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St. John Neumann's Mission Corner

Our Parish Mission: To make disciples by encountering Christ, growing in Christ, and being sent by Christ.



A Summer Exercise Program Just for You!

There is a phrase in Catholic theology: *lex orandi, lex credendi*. Loosely translated, the Latin means: as we pray, so we believe. A contemporary of St. Augustine originally articulated the phrase in reference to the liturgy ... the Church's liturgy and prayer express our beliefs. The words of prayer matter because the community will come to believe what we pray. Our prayers, in other words, better be faithful to our doctrine. The words we use in prayer matter.

Mission statements follow this same vein of that which we speak tends to form our beliefs and actions. Organizations develop mission statements to ensure that all within the institution are rowing in the same direction. A good mission statement impacts every level of an organization, and parish mission statements are no different for the organization of a parish.

Pope Paul VI clearly rearticulated the Church's mission statement: the Church exists to evangelize. This from the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (paragraph 14). Later he writes: "Thus it is the whole Church that receives the mission to evangelize, and the work of each individual member is important for the whole" (para 15). It is the mission of each of us to evangelize.

What does it mean to "evangelize"? Consider this from the United States Bishop's document *Disciples Called to Witness*: "The Church's *ad gentes* ("to the world") mission given to her by Christ is the proclamation of the Good News to those who do not know him" (p. 5). We must proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ so that it leads others to encounter Christ and grow in relationship with him. To evangelize is to make disciples of Christ.

What we pray in mission, we believe, and we show in our actions. As such, our parish mission statement evolved way back in 2018: To make disciples by encountering Christ, growing in Christ, and being sent by Christ.

A key question: What is a disciple of Christ? No definition will be comprehensive, but some key aspects of being a disciple of Christ include:

1. Praying daily with God (talking to, listening for, and sitting in his presence)

2. Having a personal relationship with Jesus
3. Sharing your faith with others so as to bring them to faith in Christ and the Church he founded
4. Reading Scripture daily
5. Learning the basics of Catholic teachings
6. Being an active member of a Christian community, a parish, by serving in parish ministries and by financially tithing to the Church
7. Celebrating Sunday Eucharist faithfully and celebrating Reconciliation regularly; or being on a journey of preparing to celebrate the sacramental life: beginning with Baptism and leading to the other sacraments.
8. Seeing your life as a mission field, guided and gifted by the Holy Spirit

Which of these 8 points, if any, are you a master disciple in? Which are you a trainee or newbie in? The thing about discipleship is that its perfection takes the preverbal lifetime. And more. This summer, we encourage you to take up just one of these 8 points and focus on it daily if possible. Flex that discipleship muscle!