



Proclaim Christ *and* Make Disciples *through the* Sacramental Life *of the* Church.

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Help Wanted: Parish Ambassadors



Archbishop
Jerome E. ListECKi

Remember when you were a little kid, and company would come over? Mom and dad would always insist that you stop whatever you were doing, come downstairs, say hello, and

visit for a little while. It was important to make the company feel welcome, to give them the best seat in the living room, to offer them something to eat or drink, and to spend time with them.

As your archbishop, I have the privilege of traveling to parishes across our archdiocese. It's a joy to visit parishes, and to worship with different communities. I know I can always count on being warmly welcomed wherever I go. In turn, I want to be sure that every newcomer at your parish is welcomed as warmly as I am.

Each and every Sunday, we have visitors in our parishes. Some might be visiting family in the area, or found our particular Mass time fit better into their schedule. At almost every weekend Mass in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, we are joined by people who aren't Catholic, people who have drifted away from the faith, people who are searching for God, and people who are "checking us out." Whether or not they come back depends greatly on what

they experience when they are with us. We want to make sure we put our best foot forward for them.

As we implement our *Vision for the Future: Evangelization and the Sunday Mass*, and especially in this Year of Mercy, we need to practice the corporal work of mercy, "Welcoming the stranger." We show others the love of Jesus when we welcome others to Mass, and to our parish communities.

Every Catholic in southeastern Wisconsin is personally invited to become a "parish ambassador." As Catholics who follow the Lord, hospitality is our great joy, and we welcome everyone – especially those who may, on the surface, seem

different. We should never be shy about welcoming others. Jesus certainly wasn't. And as we are reminded in Matthew 25, our very salvation depends on it.

Being a parish ambassador isn't just the work of an usher or hospitality minister. Every one of us is called to be a parish ambassador – an ambassador for Christ! How might each of us do that?

- Make eye contact with others, and smile! As the Holy Father said not long ago, "An ambassador for the faith must never look like someone who's just come back from a funeral!"
- Be willing to move from "your spot" at the end of the pew, and make

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Mass is for Everyone

How to be a welcoming parish to people with disabilities

Though it is a continuous challenge, outreach to people with disabilities is nothing new for the Catholic Church. Catholics in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee come from all walks of life – including those with physical and mental disabilities.

There are many ways that you can help make Mass welcoming for all who come to worship.

“The disabled community has many gifts and talents to share within their faith community,” said Carol Abraham, a member of St. John the Evangelist Parish, Twin Lakes. Carol relies on an electric wheelchair for all mobility.

“Finding ways to accommodate their disability so that they can become active participants is so important for parish life and the various ministries including liturgical ministries such as lectors, choir and cantor,” she added. “It is important to remember that parish events should also be held in wheelchair accessible locations so all parishioners and guests can attend.”

John Mezydlo, a member of St. Bruno Parish in Dousman, also uses a wheelchair in his daily life. However, he has never let physical limitations affect his desire to participate fully in the Mass. While he acknowledges how wonderful parishes have become in accommodating those with physical disabilities, parishes must also remember that not everyone needs assistance.

“One situation that particularly stood out was at communion when I was visiting another parish,” he remembered. “I always go and receive communion like everyone else – it is the highlight of Mass for me. However, this time it was brought to me without anyone asking me. I had to decline so I could go up on my own. I appreciated the gesture, but I should have been asked beforehand.”

Physically disabled people are not the only ones who can feel excluded from parish life. Those with “invisible” disabilities such as anxiety, severe arthritis, and other such issues, as well as those with mental disabilities, can often be left undereducated in their Catholic faith. Organizations such as the Special Religious Education Development Network (SPRED) is only one such group that hopes to close that gap. A small faith community in a parish that includes children or adults with special needs, SPRED integrates people with developmental disabilities more fully into the mainstream of parish life.

“SPRED is a unique program that combines religious education with community building and welcomes people with special needs into our parishes. We use a symbolic method of catechesis to reach our friends with intellectual, developmental and/or learning disabilities each at his or her level,” explained

Mary Krawczyk, outreach specialist for the organization. “In a SPRED small faith group, catechists and people with special needs form one-to-one friendships and journey together in faith. We prepare participants for full participation in the sacramental life of the parish.”

“It’s important for parishioners to witness fellow parishioners who have challenges in their lives, yet are still able and willing to share their gifts. Everyone has some gifts and talents to share,” Carol added. “People with disabilities should be encouraged, not excluded, from sharing their gifts. People with disabilities – both physical and mental – truly deserve to participate fully in our parishes, as well as within our society.”



▲ Carol Abraham

▲ Special
Religious
Education
Development

◀ John
Mezydlo

Three Points to Consider

- Treat a person with a disability as you would anyone else. Relax when communicating; rely on natural courtesy, consideration and common sense.
- Offer assistance, but do not impose if help is not desired.
- Respect the individual's personal space and auxiliary aids. Do not lean against or push a wheelchair, pet a service animal in a harness, move wheelchairs, crutches, white canes or other assistive devices out of reach of a person who uses them.



Intentional Discipleship Habit Five: *Share Jesus in Regular Parish Service*

Intentional discipleship takes practice. We practice our Catholic discipleship by repeating and strengthening six essential habits. Today we focus on Habit Six: **Share Jesus in Regular Parish Service.**

All of the discipleship habits draw us deeper into a personal encounter with Jesus Christ. For Catholics, the ultimate place for that encounter is our local parish. That's because the parish is our unbroken connection back to Jesus, Peter, and Pentecost. The parish is also ultimate because it is the timeless source of the other 5 discipleship habits – prayer, scripture, Mass, Reconciliation, and service.

So the commitment to “share Jesus in regular parish service” affirms and amplifies all of the discipleship habits! Discipleship finds its fullest maturity and expression when we practice this sixth habit of giving our energy, talents, and finances in sacrificial service to Christ's living Body of the Church.

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room for those who might have come in a few minutes late, for whatever the reason.

- Give encouragement to families with small children. Being a parent is a tough job, and young families need encouragement – especially at Mass.
- Say hello, perhaps even introduce yourself to those around you. How often

do we sit next to the same people year after year, and don't know their names?

- Talk to those you don't know. By our very nature, we tend to seek out those we know. Next weekend, interact with someone you've never met.
- Invite others to join you for Mass, especially those among your family and friends who may have drifted away

from the faith.

My hope is that every liturgy, each and every visitor will be treated like a cherished guest. Your pastor or parish director can't do this alone. If we work together as parish ambassadors, and welcome the strangers among us, we fulfill Jesus' command to “LOVE ONE ANOTHER.” See you at Mass!

Prayer for the Mission of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee

(Shortened Version)

Almighty and ever living God,
we praise you and we bless you,
for you are great indeed!

Grant, we pray,
as on that first Pentecost,
that tongues of fire may descend upon us,
and that the driving wind of your Holy Spirit
may blow boldly into our hearts.

Embolden us, O God,
so that we may go forth to proclaim
your Gospel and renew the face of the earth.

In this Archdiocese of Milwaukee,
we humbly pray for strength and fortitude
to follow your great commission:
to go and make disciples of all people,
living our faith through word and deed.

We ask all this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

The 6 Habits of Catholic Intentional Discipleship

- Encounter Jesus in Daily Prayer Time
- Know Jesus in Daily Scripture Reflection
- Receive Jesus in the Eucharist Often
- Seek Jesus' Mercy in Reconciliation Often
- Serve Jesus in the Least Often
- Share Jesus in Regular Parish Service

Se necesitan embajadores en la parroquia



Arzobispo
Jerome E. ListECKi

¿Recuerdan cuando ustedes eran pequeños y llegaba visita? Nuestros padres siempre insistían en que paráramos lo que estábamos haciendo, viniéramos a saludar y

conversar con la visita por un momento. Era importante que la visita se sintiera bienvenida, se le ofrecía el mejor asiento en la sala, algo de comer o beber y compartir tiempo con ellos.

Como su arzobispo, yo he tenido el privilegio de viajar a parroquias alrededor de la arquidiócesis. Es una alegría visitar y celebrar la Misa con diferentes comunidades. Reconozco que yo siempre puedo contar con recibir una calorosa bienvenida donde quiera que yo vaya. A la vez, quiero estar seguro que cada persona nueva en su parroquia también reciba una calorosa bienvenida.

Todos los domingos, tenemos visitantes en nuestras parroquias. Algunos están visitando a su familia en el área, o encontraron un horario en particular que funciona con su horario

para ir a Misa. En casi cada Misa de fin de semana en la Arquidiócesis de Milwaukee, nos reunimos con gente que no es católica, gente que se alejó de su fe, gente que está en buscando a Dios, o gente que nos esta “explorando”. El que regresen o no depende en gran parte de la experiencia que tengan cuando están con nosotros.

Queremos asegurarnos que nos esmeremos por ellos.

Al implementar Una visión para el futuro: La evangelización y la Misa dominical, y especialmente en este Año de la Misericordia, necesitamos practicar la obra corporal de misericordia de “dar la bienvenida al desconocido”. Demostramos a los demás el amor de Jesús cuando damos la bienvenida a los que vienen a Misa, y a nuestra comunidad parroquial.

Como su arzobispo, estoy pidiendo a cada católico en el sureste de Wisconsin a que sea un “embajador parroquial”. Como católicos que seguimos al Señor, la hospitalidad es nuestra gran alegría, y damos la bienvenida a todos – especialmente a quienes pueden aparentemente parecer diferentes.

Ser un embajador parroquial no es solamente el trabajo de los acomodadores o del ministerio de

hospitalidad. Cada uno de nosotros somos llamados a ser un embajador parroquial. ¿Cómo puede cada uno de nosotros hacerlo?

- ¡Mire a las personas a los ojos y sonría! Como el Santo Padre hace poco dijo: “¡Un embajador de la fe jamás debe parecerse a alguien que acaba de regresar de un funeral!”
- Esté dispuesto de moverse de “su lugar” en la banca, y hacer espacio para aquellos que podrían llegar unos pocos minutos más tarde, o por cualquier razón que sea.
- Anime a las familias con niños pequeños. Ser padres es un trabajo difícil, y las familias jóvenes necesitan ser animadas - especialmente en la Misa.
- Salude, tal vez incluso preséntese a quienes le rodean. ¿Cuántas veces nos sentamos junto a la misma gente año tras año, y no sabemos sus nombres?

Mi esperanza es que en cada liturgia, cada visitante sea tratado como un invitado especial. Si trabajamos juntos como embajadores parroquiales, y damos la bienvenida a los desconocidos, cumplimos con el mandato de Jesús de “Amarnos los unos a los otros.” ¡Nos vemos en Misa!

El sexto hábito del discipulado intencional: *compartir a Jesús en el servicio parroquial*

El discipulado intencional requiere práctica. Practicamos nuestro discipulado católico repitiendo y fomentando los seis hábitos esenciales. Hoy nos enfocaremos en el sexto hábito: compartir a Jesús en el servicio parroquial.

Todos los hábitos del discipulado nos adentran más a un encuentro personal con Jesucristo. Para los católicos, el mejor lugar para ese encuentro es nuestra parroquia local. Eso es porque la parroquia es nuestra conexión inquebrantable con Jesús, Pedro y Pentecostés. La parroquia

también es fundamental porque es la fuente eterna de los otros cinco hábitos del discipulado – la oración, la Escritura, la Misa, la reconciliación y el servicio.

¡Por lo tanto el compromiso de “compartir a Jesús en el servicio parroquial” afirma y amplifica todos los hábitos del discipulado! El discipulado encuentra su plena madurez y expresión cuando practicamos este sexto hábito de dar nuestra energía, talentos y dinero en servicio sacrificial al cuerpo vivo de Cristo de la Iglesia.