

2023 Evangelization Supplement



Steve Dawson believes two-minute conversations with strangers about his Catholic faith can lead them closer to God. Here, the founder of St. Paul Street Evangelization talks about the difference Christ has made in his life with two women on a street corner in Bloomington in 2016. (File photo by John Shaughnessy)

Walking in faith, my purpose

By Anita Bardo

Sometimes evangelization is as simple as sharing your story. When did you first become aware of Jesus' presence in your life? Is there a



moment when that awareness deepened significantly leading to a stronger relationship with Christ? Here is an example:

My relationship with God had been pretty consistent, but I knew there was something missing.

Then in 2010, my oldest grandson was born. He was born with a few complications, but nothing we felt we could not handle. Through his first few months of life, he went through several surgeries.

Elijah is his name, and he was the joy of our lives. He had his own personality he shared with us individually. Elijah was on the mend and healing—so we thought.

Then, at 4 months old, we were given the news that none of us expected: Elijah was diagnosed with stage four neuroblastoma, a childhood cancer. This news broke my spirit and my heart and devastated my daughter.

While sitting in a moment of silence, I thought, "How could a newborn have stage four cancer?" I never asked why, I simply asked God for guidance and understanding. I reached out to my family, my spiritual director and close friends asking for prayer, more so for my daughter than for me.

The days became gloomy, frustrating and sad. All we could do was make Elijah comfortable, singing to him and staying fervent in prayer. On July 8, 2010, Elijah was called back home to God. He was perfect and peaceful, and we were grateful for those five months and four days of his life. He brought a change in our lives that will forever be remembered.

In reflecting on how things transpired, I asked God what this meant, and these answers continually came to mind: Your life is going to change, your faith will become stronger, and your outlook on life will be promising.

Weeks, months and years passed, and my life did begin to change. My spiritual maturity increased, and I began to understand how my life would begin to shift. I thought at this moment, "What is my purpose?" At that very moment, I prayed for direction. I looked at Scripture to give me a better understanding. I reflected on Isaiah 30:21: "And your ears shall hear a word behind you: This is the way; walk in it, when you would turn to the right or the left."

Last August, I was laid off from a job of 22 years. Then on Nov. 3 last year, I was offered a job I was not looking for but prayed for, working in evangelization ministry for the archdiocese. Love of my neighbor was present. The invitation of God to take a leap of faith was present. I'm forever grateful for my true purpose in life—ministering to the local Church—and the satisfaction of being OK with God's plan.

Our stories that we share open doors to reach others in ways that we may not know. But it's what God is calling each of us to do: to be vulnerable, to be uncomfortable, to be authentic in who we are and in following Christ as a disciple.

Being hope for others, being a resource for many—that truly is my walk with Christ.

(Anita Bardo is coordinator of evangelization and discipleship for the archdiocesan Office of Evangelization.) †

'Keep it simple' when either starting or jump-starting parish evangelization teams

By Natalie Hoefler

We're all called to evangelize, the Church teaches.

While true, that "all call" can become "no call."

"There's an old saying that evangelization is everyone's job," says Ken Ogorek, archdiocesan director of catechesis. "But a lot of us have experienced the reality that, when something is everyone's job, it quickly becomes no one's job."



Ken Ogorek

Parish evangelization teams can turn that tide, he notes. His office created a guidebook for starting—or re-igniting—such teams (see sidebar on page 13 for link), and the Office of Evangelization is "more than happy" to work with parishes in building their evangelization efforts.

Archdiocesan coordinator of evangelization and discipleship Anita Bardo says those efforts are "steeped in prayer."

"The first step, when someone thinks they want to start an evangelization team, is discerning from the Holy Spirit," she advises.

"I think there can be a risk of, 'Well, we need this, so I should do it.' You have to know you're working

through the urging of the Holy Spirit."

After discerning a call to start a parish evangelization team, the next step is reaching out to your parish priest.

What evangelization is—and isn't

It starts with a simple conversation—no plans, just discussion, says Bardo.

"First, ask if there is already a team you can join," she says. "If not, then discuss what you discerned about to start a team.

"Once that conversation happens and the decision is made to pursue forming a team, that's when you announce the effort to the parish and consider what to look for in potential team members."

The announcement "doesn't have to be a huge splash," says Ogorek. "It's OK to start small with simple goals."

One goal is for team members to first learn what they will eventually help parishioners learn: what evangelization is and what it is not.

"Some people confuse evangelization with proselytizing," says Bardo. "They think evangelization is yelling on a street corner or forcing your views on someone else. That is *not* what evangelization is!"

Rather, she says, evangelization is simply "telling your faith story."

And what does that look like?

"Talk about what was your life like before you encountered Christ,"

says Ogorek. "How did you encounter him? How did you come to a deeper awareness of the role that Jesus plays in your life? And how is your life different now? Then ask if they'd like to hear more.

"People can argue about teachings. But nobody can argue with your witness, because it's just your story. That in some ways is liberating, I think. It should give us encouragement to share our witness."

Once team members understand what evangelization is and are comfortable sharing their own stories, it's time to develop a plan to engage parishioners and take the good news throughout your parish's boundaries.

While there is no one-size-fits-all plan, Bardo and Ogorek recommend starting small.

"A good place to consider starting is by forming discipleship groups," always under the care and support of the evangelization team, says Bardo.

These groups start with parishioners who have been prayerfully discerned and invited to be trained as leaders, who then invite a limited number of people to grow together in faith.

"We are called not only to know things about Jesus, but truly to know him, deeply and personally, and to become like him," notes the archdiocesan guidebook on evangelization teams. "Discipleship groups are centered around coming to know the person of Jesus, and when

See TEAMS, page 11



Parishes use a variety of initiatives to share the Gospel

By Sean Gallagher

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis has 126 parishes spread across 39 counties reaching from the plains of central Indiana through the hills in the southern part of the state to the banks of the Ohio River.

All of those faith communities are outposts of the Church spread across cities, small towns, rural farmland and rolling hills.

It is from these parishes that the faithful go forth to carry out the Church's mission to proclaim the Gospel to all creation.

Four archdiocesan faith communities are taking a multi-pronged approach to the task of evangelization, seeking to strengthen the faith of its members, inviting back Catholics who have walked away from the faith and reaching out to people with no church home.

Members of St. Joseph Parish in Shelbyville, St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Parish in Indianapolis, St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Fortville and St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Shelby County are all making efforts online, through mail and person-to-person to share the Gospel.

'The message is Jesus'

Little Flower Parish on Indianapolis' east side isn't located on a main thoroughfare, but is embedded in the middle of a neighborhood.

Members of the Indianapolis East Deanery faith community's Invite Commission are working to build up the connection between the parish and its non-Catholic neighbors.

Cindy Woods, who helps lead the commission, grew up in the parish decades ago at a time when the divide between Catholics and non-Catholics seemed set in stone.

"We want to be a part of the community and let people know that it's a good place for them to come to," said Woods. "We want them to know about Jesus. The message is Jesus."

This happens in many ways, Woods noted.

"We've been trying hard to put ourselves out there," she said. "For three or four years, we've had food drives and get the neighborhood involved. We're trying to [interact] with non-Catholics in the neighborhood to invite them to come to the parish and to its festival."

At Little Flower's annual summer festival, the commission has a table where they meet visitors, give them crucifix necklaces and ask if they have any prayer needs.

"Sometimes, people will just pray with us right there and talk with us about Jesus," Woods said.

Despite the challenge Catholics face in the increasing secularization of contemporary culture, Woods has confidence in the future.

"It's all going to work out," she said. "Everything's going to be OK because of Jesus. That is contagious. All the members of the commission have that feeling."

Helping the Holy Spirit touch hearts

For much of its 154-year history, St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Fortville was a faith community in a small town in the midst of farmland in northwestern Hancock County.

In recent years, however, new housing developments have been constructed on many of those fields, attracting many people to Fortville who work in nearby Indianapolis and the quickly growing towns of Hamilton County.

That has led Kevin Sears and other St. Thomas parishioners to let newcomers to the area know about St. Thomas and the Gospel it offers.

One way they do that is through distributing yard signs he hopes "can get people connected with us and that send



Kevin Brady, a member of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Fortville, mans a booth for the Indianapolis East Deanery faith community at an ecumenical event in the town in northwestern Hancock County. (Submitted photo)

the basic message of where they can encounter Jesus."

"To those that grew up in the faith but fell away, maybe the Holy Spirit can work through such a simple reminder," Sears said.



Kevin Sears

He and other parishioners have also put up booths at community events to meet and interact with people from beyond the parish.

At the booths, they offer books and pamphlets about the faith, rosaries and other items. For those who stop to speak with the parishioners or take some of the material they offer, Sears says the parishioners there were "making it easier for the Holy Spirit

to move in their hearts."

"A woman stopped by, asking about who to contact to have her baby baptized," he said. "If we weren't out there, no one would even be reminded about their faith if they had fallen away."

Thus far, St. Thomas has set up booths at events just in Fortville. But Sears takes seriously the mission of sharing the Gospel throughout the geographic boundaries of the parish, which stretch across the northern half of Hancock County.

He hopes to have booths from the parish at community events in all the area's small towns.

"That's a lot of rural ground to cover when we're tucked away in the northwest corner of the county," Sears said. "Not only do we have a small parish, but we are responsible for the souls within a large physical boundary."

Indeed, he recognizes a duty to people beyond northern Hancock County, namely young adults from St. Thomas who have gone away to college. So Sears and others have made an effort to send care packages to them.

"It's important to make sure we find ways to stay connected to our parishioners that have headed to college," Sears said. "They need to know that they will always have a parish family at St. Thomas. We want to encourage them to find a Catholic church and Newman Center, to get connected with fellow Catholics to help them stay grounded with Mass and the Eucharist."

'Organic evangelization'

St. Joseph Parish in Shelbyville and nearby St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Shelby County have taken similar approaches to evangelization as those used at Little Flower and St. Thomas.

In reaching out to inactive Catholics, though, they go out to meet them—at their homes.

Franciscan Sister Joan Miller, St. Vincent's parish life coordinator, and members of St. Joseph Parish go to homes of registered parishioners who haven't been to the faith communities for a time.



Sr. Joan Miller, O.S.F.

"I didn't know how I would be received," said Sister Joan. "But people have thanked me. ... I got to learn more about people, what's going on in their lives, especially if they've been sick."

"I'm glad to do that. It's good to see the people. They're not just names on paper."

"People are grateful for a personal encounter," said Father Michael Keucher, St. Joseph's pastor. "The personal encounter, face-to-face, person-to-person, is how Christ encountered people."

"When people realize that they are missed, they're loved, they're wanted and that their Church cares enough to come visit them—that makes a big difference. They do come back."

The two parishes also reached out to inactive Catholics by sending them postcards at the start of Lent. One featured an image of ashes, a Palm Sunday palm, an invitation to return to Christ and the parish, and the website address for both parishes.

Another offered a Lenten prayer, instructions on the *lectio divina* form of prayer, and a list of Scripture passages to mediate upon.

Father Keucher has also posted daily "Father Mike Minute" videos on St. Joseph's YouTube channel that explain aspects of the Church's beliefs and worship and offer spiritual reflections.

"The more people know, the more they will love," said Father Keucher.

Whether it's through mail, in person-to-person encounters or through online videos and social media, Father Keucher said the members of St. Joseph and St. Vincent are starting to get an "organic evangelization" mindset.

"Evangelization is becoming more a part of who are across both parishes," he said.

Father Keucher spoke of how teenage St. Joseph parishioners recently took prom dates to the parish's perpetual adoration chapel after the dance and prayed with them there.

"How beautiful is that?" Father Keucher said. "It's not an official evangelization program or campaign. It's just something that organically happened where people get the idea in their mind and heart that they're supposed to make disciples of all nations and they're going to start with their friends."

"Hopefully the parish-wide initiatives are not just fruitful in and of themselves, but will breed a change of culture and a change of heart inside each of our members, that they'll want to evangelize." †



This is the image on a postcard sent out before Ash Wednesday to inactive Catholics by St. Joseph Parish in Shelbyville and St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Shelby County as part of their multi-pronged evangelization efforts. (Submitted photo)



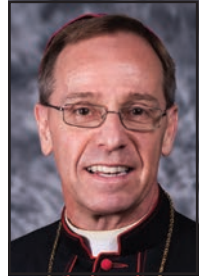
From local to nearby to national, evangelization resources abound

By Natalie Hoefler

Evangelization, sharing the good news of salvation through Christ. That's a task for others, right?

By our baptism, the answer is no, says Archbishop Charles C. Thompson.

"Every baptized Christian is called to holiness and mission," he told *The Criterion* in a recent interview. "And that mission is evangelization and catechesis. We're individually called by our baptism to evangelize."



Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

That call might seem overwhelming. How do individuals evangelize? How do parishes evangelize? What does evangelization look like?

The answer is actually quite simple, says Ken Ogorek, director of the archdiocesan Office of Catechesis. "Evangelization is telling your faith story," he says.

Keeping that one action in mind, there are many resources available to help individuals learn how to share their faith story most effectively in different cases. And there are many tools available to aid parishes in helping parishioners become story-telling evangelizers.

Below are five tools offered by the archdiocesan Office of Evangelization, Franciscan University of Steubenville and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) to help individuals and parish evangelization teams in their mission to share the good news of Christ's love, mercy and salvation. For more information on these tools, see the related sidebar.

Archdiocesan Office of Evangelization

First and foremost, the archdiocesan Office of Catechesis is ever-ready "to assist parishes in starting or re-starting parish evangelization teams," says Anita Bardo, archdiocesan coordinator of evangelization and discipleship.

"We can come out and train parish evangelization teams, we offer workshops, and we have tools available on our website.

"But those tools may not fit in every situation—evangelization is not 'one size fits all.' So we're just a phone call away to discuss each parish's situation, brainstorm ideas and recommend other resources that might help the parish."

Still, the resource page on the office's website is a good place to start, particularly the guidebook, "How to Start (or Jumpstart) Discipleship Groups at Your Parish," available in English and Spanish.

"The guidebook is to help existing or new evangelization teams by giving them a method that they

can start with," explains Ogorek, who helped create the straightforward, 28-page tool.

"Frankly, very few of our parishes have a core group of people who are being prayerfully strategic about reaching the unchurched and the alienated," says Ogorek. "They're doing things here and there that are evangelizing in nature. But we would like to see every parish to be a little bit more intentional and focused on strategic evangelization to make sure we're not missing opportunities to share the good news."

The office also offers an annual workshop to help individuals learn how to evangelize. The next opportunity is set for Aug. 5 at Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood.

St. Paul Street Evangelization is conducting the workshop—but don't let the name fool you, says Ogorek.

"The workshop isn't just about street evangelization. It's really just helping people gain confidence in telling their story and witnessing to particular types of people in a non-confrontational way.

"Participants will not only hear about good evangelization techniques, but will also have opportunities to practice them that day."

Ron Greulich has attended the workshop. The member of St. Simon the Apostle Parish in Indianapolis called it "a real eye-opening day."

"The main thing we learned was how to assess where a person might be—non-believer, non-Christian, non-Catholic or a Catholic who left the Church," he says. "They gave us examples of how to tailor our story in each of those cases. Then we got to practice what we learned—that took it to a whole new level!"

"I recommend [the workshop] so highly for anyone who has a desire to share Jesus. Just take the leap of faith—you'll learn so much."

Franciscan University of Steubenville

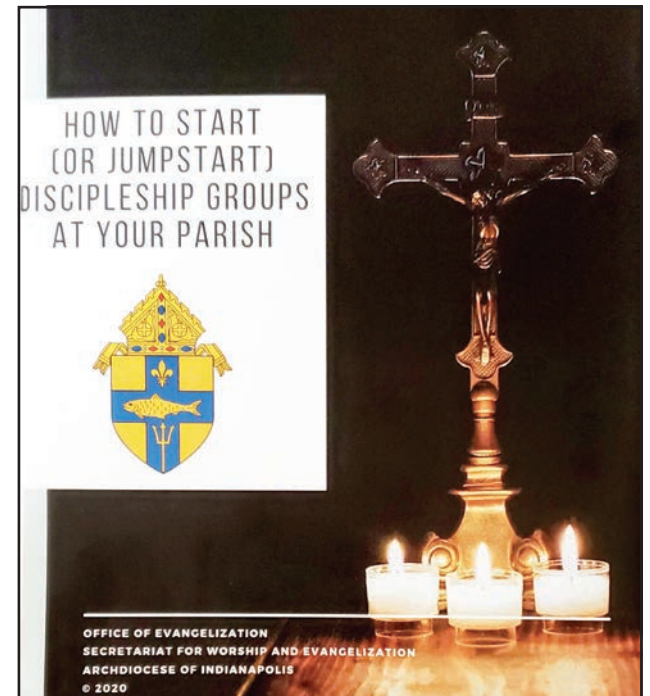
To help evangelization team members, catechists and interested individuals learn and grow, the Office of Catechesis recommends—and utilizes—the annual, four-day St. John Bosco Conference for Evangelization and Catechesis at Franciscan University of Steubenville in Ohio.

"It's like no other," says Tim Seman, pastoral associate of Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and St. Augustine parishes in Jeffersonville.

He describes the conference as "a place to learn from the best people in the field, to grow, to meet other people in the same field as you, doing the same work you do and discussing successes and ideas."



Tim Seman



The conference, held each year in June, offers a variety of workshops and talks.

"Although most people who go work for the Church, any Catholic is going to find something beneficial to them," says Seman. "It's very much like a retreat as well, with Mass, confession and adoration," he adds.

He also recommends another Franciscan University resource: Franciscan at Home, offered through the university's Catechetical Institute.

The archdiocese has partnered with the Institute to make this online tool available to parishes in central and southern Indiana.

"It's really an extension of the St. John Bosco Conference," says Seman, who worked for the Institute for two years. "Not only are a lot of the talks from the conference available, but it has a wide variety of tracks made up of a number of workshops, each with videos and guides you can print out.

"The workshops for each track are so formative that you really can't find anything else better, outside of going for a degree."

USCCB

As the chairman-elect of the USCCB's Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis, Archbishop Thompson has been familiarizing himself with the committee's mission, efforts and resources.

The group's website offers nearly a dozen topics and tools under its "Resources" tab.

See **RESOURCES**, page 12

Evangelization versus proselytization

"Evangelization goes out to others and listens to them; proselytization excludes others and simply talks at them.

"Evangelization is a proclamation

of Jesus, allowing people to have an encounter with Christ; proselytization is proud and convinced that it has all the answers.

"Evangelization trusts in the Holy Spirit as the true evangelist, as the one who makes converts; proselytization believes it's up to us, to the force of our

arguments and persuasive power." —points from homily by Pope Francis on Aug. 5, 2013, summarized by Chris Sparks at [Inkiy.in/definitions](https://www.inkiy.in/definitions)

TEAMS

continued from page 9

we experience an authentic encounter with him, the living Word of God, we are transformed."

After a time, members of a discipleship group go on to create their own group, and so on, creating a multitude of disciples.

'The primary purpose is love'

Parish evangelization leaders don't have to go it alone. The Office of Evangelization's guidebook can be printed from their resource page, and the staff is just a phone call or email away.

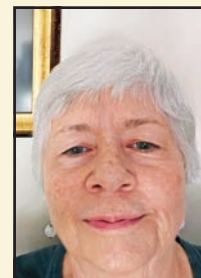
But it can also be beneficial to learn and discuss ideas in a group setting with other like-minded Catholics.

To that end, the office offers an annual workshop on creating or jump-starting parish evangelization teams.

The most recent one was held on April 29 at St. Agnes Parish in Nashville. Nearly 40 people from 15 parishes in central and southern Indiana participated.

"Some who came were inquiring about what an evangelization team even is, as well as how to get started," notes Bardo.

"I really felt like it fleshed things out better," says Terry Thixton of St. Patrick Parish in Salem. Creating a team "just seems much more doable."



Terry Thixton

Thixton, who is helping her parish start an evangelization team, appreciated the "suggestions for recruitment, traits for good team members and hearing ideas

implemented by evangelization teams in other parishes."

During the workshop, participants practiced sharing their witness story.

"I've been shy about sharing my past not-so-great things," she recalls. "But it seemed like in the eyes of the people I was sharing with, there was empathy and compassion.

"When someone tells about dark parts of their life, I think they're very brave. I'm reminded that God is very merciful. I think if we all gained that courage to share from our regular experiences, that our evangelization would be planting a seed.

"I really loved that they said the

primary purpose of evangelization is love."

Thixton says she is "very grateful" for both the workshop and those from the Office of Evangelization who presented it.

"I just got an email from Anita sent to the participants saying, 'Let's have a webinar and share what we're doing,'" she says. "I like having a community of evangelization teams. You learn from each other, and you come to not feel like strangers."

Like Thixton, Kathy Sleva of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Bedford



Kathy Sleva

was especially struck by the sharing of witness stories during the workshop. "That is where the inspiration and excitement came from for me," she says.

Sleva described the different steps and advice discussed during the day. But amid the practical tips and suggestions, one message stuck with her.

"Anita Bardo was especially emphatic about keeping it simple, and don't assume that you have to be the

best disciple to bring others to Jesus," she says. "We're all on a faith journey, and we all have a story to tell. You don't have to be a saint to become a disciple or to bring others as disciples to Jesus."

'Don't overthink it'

Ogorek offers these final words of advice for those starting or reinvigorating parish evangelization teams.

"Don't overthink it," he says. "It's really pretty simple. You can start doing some simple basic evangelization activities in your parish pretty easily. If you're paralyzed or at a loss for ideas, you're probably overthinking it.

Sometimes that paralysis "is the work of the enemy," Ogorek notes. "That's why prayer is such an important part of all these efforts. They have to flow from prayer and be peace.

"And then, before too long, we're offering prayers of thanks to God for the work he is doing."

(For more information on forming or redesigning parish evangelization teams, contact Anita Bardo at 317-236-1466 or abardo@ardchindy.org.) †



For Hispanic Catholics and for all Catholics, 'we're called to come together as one' in Christ

By John Shaughnessy

The eyes of Felix Navarrete sparkle when he recalls one of his favorite moments from the past few months—a moment that gives a view of the Church when it's at its best.

The moment unfolded on the evening of April 18 at a gathering of people from different Indianapolis parishes.

As the coordinator of Hispanic Ministry for the archdiocese, Navarrete was invited to speak at the gathering about the multi-year National Eucharistic Revival that will soon place its emphasis at the parish level from June 2023 to July 2024.

Yet before his talk at St. Ann Church in Indianapolis, Navarrete joined the group for eucharistic adoration, a group that included people who speak different languages—English, Spanish and French.

"Seeing all these people together in the church was just beautiful," Navarrete says. "I was just speechless. I really felt the presence of Jesus, and I felt he was feeling so happy to see all this diversity of cultures and skin colors all together in the church.

"In that moment, I thought, 'OK, this is what the Lord wants us to do.'"

That feeling for Navarrete was enhanced by what happened next—a simple yet significant gesture for the Spanish-speaking group that was made by Father Jude Meril Sahayam, the administrator of St. Ann Parish.

After eucharistic adoration, Father Sahayam divided the groups by their language, sending the English-speaking and French-speaking groups to rooms outside the church while inviting the Spanish-speaking group to stay in the church to hear their talk. That invitation deeply touched many of the Hispanics.

"At the end of the gathering, a lot of the people expressed to me how they felt so welcomed. Some of them said, 'Hey, Felix, most of the times we're the ones who need to move to a different room. And this priest invited us to stay in the church.'

"In the last couple of months, it's been one of the best moments I've shared with the Hispanic community. I was able to see in their faces that they had a special moment with Jesus in the Eucharist. And they were so grateful for that moment in the church. I was so happy. I got home and I was telling my wife about all that had happened, and she said, 'Well, that's the Holy Spirit!'"

Those combined scenes capture the essence of what the Catholic faith means to many Hispanics, Navarrete says. At the same time, those two scenes offer an understanding of how evangelization efforts can be tailored to Hispanic Catholics, whether in predominantly

Hispanic parishes or in parishes where they are in the minority.

'You see the humanity of someone'

"They live their faith in a simple way," Navarrete says. "They feel moved by devotions, especially devotion to Our Lady. And it's very important for them to have an encounter with Jesus, especially in the Eucharist. Something that's very helpful in the mission of evangelizing our Hispanics is creating spaces for them to have these personal encounters with Jesus. They feel very comfortable attending spiritual retreats."

He recalls the impact of a retreat for Hispanic Catholics that occurred earlier this year.

"It was very fruitful, seeing all these people coming together and praying together, having this encounter with Jesus.

Something very special happens in that moment. You see it in their faces. They're crying. You see the humanity of someone who is probably facing some struggle or illness or whatever. You are offering them this moment of encounter with Jesus in the Eucharist. And they realize the whole presence of Jesus is there. It's someone embracing them.

"That's the moment I feel we are really instruments of God, helping others to get closer to him. To be part of building these relationships makes me feel special. It also makes me feel more engaged in the Church, in the way I need to do things better and give a personal testimony, as well in the way I act and the way I speak. If we can help them create those spaces and help them get closer to Jesus, that's part of our mission as leaders."

That mission and that hope arise against the backdrop of some sobering statistics about U.S. Latinos who



Members of St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish in Indianapolis work together during a gathering at St. Ann Church in Indianapolis on April 18 for talks about the multi-year National Eucharistic Revival. (Submitted photo)

are Catholic. A recent study by the Pew Research Center noted that the percentage of Hispanic adults in the U.S. identifying as Catholic decreased from 67% in 2010 to 43% in 2022.

"It's concerning," Navarrete says about the results of the Pew study. "Something has happened in this change of life coming from Latin America to the United States. In Latin America, the Catholic people live their faith in a very simple and devotional way. Devotions are a key for Hispanic Catholics.

"When they come here and they don't find that specific ingredient that helped them have that closeness to God, then they tend to look for another experience and going to a different denomination. That's pretty sad. We as leaders are living very challenging moments in the Church.

We need to be aware of these particular situations that Hispanics are going through in the United States."

Creating that connection to the Church for people from all backgrounds is the work of all Catholics—and an emphasis that parishes are especially asked to embrace during this upcoming parish phase of the National Eucharistic Revival.

'We're called to come together as one'

"We really need to think intentionally about how we can grow our faith community together. It's all nationalities," says Anita Bardo, coordinator of evangelization and discipleship for the archdiocese. "When we have things like eucharistic adoration or the rosary, we can all come together because we know it's all the same. And that's what we're called to do. We're called to come together as one."

The Eucharistic Revival has the great potential for fostering that unity among the faithful of the Church—an emphasis that's particularly meaningful to the way that Hispanic Catholics celebrate their faith, Navarrete says.

"I believe this is the moment we have to reignite ourselves in our faith—to get back to our beginning, to our first love, to our first encounter with God," he says. "This Eucharistic Revival is giving us an opportunity to make a new chapter in our faith journey."

Bardo agrees.

"It's important that we're widening our thoughts and our concerns because we're all growing together in faith. And the eucharistic revival is going to get us there," she says. "It's going to make a difference if we're not just to ourselves, but we're reaching out to our sisters and brothers. We have Hispanics, we have Burmese, we have Africans, we have French-speaking people," as well as Catholic communities from the Philippines, South Korea and Vietnam.

"Though we may be different, we're still one. It's important to see everyone come together and then to know that everyone is welcomed. We should embrace the different cultures. The more that we have an understanding of what we're called to do—to be bonded in Christ together, to be one in Christ—then I think we'll all be better." †



Members of St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis and their pastor, Father John McCaslin, pose for a photo with Felix Navarrete, far right, coordinator of Hispanic ministry for the archdiocese, during an April 18 gathering at St. Ann Church in Indianapolis about the National Eucharistic Revival. (Submitted photo)

RESOURCES

continued from page 11

In 2017, the committee published "Living as Missionary Disciples." Different from the how-to nature of the archdiocese's guidebook, this 38-page document lists points for parishes to consider when forming an evangelization team. It also addresses the nature of what St. John Paul II called "new evangelization."

"That doesn't mean we're saying anything new," Archbishop Thompson explains. "Our message is always the Gospel, Christ, the good news of salvation.

"The new evangelization means

finding new ways to proclaim it. How do we proclaim the message to our particular time and culture? What are the different ideologies and the agendas that we're facing today? What new tools do we have to help in this mission?"

The document also offers questions for reflection on the four "cultures" a parish evangelization team needs to nurture for effective discipleship: encounter, accompaniment, community and sending.

"It addresses how do we create those cultures, both for individuals and communities," says the archbishop. "How do we create a culture where individuals and parishes encounter Christ? How do we prepare them for a culture of accompaniment? How do

parishes reach the variety of people that make up their community? How do they prepare them to be sent out to witness?"

Another USCCB evangelization resource deals specifically with outreach to the "unaffiliated"—those who claim no religious affiliation.

While the "Outreach to the Unaffiliated Discussion Guide" and "Field Guide for Leaders" were written for bishops, "both can be helpful to parish leaders," says Archbishop Thompson.

"I think for this and a lot of these documents is the bottom line that there's not a one-size-fits-all solution when it comes to evangelizing. You have to look at your community, your parish. I think that's important."

Finally, Archbishop Thompson notes

the connection between evangelization and the National Eucharistic Revival.

"In fact, it's a sub-committee of Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis," he says.

The coordinating organization for the three-year revival "is creating resources and putting them on the website all the time," he adds. "They've done some very nice stuff."

In addition to a podcast, the site offers numerous videos—including one that featured Archbishop Thompson, and another in the works that includes him.

The connection between evangelization and the revival is direct, he says: "The Eucharist is the core of who we are and what we do, so it is the source of evangelization." †



Para los católicos hispanos y para todos en general: ‘estamos llamados a la unidad’ en Cristo

Por John Shaughnessy

Los ojos de Félix Navarrete brillan cuando recuerda uno de sus momentos predilectos de los últimos meses que nos brinda una visión de la Iglesia en su máximo apogeo.

Ese momento se produjo la tarde del 18 de abril en una reunión de distintas parroquias de Indianápolis.

Como coordinador del Ministerio Hispano de la Arquidiócesis, Navarrete fue invitado como orador del encuentro sobre el Renacimiento Eucarístico Nacional plurianual que entre junio de 2023 y julio de 2024 hará énfasis en la instancia parroquial.

Sin embargo, antes de su charla en la iglesia de Santa Ana de Indianápolis, Navarrete se unió al grupo de adoración eucarística, en el que había personas que hablaban distintos idiomas: inglés, español y francés.

“Ver a toda esta gente reunida en la iglesia fue algo hermoso—recuerda Navarrete—. Me quedé sin palabras. Realmente sentí la presencia de Jesús, y que él estaba muy feliz de ver toda esa diversidad de culturas y colores de piel reunidos en la iglesia.

“En ese momento pensé: ‘Esto es lo que el Señor quiere que hagamos.’”

Ese sentimiento se vio reforzado por lo que ocurrió a continuación: un gesto sencillo pero significativo para el grupo hispanohablante que realizó el padre Jude Meril Sahayam, párroco de Santa Ana.

Tras la adoración eucarística, el padre Sahayam dividió a los grupos por idioma; envió a los grupos de habla inglesa y francesa a salones ubicados fuera de la iglesia e invitó al grupo de habla hispana a permanecer en la iglesia para escuchar su charla. Esa invitación conmovió profundamente a muchos de los hispanos.

“Al final de la reunión, muchos expresaron que se sentían sumamente bienvenidos. Algunos dijeron: ‘Oye, Félix, casi siempre somos nosotros los que tenemos que cambiarnos de salón, pero este padre nos invitó a quedarnos en la iglesia.’”

“Los últimos dos meses, han sido de los mejores que he compartido con la comunidad hispana. Pude ver en sus rostros que vivieron un momento especial con Jesús en la Eucaristía. Y se sentían muy agradecidos por haber tenido ese momento en la iglesia.

“Estaba muy feliz. Llegué a mi casa y cuando le conté a mi esposa todo lo que había pasado, me dijo: ‘Bueno, ¡ese es el Espíritu Santo!’”

Esas escenas, en conjunto, captan la esencia de lo que significa la fe católica para muchos hispanos, afirma Navarrete. Al mismo tiempo, esas dos escenas nos ayudan a entender de qué manera los esfuerzos de evangelización pueden adaptarse a los católicos hispanos, ya sea en parroquias predominantemente hispanas o en parroquias donde son minoría.

“Ves el lado humano de la gente.”

“Viven su fe de forma sencilla—asegura Navarrete—. Las devociones los



Miembros de la comunidad hispana/latina del Decanato Oeste de Indianápolis posan para una foto con el padre John McCaslin, párroco de Santa Mónica en Indianápolis, y Félix Navarrete, coordinador del ministerio hispano de la Arquidiócesis, (en la primera fila inmediatamente debajo del crucifijo), durante una reunión sobre el Renacimiento Eucarístico Nacional celebrada el 18 de abril en la Iglesia Santa Ana en Indianápolis. (Foto enviada)

conmueven, especialmente la devoción a la Virgen. Y para ellos es muy importante tener un encuentro con Jesús, principalmente en la Eucaristía. Algo que ayuda mucho en la misión de evangelización de nuestros hispanos es crear espacios para que tengan encuentros personales con Jesús. Se sienten muy cómodos en los retiros espirituales.”

Recuerda el impacto de un retiro para católicos hispanos que se hizo a principios de este año.

“Fue muy productivo verlos a todos reunidos y rezando juntos, en un encuentro con Jesús. En ese momento ocurre algo muy especial y lo vemos en sus caras. Lloran. Ves el lado humano de alguien que probablemente enfrenta alguna tribulación o enfermedad, o lo que sea. En la Eucaristía hallan ese momento de encuentro con Jesús y se dan cuenta de que la presencia de Jesús está allí, de que alguien los abraza.

“Es en ese momento en el que siento que somos verdaderamente instrumentos de Dios y que ayudamos a los demás a acercarse a Él. Formar parte de la creación de estas relaciones me hace sentir especial. También me hace sentir más comprometido con la Iglesia, en cuanto a que debo hacer mejor las cosas y dar un testimonio personal, así como en mi forma de actuar y de hablar. Ayudarlos a crear esos espacios y a acercarse a Jesús forma parte de nuestra misión como líderes.”

Esa misión y esa esperanza surgen con el telón de fondo de algunas estadísticas aleccionadoras sobre los latinos católicos

de Estados Unidos. Un estudio reciente del Pew Research Center señaló que el porcentaje de adultos hispanos que se identifican como católicos disminuyó del 67% en 2010 al 43% en 2022.

“Resulta preocupante—comenta Navarrete sobre los resultados del estudio de Pew—. Algo ha ocurrido en ese cambio de vida al venir de Latinoamérica a Estados Unidos. En América Latina, el pueblo católico vive su fe de forma muy sencilla y devocional. Las devociones son esenciales para los católicos hispanos.

“Cuando vienen aquí y no encuentran ese ingrediente específico que les ayudó a mantener esa cercanía con Dios, entonces tienden a buscar otra experiencia y pasarse a otra denominación. Y eso es muy triste. Como líderes, estamos viviendo momentos muy difíciles para la Iglesia. Debemos de ser conscientes de estas situaciones específicas que viven los hispanos en Estados Unidos.”

Crear esa conexión con la Iglesia para gente de diversos orígenes es tarea de todos los católicos, y es un énfasis que se pide que adopten sobre todo las parroquias durante este próximo período del Renacimiento Eucarístico Nacional.

‘Estamos llamados a la unidad’

“En verdad debemos pensar intencionadamente en cómo podemos hacer crecer juntos nuestra comunidad de fe. Para todas las nacionalidades—afirma Anita Bardo, coordinadora de evangelización y discipulado de la

Arquidiócesis—. Cuando tenemos actividades como la adoración eucarística o el rosario, todos podemos unirnos porque sabemos que en cualquier idioma es igual. Y a eso estamos llamados: a la unidad.”

El Renacimiento Eucarístico es un enfoque que tiene un gran potencial para fomentar esa unidad entre los fieles de la Iglesia, un énfasis que también es particularmente significativo para la forma en que los católicos hispanos celebran su fe, asegura Navarrete.

“Creo que es el momento de reavivar nuestra fe, de volver a nuestros orígenes, a nuestro primer amor, a nuestro primer encuentro con Dios—afirma Navarrete—. Este Renacimiento Eucarístico nos da la oportunidad de escribir un nuevo capítulo en nuestro camino de fe.”

Bardo concuerda:

“Es importante que amplíemos nuestros pensamientos y nuestras inquietudes porque todos estamos creciendo juntos en la fe. Y el Renacimiento Eucarístico nos va a llevar hasta este punto—expresa—. Marcará la diferencia si no nos limitamos y les tendemos la mano a nuestros hermanos y hermanas. Tenemos hispanos, birmanos, africanos, tenemos francófonos.

“Y aunque seamos diferentes, seguimos siendo uno. Es importante verlos a todos reunidos y saber que todos son bienvenidos. Debemos acoger a las diferentes culturas. Cuanto más comprendamos lo que estamos llamados a hacer, es decir, estar unidos en Cristo, ser uno en Cristo, creo que todos estaremos mejor.” †

Evangelization resources

Below are links to evangelization resources listed in the article beginning on page 11:

Archdiocesan Office of Evangelization

• “How to Start (or Jumpstart) Discipleship Groups at Your Parish,” evangelizeindy.com/resources (available in English and Spanish).

• Archdiocesan Evangelization Workshop, Aug. 5 at Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood, conducted by St. Paul Street Evangelization, stpaulse.com/greenwood-bet (tracks in English and Spanish).

• Other resources: evangelizeindy.com/resources.

For more information on these resources or to discuss how the archdiocesan Office of Evangelization can help your parish’s evangelization efforts, contact Anita Bardo at 317-236-1466 or abardo@archindy.org.

Franciscan University of Steubenville

• St. John Bosco Conference (held this year on July 17-20), steubenvilleconferences.com/events/sjb.

• Franciscan at Home online workshops, contact Ken Ogorek at 317-236-1446 or kogorek@archindy.org.

USCCB

• “Living as Missionary Disciples,” inkiy.in/usccbdiscipleship (available in English and Spanish)

• “Outreach to the Unaffiliated Discussion Guide” and accompanying “Field Guide for Leaders,” inkiy.in/unaffiliated (Guide is available in English and Spanish).

• National Eucharistic Revival, www.eucharisticrevival.org/learn-resources.

Additionally, Pope Francis started offering a weekly series of talks on evangelization earlier this year. To read his messages in English, Spanish, French and several other languages, go to inkiy.in/popseries. †