Engaging Disciples

Everything we hear and speak about tonight is not a final product but the beginning of a dialogue.

-Sources-Fr. James Mallon-Divine Renovation, Sherry Weddell-Intentional disciples, John Roberto-Innovation Labs, Bob McCarty-Going, Going Gone. Renew International

I-Summary of my story

2 pertinent points-

After several years of not practicing my faith I discovered the importance of my relationship with Christ through a personal and profound encounter with Christ.

I had a foundation on which to build that relationship because of my parents nurturing my faith and providing me with the tools necessary respond to that encounter. This is something that many people for a variety of reasons do not have today.

II Summary of past conferences that have been to inspiration for this discussion

The catholic culture is no longer prevalent in our households and communities, thus the old paradigm/progression of learning about faith - behave>believe>belong no longer exists. It is now belong>believe>behave.

The “Conveyor Belt” of passing on the faith from one generation to the next (family, sacraments and education) is broken.

There is a increasing number of “Nones”, those who have disaffiliated themselves from the church or were never affiliated with the church to begin with.

Inherited faith is no longer the rule: Raised catholic? 30% still practice (attend church 1/mth or more, 38% identify as Catholic but seldom go to church, 32% no longer consider themselves catholic. This increases for the younger generations.

There are differences in importance of religion in the daily lives of people-based on generation, upbringing, etc

Common dynamics for leaving/not being involved:

Rarely single event

Religion 1 of many avenues to create meaning

Relief once decision is made -it is a hard decision

Feel forced into religion

I can be ethical w/o being religious

Want proof of God.

There is hope:

A personal relationship with God and with others is foundational. An encounter with Christ. Stirring people to conversion

-**the dynamics of conversion:** The Good News is preached. People make a decision to follow Jesus. They seek to get to know Him better and learn more of his ways. They build a strong communion (with God and one another) and get involved in mission.

It is about me and Jesus as much as it is about we and Jesus.

This is a process. We are journeying together

III Who we are-disciples of Jesus Christ,

Types of discipleship-belongers, disciple, intentional disciples, missionary disciples.

Belongers-a person who is passive about their faith. Faith doesn’t have implications in their daily lives. Practicing faith is about going through the proper motions. No significant personal relationship with Christ. (Many catholics do not believe in a personal God. I.E. the birth of Jesus, God becoming man is a nice story, not really God dwelling among us.

Disciple- Person with a hunger for Jesus-to worship him, know more about him, know him

Intentional Disciple: Sherry Weddell notes, “Simon Peter’s ‘drop the net’ decision is what we mean by intentional” Intentional is not a matter of following the rules or being a cultural Catholic, of simply belonging. It means making a conscience decision to follow Christ knowing that it will change our lives. It means entrusting one’s life to Jesus Christ. Sacraments necessary but not magic- they are a grace

Missionary Disciple- Going out to tell the good news, proclaiming, Kerygma – reaching out of ourselves (as individuals and as a community) to others not just in forms of service but in faith

Many Catholics are not familiar with the term kerygma, and so they can be perplexed when they see or hear it.  Kerygma is a Greek term that basically means “preaching” and is used to describe the content of the apostolic message of Jesus. St. Paul reminds us in Romans 10:14 that preaching is essential for people to believe in Jesus and be saved.

When Paul referred to preaching the kerygma, he was referring to a very specific message, not just a general homily on any aspect of faith. Paul preached first and foremost the message of Jesus’ death and resurrection and their saving significance. Paul also preached on the response required of us in order to accept and live out this saving action of Jesus.

IV What we want to do

Become a parish of missionary disciples-

Move from Maintenance to Mission

How do we do it:

Discernment

Invitation

Listen to understand, not listen to respond.- personal journey with an openness to hear and respond. A combination of the persons own spiritual journey and the Great story of God’s Love

Need to tailor to the individual to foster the moment of conversion.

People are hungry for meaning and purpose, recognition, connection, justice and the Holy