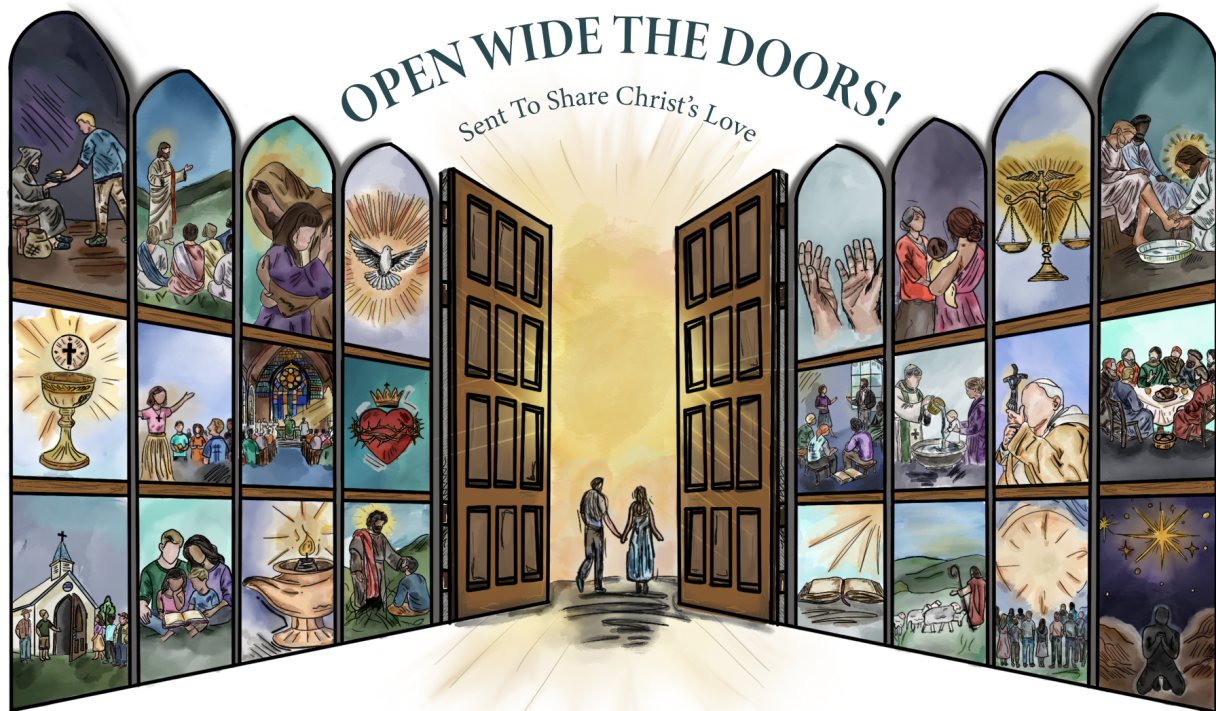




Open Wide the Doors! Sent to Share Christ's Love 2025-2028 Faith Plan - Holy Spirit Catholic Schools

Developed by Aaron Skretting, Director of Religious Education, March 2025

Historical Overview

Holy Spirit Catholic Schools first developed a Faith Plan in 2010 based in work that was completed with Bishop Henry around shepherd leadership. This initial plan was based in Luke 24 (The Road to Emmaus), and was organized around the theme “Are Not Our Hearts Burning Within Us?” This initial plan was followed with the 2013-2016 Faith Plan, “Taking Our Place at the Table,” which focused on Catholic Social Teachings. The 2016-2019 Faith Plan, Growing in Faith Together (GIFT), saw the expansion and more detailed development of the plan, and for the first time, had a unifying image that was revealed over the course of the three years. The 2019-2022 Faith Plan, “Making Our Mark - Journey of an Intentional Disciple,” grew out of GIFT both thematically and visually. This plan focused on intentional discipleship and the papal writing *Gaudete et Exsultate* (Rejoice and Be Glad) at its core. Our most recent faith plan, lasting from 2022-2025, was entitled *Arise! Pilgrims of Hope*. This plan referenced *Christus Vivit* (Christ is Alive) and *Lumen Fidei* (The Light of Faith), as we anticipated the coming of the Jubilee year.

Consultation Process

The consultation process for the 2025-2028 Faith Plan was held in two parts. An initial consultation video was recorded and distributed to all staff, along with a feedback form to gather their thoughts. The successful approach of the previous faith plan consultation was used as the template for the video, and a half-hour video was created that incorporated a prayerful listening exercise (using a short *lectio divina* from Acts 2:1-8, 23-24, 32-33, 37-42), an overview of the rationale behind having a faith plan, the key focus of Catholic Education on evangelization, and the main components of our previous Faith Plans. Participants were then asked to complete a feedback form with the following questions:

- What did you connect with most from this faith plan?
- What are two key elements from the current faith plan that you would like to carry on in the new faith plan?
- What spiritual needs have you identified for yourself, your school, or your community?
- What might be a main theme/subthemes that we could use?
- What might be some verbs/actions/calls that would be useful?
- What scriptures might be a good guide for us?
- Do you have ideas for an image or graphics that could be used?

There were 35 responses to the feedback questions. A summary of the feedback is embedded in Appendix A of this document. The general themes that emerged in the feedback across the questions were:

- Elements to Continue - seamless progression and connection across themes, saints/scripture/Catholic teachings as anchors, visual/physical representation, celebratory and inclusive faith experience, and action orientation
- Spiritual Needs - deepening personal and communal faith, need for connection and belonging, living and proclaiming the faith, continued faith formation, and a desire for hope/joy/well-being
- Other feedback - there were no clear patterns for the other questions that emerged.

With this feedback received, but from a limited number of respondents, we sought to confirm whether it was representative of the division more holistically. Our District Religious Education

Committee reviewed and analyzed the results, and confirmed that it was indicative of the wider reality.

School representatives were invited to join in a morning, in-person gathering on February 4, 2025. Forty-five participants representing staff, students, parents, and trustees were able to attend that day, and worked in nine table groups of five or six. A brief review of the video and feedback information led into table discussions around key themes from the feedback, which confirmed the earlier analysis. Participants then explored the Five Marks of Catholic Education, examining each for evidence in their school experience, before ranking their importance collectively for the next faith plan. They overwhelmingly indicated Mark 1 (Christian Anthropology) as the most important for the next faith plan. This was followed by Mark 4 (Gospel Witness), Mark 5 (Spirituality of Communion), Mark 3 (Faith-infused Curriculum) and Mark 2 (Catholic Worldview) respectively. Groups were then asked to create rough draft Faith Plans before engaging in a dot voting activity to highlight the most important or resonant words, images, and themes. Images of each of these can be found in Appendix B (these images also show elements of each plan that were eventually incorporated in the final version). Common themes and resonant ideas from these drafts were:

- | | | |
|------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| • Encounter | • Creation | • Open Wide the |
| • Belonging | • Head/Heart/Hands | Doors (St. Pope |
| • Witness | • Equipped | John Paul II) |
| • Joy | • Ignite/Inspire | • Mountains |
| • Community | • Micah 6:8 | • landscape |
| • Body of Christ | • John 15:16 | • Sending Forth |
| • Serve | • Mark 16:15 | • Going Forth |
| • Reflect | • The Sacred Heart | • Love |
| • Diverse | of Jesus | • Presence |
| • Basics/Knowing | | • Bringing the Word |
| • Purpose | | alive |

These themes were then used, along with both sets of feedback, to construct this new Faith Plan.

Rationale

The new Faith Plan begins in the midst of the 2025 Jubilee Year, with the Papal theme Pilgrims of Hope. As we begin our new Faith Plan during this year, it makes sense to continue some connection to that theme, the concept of Jubilee, and the Papal Bull *Spes Non Confundit* at the outset of the plan. The repeated and emergent theme of the Sacred Heart of Jesus points us to the recent encyclical *Dilexit Nos*, and the focus on Christian anthropology (Mark 1) suggests a return to the ‘basics’ of our faith. As noted by the Congregation for Catholic Education in *Educating Together in Catholic Schools* ([2007](#)),

“Catholic educators need a “formation of the heart”: they need to be led to that encounter with God in Christ which awakens their love and opens their spirits to others, so that their

educational commitment becomes *a consequence deriving from their faith, a faith which becomes active through love* (cf. Gal 5:6). In fact, even *care for instruction means loving* (Wis 6:17). It is only in this way that they can make their teaching a school of faith, that is to say, a transmission of the Gospel, as required by the educational project of the Catholic school.”

The plan also seeks to align with major themes and language from the Diocesan Renewal in the Diocese of Calgary. The Diocesan Renewal - You are Called. You Matter. You Belong. - has three major themes:

1. Forming missionary disciples in Christ (Invite others to know Christ, Teach the great story of Jesus and His Church, Practice the Faith)
2. Being a church of encounter and witness (Listen to others' lived experience, Witness to Christ in word and deed, Lead with Christian mercy and passion)
3. Strengthening family life (Welcome families to a sacramental life, Engage families and youth meaningfully, Accompany people at all stages of life)



The plan also needs connections back to our previous plans and experiences. There is a visual and thematic thread that has connected Holy Spirit's faith plans together over time.

- 2010-2013 - Are Not Our Hearts Burning Within Us? - symbolized by the small flame, was based on the Road to Emmaus.
- 2013-2016 - Taking Our Place at the Table - the icon of the Holy Trinity with room for us to join.
- 2016-2019 - Growing in Faith Together - rooted in the Eucharist, growing into a tree
- 2019-2022 - Making Our Mark - Journey of an Intentional Disciple - the journey from the tree to the church
- 2022-2025 - Arise! Pilgrims of Hope - the vision at the doors looking into the church



Themes/Subthemes

The main title of the plan, *Open Wide the Doors! Sent to Share Christ's Love*, begins with the Jubilee year tradition of opening the doors. As St. Pope John Paul II said in his inauguration homily (October 22 1978), "Do not be afraid. Open wide the doors for Christ." This is followed by the subtitle, *Sent to Share Christ's Love*, which references both the sending forth at the end of the Mass (connected to the images for the previous and current plans) as well as the theme of Christ's love. We open the doors as Pilgrims of Hope in the Jubilee year, heading out to share the love of Christ with those around us. This is, in a sense, a response to the previous faith plan in which Isaiah 6:8 - *Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I; send me!"* - called us to action. We are sent by the main scripture for this plan, from Mark 16:15:

And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation."

The title of the plan also can be read as a call to us to open wide the doors for Christ in our own hearts as well as our own schools and parishes. This aligns well with our Diocesan renewal calls to form missionary disciples in Christ, strengthen family life, and be a Church of encounter and witness. What does this look like? We are guided by the secondary scripture for this plan, Micah 6:8:

...What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (1716-1721) reveals to us that *"The Beatitudes are at the heart of Jesus' preaching. They take up the promises made to the chosen people since Abraham. The Beatitudes fulfill the promises by ordering them no longer merely to the possession of a territory, but to the Kingdom of heaven ... The Beatitudes depict the countenance of Jesus Christ and portray his charity....[they] reveal the goal of human existence, the ultimate end of human acts: God calls us to his own beatitude. This vocation is addressed to each individual personally, but also to the Church as a whole, the new people made up of those who have accepted the promise and live from it in faith ... God put us in the world to know, to*

love, and to serve him, and so to come to paradise. Beatitude makes us "partakers of the divine nature" and of eternal life."

We can align the message from Micah with this purpose as follows:

	Year One	Year Two	Year Three
Pilgrims of Hope...	Walk humbly with God	Love Kindness	Do Justice
They are called to...	Know God	Love God	Serve God
By encountering God in...	The Word	The Mass / Christ's Sacred Heart	One Another
Diocesan renewal	You Belong	You Matter	You are Called

Year 1 - Walk Humbly with God - In this year, we conclude our year of pilgrimage by continuing our walk with God, seeking to Know Him. We encounter Christ in the Gospels, specifically the parables of Luke, asking ourselves - where do I fit in these stories, and what do they teach me about my relationship with God? We can see here the connection to the Liturgy of the Word in the Mass. We focus on the Diocesan renewal calls to invite others to know Christ, to listen to others' lived experience, and to engage families and youth meaningfully. Our scriptural focus for this year is Matthew 11:29 - *Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*

Year 2 - Love Kindness - In this year, we seek to Love God, who is kindness and mercy. We contemplate the Sacred Heart of Jesus as we open our own heart to Christ, and focus on learning about the Mass, asking ourselves - *how do I encounter Christ in the Mass?* - which brings us to the Liturgy of the Eucharist. We focus on the Diocesan renewal calls to practice the faith, welcome families to a sacramental life, and to lead with Christian mercy and compassion. Our scriptural focus for this year is Acts 2:42 - *They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.*

Year 3 - Do Justice - In this year, we encounter God in one another as we Serve God (and in doing so, return back to our own encounter with Him). We reflect on the Beatitudes as an expression of Christ's love and our ultimate vocation. We focus on the Diocesan renewal calls to teach the great story of Jesus and His Church, to accompany people at all stages of life, and to witness to Christ in word and deed, asking ourselves - what is God sending me/us to do? We can see here the connection to the Sending Forth at the conclusion of the Mass. Our scriptural focus for this year is 1 Peter 3:8 - *Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind.*

Throughout the plan, we reference the Five Marks of Catholic Education, focusing particularly on Christian Anthropology and Gospel Witness. The use of the Parables and the Beatitudes as a focus for formation is intentional in this regard, as Christ affirms the dignity of every person in

these lessons. Our guiding papal documents are Pope Francis' bull *Spes Non Confundit* (Hope Does Not Disappoint), his encyclical letter *Dilexit Nos* (He Loved Us - October 24, 2024), and his encyclical letter *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel - November 13, 2013), which together address themes of the Jubilee, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and Christ's love. An overview of the three years, with the guiding scriptures and references, can be found in Appendix C.

Visual



For the first time, our image for the plan was created by a student. Bella Lindemann, grade 11 student at Catholic Central High School, was enlisted to take the text of the plan's overview and create from that an image that would illustrate those ideas. The result is the image presented. At the centre of the image, we have the doors opening outward into the world beyond, with representative figures making their way out. The style of the doors evokes the doors of the Vatican that are opened during the Jubilee year in their size and design. To the left and right of the doors, forming panels, are a variety of smaller images that highlight the themes and ideas of the faith plan. The lines of perspective have shifted from the previous plan, turning the viewer around at the conclusion of Mass to show the sending forth. The panel images on each side form walls of the church, with the title and subtitle of the plan at the top filling in to evoke the rafters of the church. There is an intentionality to the pattern of the panels; the ideas of year one (Know God) are found in the bottom row, with the ideas of year two (Love God) found in the centre row, and the ideas of year three (Serve God) found in the top row. The images (and suggested meanings) are as follows:

Year One (Know God) - from left to right

- Community gathered at the Church - *Spes Non Confundit*

- Family reading together - Strengthen Family Life (Diocesan Renewal)
- Lamp - symbol for knowledge
- Christ speaking to an individual - *Matthew 11:29*
- Bible - encountering God in the Word
- Sheep with their shepherd - the Parables
- Community gathered together - You Belong (Diocesan Renewal)
- Person in prayer - **Christian Anthropology (Marks)**

Year Two (Love God) - from left to right

- Eucharist and Chalice - the Mass
- Classroom - **Gospel Witness (Marks)**
- Interior of the Church - the Mass
- Sacred Heart of Jesus - the Sacred Heart of Jesus/Dilexit Nos
- Small group gathering - You Matter/Be a Church of Encounter and Witness (Diocesan Renewal)
- Baptism - Welcome families to a sacramental life (Diocesan Renewal)
- Pope John Paul II - Open Wide the Doors, Saints in the faith plan
- Apostles at table - *Acts 2:42*

Year Three (Serve God) - from left to right

- Man serving the poor - **Christian Anthropology (Marks)**
- Christ teaching - the Beatitudes/Sermon on the Mount
- Embrace of women - *1 Peter 3:8*
- Dove - symbolic of the Holy Spirit (and Holy Spirit Catholic Schools)
- Hands - Form Missionary Disciples in Christ (Diocesan Renewal)
- Three generations of women - You are Called/Accompaniment at all stages of life (Diocesan Renewal)
- Scales - symbol for justice
- Christ washing the feet of the disciples - serving God/encountering one another/*Evangelii Gaudium*

(**Bold** denotes Marks of an Excellent Catholic School; *Italics* denotes Scriptural reference; Underlining denotes Diocesan Renewal calls; plain text denotes formation or thematic elements)

The intention is to highlight each row during the active year, focusing on one particular image in each year as most representative of the year (Shepherd, Apostles, Christ washing the feet). While each year has a main theme, we know that these are not lived out in isolation, and that elements of knowing, loving, and serving God appear throughout the plan. We could also therefore read the image as seeing people who came to know, love, and serve God entering through the doors of eternal life after engaging in a life filled with the actions and attitudes shown in the panels.

It is my sincere hope that through the course of this faith plan, the students, staff, and communities of Holy Spirit will experience the richness of the Jubilee and deepen their knowledge of, love of, and service to God. In doing so, we respond to Christ's call to "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation." (Mark 16:15). Sent to share

Christ's love, we open wide the doors of our hearts, our schools, and our churches to God and to one another.

Now the time has come for a new Jubilee, when once more the Holy Door will be flung open to invite everyone to an intense experience of the love of God that awakens in hearts the sure hope of salvation in Christ. (Spes Non Confundit 6)

Written and proposed by Aaron Skretting, with great thanks and respect to the trustees, staff, parents and students of Holy Spirit Catholic Schools, and our local clergy, particularly those who were able to join us in our Faith Plan Consultation.



Appendices

Appendix A: Faith Plan Consultation - Part 1 Survey Results

Appendix B: “Dot Voting” Pictures

Appendix C: Three Year Faith Plan Overview

Appendix D: Selected Quotes from Spes Non Confundit, Dilexit Nos and Evangelii Gaudium

APPENDIX A - Faith Plan Consultation Survey Results

What are two key elements from the current faith plan that you'd like to carry on in the new faith plan?

Monthly Saints and Formation
We need to continue to BUILD the body of Christ at home and abroad (St. Odilia's School).
Spiritual connection in deep meditation, prayer and gratitude. - the idea of a steady journey, and forward motion. - the focus on service to the common good
I've appreciated the pairing of Scripture and Church teachings with actions and resources. It can be difficult to see growth in ourselves and our community without the support of concrete materials and the element of "doing." I've also valued, in the current and previous plans, the clear progression and connections over the three years, along with visuals. These plans have been so well-articulated; all of us in Holy Spirit understand and can talk about our direction as a division.
Focus on Catholic Social Teachings and use them to connect with our IB learner profiles
the celebratory nature and focus on growth
Build and Proclaim
Gospel, liturgy (emphasizing different parts of the mass), apostles creed, Catholic social teachings
I liked the physical aspect of it. It felt very actionable and in language that the students understood.
I love how visible our faith plan is throughout our division, resources that tie our faith plan to the parish and faith community
I love the visuals and how they strongly connect with each call to action.
Saints and Gospel connections, that we are pilgrims on a journey
Living our faith.
One key element that I think we should keep is the close connections that we have from year to year with each of the themes. It seemed that there was a seamless connection from one to the other. A second key element might be the discussions that we have, at DREC, around the various ways that we can celebrate and these themes in our schools.

The congruency with the images. I loved how the pictures when brought together made a complete picture, yet individually they weren't "missing" something. "Pilgrims of Hope" being brought throughout the subthemes and years.
Discipleship and relationship with/to God/Jesus
"Building" the Kingdom (very concrete) and being "Pilgrims" as we are all on a journey
1) Understanding the lives of the saints and connecting their lives to our present circumstances. 2) Yearly theme that progresses from year one to three.
The two key elements that I would like to carry on are ideas and themes that stem from the words "arise" and "build".
I'm thinking this way because I keep reflecting on the growing diversity of our school. Within this diversity I have seen outward signs of our faith through the different cultures represented in our student body.
We could build on this ever evolving reality of our schools by celebrating our uniqueness as children of God who are so different, but yet one through Christ with the same mission.
The idea of building or putting our faith plan into action I think is essential for students to see a connection between our faith and the manifestation of our faith in good works. I also like the idea of being called to learn about our faith and live our faith in our daily lives.
I like the visual representation of the theme(s) as well as the faith focus.
Service, Inward, Outward, Hope, Catholic Social Teachings, The Trinity
Easy to integrate at all grade levels and meaningful/relatable to today's world. I also felt the "action words" were helpful. It was comprehensive with a lot of supporting resources. exposure to scripture/liturgy/Gospel and Catholic Social Teachings/social justice
I love the continuous theme, with ideas and visuals that link easily from one year to the next, and that can be explained easily to our younger students. I love that we had words of action to guide us through our faith plan.
I like having a monthly focus (ie Saint, fruits of the Spirit, gifts of the Spirit, etc) within the overarching theme. I also like the focus on the Catholic Social Teachings.
Share a Catholic worldview through events. Create physical spaces in our school which showcase and celebrate our Catholic faith. Retreats for staff and students.
I enjoyed the clear calls to action and the creativity of the visual
I like that the faith plan starts with personal faith formation and moves outwards.
Continue to celebrate how we proclaim our faith and enhancing encounter and service
Saints cards, a visual that is so readily accessible to connect with (really liked the one we had as it was a constant reminder of the faith plan)

The idea of proclaiming our faith, the connections building from year to year with each theme

Having the same word appear at the base of each block of the theme (Hope) is simple and effective in linking all three years together. The same powerful minimalism at the top of each block (Arise, Build, Proclaim) creates unity while simultaneously making the three year theme accessible to all.

What spiritual needs have you identified for yourself, your school, or your community?

Joy - students and staff are tired and worn down. We have focused on being pilgrims of hope, and living with hope, but how do we connect our actions of living with hope to living with joy? If I have hope, how does that drive my actions that lead to my ultimate end and true happiness?

People within our school are exhausted and have needs that don't seem to be heard. More mental health material that coincides with the gospel message to support the needs of both staff and students.

Constant connection, giving of spirit.

I have noticed a building trend in self-centeredness, and am hoping that we can take steps to shift the general focus onto how we can better serve others. Many people are feeling isolated and alone in current times, and I think that encouraging our students to step out of their comfort zones, and shift their focus onto the service of others, they will, in turn, experience the joy of connection and service.

I've been thinking about the intentional and meaningful permeation of our faith into our practices and subject area teaching. The presentations about Catholic Social Teachings within the context of assessment were powerful, and I'm wondering about the potential of using the lens of faith as we consider other areas, as well - could be some great reflection. Maybe we need to name those principles of our faith that guide our interactions and decision-making. Brett Salkeld used the phrases, "What am I for? How does this connect to my purpose? How does this contribute to fulfillment and appreciation of our world?"

Mercy, Dignity, welcoming to Mass (either a return for the baptized or an invitation for evangelization)

More worship!

The need for a stronger prayer life and deeper connection to Christ.
The need to deepen our understanding of our faith and discerning how God is calling you to serve him in our lives.

Our school struggles with students having a true understanding of faith, limited relationship with God and sadly, even belief, and the confusion from the ideologies of secular society. The need to engage students in meaningful, relevant faith experiences. The need to share the faith with students and families who may feel distant from the Church.

Community needs: living out Catholic values in a culture that may challenge or misunderstand the faith
enhancing the understanding of our faith within the school and our students
Reaching out to those in our community who are NOT Catholic, but how we can still support them as Christians through our faith plan.
Connection to Parish between school and Parish, family and Parish, lack of attendees at Mass.
Not only a deeper relationship with God, but deeper relationships with others. Call to be in communion with one another.
Renewal, strengthening, knowing, proclaim and teach the faith
The greatest single cause of atheism in the world today is Christians who acknowledge Jesus with their lips and walk out the door and deny Him by their lifestyle. That is what an unbelieving world simply finds unbelievable." (Billy Graham) Living out our faith, being visible and being credible.
I truly believe that the subtle need to Proclaim needs to continue to occur throughout our school community.
There's a detachment from what truly matters, and the correlation to the time you spend. There seems to be an outward approach of things that don't seem to matter or hold value, and in the same breath if something matters then it has to consume you. No balance, or hierarchy of priorities and how to live those priorities. An element of lost identity, that's found in too many places, mixed with the pressure from constantly being watched, and never being allowed to make mistakes.
Distance from sacraments, disengagement from church for many staff and families, stronger connection needed between parish and school.
Becoming more rooted in the Sacraments, especially the sacraments of initiation. From our call at Baptism to Confirmation and receiving Eucharist.
No matter who we are or where we are in our journey with God, there has to be an internal change and understanding of what it means to know God which then influences our family, our peers, and our community.
I always feel a need to have a closer, personal encounter with Jesus, and the same goes for our students and staff. With all of the issues and challenges we have when it comes to accepting our differences, I feel that we have such a gift to be able to openly invite the Holy Spirit to be our foundation and unifier.
One spiritual need is education in our faith and how to live our faith without judgement of others. Also the support of our religion as we accompany each other on our life journey
To come together as a school community to practice our faith.

Meaningful Connection (to God, to one another, to our parishes, with our families, creating a web of faith to lean into and be a part of and to expand out into the world). How can our Catholic lens help us be people of hope and joy in a world that is struggling and suffering?
Creating a loving space for all and a sense of belonging. Infusing prayer organically throughout the day. Allowing Christ's love and light to shine through us in words and actions.
Meaningful and authentic experiences to encounter God (i.e., presenters, retreats, activities)
The need for connection and to all be working towards common goals and common understandings, even though we are all at different places in our faith journey. The idea that we all have something to teach and we all have something to learn, or give and receive
opportunities for fellowship; deeper understanding of Catholic values/beliefs (the "why"); students developing an authentic relationship with Jesus; deeper understanding of prayer/opportunities to pray/different types of prayers
Connection
I see a need to nurture relationship with God and with others. Many individuals in our school struggle with maintaining positive relationships, and therefore suffer from isolation and anxiety. I also see a need to simplify our next faith plan. Our last two were so deep rooted in theological foundations that they were more difficult to translate to staff and students in a meaningful way. My opinion is that a lot of the intention was lost because the foundational sources and overall concepts were aimed at those interested in the scholarly and theological perspective. In the reality of our schools, and the faith journeys of our staff and students it was a little difficult to relay these concepts in as meaningful of a way that the plan itself would have intended. (In theory, the past 2 faith plans were amazing, but in practice, I believe they fell short of coming to fruition as planned. Maybe due to the complexity of content.)
An appreciation of sacred spaces.
Prayer and engagement in community
You are not providing a realistic tangible connection for our youth. You are asking adults when you should be asking the students. And when you ask the students, you need to listen!
More time needed for prayer as a community, faith formation
Living as witnesses, deepening Eucharistic understanding, understandings of the Creeds, witnessing joy in faith, promoting interconnectedness
Being invited/feeling welcomed to participate in all aspects of the faith journey

What might be a main theme/subthemes that we could use?

Main theme: People of Joy Sub-themes: ORIENT ourselves to God, LIVING with the Spirit, RADIATING Joy
You are Called, You Matter , You Belong! I think touching on this subject so we align with the church. The theme that the church is bringing forth for the next 3 years would be wise to connect with...the message is stronger when we are all talking the same talk.
Connecting to spirit.
-making a difference -opening hearts and minds -serving God through serving others -being part of a community
Filled with the Holy Spirit -sacraments -the global Church (Catholicism around the world) -united in faith (welcoming everyone)
The idea that we can always root ourselves in Christ. I always like sub themes of growth
Theme: Witnesses to the world: called to evangelize as one people of God. Sub-themes: encountering Christ, living as one people of God, and sharing the Good News.
devotion, a common understanding or belonging, embracing diversity (using the different languages but everybody was able to understand) --> we are all different but equally have a place with Jesus. "Here I am.. I come to do your will"
See the Word of God, Hear the Word of God, Speak/Act on the Word of God; almost like how we sign on our head, lips, and heart before the Gospel.
A theme I like is "Walking with Christ". I "borrowed it" from the Toronto Catholic Board of Education. Year 1 With Eyes of Hope, Yr 2 Hearts of Kindness and Love, Yr 3 With Minds of Justice and Peace. The faith plan to me allows us to deepen our sense of belonging and caring in our schools and community and follows nicely with Truth and Reconciliation as well. Yr 1 speaks to us about following in Jesus' footsteps by exemplifying love of self, and neighbor as revealed by Micah. Pastoral Plan calls us to be living signs of Christ's presence in the world today as we live the Gospel - believing what we read, preaching what we believe, and practicing what we preach. Through our actions as a community, we commit ourselves to spiritual renewal and growth. We evangelize the proclamation of the Gospel and share the Catholic faith through active participation in meaningful liturgical celebrations in our school and parish communities." Walking with Christ: with eyes of faith and hope, with hearts of kindness and love and with minds of justice and peace" reminds us that we are called to continue to strengthen our sense of belonging to God and one another, to express our belief in God through our vision and mission, and to work to achieve our goals as people on a

common mission. By walking humbly with God, we are invited to closely examine our identity, privilege, and the gifts that God has accorded to us, in relation to the systems of oppression still in existence, and through this, discern what God calls us to do, as models of faith and hope.

Yr 2 the second year of the pastoral plan, we anticipate Walking with Christ, with Hearts of Kindness and Love.

Throughout the Gospel stories, Jesus role-modeled what it means to love with compassion, kindness, courage, and hope. He healed and served those who were marginalized, challenged those who felt they “owned” the truth, and called everyone to conversion in the way they lived their lives. Acting sincerely with hearts of kindness and love requires a giving of ourselves, in big or small ways – whether it is our time, presence, finances, prayers, or actions – we can give generously. Our heart of kindness can draw on the love of Christ that lies deep within us, knowing we are truly beloved. When we center ourselves in God’s love, are we not inspired by gratitude and the desire to share this joy with others? From this, our hearts of kindness and love can flow freely into a beautiful shaping of our community – one that honours the dignity of all persons and proclaims the “kingdom of God” in the here and now. May our journey of Walking with Christ, with Hearts of Kindness and Love, engender patience, peace, openness to listening, meaningful dialogue, reconciliation, trust, and generosity in giving. On this journey may we be nurtured with prayer, reflection, and quality time with God!

Yr 3

Walking with Christ with minds of justice and peace is a transformative journey that includes our thoughts, actions, and beliefs. It involves reflecting on the teachings of Jesus Christ and embodying the principles of justice and peace in all aspects of our lives. To walk with Christ means to follow His example, to cultivate a deep and personal relationship with Him. Christ’s life was characterized by love, compassion, and righteousness. He stood against injustice and sought to uplift the marginalized and oppressed. By walking with Christ, we commit ourselves to the pursuit of justice and peace.

Having a mind of justice means recognizing the inherent dignity and worth of every individual. It requires treating others with fairness, equality, and respect, regardless of their background, race, gender, or social status. Jesus consistently challenged societal norms and prejudices, breaking down barriers and embracing all people. Walking with Christ with a mind of justice compels us to advocate for the rights of the oppressed, to speak out against discrimination, and to work towards a more equitable society. Walking with Christ with a mind of peace involves pursuing harmony, reconciliation, and non-violence in our relationships and interactions. Jesus taught us to be peacemakers, and to seek reconciliation and forgiveness. By embracing justice and peace, we become ambassadors of Christ’s love and compassion. May we all embark on this journey, allowing Christ to guide us as we walk with minds of justice and peace.

Caring for yourself (spiritual health/being; year 1), community (year 2), and the world (year 3).

Hearts on Fire? Armor of God, Stronghold of God, Anchor of Faith

Acts of Mercy.

You belong not just in your families but also in your friendship circles, classrooms, etc

Theme: Called to Sainthood. Sub themes:1. Encountering God "By standing before the Eucharistic Christ, we become Holy."-St Carlos Acutis Encountering God. 2 sub-theme

Thriving not surviving "Our heart is restless until it rests in you" Saint Augustine 3rd sub-theme Convicted through Christ. "I am not afraid, I was born to do this"- St Joan of Arc
Hope, strength, symbol of a rock/mountains
You are Called, You Matter, You Belong. Or, connecting with the Diocese's new 3 year plan.
Something that starts with an encounter with God and leads to The Great Commission
Possible main theme: -United in the Spirit. Sub themes: -They'll know we are Christians by our love -The Gospel is not for believers alone, but for everyone -Do not be afraid to proclaim the name of Jesus
I like the idea of having an action for our faith, how we can best live our faith in terms of relating to others and helping others. As well, the idea of grace seems really important to me as our world seems to be struggling with acceptance and kindness for all of God's creation.
Matthew 25 - We Must Care for People in Need; Mark 1 - John the Baptist Prepares People for Jesus
We are the Body of Christ - Connection, Creation, Celebration
Witnesses, People of Faith, Walking with Christ, Disciples, Shine Your Light for Others
Witnesses - Witness of Jesus' love (learning scripture, acts of charity, etc), Witness of Jesus' mercy (repentance/reconciliation)
I can give and I can receive
Jesus in our heart, head, and hands.
Building Character Through Catholic Values (faith, hope, love, community, dignity of persons, magnanimity, justice, stewardship of creation)?
Solidarity: "We are many parts: We are all one body" (This would address current classroom issues/trends of high anxiety, isolation, selfishness in our classrooms/lack of community, and relationship issues) -the gifts we have, have been given to share - make us one in God - love that we share - cross that we bear - hope in despair (Keep it simple and bring back the golden rule) - 10 commandments - focus on relationship with god and others - The greatest is love - Trinity connection
Sacredness. Jesus going out to the desert to pray and to prepare.

Using Jubilee: Pilgrims of Hope and from the Summit: Sharing the Reason for our Hope
The theme MUST include an action verb that the students can relate to. The best in the past were FEED my Sheep, and WALKING Together. None of them understand nor care what ARISE means/is/does.
community, faith life, witness
Faith in Stewardship (all aspects), Caring for Creation, Faith in action (although this could be similar to proclaim), engaging the heart and mind
Love 1. For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son... (John 3:16-17) 2. Love the Lord, your God with all your heart... (Matt 22:37) 3. Love your neighbour as yourself... (Mark 12:30) 4. ...God is love...John 4:16

What are some verbs/actions/calls that would be useful?

living the Beatitudes, living the virtues, further work with Catholic Social Teaching, serve, scripture study, praying, orienting our lives to God, radiate joy with a life in Christ, Fruits of the Spirit
Hear , See, Serve
Love, laugh, learn.
-giving -compassion - service -sacrifice - community
Embody, manifest . . . ? The "if we believe, then we do" idea?
hear, reflect, evangelize
Immerse, Endurance
Evangelizing begins with a personal encounter with Christ: host parish or school wide retreats, promote scripture, encourage testimonies
Strengthen the unity of the Church as a community or missionary disciples: organize events that celebrate the cultural diversity within the Church, establish small groups for faith sharing, involve families, youth, and marginalized groups in school and leadership roles. Equipping and sending out all members of the Church to evangelize in their families, workplaces, schools, and communities: train students and parishioners to evangelize, partner with mission organizations to provide service opportunities locally and globally

serving, embracing, walking with God
See, Hear, Speak or Show or Act
Justice, Belonging, Love, Humility, Accepting, Peace,
Care, love, connect, respect, exalt, value, support
Faith, Hope, Love, witness, sharing, growing, prayer, journey, Feed, Give, Clothe, Shelter, Visit, Comfort...
faithful, trust, lead
Actions- Monthly adoration at each school. -MANDATORY school retreats with focus on subthemes and overarching themes of sainthood. -Monthly discuss/share a miracle of the Eucharist or a saint at assembly -Have faith be a part of the entire school and not just religion class. -Learn how someone becomes a recognized saint, what's the actual process. -in the beginning of the year write about how you could be a saint and what saintly actions would others bring up your cause for sainthood, what evidence would prove or disprove their claims? (self critical) Re examine mid way point and at the end of the year how you maintained or where you needed to grow in virtue. -Celebrate school saints feast day as such. Have each class choose a saint that represents their "home-room team" or class teams. Add Saint names to each room IE Room 112 St Therese of Lisieux. and have that Saints image be in the classroom, as well as BIO of the saint. Invoke their intercession with morning prayer in each class. (use this saint when classes lead specific things in the school.)
Hope, grace, truth,
"Repent" and "Be Sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit" - these actions spoke to me during Lectio Divina.
Make disciples, baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (connection), teaching (discipleship); ministry to each other; evangelize; worship; awareness of need
Unite Love Forgive Pray Do not be afraid
Acceptance, Grace, Support, Helping, Journey,
Prepare, Acceptance, Understanding
Serve. Share. Give Connect Create Celebrate Rest Love Pray Rejoice See Hear Hope Welcome Invite Make Room Reach Out Forgive Let Go Seek Understanding Comfort Heal Come Together
Love, Lead, Learn, Listen, Encourage and Model
witness, repent, reconcile, renew, evangelize
Teach/lead/learn/understand/share/show

serve, nurture, engage, connect, inspire, transform
Reach, Teach and Equip (to know God, love God, serve God and claim the Kingdom of Heaven)
Love God & Love your neighbour. 10 commandments. Catholic social teachings are all about relationship. Gifts and talents (Holy spirit)
Rest. Learn. Prepare
Pray, Engage, Serve, Proclaim, Celebrate, Participate, Walk,
Scrolling, Getting/Giving the Message, Lifting, Flexing, Backing
I have called you each by name (Isaiah)/ Here I am (Samuel) (call and response), witness, see and hear, breaking of bread (community)
cultivate, restore, encourage, share
invite, cherish, value, appreciate, venerate, honour, respect, appreciate

What scriptures might be a good guide for us?

OLD TESTAMENT

1 Samuel 3:14
 Nehemiah 8:10
 Psalm 23
 Psalm 86:15
 Psalm 100:2-3
 Psalm 117:2
 Proverbs 17:17
 Isaiah 6:8
 Isaiah 25:4
 Isaiah 41:10
 Isaiah 43
 Isaiah 54:10
 Isaiah 61:1-2
 Jeremiah 29:11-12
 Micah 6:8

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 5:1-11
 Matthew 5:9
 Matthew 5:16
 Matthew 14:25-33
 Matthew 16:13-19

Matthew 17:20
 Matthew 22:37
 Matthew 25:35-40
 Matthew 28:18-20
 Mark 1:35
 Mark 12:30
 Mark 16:15
 Luke 1:41-42
 Luke 4:18-19
 Luke 24:32
 John 1:39
 John 3:16
 John 4:13-24

NEW TESTAMENT cont.'d

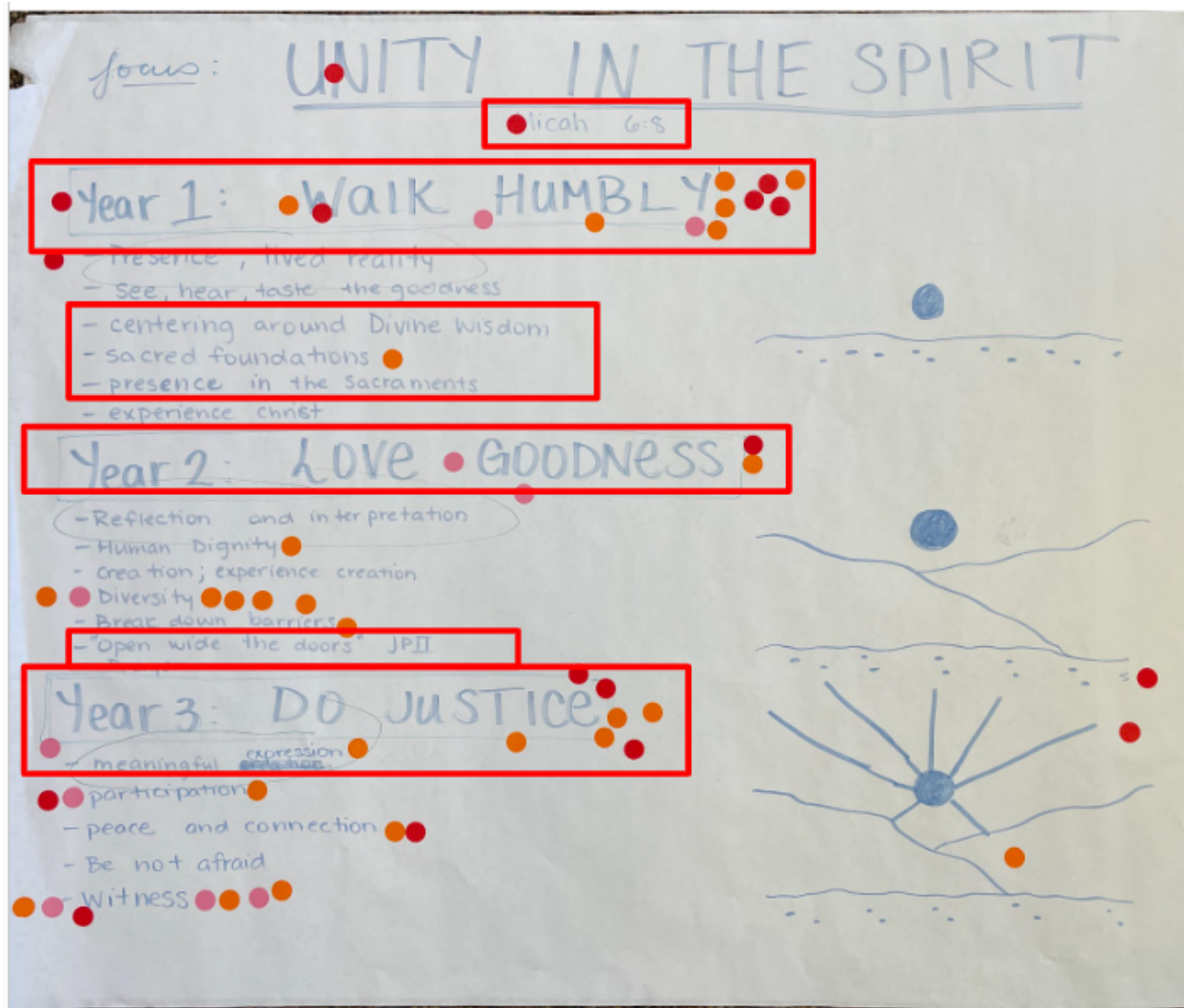
John 9:1-41
 John 13:35
 John 15:5
 John 15:13
 John 16:25-33
 John 20:27-29
 Acts 1:7-8
 Acts 2:42-47
 Acts 4:32

Romans 12:4-8
Romans 15:7
1 Corinthians 12:14-26
2 Corinthians 1:3-4
Galatians 5:22
Ephesians 2:7
Ephesians 2:14
Ephesians 4:4-6
Ephesians 4:32
Philippians 4:4
Colossians 3:12
Colossians 3:14
1 Thessalonians 5:11

1 Timothy 4:15
2 Timothy 3:14-15
2 Timothy 3:16-17
Hebrews 4:15
Hebrews 10:24-25
Hebrews 12:1-2
Hebrews 13:1-2
James 1:19
James 1:22
James 2:13
1 Peter 1:8
1 Peter 2:9
1 Peter 4:10

DRAFT

APPENDIX B "Dot Voting" Pictures



AVAILABILITY

Equip

KNOW (Empower the mind)

- Bible stories
- Catholic teachings

→ More, say

HEAD

- "Where do I fit in these stories?"
- "What do they teach me about my relationship with God?"

BELONG (Ignite)

- Community

HEART

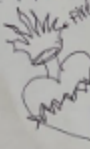
- Church/School/Home
- Inquire students to participate/lead at Mass.

INSPIRE (Serve)

- Ability
- WORK/WITNESS to others

HANDS

IMAGE OF SACRED HEART



Google - Sacred Heart

- CROWN → Equip/Empower
- HEART → Belong
- FIRE → Inspire

Year One: Reflect

- where we've been, where we are, where we're going
- what is our purpose?
 - self
 - street
 - church
 - community
- "Be still and know I AM GOD" - Psalm 46:10

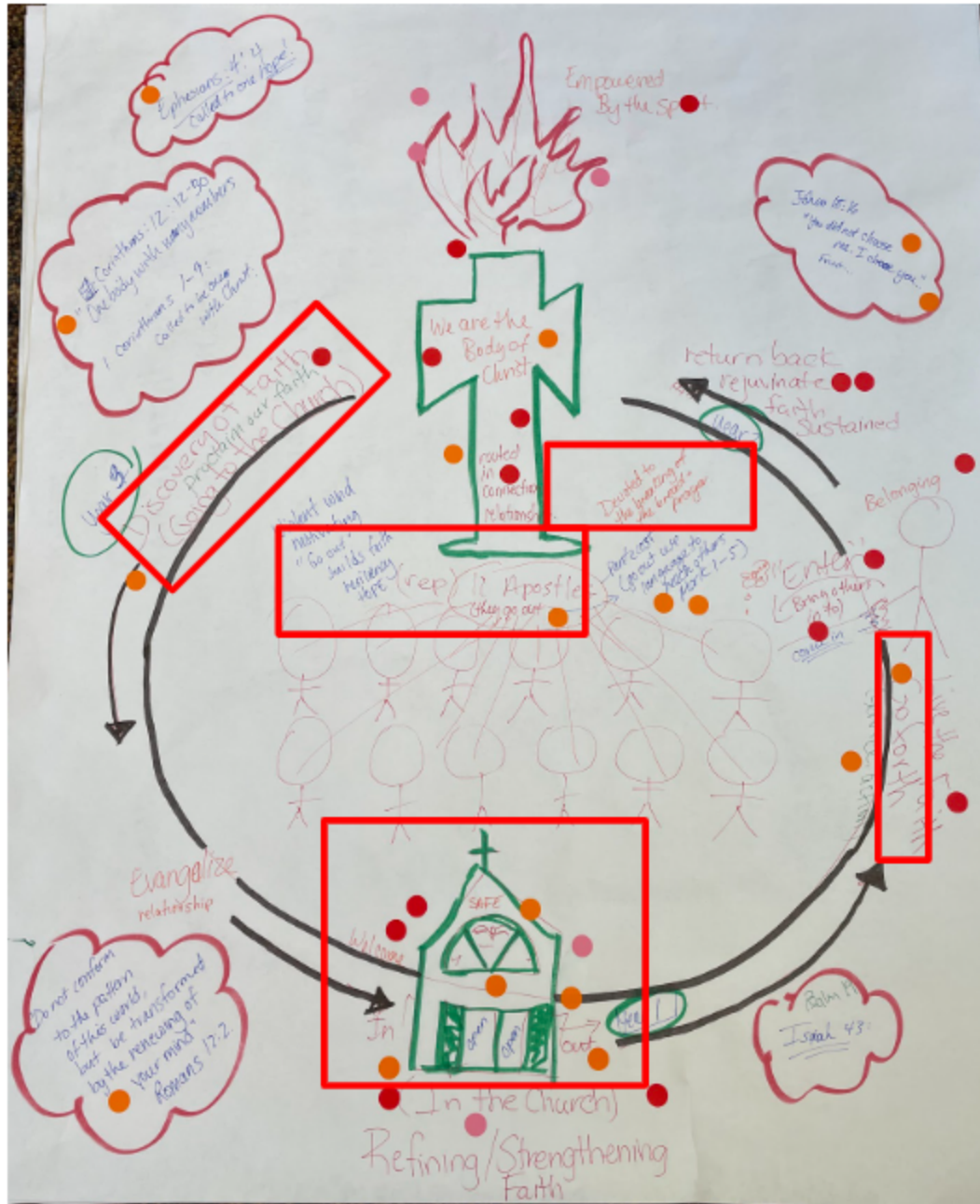
IMAGE
Breaking Bread

Year Two: Connect

- strengthening community bonds
- knowledge of the faith
- understanding mission of the Church
- Romans 12:5
- connect with the past and to the future

Year Three: Serve

- encounter
- bare witness
- living out your faith
- do small things with GREAT love
- finding and sharing the joy



James 1:22 "But be ye doers of the word, not hearers only..."

Matthew 28:19-20 "Go therefore make disciples of all nations..."

Ephesians 5:8-10 "For you were here to darkness, but now

From the doors of the church

opening the doors

"Go forth and live the Gospel with your lives"

Bringing the Word to life

Light in the Lord."

Beatitudes
Sermon on the Mount

* circles = puzzle pieces

diversity
we build together "all together in this place"

Community

TRUTH

Wind
Fire

Joy

Joy

Joy

Joy

Joy

Joy

Joy

Joy

Joy

Joy

Joy

Joy

Joy

Joy

Joy

Joy

Joy

Joy

Joy

Joy

Joy

Joy

Joy

Joy

Joy

Joy

First Nation (Buffalo)
Landscapes / horizons
Symbolizing a journey

Tree
Land

Water

parish

Being more all together in one place - different
but still one "one" ability
All of us are witnesses
Holy Spirit - God/Father, Jesus/son -
elements - fire, wind, water
Renewal?

Going Together?
-continually from one faith place to the next
through "the years"
-unity / solidarity of the nation - all
- all

Listen
Head



Heart
(Holy Spirit)
(Ankeration)

Major action word/DO
Here I am Lord?



Image Ideas

Jesus-Sermon on Mount
Image in 9/7 text

Be amazed...
tell about it!



Image

- People
- Children
- Sun
- Eggs

Encounter
Witness
Called
God is love
Invitation
Communion/
Community

Go
Back to
Baptism
of Initiation
to FAITH
SPIRIT

Celebrate Diversity... (all are welcome)

"Do justice, love mercy walk humbly with our Lord." (Micah)

"We are all children of God"

"Father me"

Encounter

- Jesus on boat
- sacred heart of Jesus
- apostles' stories

Jesus always open
- kid running to him.
- light goes toward w/ light
- kid goes forward w/ light

Jesus with the children.

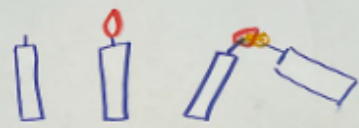
1) Love

- God, self, others
- relationship

- candle giving candle
- 1) God lighting your flame
- 2) lighting your flame
- 3) passing the flame to others.

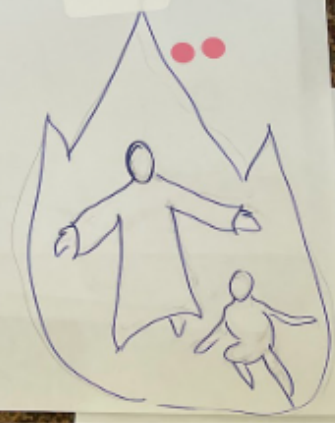
2) Belonging

- diversity
- connection
- dignity



3) Witness

- share with others
- conviction
- calling ... What or who are we being called to do or be?
- solidarity?



- Songs
- Refrains Fire (Zechariah 12:9)
 - "Come with Your Fire"
 - - Carlos George "Hands Song"
 - - Pecos "Bethel House"

Isaiah 43:10-12
You ARE my witness.



1:16-17
You are the light of the world
Matthew 5:14-16

- Heart - Sacred Heart of Jesus
- Heart is personal, speaks to us.
- Witness
- Truth & purpose
- Intention of Trans.

To Receive
and to give
are joined

Brotherhood,
9 Nations
Peter 2:9

- Fire
- Ignite
- The Holy Spirit
- Action & Calling - Pentecost
- Discipleship
- Dedication to faith

Road to
Emmanuel
"where our
Hearts rest
Burns"

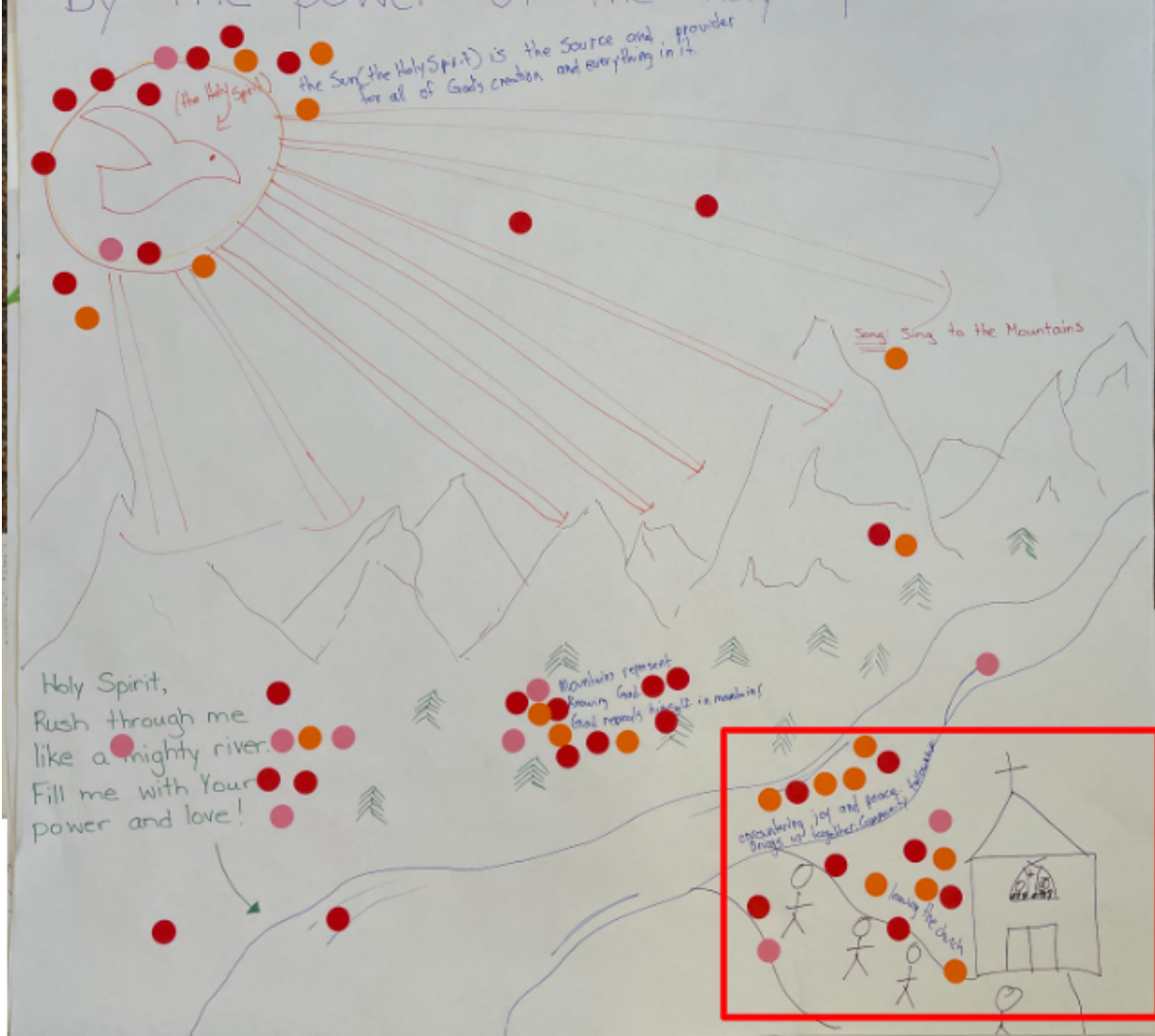
God is
Fire
Abraham 29

- Hands
- Purpose
- Service (Hands of Christ)
- belonging
- Community & Connection
- Fellowship
- Prayer

1 Cor 12:27
You are the
Body of
Christ

- EASTER

May the God of hope fill you with
all joy and peace as you trust in him,
so that you may overflow with hope
by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13



APPENDIX C: Three Year Faith Plan Overview

Open Wide the Doors!

2025-2028 Faith Plan Overview

And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation." (Mark 16:15)

Main Scripture	Mark 16:15	And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation."				
Secondary Scripture	Micah 6:8	...What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?				
YEAR ONE						
Know God						
Year Scripture	Pilgrims	We are called to...	By encountering God in...	Marks	Spes Non Confundit	Formation
"Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." (Matthew 11:29)	Walk Humbly With God	Know God	The Word	Christian Anthropology In our Catholic Schools, we know that each person is created in the image of God and has an eternal destiny.	⁶ Now the time has come for a new Jubilee, when once more the Holy Door will be flung open to invite everyone to an intense experience of the love of God that awakens in hearts the sure hope of salvation in Christ.	The Parables in Luke
YEAR TWO						
Love God						
Year Scripture	Pilgrims	We are called to...	By encountering God in...	Marks	Dilexit Nos	Formation
"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." (Acts 2:42)	Love Kindness	Love God	The Mass / The Sacred Heart of Jesus	Gospel Witness In our Catholic Schools, we witness to others a life lived in relationship with Jesus, and participate actively in the life of the Church.	⁶⁴ ...in the Eucharist the merciful and ever-present love of the heart of Christ invites us to union with him. It can also be said that this practice can prove similarly beneficial in our own time, for a different reason. Amid the frenetic pace of today's world and our obsession with free time, consumption and diversion, cell phones and social media, we forget to nourish our lives with the strength of the Eucharist.	The Mass
YEAR THREE						
Serve God						
Year Scripture	Pilgrims	We are called to...	By encountering God in...	Marks	Evangelii Gaudium	Formation
"Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind." (1 Peter 3:8)	Do Justice	Serve God	One Another	Christian Anthropology and Spirituality of Communion In our Catholic Schools, we embrace the dignity of all, recognizing that God will be found in each other.	^{48, 49} If the whole Church takes up this missionary impulse, she has to go forth to everyone without exception. But to whom should she go first? When we read the Gospel we find a clear indication: not so much our friends and wealthy neighbours, but above all the poor and the sick, those who are usually despised and overlooked, "those who cannot repay you" (Lk 14:14)...Let us go forth, then, let us go forth to offer everyone the life of Jesus Christ.	The Beatitudes

[Expanded Version](#)

Appendix D: Papal Writings

The logical Papal writings that emerged in this discernment are Pope Francis' bull *Spes Non Confundit* (Hope Does Not Disappoint), his encyclical letter *Dilexit Nos* (He Loved Us - October 24, 2024), and his encyclical letter *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel - November 24, 2013). A selection of relevant quotes follows:

- *Spes Non Confundit* ([Hope Does Not Disappoint](#))
 - 3. *Hope is born of love and based on the love springing from the pierced heart of Jesus upon the cross.*
 - 6. *Now the time has come for a new Jubilee, when once more the Holy Door will be flung open to invite everyone to an intense experience of the love of God that awakens in hearts the sure hope of salvation in Christ.*
 - 12. *With renewed passion, let us demonstrate care and concern for adolescents, students and young couples, the rising generation. Let us draw close to the young, for they are the joy and hope of the Church and of the world!*
 - 13. *May the Christian community always be prepared to defend the rights of those who are most vulnerable, opening wide its doors to welcome them, lest anyone ever be robbed of the hope of a better future.*
 - 17. *All the baptized, with their respective charisms and ministries, are co-responsible for ensuring that manifold signs of hope bear witness to God's presence in the world.*
 - 25. *The coming Jubilee will thus be a Holy Year marked by the hope that does not fade, our hope in God... Through our witness, may hope spread to all those who anxiously seek it.*
- *Dilexit Nos* ([He Loved Us](#))
 - This papal encyclical is a way of embedding the Sacred Heart of Jesus (which was referenced so strongly in our consultations) into the plan as we examine Christ's love for us.
 - 2. *The symbol of the heart has often been used to express the love of Jesus Christ. Some have questioned whether this symbol is still meaningful today. Yet living as we do in an age of superficiality, rushing frenetically from one thing to another without really knowing why, and ending up as insatiable consumers and slaves to the mechanisms of a market unconcerned about the deeper meaning of our lives, all of us need to rediscover the importance of the heart.*
 - 8. *Instead of running after superficial satisfactions and playing a role for the benefit of others, we would do better to think about the really important questions in life. Who am I, really? What am I looking for? What direction do I want to give to my life, my decisions and my actions? Why and for what purpose am I in this world? How do I want to look back on my life once it ends? What meaning do I want to give to all my experiences? Who do I want to be for others? Who am I for God? All these questions lead us back to the heart.*
 - 11. *If we devalue the heart, we also devalue what it means to speak from the heart, to act with the heart, to cultivate and heal the heart. If we fail to appreciate the specificity of the heart, we miss the messages that the mind alone cannot communicate; we miss out on the richness of our encounters with others; we*

miss out on poetry. We also lose track of history and our own past, since our real personal history is built with the heart. At the end of our lives, that alone will matter.

- 14. It could be said, then, that I am my heart, for my heart is what sets me apart, shapes my spiritual identity and puts me in communion with other people. The algorithms operating in the digital world show that our thoughts and will are much more “uniform” than we had previously thought. They are easily predictable and thus capable of being manipulated. That is not the case with the heart.
- 18. We see, then, that in the heart of each person there is a mysterious connection between self-knowledge and openness to others, between the encounter with one’s personal uniqueness and the willingness to give oneself to others. We become ourselves only to the extent that we acquire the ability to acknowledge others, while only those who can acknowledge and accept themselves are then able to encounter others.
- 21. In a word, if love reigns in our heart, we become, in a complete and luminous way, the persons we are meant to be, for every human being is created above all else for love. In the deepest fibre of our being, we were made to love and to be loved.
- 25. At that point, we realize that in God’s eyes we are a “Thou”, and for that very reason we can be an “I”. Indeed, only the Lord offers to treat each one of us as a “Thou”, always and forever. Accepting his friendship is a matter of the heart; it is what constitutes us as persons in the fullest sense of that word.
- 26. Saint Bonaventure tells us that in the end we should not pray for light, but for “raging fire”. [17] He teaches that, “faith is in the intellect, in such a way as to provoke affection. In this sense, for example, the knowledge that Christ died for us does not remain knowledge, but necessarily becomes affection, love”. [18] Along the same lines, Saint John Henry Newman took as his motto the phrase Cor ad cor loquitur, since, beyond all our thoughts and ideas, the Lord saves us by speaking to our hearts from his Sacred Heart. This realization led him, the distinguished intellectual, to recognize that his deepest encounter with himself and with the Lord came not from his reading or reflection, but from his prayerful dialogue, heart to heart, with Christ, alive and present. It was in the Eucharist that Newman encountered the living heart of Jesus, capable of setting us free, giving meaning to each moment of our lives, and bestowing true peace: “O most Sacred, most loving Heart of Jesus, Thou art concealed in the Holy Eucharist, and Thou beatest for us still... I worship Thee then with all my best love and awe, with my fervent affection, with my most subdued, most resolved will. O my God, when Thou dost condescend to suffer me to receive Thee, to eat and drink Thee, and Thou for a while takest up Thy abode within me, O make my heart beat with Thy Heart. Purify it of all that is earthly, all that is proud and sensual, all that is hard and cruel, of all perversity, of all disorder, of all deadness. So fill it with Thee, that neither the events of the day nor the circumstances of the time may have power to ruffle it, but that in Thy love and Thy fear it may have peace”.

- 27. Before the heart of Jesus, living and present, our mind, enlightened by the Spirit, grows in the understanding of his words and our will is moved to put them into practice. This could easily remain on the level of a kind of self-reliant moralism. Hearing and tasting the Lord, and paying him due honour, however, is a matter of the heart. Only the heart is capable of setting our other powers and passions, and our entire person, in a stance of reverence and loving obedience before the Lord.
- 28. The heart of Christ is “ecstasy”, openness, gift and encounter. In that heart, we learn to relate to one another in wholesome and happy ways, and to build up in this world God’s kingdom of love and justice. Our hearts, united with the heart of Christ, are capable of working this social miracle.
- 31. In the end, that Sacred Heart is the unifying principle of all reality, since “Christ is the heart of the world, and the paschal mystery of his death and resurrection is the centre of history, which, because of him, is a history of salvation”. [25] All creatures “are moving forward with us and through us towards a common point of arrival, which is God, in that transcendent fullness where the risen Christ embraces and illumines all things”.
- 32. The heart of Christ, as the symbol of the deepest and most personal source of his love for us, is the very core of the initial preaching of the Gospel. It stands at the origin of our faith, as the wellspring that refreshes and enlivens our Christian beliefs.
- 33. Christ showed the depth of his love for us not by lengthy explanations but by concrete actions. By examining his interactions with others, we can come to realize how he treats each one of us, even though at times this may be difficult to see. Let us now turn to the place where our faith can encounter this truth: the word of God.
- 48. Devotion to the heart of Christ is not the veneration of a single organ apart from the Person of Jesus. What we contemplate and adore is the whole Jesus Christ, the Son of God made man, represented by an image that accentuates his heart. That heart of flesh is seen as the privileged sign of the inmost being of the incarnate Son and his love, both divine and human. More than any other part of his body, the heart of Jesus is “the natural sign and symbol of his boundless love”.
- 51. In a natural and direct way, it points us to him and to him alone, who calls us to a precious friendship marked by dialogue, affection, trust and adoration. The Christ we see depicted with a pierced and burning heart is the same Christ who, for love of us, was born in Bethlehem, passed through Galilee healing the sick, embracing sinners and showing mercy. The same Christ who loved us to the very end, opening wide his arms on the cross, who then rose from the dead and now lives among us in glory.
- 54. It is understandable, then, that the Church has chosen the image of the heart to represent the human and divine love of Jesus Christ and the inmost core of his Person. Yet, while the depiction of a heart afire may be an eloquent symbol of the burning love of Jesus Christ, it is important that this heart not be represented

apart from him. In this way, his summons to a personal relationship of encounter and dialogue will become all the more meaningful. [33] The venerable image portraying Christ holding out his loving heart also shows him looking directly at us, inviting us to encounter, dialogue and trust; it shows his strong hands capable of supporting us and his lips that speak personally to each of us.

- 59. Yet we cannot attain our fulfilment as human beings unless we open our hearts to others: only through love do we become fully ourselves. The deepest part of us, created for love, will fulfil God's plan only if we learn to love. And the heart is the symbol of that love.
- 67. Entering into the heart of Christ, we feel loved by a human heart filled with affections and emotions like our own. Jesus' human will freely choose to love us, and that spiritual love is flooded with grace and charity. When we plunge into the depths of his heart, we find ourselves overwhelmed by the immense glory of his infinite love as the eternal Son, which we can no longer separate from his human love. It is precisely in his human love, and not apart from it, that we encounter his divine love: we discover "the infinite in the finite".
- 77. Saint John Paul II taught that, "the Saviour's heart invites us to return to the Father's love, which is the source of every authentic love". [68] This is precisely what the Holy Spirit, who comes to us through the heart of Christ, seeks to nurture in our hearts. For this reason, the liturgy, through the enlivening work of the Spirit, always addresses the Father from the risen heart of Christ.
- 83. Devotion to Christ's heart is essential for our Christian life to the extent that it expresses our openness in faith and adoration to the mystery of the Lord's divine and human love. In this sense, we can once more affirm that the Sacred Heart is a synthesis of the Gospel.
- 84. ...in the Eucharist the merciful and ever-present love of the heart of Christ invites us to union with him. It can also be said that this practice can prove similarly beneficial in our own time, for a different reason. Amid the frenetic pace of today's world and our obsession with free time, consumption and diversion, cell phones and social media, we forget to nourish our lives with the strength of the Eucharist.
- 88. I would add that the heart of Christ also frees us from another kind of dualism found in communities and pastors excessively caught up in external activities, structural reforms that have little to do with the Gospel, obsessive reorganization plans, worldly projects, secular ways of thinking and mandatory programmes. The result is often a Christianity stripped of the tender consolations of faith, the joy of serving others, the fervour of personal commitment to mission, the beauty of knowing Christ and the profound gratitude born of the friendship he offers and the ultimate meaning he gives to our lives.
- 89. This leads me to propose to the whole Church renewed reflection on the love of Christ represented in his Sacred Heart. For there we find the whole Gospel, a synthesis of the truths of our faith, all that we adore and seek in faith, all that responds to our deepest needs.

- 101. The pierced heart of Christ embodies all God's declarations of love present in the Scriptures. That love is no mere matter of words; rather, the open side of his Son is a source of life for those whom he loves, the fount that quenches the thirst of his people.
- 106. Saint Bonaventure unites these two spiritual currents. He presents the heart of Christ as the source of the sacraments and of grace, and urges that our contemplation of that heart become a relationship between friends, a personal encounter of love.
- 115. For Francis de Sales, true devotion had nothing to do with superstition or perfunctory piety, since it entails a personal relationship in which each of us feels uniquely and individually known and loved by Christ. "This most adorable and lovable heart of our Master, burning with the love which he professes to us, [is] a heart on which all our names are written... Surely it is a source of profound consolation to know that we are loved so deeply by our Lord, who constantly carries us in his heart". [104] With the image of our names written on the heart of Christ, Saint Francis sought to express the extent to which Christ's love for each of us is not something abstract and generic, but utterly personal, enabling each believer to feel known and respected for who he or she is.
- 148. Devotion to the heart of Christ reappears in the spiritual journey of many saints, all quite different from each other: in every one of them, the devotion takes on new hues.
- 157. We see, then, the unity of the paschal mystery in these two inseparable and mutually enriching aspects. The one mystery, present by grace in both these dimensions, ensures that whenever we offer some suffering of our own to Christ for his consolation, that suffering is illuminated and transfigured in the paschal light of his love. We share in this mystery in our own life because Christ himself first chose to share in that life. He wished to experience first, as Head, what he would then experience in his Body, the Church: both our wounds and our consolations. When we live in God's grace, this mutual sharing becomes for us a spiritual experience. In a word, the risen Lord, by the working of his grace, mysteriously unites us to his passion. The hearts of the faithful, who experience the joy of the resurrection, yet at the same time desire to share in the Lord's passion, understand this. They desire to share in his sufferings by offering him the sufferings, the struggles, the disappointments and the fears that are part of their own lives. Nor do they experience this as isolated individuals, since their sufferings are also a participation in the suffering of the mystical Body of Christ, the holy pilgrim People of God, which shares in the passion of Christ in every time and place. The devotion of consolation, then, is in no way ahistorical or abstract; it becomes flesh and blood in the Church's pilgrimage through history.
- 158. The natural desire to console Christ, which begins with our sorrow in contemplating what he endured for us, grows with the honest acknowledgment of our bad habits, compulsions, attachments, weak faith, vain goals and, together with our actual sins, the failure of our hearts to respond to the Lord's love and his plan for our lives.

- 163. This then challenges us to seek a deeper understanding of the communitarian, social and missionary dimension of all authentic devotion to the heart of Christ. For even as Christ's heart leads us to the Father, it sends us forth to our brothers and sisters. In the fruits of service, fraternity and mission that the heart of Christ inspires in our lives, the will of the Father is fulfilled.
- 167. We need once more to take up the word of God and to realize, in doing so, that our best response to the love of Christ's heart is to love our brothers and sisters. There is no greater way for us to return love for love.
- 182. In union with Christ, amid the ruins we have left in this world by our sins, we are called to build a new civilization of love. That is what it means to make reparation as the heart of Christ would have us do. Amid the devastation wrought by evil, the heart of Christ desires that we cooperate with him in restoring goodness and beauty to our world.
- 203. Acts of love of neighbour, with the renunciation, self-denial, suffering and effort that they entail, can only be such when they are nourished by Christ's own love. He enables us to love as he loved, and in this way he loves and serves others through us. He humbles himself to show his love through our actions, yet even in our slightest works of mercy, his heart is glorified and displays all its grandeur. Once our hearts welcome the love of Christ in complete trust, and enable its fire to spread in our lives, we become capable of loving others as Christ did, in humility and closeness to all. In this way, Christ satisfies his thirst and gloriously spreads the flames of his ardent and gracious love in us and through us.
- 209. Mission, as a radiation of the love of the heart of Christ, requires missionaries who are themselves in love and who, enthralled by Christ, feel bound to share this love that has changed their lives.
- 211. Christ asks you never to be ashamed to tell others, with all due discretion and respect, about your friendship with him. He asks that you dare to tell others how good and beautiful it is that you found him.
- 212. We should not think of this mission of sharing Christ as something only between Jesus and me. Mission is experienced in fellowship with our communities and with the whole Church. If we turn aside from the community, we will be turning aside from Jesus. If we turn our back on the community, our friendship with Jesus will grow cold. This is a fact, and we must never forget it. Love for the brothers and sisters of our communities – religious, parochial, diocesan and others – is a kind of fuel that feeds our friendship with Jesus. Our acts of love for our brothers and sisters in community may well be the best and, at times, the only way that we can witness to others our love for Jesus Christ.
- 213. This love then becomes service within the community. I never tire of repeating that Jesus told us this in the clearest terms possible: "Just as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me" (Mt 25:40). He now asks you to meet him there, in every one of our brothers and sisters, and especially in the poor, the despised and the abandoned members of society. What a beautiful encounter that can be!

- 214. *If we are concerned with helping others, this in no way means that we are turning away from Jesus. Rather, we are encountering him in another way. Whenever we try to help and care for another person, Jesus is at our side. We should never forget that, when he sent his disciples on mission, “the Lord worked with them” (Mk 16:20). He is always there, always at work, sharing our efforts to do good. In a mysterious way, his love becomes present through our service. He speaks to the world in a language that at times has no need of words.*
- 215. *Jesus is calling you and sending you forth to spread goodness in our world. His call is one of service, a summons to do good, perhaps as a physician, a mother, a teacher or a priest. Wherever you may be, you can hear his call and realize that he is sending you forth to carry out that mission.*
- 216. *In your own way, you too must be a missionary, like the apostles and the first disciples of Jesus, who went forth to proclaim the love of God, to tell others that Christ is alive and worth knowing. Saint Therese experienced this as an essential part of her oblation to merciful Love: “I wanted to give my Beloved to drink and I felt myself consumed with a thirst for souls”. [227] That is your mission as well. Each of us must carry it out in his or her own way; you will come to see how you can be a missionary. Jesus deserves no less. If you accept the challenge, he will enlighten you, accompany you and strengthen you, and you will have an enriching experience that will bring you much happiness. It is not important whether you see immediate results; leave that to the Lord who works in the secret of our hearts. Keep experiencing the joy born of our efforts to share the love of Christ with others.*
- Evangelii Gaudium ([The Joy of the Gospel](#))
 - **ADD STUFF HERE**
 - 2. *The great danger in today’s world, pervaded as it is by consumerism, is the desolation and anguish born of a complacent yet covetous heart, the feverish pursuit of frivolous pleasures, and a blunted conscience. Whenever our interior life becomes caught up in its own interests and concerns, there is no longer room for others, no place for the poor. God’s voice is no longer heard, the quiet joy of his love is no longer felt, and the desire to do good fades. This is a very real danger for believers too. Many fall prey to it, and end up resentful, angry and listless. That is no way to live a dignified and fulfilled life; it is not God’s will for us, nor is it the life in the Spirit which has its source in the heart of the risen Christ.*
 - 3. *...Time and time again he bears us on his shoulders. No one can strip us of the dignity bestowed upon us by this boundless and unfailing love. With a tenderness which never disappoints, but is always capable of restoring our joy, he makes it possible for us to lift up our heads and to start anew. Let us not flee from the resurrection of Jesus, let us never give up, come what will. May nothing inspire more than his life, which impels us onwards!*
 - 7. *Sometimes we are tempted to find excuses and complain, acting as if we could only be happy if a thousand conditions were met. To some extent this is because our “technological society has succeeded in multiplying occasions of pleasure, yet has found it very difficult to engender joy”.[2] I can say that the most beautiful*

and natural expressions of joy which I have seen in my life were in poor people who had little to hold on to. I also think of the real joy shown by others who, even amid pressing professional obligations, were able to preserve, in detachment and simplicity, a heart full of faith. In their own way, all these instances of joy flow from the infinite love of God, who has revealed himself to us in Jesus Christ. I never tire of repeating those words of Benedict XVI which take us to the very heart of the Gospel: "Being a Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction".

- 8. Thanks solely to this encounter – or renewed encounter – with God's love, which blossoms into an enriching friendship, we are liberated from our narrowness and self-absorption. We become fully human when we become more than human, when we let God bring us beyond ourselves in order to attain the fullest truth of our being. Here we find the source and inspiration of all our efforts at evangelization. For if we have received the love which restores meaning to our lives, how can we fail to share that love with others?
- 13. Nor should we see the newness of this mission as entailing a kind of displacement or forgetfulness of the living history which surrounds us and carries us forward. Memory is a dimension of our faith which we might call "deuteronomic", not unlike the memory of Israel itself. Jesus leaves us the Eucharist as the Church's daily remembrance of, and deeper sharing in, the event of his Passover (cf. Lk 22:19). The joy of evangelizing always arises from grateful remembrance: it is a grace which we constantly need to implore. The apostles never forgot the moment when Jesus touched their hearts: "It was about four o'clock in the afternoon" (Jn 1:39). Together with Jesus, this remembrance makes present to us "a great cloud of witnesses" (Heb 12:1), some of whom, as believers, we recall with great joy: "Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God" (Heb 13:7). Some of them were ordinary people who were close to us and introduced us to the life of faith: "I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice" (2 Tim 1:5). The believer is essentially "one who remembers".
- 14. Attentive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit who helps us together to read the signs of the times, the XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops gathered from 7-28 October 2012 to discuss the theme: *The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith*. The Synod reaffirmed that the new evangelization is a summons addressed to all and that it is carried out in three principal settings.[10]
 - In first place, we can mention the area of ordinary pastoral ministry, which is "animated by the fire of the Spirit, so as to inflame the hearts of the faithful who regularly take part in community worship and gather on the Lord's day to be nourished by his word and by the bread of eternal life".[11] In this category we can also include those members of faithful who preserve a deep and sincere faith, expressing it in different ways, but seldom taking part in worship. Ordinary pastoral ministry seeks to help

believers to grow spiritually so that they can respond to God's love ever more fully in their lives.

- A second area is that of “the baptized whose lives do not reflect the demands of Baptism”, [12] who lack a meaningful relationship to the Church and no longer experience the consolation born of faith. The Church, in her maternal concern, tries to help them experience a conversion which will restore the joy of faith to their hearts and inspire a commitment to the Gospel.
- Lastly, we cannot forget that evangelization is first and foremost about preaching the Gospel to those who do not know Jesus Christ or who have always rejected him. Many of them are quietly seeking God, led by a yearning to see his face, even in countries of ancient Christian tradition. All of them have a right to receive the Gospel. Christians have the duty to proclaim the Gospel without excluding anyone. Instead of seeming to impose new obligations, they should appear as people who wish to share their joy, who point to a horizon of beauty and who invite others to a delicious banquet. It is not by proselytizing that the Church grows, but “by attraction”. [13]
- 20. The word of God constantly shows us how God challenges those who believe in him “to go forth”. Abraham received the call to set out for a new land (cf. Gen 12:1-3). Moses heard God's call: “Go, I send you” (Ex 3:10) and led the people towards the promised land (cf. Ex 3:17). To Jeremiah God says: “To all whom I send you, you shall go” (Jer 1:7). In our day Jesus' command to “go and make disciples” echoes in the changing scenarios and ever new challenges to the Church's mission of evangelization, and all of us are called to take part in this new missionary “going forth”. Each Christian and every community must discern the path that the Lord points out, but all of us are asked to obey his call to go forth from our own comfort zone in order to reach all the “peripheries” in need of the light of the Gospel.
- 21. The Gospel joy which enlivens the community of disciples is a missionary joy. The seventy-two disciples felt it as they returned from their mission (cf. Lk 10:17). Jesus felt it when he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and praised the Father for revealing himself to the poor and the little ones (cf. Lk 10:21). It was felt by the first converts who marvelled to hear the apostles preaching “in the native language of each” (Acts 2:6) on the day of Pentecost. This joy is a sign that the Gospel has been proclaimed and is bearing fruit. Yet the drive to go forth and give, to go out from ourselves, to keep pressing forward in our sowing of the good seed, remains ever present. The Lord says: “Let us go on to the next towns that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out” (Mk 1:38). Once the seed has been sown in one place, Jesus does not stay behind to explain things or to perform more signs; the Spirit moves him to go forth to other towns.
- 24. The Church which “goes forth” is a community of missionary disciples who take the first step, who are involved and supportive, who bear fruit and rejoice. An evangelizing community knows that the Lord has taken the initiative, he has

loved us first (cf. 1 Jn 4:19), and therefore we can move forward, boldly take the initiative, go out to others, seek those who have fallen away, stand at the crossroads and welcome the outcast. Such a community has an endless desire to show mercy, the fruit of its own experience of the power of the Father's infinite mercy. Let us try a little harder to take the first step and to become involved. Jesus washed the feet of his disciples. The Lord gets involved and he involves his own, as he kneels to wash their feet. He tells his disciples: "You will be blessed if you do this" (Jn 13:17). An evangelizing community gets involved by word and deed in people's daily lives: it bridges distances, it is willing to abase itself if necessary, and it embraces human life, touching the suffering flesh of Christ in others. Evangelizers thus take on the "smell of the sheep" and the sheep are willing to hear their voice. An evangelizing community is also supportive, standing by people at every step of the way, no matter how difficult or lengthy this may prove to be. It is familiar with patient expectation and apostolic endurance. Evangelization consists mostly of patience and disregard for constraints of time. Faithful to the Lord's gift, it also bears fruit. An evangelizing community is always concerned with fruit, because the Lord wants her to be fruitful. It cares for the grain and does not grow impatient at the weeds. The sower, when he sees weeds sprouting among the grain does not grumble or overreact. He or she finds a way to let the word take flesh in a particular situation and bear fruits of new life, however imperfect or incomplete these may appear. The disciple is ready to put his or her whole life on the line, even to accepting martyrdom, in bearing witness to Jesus Christ, yet the goal is not to make enemies but to see God's word accepted and its capacity for liberation and renewal revealed. Finally an evangelizing community is filled with joy: it knows how to rejoice always. It celebrates every small victory, every step forward in the work of evangelization. Evangelization with joy becomes beauty in the liturgy, as part of our daily concern to spread goodness. The Church evangelizes and is herself evangelized through the beauty of the liturgy, which is both a celebration of the task of evangelization and the source of her renewed self-giving.

- 39. Just as the organic unity existing among the virtues means that no one of them can be excluded from the Christian ideal, so no truth may be denied. The integrity of the Gospel message must not be deformed. What is more, each truth is better understood when related to the harmonious totality of the Christian message; in this context all of the truths are important and illumine one another. When preaching is faithful to the Gospel, the centrality of certain truths is evident and it becomes clear that Christian morality is not a form of stoicism, or self-denial, or merely a practical philosophy or a catalogue of sins and faults. Before all else, the Gospel invites us to respond to the God of love who saves us, to see God in others and to go forth from ourselves to seek the good of others. Under no circumstance can this invitation be obscured! All of the virtues are at the service of this response of love. If this invitation does not radiate forcefully and attractively, the edifice of the Church's moral teaching risks becoming a house of cards, and this is our greatest risk. It would mean that it is not the

Gospel which is being preached, but certain doctrinal or moral points based on specific ideological options. The message will run the risk of losing its freshness and will cease to have "the fragrance of the Gospel".

- 45. We see then that the task of evangelization operates within the limits of language and of circumstances. It constantly seeks to communicate more effectively the truth of the Gospel in a specific context, without renouncing the truth, the goodness and the light which it can bring whenever perfection is not possible. A missionary heart is aware of these limits and makes itself "weak with the weak... everything for everyone" (1 Cor 9:22). It never closes itself off, never retreats into its own security, never opts for rigidity and defensiveness. It realizes that it has to grow in its own understanding of the Gospel and in discerning the paths of the Spirit, and so it always does what good it can, even if in the process, its shoes get soiled by the mud of the street.
- 46. A Church which "goes forth" is a Church whose doors are open. Going out to others in order to reach the fringes of humanity does not mean rushing out aimlessly into the world. Often it is better simply to slow down, to put aside our eagerness in order to see and listen to others, to stop rushing from one thing to another and to remain with someone who has faltered along the way. At times we have to be like the father of the prodigal son, who always keeps his door open so that when the son returns, he can readily pass through it.
- 47. The Church is called to be the house of the Father, with doors always wide open. One concrete sign of such openness is that our church doors should always be open, so that if someone, moved by the Spirit, comes there looking for God, he or she will not find a closed door. There are other doors that should not be closed either. Everyone can share in some way in the life of the Church; everyone can be part of the community, nor should the doors of the sacraments be closed for simply any reason. This is especially true of the sacrament which is itself "the door": baptism. The Eucharist, although it is the fullness of sacramental life, is not a prize for the perfect but a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak.[51] These convictions have pastoral consequences that we are called to consider with prudence and boldness. Frequently, we act as arbiters of grace rather than its facilitators. But the Church is not a tollhouse; it is the house of the Father, where there is a place for everyone, with all their problems.
- 48. If the whole Church takes up this missionary impulse, she has to go forth to everyone without exception. But to whom should she go first? When we read the Gospel we find a clear indication: not so much our friends and wealthy neighbours, but above all the poor and the sick, those who are usually despised and overlooked. "those who cannot repay you" (Lk 14:14). There can be no room for doubt or for explanations which weaken so clear a message. Today and always, "the poor are the privileged recipients of the Gospel".[52] and the fact that it is freely preached to them is a sign of the kingdom that Jesus came to establish. We have to state, without mincing words, that there is an inseparable bond between our faith and the poor. May we never abandon them.

- 49. Let us go forth, then, let us go forth to offer everyone the life of Jesus Christ. Here I repeat for the entire Church what I have often said to the priests and laity of Buenos Aires: I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security. I do not want a Church concerned with being at the centre and which then ends by being caught up in a web of obsessions and procedures. If something should rightly disturb us and trouble our consciences, it is the fact that so many of our brothers and sisters are living without the strength, light and consolation born of friendship with Jesus Christ, without a community of faith to support them, without meaning and a goal in life. More than by fear of going astray, my hope is that we will be moved by the fear of remaining shut up within structures which give us a false sense of security, within rules which make us harsh judges, within habits which make us feel safe, while at our door people are starving and Jesus does not tire of saying to us: "Give them something to eat" (Mk 6:37).
- 65. Despite the tide of secularism which has swept our societies, in many countries – even those where Christians are a minority – the Catholic Church is considered a credible institution by public opinion, and trusted for her solidarity and concern for those in greatest need. Again and again, the Church has acted as a mediator in finding solutions to problems affecting peace, social harmony, the land, the defence of life, human and civil rights, and so forth. And how much good has been done by Catholic schools and universities around the world! This is a good thing. Yet, we find it difficult to make people see that when we raise other questions less palatable to public opinion, we are doing so out of fidelity to precisely the same convictions about human dignity and the common good.
- 87. Today, when the networks and means of human communication have made unprecedented advances, we sense the challenge of finding and sharing a "mystique" of living together, of mingling and encounter, of embracing and supporting one another, of stepping into this flood tide which, while chaotic, can become a genuine experience of fraternity, a caravan of solidarity, a sacred pilgrimage. Greater possibilities for communication thus turn into greater possibilities for encounter and solidarity for everyone. If we were able to take this route, it would be so good, so soothing, so liberating and hope-filled! To go out of ourselves and to join others is healthy for us. To be self-enclosed is to taste the bitter poison of immanence, and humanity will be worse for every selfish choice we make.
- 106. Even if it is not always easy to approach young people, progress has been made in two areas: the awareness that the entire community is called to evangelize and educate the young, and the urgent need for the young to exercise greater leadership. We should recognize that despite the present crisis of commitment and communal relationships, many young people are making common cause before the problems of our world and are taking up various forms of activism and volunteer work. Some take part in the life of the Church as members of service groups and various missionary initiatives in their own

dioceses and in other places. How beautiful it is to see that young people are “street preachers” (callejeros de la fe), joyfully bringing Jesus to every street, every town square and every corner of the earth!

- 113. The salvation which God has wrought, and the Church joyfully proclaims, is for everyone.[82] God has found a way to unite himself to every human being in every age. He has chosen to call them together as a people and not as isolated individuals.[83] No one is saved by himself or herself, individually, or by his or her own efforts. God attracts us by taking into account the complex interweaving of personal relationships entailed in the life of a human community. This people which God has chosen and called is the Church. Jesus did not tell the apostles to form an exclusive and elite group. He said: “Go and make disciples of all nations” (Mt 28:19). Saint Paul tells us in the people of God, in the Church, “there is neither Jew or Greek... for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:28). To those who feel far from God and the Church, to all those who are fearful or indifferent, I would like to say this: the Lord, with great respect and love, is also calling you to be a part of his people!
- 114. Being Church means being God’s people, in accordance with the great plan of his fatherly love. This means that we are to be God’s leaven in the midst of humanity. It means proclaiming and bringing God’s salvation into our world, which often goes astray and needs to be encouraged, given hope and strengthened on the way. The Church must be a place of mercy freely given, where everyone can feel welcomed, loved, forgiven and encouraged to live the good life of the Gospel.
- 120. In virtue of their baptism, all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciples (cf. Mt 28:19). All the baptized, whatever their position in the Church or their level of instruction in the faith, are agents of evangelization, and it would be insufficient to envisage a plan of evangelization to be carried out by professionals while the rest of the faithful would simply be passive recipients. The new evangelization calls for personal involvement on the part of each of the baptized. Every Christian is challenged, here and now, to be actively engaged in evangelization: indeed, anyone who has truly experienced God’s saving love does not need much time or lengthy training to go out and proclaim that love. Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus: we no longer say that we are “disciples” and “missionaries”, but rather that we are always “missionary disciples”. If we are not convinced, let us look at those first disciples, who, immediately after encountering the gaze of Jesus, went forth to proclaim him joyfully: “We have found the Messiah!” (Jn 1:41). The Samaritan woman became a missionary immediately after speaking with Jesus and many Samaritans come to believe in him “because of the woman’s testimony” (Jn 4:39). So too, Saint Paul, after his encounter with Jesus Christ, “immediately proclaimed Jesus” (Acts 9:20; cf. 22:6-21). So what are we waiting for?
- 121. Of course, all of us are called to mature in our work as evangelizers. We want to have better training, a deepening love and a clearer witness to the

Gospel. In this sense, we ought to let others be constantly evangelizing us. But this does not mean that we should postpone the evangelizing mission; rather, each of us should find ways to communicate Jesus wherever we are. All of us are called to offer others an explicit witness to the saving love of the Lord, who despite our imperfections offers us his closeness, his word and his strength, and gives meaning to our lives. In your heart you know that it is not the same to live without him; what you have come to realize, what has helped you to live and given you hope, is what you also need to communicate to others. Our falling short of perfection should be no excuse; on the contrary, mission is a constant stimulus not to remain mired in mediocrity but to continue growing. The witness of faith that each Christian is called to offer leads us to say with Saint Paul: "Not that I have already obtained this, or am already perfect; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own" (Phil 3:12-13).

- 122. In the same way, we can see that the different peoples among whom the Gospel has been inculturated are active collective subjects or agents of evangelization. This is because each people is the creator of their own culture and the protagonist of their own history. Culture is a dynamic reality which a people constantly recreates; each generation passes on a whole series of ways of approaching different existential situations to the next generation, which must in turn reformulate it as it confronts its own challenges. Being human means "being at the same time son and father of the culture to which one belongs".[97] Once the Gospel has been inculturated in a people, in their process of transmitting their culture they also transmit the faith in ever new forms; hence the importance of understanding evangelization as inculturation. Each portion of the people of God, by translating the gift of God into its own life and in accordance with its own genius, bears witness to the faith it has received and enriches it with new and eloquent expressions. One can say that "a people continuously evangelizes itself".[98] Herein lies the importance of popular piety, a true expression of the spontaneous missionary activity of the people of God. This is an ongoing and developing process, of which the Holy Spirit is the principal agent.
- 125. To understand this reality we need to approach it with the gaze of the Good Shepherd, who seeks not to judge but to love. Only from the affective connaturality born of love can we appreciate the theological life present in the piety of Christian peoples, especially among their poor. I think of the steadfast faith of those mothers tending their sick children who, though perhaps barely familiar with the articles of the creed, cling to a rosary; or of all the hope poured into a candle lighted in a humble home with a prayer for help from Mary, or in the gaze of tender love directed to Christ crucified. No one who loves God's holy people will view these actions as the expression of a purely human search for the divine. They are the manifestation of a theological life nourished by the working of the Holy Spirit who has been poured into our hearts.
- 127. Today, as the Church seeks to experience a profound missionary renewal, there is a kind of preaching which falls to each of us as a daily responsibility. It

has to do with bringing the Gospel to the people we meet, whether they be our neighbours or complete strangers. This is the informal preaching which takes place in the middle of a conversation, something along the lines of what a missionary does when visiting a home. Being a disciple means being constantly ready to bring the love of Jesus to others, and this can happen unexpectedly and in any place: on the street, in a city square, during work, on a journey.

- 128. In this preaching, which is always respectful and gentle, the first step is personal dialogue, when the other person speaks and shares his or her joys, hopes and concerns for loved ones, or so many other heartfelt needs. Only afterwards is it possible to bring up God's word, perhaps by reading a Bible verse or relating a story, but always keeping in mind the fundamental message: the personal love of God who became man, who gave himself up for us, who is living and who offers us his salvation and his friendship. This message has to be shared humbly as a testimony on the part of one who is always willing to learn, in the awareness that the message is so rich and so deep that it always exceeds our grasp. At times the message can be presented directly, at times by way of a personal witness or gesture, or in a way which the Holy Spirit may suggest in that particular situation. If it seems prudent and if the circumstances are right, this fraternal and missionary encounter could end with a brief prayer related to the concerns which the person may have expressed. In this way they will have an experience of being listened to and understood; they will know that their particular situation has been placed before God, and that God's word really speaks to their lives.
- 134. Universities are outstanding environments for articulating and developing this evangelizing commitment in an interdisciplinary and integrated way. Catholic schools, which always strive to join their work of education with the explicit proclamation of the Gospel, are a most valuable resource for the evangelization of culture, even in those countries and cities where hostile situations challenge us to greater creativity in our search for suitable methods.
- 144. To speak from the heart means that our hearts must not just be on fire, but also enlightened by the fullness of revelation and by the path travelled by God's word in the heart of the Church and our faithful people throughout history. This Christian identity, as the baptismal embrace which the Father gave us when we were little ones, makes us desire, as prodigal children – and favourite children in Mary – yet another embrace, that of the merciful Father who awaits us in glory. Helping our people to feel that they live in the midst of these two embraces is the difficult but beautiful task of one who preaches the Gospel.
- 164. In catechesis too, we have rediscovered the fundamental role of the first announcement or kerygma, which needs to be the centre of all evangelizing activity and all efforts at Church renewal. The kerygma is trinitarian. The fire of the Spirit is given in the form of tongues and leads us to believe in Jesus Christ who, by his death and resurrection, reveals and communicates to us the Father's infinite mercy. On the lips of the catechist the first proclamation must ring out over and over: "Jesus Christ loves you; he gave his life to save you; and now he is

living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen and free you.” This first proclamation is called “first” not because it exists at the beginning and can then be forgotten or replaced by other more important things. It is first in a qualitative sense because it is the principal proclamation, the one which we must hear again and again in different ways, the one which we must announce one way or another throughout the process of catechesis, at every level and moment.

- 169. In a culture paradoxically suffering from anonymity and at the same time obsessed with the details of other people’s lives, shamelessly given over to morbid curiosity, the Church must look more closely and sympathetically at others whenever necessary. In our world, ordained ministers and other pastoral workers can make present the fragrance of Christ’s closeness and his personal gaze. The Church will have to initiate everyone – priests, religious and laity – into this “art of accompaniment” which teaches us to remove our sandals before the sacred ground of the other (cf. Ex 3:5). The pace of this accompaniment must be steady and reassuring, reflecting our closeness and our compassionate gaze which also heals, liberates and encourages growth in the Christian life.
- 170. Although it sounds obvious, spiritual accompaniment must lead others ever closer to God, in whom we attain true freedom. Some people think they are free if they can avoid God; they fail to see that they remain existentially orphaned, helpless, homeless. They cease being pilgrims and become drifters, flitting around themselves and never getting anywhere. To accompany them would be counterproductive if it became a sort of therapy supporting their self-absorption and ceased to be a pilgrimage with Christ to the Father.
- 172. One who accompanies others has to realize that each person’s situation before God and their life in grace are mysteries which no one can fully know from without. The Gospel tells us to correct others and to help them to grow on the basis of a recognition of the objective evil of their actions (cf. Mt 18:15), but without making judgments about their responsibility and culpability (cf. Mt 7:1; Lk 6:37). Someone good at such accompaniment does not give in to frustrations or fears. He or she invites others to let themselves be healed, to take up their mat, embrace the cross, leave all behind and go forth ever anew to proclaim the Gospel. Our personal experience of being accompanied and assisted, and of openness to those who accompany us, will teach us to be patient and compassionate with others, and to find the right way to gain their trust, their openness and their readiness to grow.
- 177. The kerygma has a clear social content: at the very heart of the Gospel is life in community and engagement with others. The content of the first proclamation has an immediate moral implication centred on charity.
- 178. To believe in a Father who loves all men and women with an infinite love means realizing that “he thereby confers upon them an infinite dignity”.[141] To believe that the Son of God assumed our human flesh means that each human person has been taken up into the very heart of God. To believe that Jesus shed his blood for us removes any doubt about the boundless love which ennoble each human being. Our redemption has a social dimension because “God, in

Christ, redeems not only the individual person, but also the social relations existing between men".[142] To believe that the Holy Spirit is at work in everyone means realizing that he seeks to penetrate every human situation and all social bonds: "The Holy Spirit can be said to possess an infinite creativity, proper to the divine mind, which knows how to loosen the knots of human affairs, even the most complex and inscrutable".[143] Evangelization is meant to cooperate with this liberating work of the Spirit. The very mystery of the Trinity reminds us that we have been created in the image of that divine communion, and so we cannot achieve fulfilment or salvation purely by our own efforts. From the heart of the Gospel we see the profound connection between evangelization and human advancement, which must necessarily find expression and develop in every work of evangelization. Accepting the first proclamation, which invites us to receive God's love and to love him in return with the very love which is his gift, brings forth in our lives and actions a primary and fundamental response: to desire, seek and protect the good of others.

- 198. For the Church, the option for the poor is primarily a theological category rather than a cultural, sociological, political or philosophical one. God shows the poor "his first mercy".[163] This divine preference has consequences for the faith life of all Christians, since we are called to have "this mind... which was in Jesus Christ" (Phil 2:5). Inspired by this, the Church has made an option for the poor which is understood as a "special form of primacy in the exercise of Christian charity, to which the whole tradition of the Church bears witness".[164] This option – as Benedict XVI has taught – "is implicit in our Christian faith in a God who became poor for us, so as to enrich us with his poverty".[165] This is why I want a Church which is poor and for the poor. They have much to teach us. Not only do they share in the sensus fidei, but in their difficulties they know the suffering Christ. We need to let ourselves be evangelized by them. The new evangelization is an invitation to acknowledge the saving power at work in their lives and to put them at the centre of the Church's pilgrim way. We are called to find Christ in them, to lend our voice to their causes, but also to be their friends, to listen to them, to speak for them and to embrace the mysterious wisdom which God wishes to share with us through them.
- 210. It is essential to draw near to new forms of poverty and vulnerability, in which we are called to recognize the suffering Christ, even if this appears to bring us no tangible and immediate benefits. I think of the homeless, the addicted, refugees, indigenous peoples, the elderly who are increasingly isolated and abandoned, and many others. Migrants present a particular challenge for me, since I am the pastor of a Church without frontiers, a Church which considers herself mother to all. For this reason, I exhort all countries to a generous openness which, rather than fearing the loss of local identity, will prove capable of creating new forms of cultural synthesis. How beautiful are those cities which overcome paralysing mistrust, integrate those who are different and make this very integration a new factor of development! How attractive are those cities

which, even in their architectural design, are full of spaces which connect, relate and favour the recognition of others!

- 259. Spirit-filled evangelizers means evangelizers fearlessly open to the working of the Holy Spirit. At Pentecost, the Spirit made the apostles go forth from themselves and turned them into heralds of God's wondrous deeds, capable of speaking to each person in his or her own language. The Holy Spirit also grants the courage to proclaim the newness of the Gospel with boldness (parrhesía) in every time and place, even when it meets with opposition. Let us call upon him today, firmly rooted in prayer, for without prayer all our activity risks being fruitless and our message empty. Jesus wants evangelizers who proclaim the good news not only with words, but above all by a life transfigured by God's presence.
- 262. Spirit-filled evangelizers are evangelizers who pray and work. Mystical notions without a solid social and missionary outreach are of no help to evangelization, nor are dissertations or social or pastoral practices which lack a spirituality which can change hearts. These unilateral and incomplete proposals only reach a few groups and prove incapable of radiating beyond them because they curtail the Gospel. What is needed is the ability to cultivate an interior space which can give a Christian meaning to commitment and activity.[205] Without prolonged moments of adoration, of prayerful encounter with the word, of sincere conversation with the Lord, our work easily becomes meaningless; we lose energy as a result of weariness and difficulties, and our fervour dies out. The Church urgently needs the deep breath of prayer, and to my great joy groups devoted to prayer and intercession, the prayerful reading of God's word and the perpetual adoration of the Eucharist are growing at every level of ecclesial life. Even so, "we must reject the temptation to offer a privatized and individualistic spirituality which ill accords with the demands of charity, to say nothing of the implications of the incarnation".[206] There is always the risk that some moments of prayer can become an excuse for not offering one's life in mission; a privatized lifestyle can lead Christians to take refuge in some false forms of spirituality.
- 263. We do well to keep in mind the early Christians and our many brothers and sisters throughout history who were filled with joy, unflagging courage and zeal in proclaiming the Gospel. Some people nowadays console themselves by saying that things are not as easy as they used to be, yet we know that the Roman empire was not conducive to the Gospel message, the struggle for justice, or the defence of human dignity. Every period of history is marked by the presence of human weakness, self-absorption, complacency and selfishness, to say nothing of the concupiscence which preys upon us all. These things are ever present under one guise or another: they are due to our human limits rather than particular situations. Let us not say, then, that things are harder today; they are simply different. But let us learn also from the saints who have gone before us, who confronted the difficulties of their own day. So I propose that we pause to rediscover some of the reasons which can help us to imitate them today.
- 265. Jesus' whole life, his way of dealing with the poor, his actions, his integrity, his simple daily acts of generosity, and finally his complete self-giving, is precious

and reveals the mystery of his divine life. Whenever we encounter this anew, we become convinced that it is exactly what others need, even though they may not recognize it: "What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you" (Acts 17:23). Sometimes we lose our enthusiasm for mission because we forget that the Gospel responds to our deepest needs, since we were created for what the Gospel offers us: friendship with Jesus and love of our brothers and sisters. If we succeed in expressing adequately and with beauty the essential content of the Gospel, surely this message will speak to the deepest yearnings of people's hearts: "The missionary is convinced that, through the working of the Spirit, there already exists in individuals and peoples an expectation, even if an unconscious one, of knowing the truth about God, about man, and about how we are to be set free from sin and death. The missionary's enthusiasm in proclaiming Christ comes from the conviction that he is responding to that expectation".[208]

Enthusiasm for evangelization is based on this conviction. We have a treasure of life and love which cannot deceive, and a message which cannot mislead or disappoint. It penetrates to the depths of our hearts, sustaining and ennobling us. It is a truth which is never out of date because it reaches that part of us which nothing else can reach. Our infinite sadness can only be cured by an infinite love.

- 266. But this conviction has to be sustained by our own constantly renewed experience of savouring Christ's friendship and his message. It is impossible to persevere in a fervent evangelization unless we are convinced from personal experience that it is not the same thing to have known Jesus as not to have known him, not the same thing to walk with him as to walk blindly, not the same thing to hear his word as not to know it, and not the same thing to contemplate him, to worship him, to find our peace in him, as not to. It is not the same thing to try to build the world with his Gospel as to try to do so by our own lights. We know well that with Jesus life becomes richer and that with him it is easier to find meaning in everything. This is why we evangelize. A true missionary, who never ceases to be a disciple, knows that Jesus walks with him, speaks to him, breathes with him, works with him. He senses Jesus alive with him in the midst of the missionary enterprise. Unless we see him present at the heart of our missionary commitment, our enthusiasm soon wanes and we are no longer sure of what it is that we are handing on; we lack vigour and passion. A person who is not convinced, enthusiastic, certain and in love, will convince nobody.
- 272. Loving others is a spiritual force drawing us to union with God; indeed, one who does not love others "walks in the darkness" (1 Jn 2:11), "remains in death" (1 Jn 3:14) and "does not know God" (1 Jn 4:8). Benedict XVI has said that "closing our eyes to our neighbour also blinds us to God",[209] and that love is, in the end, the only light which "can always illuminate a world grown dim and give us the courage needed to keep living and working".[210] When we live out a spirituality of drawing nearer to others and seeking their welfare, our hearts are opened wide to the Lord's greatest and most beautiful gifts. Whenever we encounter another person in love, we learn something new about God. Whenever our eyes are opened to acknowledge the other, we grow in the light of faith and

knowledge of God. If we want to advance in the spiritual life, then, we must constantly be missionaries. The work of evangelization enriches the mind and the heart: it opens up spiritual horizons; it makes us more and more sensitive to the workings of the Holy Spirit, and it takes us beyond our limited spiritual constructs. A committed missionary knows the joy of being a spring which spills over and refreshes others. Only the person who feels happiness in seeking the good of others, in desiring their happiness, can be a missionary. This openness of the heart is a source of joy, since "it is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). We do not live better when we flee, hide, refuse to share, stop giving and lock ourselves up in own comforts. Such a life is nothing less than slow suicide.

- 273. My mission of being in the heart of the people is not just a part of my life or a badge I can take off; it is not an "extra" or just another moment in life. Instead, it is something I cannot uproot from my being without destroying my very self. I am a mission on this earth; that is the reason why I am here in this world. We have to regard ourselves as sealed, even branded, by this mission of bringing light, blessing, enlivening, raising up, healing and freeing. All around us we begin to see nurses with soul, teachers with soul, politicians with soul, people who have chosen deep down to be with others and for others. But once we separate our work from our private lives, everything turns grey and we will always be seeking recognition or asserting our needs. We stop being a people.
- 274. If we are to share our lives with others and generously give of ourselves, we also have to realize that every person is worthy of our giving. Not for their physical appearance, their abilities, their language, their way of thinking, or for any satisfaction that we might receive, but rather because they are God's handiwork, his creation. God created that person in his image, and he or she reflects something of God's glory. Every human being is the object of God's infinite tenderness, and he himself is present in their lives. Jesus offered his precious blood on the cross for that person. Appearances notwithstanding, every person is immensely holy and deserves our love. Consequently, if I can help at least one person to have a better life, that already justifies the offering of my life. It is a wonderful thing to be God's faithful people. We achieve fulfilment when we break down walls and our heart is filled with faces and names!