priest or the deacon, should meet to pray together before selecting the evangelisation team and deciding what their remit might be.



**Tip**

## STRENGTH IN DIVERSITY

Jesus chose diverse people – not only the usual suspects who are already busy. Recruit people from all walks of life whose disposition is positive, encouraging and whose prayer is sincere.



**Tip**

## MISSIONARY CONSCIENCE

Recognise the difference between enabling the parish to become mission-focused, and the temptation to form a small group of evangelisers. Be clear that you are a team who will become the “mission conscience” of the parish community, promoting and enabling everyone and everything to be more outward-facing and missionary in its intentions.



**Tip**

## A PERSONAL INVITATION

Invite people to the team with a specific and unique calling, highlighting the reason for your decision as a recognition of a person’s particular gifts. The invitation isn’t casual or to anyone who is “available”. Choose people for whom this would be their primary contribution to parish life, rather than one thing among many others.



**Tip**

## A PERSONAL ENCOUNTER

The primary qualification for participation in the work of evangelisation is a personal prayer life, which has led to an encounter and daily relationship with Jesus. This living relationship will be expressed differently in different people. The sharing of moments of personal encounter with Christ should be encouraged in the conversation and narrative of the team.

# FORMING A PARISH EVANGELISATION TEAM



## Tip

### HAVE NO SECRETS

Be consistent in your efforts to communicate the purpose of the team and its membership to the whole parish community, avoiding any secrecy or mystery. The team's very existence is part of a shift in parish culture and needs to be widely known, understood, appreciated and prayed for.



## Tip

### FORMATION MATTERS

Ensure that a period of carefully prepared formation is given to your Evangelisation Team. Spend time looking for appropriate resources to help inspire and ignite it. Bring in speakers who can motivate and excite. Ensure that the team learns to pray together, eat together, and reflects together upon sections of Pope Francis' Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*.



## Tip

### TELL YOUR STORY

Include in the period of formation some opportunities for team members to reflect upon their personal faith experiences and also some time for these experiences to be shared.



## Tip

### ONGOING DISCERNMENT

Discernment is not only the starting point but an ongoing feature of the life of the team. What are we doing? Why are we doing it? Are we the right people to be doing it? To this end, ensure the team maintains an openness to new ways of doing things, is in touch with people outside the parish and recognises that mistakes can be learnt from.



## Tip

### MERCY COMES FIRST

Resist negative or judgemental dispositions. Be quick to forgive fellow team members and those to whom you are trying to evangelise!

## Learning from Pope Francis

"The parish is not an outdated institution; precisely because it possesses great flexibility, it can assume quite different contours depending on the openness and missionary creativity of the pastor and the community. If the parish proves capable of self-renewal and constant adaptivity, it continues to be 'the Church living in the midst of the homes of her sons and daughters'. This presumes that it really is in contact with the homes and the lives of its people and does not become a useless structure, out of touch with people or a self-absorbed group made up of a chosen few. The parish is the presence of the Church in a given territory, an environment for hearing God's word, for growth in the Christian life, for dialogue, proclamation, charitable outreach, worship and celebration. In all its activities the parish encourages and trains its members to be evangelisers. It is a community of communities, a sanctuary where the thirsty come to drink in the midst of their journey and a centre of constant missionary outreach. We must admit, though, that the call to review and renew our parishes has not yet sufficed to bring them nearer to people, to make them environments of living communion and participation, and to make them completely mission-oriented."

Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 28