

Dear Friends,

Last week I introduced a series of letters on six CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EVANGELIZING PARISH. This week, I want to talk about another one of those characteristics: ***“An Evangelizing Parish shares the faith through Christian witness and service.”*** All I have to do is think about how generously our parish donates to the local food pantries, helps people who face great tragedies in their lives, assists the poor in our area, and worships with such enthusiasm, to see how well our parish matches this particular characteristic. We are an evangelizing parish. We do proclaim the gospel in countless ways. St. Francis of Assisi once told one of his Friars to “Go and proclaim the gospel, and if you must, use words.”

Evangelization is so much more than preaching homilies. To evangelize means also to live the Gospel, the Good News of God’s love. Evangelists ought to know the Gospels fairly well, but the key is in putting God’s Word into action in our daily lives.

This past Sunday, January 10, the leadership members of our parish gathered to come up with five ways we can work to fulfill the first goal of the United States Bishops in their document [Go And Make Disciples](#). This goal states that we are to foster such a great enthusiasm for our faith that people will be drawn to enter more deeply into the life of the Church. I am so excited about these five areas of evangelical concern that we are going to work on.

1. **ADULT EDUCATION** – This is an area of broad concern in our parish. It will cover several activities. Our new Evangelization Team will be responsible for overseeing this most important area of concern. We will come up with a list of ways in which we can help to educate adults in our parish, and we will work to make sure that all the necessary objectives will be fulfilled.
2. **YOUTH MINISTRY** – Our Stewardship Commission has been tasked with finding ways to make youth ministry a greater reality in the life of our parish. We may never have a strong youth group in our parish, but we can work to include our youth in all aspects of parish life. Grade school, junior high and high school students along with young adults are vital to the life of our parish and need to be included in ministries and activities. Their roles are just as important as the roles we adults play.
3. **FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICE** – Our Finance Council is going to move beyond crunching numbers to also work on ways to build up family life in our parish. We will look at the possibilities of Family Mentoring programs as well as finding other family-friendly activities.
4. **BUILD STRONGER RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN MINISTRIES** – The Pastoral Council will help us to find ways to improve how we relate and communicate within and among the various ministries in our parish.
5. **RETREATS IN OUR PARISH** – The Pastoral Council will also work to build up retreat experiences for our parish. There are many possibilities, but one that appeared to have the most interest seemed very simple: a day long retreat right here in our parish.

When our meeting on Sunday afternoon was over, I felt so proud of the leaders of our parish for their enthusiastic dialogue. We had a great time. But we also worked hard. It is clear that we have a lot of work left to do. I look forward to the challenge of working to fulfill the Bishops' goal of fostering an enthusiasm for our faith. I am charged up. I know that the leaders of our parish are excited. What I look forward to the most, however, is your response to the ways we proclaim the gospel in our parish.

In joyful hope,  
Fr. Tim Seigel