



CONVOCATION OF
CATHOLIC LEADERS:
THE JOY OF THE
GOSPEL IN AMERICA



Participant Guidebook AND Journal



**United States
Conference of Catholic Bishops**

**Bishops' Working Group on the
Life and Dignity of the Human Person**



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Participant Guidebook AND Journal

in preparation for the Convocation of Catholic Leaders

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United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Bishops' Working Group on the Life and Dignity of the Human Person

Introduction

The joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. With Christ joy is constantly born anew.
(Pope Francis)¹

The Convocation of Catholic Leaders: The Joy of the Gospel in America is a gathering of the rich diversity of Catholic leaders from across the United States, convened by the bishops to respond to our Holy Father Pope Francis's call in his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (*The Joy of the Gospel*) "to embark upon a new chapter of evangelization marked by this joy [of the Gospel]"—to become ever more, and to form others as, missionary disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ.²

This moment is an opportunity for the Church in the United States—in a broad representation of active and emerging leaders under the guidance of the bishops—to examine today's concerns, challenges, and opportunities in the light of the Church's mission of evangelization, and be equipped to go forth, ready to engage the world with the joy of the Gospel. As we reflect, pray, and discern together at the Convocation, we will renew our baptismal commitment to be missionary disciples in today's world, and we will be strengthened in this mission by one another and by the grace of God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

There are **two key outcomes** for the *Convocation of Catholic Leaders*: First, that leaders will be equipped and re-energized to share the Gospel as missionary disciples, and, second, that they

will take away fresh insights from participation in a strategic conversation about current challenges and opportunities informed by new research, communications strategies, and successful models.

The hope is that the Convocation can assist participants in bringing back—to their dioceses, parishes, movements, organizations, work, and ministries—tools, resources, and renewed inspiration to apply and advance *Evangelii Gaudium* and Pope Francis’s “dream of a ‘missionary option’” for all pastoral activities and ministries.³ The Holy Father has called all in the Church to a “missionary conversion”: “‘Mere administration’ can no longer be enough. Throughout the world, let us be ‘permanently in a state of mission.’”⁴ The Convocation, then, is framed around these principles.

While most conferences point toward the speakers onstage as the experts, the Convocation is different. The experts are the participants themselves, because they know the local reality of the Church in their area better than any of the speakers can. The speakers, then, are meant to be inspirers, motivators, and facilitators of conversation who can accompany and guide the experts (the delegates) to wherever God may be leading them next in their journey. The attendees and their bishops are the actual protagonists of the *Convocation of Catholic Leaders*: they will be the ones taking the message of missionary discipleship into their local communities, and together as the Body of Christ, impact culture and society nationwide.

This guidebook is meant to assist participants in their preparation for the Convocation as well as in their implementation of the Convocation afterward. The guidebook can also be helpful for those not attending the event itself but who will be praying and collaborating with attendees in various ways, viewing parts of the Convocation from afar, and/or advancing the fruits of the Convocation and missionary discipleship.

Key ways to prepare for the Convocation include the following:

- Pray for the Convocation (and those who are part of it), that the gathering may bear much fruit and advance the work of forming missionary disciples in the United States.
- Read and discuss this guide with your team, using it to help prepare for and implement the Convocation
- Read and study Pope Francis's *The Joy of the Gospel* (*Evangelii Gaudium*)
- Familiarize yourself with the US bishops' statements, resources, and documents on evangelization and missionary discipleship (refer to the appendix in this guide, and for the most up-to-date list, go online to the USCCB website: <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/new-evangelization/index.cfm>). Please note the most recent USCCB resource, *Living as Missionary Disciples: A Resource for Evangelization* (2017).

We, the USCCB Bishops' Working Group on the Life and Dignity of the Human Person, will be preparing for this Convocation by praying for and accompanying you as you make plans to convene in Orlando this summer or to participate digitally. We walk together with you on this journey and look forward to the great fruits that will come about because of this shared experience of the faith.

We dedicate the *Convocation of Catholic Leaders* to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Evangelization, especially under her titles of Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of the Americas, and the Immaculate Conception, patroness of the United States. Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mary Immaculate, pray for us!

Key Questions to Be Considered

The *Convocation of Catholic Leaders* follows the sequence of topics treated by Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium*. Beginning with the celebration of the Eucharist and a focus on unity in the joy of the Gospel, the Convocation will respond to four major questions:

1. What is the nature of this current historical moment in the Church and in our nation?

For the first plenary session and the breakout sessions that follow, participants will look at various studies of the landscape to help answer this question. More than just a sociological analysis, this part of the Convocation will strive to engage in what Pope Francis calls an “evangelical discernment.”⁵

2. How do we respond to this moment as missionary disciples?

The Convocation will look at Pope Francis’s encouragement to all people of faith to take up a radical call to a “missionary option” to “pastoral ministry in a missionary key,” rather than just “church work” or maintenance.⁶ The Convocation will be an opportunity for a renewal of that call.

3. Where are we called to go? To whom are we being sent on this mission?

The Convocation will explore the mission field and the peripheries in our local communities, across the country, and within the Church. Presentations will ask: What more can we do here? This will include an unpacking of the “social dimension of evangelization” and taking the time, as Pope Francis has encouraged us, to discern the Lord’s call “to go forth from our own comfort zone in order to reach all the ‘peripheries’ in need of the light of the Gospel.”⁷ The Convocation will be a time to work and to witness to the Gospel in and through our engagement with the world.

4. What will we do when we get there? How will we engage the mission?

Finally, the Convocation will unpack the best practices and strategies for missionary discipleship, evangelization, and advancing the Church's social mission in the United States. How can each and every one of us, from bishops to parish leaders to Catholics in the pews, truly be effective "Spirit-filled evangelizers" with a heart directed toward Jesus Christ, the Gospel, and the People of God?⁸

Schedule of the Convocation: The Daily Themes and Key Moments

DAY 1: Saturday, July 1, 2017

Theme: *Unity*

Opening Mass of the Holy Spirit:
Unity, Joy, and Evangelical Discernment
(see EG, nos. 1-13, 50, and 259-261)

Convocation 101: Engaging the Vision
(see EG, nos. 3, 13-18)

Evening Marian Devotion:
Mary, Mother of Evangelization
(see EG, nos. 287-288)

DAY 2: Sunday, July 2, 2017

Theme: *Landscape & Renewal*

Morning Prayer and Plenary Session:
Charting the Landscape and Mission Field
(see EG, nos. 14-18 and 50-109)

Morning Breakout Sessions (Round A):
Reflecting on the Landscape and Mission Field

Afternoon Plenary Session:
The Radical Call to Missionary Discipleship
(see EG, nos. 19-49, 110-134, and 160-175)

Sunday Mass:
Mercy and Renewal
(see EG, nos. 3, 24, and 27 and
Misericordiae Vultus, no. 10)

Evening of Adoration and Reflection:
*Encountering Jesus, Healer of Wounds and
Source of Mercy*
(see EG, nos. 3 and 76-109)

DAY 3: Monday, July 3, 2017

Theme: *Work & Witness*

Eucharistic Procession and Benediction:
A Church That Goes Forth
(see EG, nos. 12-13, 46-49, 174, 262)

Morning Plenary Session:
Going to the Peripheries
(see EG, nos. 20, 23-24, 48-49, and 176-258)

Morning Breakout Sessions (Round B):
Going Deeper into the Peripheries

Afternoon Breakout Sessions (Round C):
Practical Strategies Beyond the Convocation

Fortnight for Freedom Mass:
Witness and Celebration
(see EG, nos. 61 and 255-258)

Evening of Witness and Praise:
A Celebration of Faith, Witness, and Mission
(see EG, nos. 4-10, 42, 121-122, 127-129)

DAY 4: Tuesday, July 4, 2017

Theme: *A Spirit of Mission*

Morning Prayer and Plenary Session:
Spirit-Filled Evangelizers Equipped for Excellence
(see EG, nos. 19-49, 110-134, and 259-288)

Diocesan, Organizational, and Community/Group
Goal Setting

(see Pope Francis, “Address,” November 10, 2015,
Florence, Italy)

Mass of Sending:

Mission and Going Forth

(see EG, no. 261, and also nos. 19-49 and 259-288)

Foundation, Motivation, and Context of the Convocation

Foundation: The Call to Missionary Discipleship

During his public ministry, Jesus did not wait for his first disciples to come to him; he actively called them to follow him (see Mt 4:18-22, Mk 1:16-20, Jn 1:35-51). Many others who encountered Jesus, such as those who received miraculous healing at his hands, could not help but speak about this meeting, even when Jesus asked them not to (e.g., Mt 8:33, Mk 1:43-45, Jn 4:28-29, Jn 9:8-12).

Each one of us is called to continue Jesus’ mission today. “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.’”⁹

Motivation and Context: Pope Francis’s *Evangelii Gaudium* and the Bishops of the United States

Jesus’ call to missionary discipleship has been sustained in and answered by his Church over the centuries. Following the Second Vatican Council, Bl. Paul VI issued a call for the whole Church to embrace anew her fundamental mission of evangelization. St. John Paul II amplified and deepened this call with an emphasis on the need to undertake a new evangelization, an emphasis

continued and strengthened by Pope Benedict XVI and now Pope Francis.

In *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis encouraged the Church to enter a “new phase of evangelization” as missionary disciples—a phase marked by ongoing “missionary conversion.”¹⁰ This is the motivation and context for the *Convocation of Catholic Leaders: The Joy of the Gospel in America*. The Holy Father teaches that, “The Gospel joy which enlivens the community of disciples is a missionary joy” (EG, no. 21). Each of us is called to witness Christ to the world. At the Convocation, bishops and other Catholic leaders will “devote the necessary effort to advancing along the path of a pastoral and missionary conversion which cannot leave things as they presently are.”¹¹

The pastoral and missionary conversion called for by Pope Francis includes an initiation into the “art of accompaniment” which teaches us to remove our sandals before the sacred ground of the other (cf. Ex 3:5).¹² This accompaniment, as the Holy Father explains, leads others closer to God as “a pilgrimage with Christ to the Father.”¹³ Missionary discipleship demands “drawing nearer to others,” including drawing “near to new forms of poverty and vulnerability, in which we are called to recognize the suffering Christ.”¹⁴ Pope Francis’s vision of missionary conversion and pastoral accompaniment is central to the Convocation.

In August of 1917, nearly one hundred years ago, representatives from 68 dioceses, 27 national Catholic organizations, and the Catholic press, met in Washington, DC, to unify their efforts in responding to the needs of the times (in that case, the First World War). Out of this first meeting grew what today we know as the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). The various collaborating organizations included or prefigured many of the groups and delegations that are participating in the *Convocation of Catholic Leaders*, one hundred years later. The Convocation, in an analogous way, is a unique gathering, convened under the leadership of the bishops, to respond to

the needs of the times today and especially to the call of the Holy Father:

In every community, in every parish and institution, in every diocese and circumscription, in every region, try to launch, in a synodal fashion, a deep reflection on . . . *Evangelii Gaudium*, to draw from it practical parameters and to launch its dispositions. . . . I am certain of your capacity to put yourselves into a creative movement in order to make this study practical.¹⁵

A goal of the Convocation is to be a deep reflection and creative movement that helps dioceses, parishes, organizations, apostolates, and associations across the United States celebrate, implement, and live out the key principles of *Evangelii Gaudium*.

Who's Who at the Convocation

It is important to understand who is attending the Convocation and why. Because of the nature of the Convocation as bishop-led and delegation-structured, it is an invitational event. Particular leaders have been invited to participate in order to bring back tools, strategies, and resources for the Church in her dioceses, parishes, movements, and organizations to implement. Meanwhile, even more Catholic leaders across the United States may be following the Convocation through streaming and engaging in conversation digitally via social media.

The success of the Convocation depends on what happens afterward and ultimately on helping all the baptized to embrace their call to missionary discipleship and to go forth into the whole world, motivated and filled with the joy of the Gospel.

Bishops at the Convocation

The bishops, as successors of the Apostles, have the vital ministry of shepherding the Church's mission of evangelization and

ministry to all. Bishops are a sign of the Church's unity. They carry out three basic offices or tasks in the Church: teaching, governing, and sanctifying. In each of these tasks, the bishops serve the Church by nurturing communion among the faithful and among particular Churches.

Pope Francis recognizes the bishop's role in strengthening the unity of the Church: "The bishop must always foster this missionary communion in his diocesan Church, following the ideal of the first Christian communities, in which the believers were of one heart and one soul."¹⁶ True unity—communion—fosters missionary outreach, and mission nurtures and strengthens unity. As St. John Paul II noted, "Communion and mission are profoundly connected with each other, they interpenetrate and mutually imply each other, to the point that communion represents both the source and the fruit of mission: communion gives rise to mission and mission is accomplished in communion."¹⁷ The bishops help to build up a Church of missionary disciples in many ways, including by cultivating and encouraging unity and mission.

The bishops of the United States have called the *Convocation of Catholic Leaders* to chart a path forward as a Church "permanently in a state of mission."¹⁸ During the event itself, the bishops will teach, but they will also be participants, listening to and learning from the rich experience of each other and of other Catholic leaders. The bishops hope that new bonds of friendship will be forged among participants and that everyone will be able to get to know some of the fruitful initiatives that are occurring around the country. As Pope Francis has noted, "Missionary disciples accompany missionary disciples."¹⁹ The Convocation will truly be a time to accompany one another and to collaborate for the good of the whole Church.

Delegation Leaders at the Convocation

In addition to the bishops, others participating in the Convocation include ordained, consecrated, and lay leaders.

Leadership in the Church can take various forms and can serve a variety of ministries. It can be formally recognized or can be more “emerging.” As a response to the Lord’s call, it can come through many avenues, for example, by an ordination, by an appointment or authorization (as in the case for many lay ecclesial ministers), or by awareness of a gift or charism received. At its most fundamental level, leadership in the Church is service, and it is meant to advance her mission of evangelization and to serve the vocation and mission of the laity, who are particularly responsible for transforming the world by bearing witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in it.

The Convocation is a time for participants to reflect on the context in which the Catholic Church in the United States finds herself today and how we might meet today’s challenges as a diverse community of missionary disciples. Most leaders—lay, consecrated, and ordained—will come to the Convocation with other members of their local community. There will be opportunities for groups to gather for reflection and discussion. Leaders will be expected to grow in relationship with their own team and to develop relationships with the rich diversity of leaders from other parts of the country.

The Convocation is also an opportunity for leaders to encounter ministries and apostolates they may be unfamiliar with. The Church is involved in a wide variety of work: education, healthcare, spirituality, refugee resettlement, sheltering the homeless, pastoral ministry, ecumenical and interreligious dialogue, advocacy for the unborn, the immigrant, and the poor, and much more. It is easy for us to become so focused on our own area of expertise or ministry that we have little time to meet or collaborate with those involved in other areas. The Convocation can be that time.

The Convocation will bring together only some of the many Catholic leaders across the country. Others will engage the Convocation through social media or television. However, all participants will have the responsibility to bring back and share

what they have contributed, received, and learned. Ultimately, the Convocation is about forming missionary disciples, a reality to which all the baptized are called.

A Team Approach

As our Holy Father has noted, “Our challenge today is . . . to foster a sense of collaboration and shared responsibility in planning for the future of our parishes and institutions. This does not mean relinquishing the spiritual authority with which we have been entrusted; rather, it means discerning and employing wisely the manifold gifts which the Spirit pours out upon the Church.”²⁰

In the United States, an opportunity for discernment is being offered through the Convocation and through the various initiatives already underway in response to the leadership of our Holy Father and his predecessors. We do not evangelize alone or in a vacuum; we need each other. All the baptized have a role to play. We are united as one Body of Christ, the Church, while recognizing the different roles and responsibilities that various members have. Church leaders have a special responsibility for “discerning and employing wisely the manifold gifts” of the Spirit.²¹ This is accomplished through collaboration, listening, and prayer. If we become more attentive to the gifts the Holy Spirit has given to others, we can work together better for the Kingdom of God.

The Convocation therefore is not a gathering of individual people but rather a gathering of teams from dioceses, organizations, and other communities and groups. The cooperation, partnership, preparation, and formation for each team (delegation) is important for the success of the event.

Being a member of a delegation means working to secure cooperation, promoting teamwork, and resolving conflicts; recognizing the potential value of differing ideas, opinions, and competing needs; and affirming and accepting challenging situations as opportunities to make effective changes to fulfill the mission of

the Church. This approach reminds us of our co-responsibility for the mission of Christ.

The Call to Missionary Discipleship in America: A Deeper Understanding of the Landscape and Needs

As noted above, in convening the *Convocation of Catholic Leaders*, the bishops of the United States are collegially responding to Pope Francis's call to them in *Evangelii Gaudium*:

In [the bishop's] mission of fostering a dynamic, open and missionary communion, he will have to encourage and develop the means of participation proposed in the Code of Canon Law, and other forms of pastoral dialogue, out of a desire to listen to everyone and not simply to those who would tell him what he would like to hear. Yet the principal aim of these participatory processes should not be ecclesiastical organization but rather the missionary aspiration of reaching everyone.²²

“Reaching everyone” is not a lofty, unattainable goal; it is the mission of the Church. As Pope Francis has taught, “In fidelity to the example of the Master, it is vitally important for the Church today to go forth and preach the Gospel to all: to all places, on all occasions, without hesitation, reluctance or fear. The joy of the Gospel is for all people: no one can be excluded.”²³ This mission can only be accomplished when all the baptized live as disciples who are sent as Christ's witnesses—as *missionary* disciples. “Reaching everyone” means providing the baptized with the means by which they can encounter Christ, deepen communion with one another, and go forth to witness to the world in word and deed. To accomplish this goal, we must go beyond the *status quo*. We are a people of continual conversion in and through Christ, not simply as individual members of the community of faith, but as the Church, together.

The Convocation seeks to assist the Church in the United States to advance what Pope Francis describes as “pastoral ministry in a missionary key”:

Pastoral ministry in a missionary key seeks to abandon the complacent attitude that says: “We have always done it this way.” I invite everyone to be bold and creative in this task of rethinking the goals, structures, style and methods of evangelization in their respective communities. A proposal of goals without an adequate communal search for the means of achieving them will inevitably prove illusory. I encourage everyone to apply the guidelines found in this document generously and courageously, without inhibitions or fear. The important thing is to not walk alone, but to rely on each other as brothers and sisters, and especially under the leadership of the bishops, in a wise and realistic pastoral discernment.²⁴

The vision for evangelization in *Evangelii Gaudium* addresses the reality of the Church and the world today and the need for new, creative ways to engage the culture. The Convocation is a unique opportunity for the Church in the United States to advance the Holy Father’s vision in view of the challenges and opportunities of our country.

Landscape of Catholic Life Today

The Convocation arose out of a study of Catholics in the United States and on what motivates us to be missionary disciples. The study focused on primary emotional drivers of what is going on in the hearts and minds of Catholics in the pews related to their faith and engagement with the Catholic Church, revealing various types of emotional engagement with the Church. This emotional canvass was just a piece of a larger landscape which needs further reflection. The Convocation will provide an opportunity to examine the cultural and ecclesial landscape in the United States.

Why Study the Landscape?

It is important that Convocation participants be aware of the landscape in the United States since effective missionary work requires knowing the people we are trying to reach: their hopes, fears, beliefs, engagement with the faith, and so on. Studying the Catholic landscape in our country can open our eyes to societal trends and expand our perception of where God is leading the Church in the United States.

Being aware of our *local* landscape (our state, county, or city) is of first importance, since national trends may or may not reflect the particular circumstances in which we find ourselves. As leaders, we should be wary of relying only on our own personal experiences or assumptions about people when making plans for evangelization. Each of us has but a limited (human) perspective, so research can fill in the gaps and provide valuable insights about the local mission field.

Catholic Life Today

Since it is impossible to adequately cover all aspects of the Catholic experience in this short guidebook, a list of helpful sources for further research is available in the *Appendix*. Here we will provide some major data points that will shape the conversations at the Convocation.

The mission field for the Church in the United States today is not the same as the mission field in the 1950s or 1960s, or even just a few years ago. In fact, the rapid changes all around us should cause us to reconsider our evangelization methods more regularly, even every few years. Here are some examples of what is different today as compared with past decades:

- Technology is everywhere, especially tools for faster and easier communication. This affects how we relate to one another and what our ideas and expectations of “community” are, even within the Church. It also means that the

acquisition of information is often instantaneous, though not always accurate, and that events that occur across the world are known by everyone right away.

- The societal, cultural, and political climate within the United States (and in many cases, around the world), has shifted dramatically, even in the last year.
- Due to globalization, we have a deeper understanding of how we all affect one another.
- Family life has been affected intensely by socio-cultural dynamics, technology, availability of work, high mobility, and so forth. Family structure and stability has experienced major shifts, and various challenges have arisen from or been associated with the sexual revolution, the erosion of marriage both culturally and legally, and socio-economic difficulties.
- Geographically, the traditionally strong presence of Catholics in the Northeast has been shifting to the South and West.
- Languages spoken in Catholic Churches in the United States have shifted over the last fifty years, with more Spanish, Filipino, Vietnamese, and Korean, for example.

Here are a few statistics to set the scene for the discussion at the Convocation:

Catholic Population in the United States

- The overall Catholic population has risen over the past fifty years, from 48.5 million in 1965 to 74.2 million in 2016 . . . but so has the number of *former* Catholic adults in the past forty years, from 7.5 million in 1975 up to 30.1 million in 2016.
- Almost half of Catholics who are now unaffiliated (48 percent) left Catholicism before reaching eighteen years old . . . an additional three in ten left the Catholic Church

as young adults between ages eighteen and twenty-three. Only one-fifth who are now unaffiliated (21 percent) and one-third who are now Protestant (34 percent) departed after turning age twenty-four.

- The population of Latinos in the United States has dramatically increased, adding to a growth in Catholic populations in various geographical areas of the United States.

Mass Attendance

- “More than three in ten adult Catholics (31.4 percent) are estimated to be attending Mass in *any* given week . . . Twenty-three percent say they attend Mass *every* week (once a week or more often)” (*Sacraments Today*, 2008, Executive Summary, 3).
- The above statistic on weekly Mass attendance is especially true among the “Millennial” generation (roughly those who were born between 1981 and 2000). Only 24 percent of Catholic Millennials attend Mass at least weekly, as compared to 56 percent of Catholics born before 1943.
- Among “Baby Boomers” (those born between 1943 and 1960), only 32 percent attend Mass on a weekly basis (D’Antonio, Dillon, Gautier, *American Catholics in Transition*: Rowman and Littlefield, 2013, 110).

Ethnic and Cultural Shifts in the Catholic Population

- There are 29.7 million Hispanic Catholics in the United States, making up 38 to 40 percent of all adult Catholics in this country; this percentage is even greater among teenagers and young adults.
- There are also more African-Americans and Asian-Pacific Islanders active in the practice of the Catholic faith than in previous generations. Thirty-six percent of all Catholic parishes across the United States have been identified as “multicultural,” meaning that they intentionally serve

more than one distinct cultural group. When surveyed, 76 percent of Catholics attending those parishes consider themselves “active Catholics” and US-born Black or African-American respondents were most likely to be involved in ministries or activities in addition to regular Mass attendance (CARA, *Cultural Diversity in the Catholic Church in the United States*, Oct. 2016).

While these numbers give us a sense of the people who are in the pews, missionary disciples do not only look within the Church; rather, they look to the men and women who are disconnected or absent from the community. It is important that disciples reach out to those on the peripheries.

At the Convocation, there will be several opportunities for delegates to explore the landscape in greater detail. A plenary session on the morning of Sunday, July 2, will give a broad look at the mission field in this country where missionary disciples are being sent. Following the large group gathering, twenty-two breakout sessions will go even deeper into several aspects of the landscape:

- The Church in the Current Political and Cultural Climate
- The Landscape of Intercultural Awareness and Dialogue in the Church
- The Rise of the “Nones” and Understanding Inactive and Disconnected Catholics
- Catholic Social Thought: The Role of Business, Advocacy, and the Community in Reducing Poverty
- Growing Isolation in America: Individualism and Indifference
- Social Media and Digital Media: Their Impact on the Church Today
- The Reality of Singleness in the Church
- Addressing and Understanding the “Throw Away Culture”
- Violence and Unrest in Our Communities

- The Catholic Landscape at Colleges and Universities
- The Impact of Immigration on Catholic Life in the United States
- The State of the Family and Human Sexuality: Struggles and Opportunities
- The State of Catholic Education and Catechesis in the United States
- The Church's Relationship with the State
- International Solidarity: Our Role Within the Global Landscape
- The Landscape of Popular Culture, Media, and News in the United States
- The Needs and Contributions of Latinos in the US Church: A Primer for *Encuentro*
- Dialogue, Relationships, and Encounter: The Ecumenical & Interreligious Landscape
- Discerning Vocations, Charisms, and Gifts for Mission in the Church and in Society
- Illuminating the Landscapes and Challenges According to *Evangelii Gaudium*
- Racism and Exclusion in America
- The Landscape of Parish Life and Catholic Ministry Today

The Peripheries in the United States

Pope Francis has challenged the Church to continue to go out, to go forth, to the peripheries in search of those who are in need of the Lord Jesus Christ and of his mercy and grace through the Church, his Body:

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.²⁵

The Church carries out Christ’s mission when she brings the healing message of the Gospel to a world wounded by sin. Pope Francis has brought particular attention to parts of our world that are often forgotten. For example, he often draws a link between abortion and the failure to care for God’s creation by talking about the “throw away culture,” a culture that focuses on pleasure and consumption, tending to ignore the need to care for all God’s creation, even using persons as mere means to an end. He writes:

Human beings are themselves considered consumer goods to be used and then discarded. We have created a “throw away” culture which is now spreading. It is no longer simply about exploitation and oppression, but something new. Exclusion ultimately has to do with what it means to be a part of the society in which we live; those excluded are no longer society’s underside or its fringes or its disenfranchised—they are no longer even a part of it. The excluded are not the “exploited” but the outcast, the “leftovers.”²⁶

The peripheries are where the castoffs of the “throw away culture” are discarded. At the Convocation, we will spend time talking about these areas and how we can reach the people who are there.

There are peripheries we can see around us if we are willing to look; there are people to whom we are called to bear witness to the hope of salvation. The poor, the sick, and the prisoner: these are persons whom God’s people have continually been exhorted to love and care for.²⁷ “For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me” (Mt 25:35).

Today, we can identify, encounter, and accompany people in other peripheries as well, those who are notable for their vulnerability in a “throw away culture.” For example, persons at the very

beginning or end of life are markedly vulnerable today. Migrants and people on the move also occupy a periphery as persons caught between two worlds. Persons with disabilities or special needs are increasingly vulnerable as our society focuses more and more on independence and autonomy. Persons caught in sex trafficking or cycles of continual violence who need freedom, as well as persons who have been adversely affected by climate change, occupy still other peripheries today. There are many people caught on the margins of society for the Church to seek out; these are just a few examples.

In preparation for the Convocation, reflect on your own ministry or apostolate, and ask, Where are some of the peripheries the Lord may be calling you and your community to seek out? Who are the forgotten in your neighborhood, your city? Who are the people on the edge of your vision that need greater attention?

At the Convocation, there will be several opportunities for delegates to focus more on those in the peripheries and the Church's response. A plenary session on the morning of Monday, July 3, will give a general outlook on the social dimension of evangelization—and reaching out to the margins of our society and culture. Following the large group gathering, twenty-two breakout sessions will allow participants to go even deeper into particular periphery areas:

- Understanding the Transition from Youth to Young Adulthood: A Growing Periphery
- An *Encuentro*/Encounter with Hispanic & Latino Catholics: A Periphery in Our Midst
- Living in the Margins in Our Country and in the World: A Church for the Poor That Is Poor
- The Marginalization of Motherhood: A Growing Periphery
- Reaching Wounded Families: Those Struggling with Brokenness
- The Feminine Genius: The Role of Women in the Church

- Understanding Addiction and the Church's Ministry with the Addicted
- The Silent Voices: Reaching Out to the Victims of Violence, Abuse, and Trafficking
- Pastoral Care for Those with Same-Sex Attraction or Who Struggle with Their Sexual Identity
- Reaching Out to Individuals and Families Affected by Incarceration
- Youth on the Margins: Understanding Those Struggling with Depression, Suicide, Gangs, and Discrimination
- From Inclusion to Belonging: Persons with Disabilities and the Deaf Community
- Living in the Peripheries of Urban Communities
- Going to the Ends of the Earth: International Mission Work
- Lord, Who Is My Neighbor? Solidarity with the Immigrant
- Honoring Our Wisdom Figures: The Role of the Elderly and the Gift of Life at All Stages
- Reaching Out to All Cultural Families: Healing the Experience of Exclusion
- Catholic Health Care: Ministering to the Spiritual and Physical Needs of All People
- Reaching the Margins in Rural America
- Understanding Victims of Sex Abuse: in Culture, Society, and the Church
- Renewing Hope, Seeking Justice: Understanding Migrants and Refugees
- Who's on the Peripheries in Our Local Parishes and Communities?

As we consider those on the peripheries, we should also reflect on the areas in our own hearts as individuals and communities that

stand in need of repentance and healing. What biases and blind spots, within each of us, remain unexplored, hidden, or mysterious, perhaps due to various obstacles, sins, or wounds?

For example, the Church must attend to the wounds rendered by racism in our country; we must listen to those affected by it and be open to healing and conversion in our own hearts and local communities.²⁸ Another example could be fear, anxiety, insecurity, or a past rejection that lingers in the heart and keeps us from sharing and acting upon a desire or calling that is experienced in prayer.

The Convocation is a good time to reflect on these imperfections and to explore them with Christ. As Pope Francis says, “What is needed is the ability to cultivate an interior space which can give a Christian meaning to commitment and activity. 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 fervor dies out.”²⁹ Begin this process of self-reflection: Where might the Lord be calling you to conversion? What areas of your own heart, and the heart of your community, are wounded and in need of Christ’s healing? The Convocation will feature several key moments of prayer and reflection for participants to engage these areas of the heart in order to be renewed so as to go forth and reach those on the peripheries.

The Role of the Leader in the Mission Territory Today

All the participants at the Convocation have been identified as Catholic leaders. Many people are considered Catholic leaders simply by virtue of their employment or position in the Church, such as pastors or lay ecclesial ministers. Others are leaders due to their role in the community. Still others have been invited as emerging leaders: young people who possess leadership gifts and have a unique perspective or others who may not be in formal positions of leadership. No matter what brought

a participant to the Convocation, we are one in the calling to missionary discipleship.

As missionary disciples, Catholic leaders are not just managers or administrators but spiritual leaders who love Jesus Christ, are faithful to the mission of the Church, and can inspire others by being responsive to the vocation, gifts, and charisms that have been given to them by the Lord.

The Holy Father presents some characteristics of a missionary disciple (or a “Spirit-filled evangelizer”) in chapter five of *Evangelii Gaudium*. The first characteristic of a missionary disciple is a personal encounter with Jesus Christ every day. “Let us call upon [the Holy Spirit] 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.”³⁰ Missionary disciples have an “interior impulse which encourages, motivates, nourishes and gives meaning” to their work.³¹ In addition, a missionary disciple is not a solitary figure but rather a person sent by Christ through the community of faith, the Church. “Mission is at once a passion for Jesus and a passion for his people.”³²

To consider further how missionary discipleship inspires and informs our responsibilities as leaders, here are some personal characteristics of missionary disciples:

- Leaders are people of prayer. They are intimately in tune with God’s voice that speaks in silence and find time to imitate the Lord, who “went up on the mountain by himself to pray” (Mt 14:23). They receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist frequently.
- Leaders are conscious of the mission field around them. They are willing to go beyond their comfort zones to embrace and engage others. They act with intentionality and an open heart for all God’s people, not only those who are already active in the life of the Church.

The Call to Missionary Discipleship

- Leaders actively seek out the lost, like the shepherd who left the ninety-nine and went in search of the lost sheep (Mt 18:12-14, Lk 15:3-7). They go out to those who are hurting and wounded and bring them “home” to the Church.
- Leaders are well-formed for the work of ministry: pastorally, emotionally, intellectually, spiritually, and culturally, among other areas.³³
 - Pastorally, they speak the language of the faith in a manner their audience can understand in order to engage them.
 - They are emotionally mature, demonstrating the capacity to listen and understand different perspectives, form relationships, mentor others, and collaborate on a team. They have habits of compassion and empathy.
 - They have a solid intellectual understanding of Scripture and the Church’s teaching in order to proclaim the Gospel (*kerygma*), as well as knowledge of other disciplines that are necessary for their work.
 - Spiritually, they have a prayer life that is foundational to their work, regularly participating in the sacraments and the life of the Church.
 - They are interculturally competent, with the attitudes and skills necessary to engage well with people from all cultural families and backgrounds.

In addition to these personal qualities, missionary disciples follow a four-step journey as leaders: *encounter*, *accompany*, *community*, and *send*.³⁴

- Leaders can regularly reflect deeply on their own experience of *encounter* with Jesus Christ through prayer, the sacraments, adoration, Scripture, works of mercy, their

families, the life of the Church, and so on. With an awareness of their own story, leaders can help bring others to encounter Christ as well.

- Leaders *accompany* others on their journey toward Christ by walking with them and supporting them, especially in their struggles. As Pope Francis said, “Often it is better to simply 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.”³⁵ This accompaniment should communicate love, not judgment, and support a gradual assimilation of truths and change. This requires patience and understanding on the part of the leader.
- Leaders find support and ongoing formation in the *community*: parish life, apostolic movements, diocesan and national networks, and small faith groups. Leaders work to make the community a place of welcome, hospitality, fellowship, catechesis, and solidarity—a place everyone would be willing to invite others into.
- Leaders are *sent to evangelize*. They have been given a mission by the Church to go outside the walls of their communities and churches and to seek those who are lost. Missionary disciples also send others, especially those they have journeyed with, into their own mission field, wherever the Lord may be calling them.

This *encounter-accompany-community-send* cycle repeats itself over and over again throughout the life of the Church and the life of each disciple. A new generation of missionary disciples is among us at the Convocation; the participants themselves, and the laity and others they serve, are its focus.

Preparation for the Convocation

There are various ways to prepare for the Convocation and to bring back what was received. Below are some suggestions. As

noted in the introduction, key ways to prepare include prayer, reading this guide, and studying *Evangelii Gaudium*.

Preparation for the Convocation will involve every individual who attends the Convocation and will call for personal effort and time. As much as possible, however, participants are encouraged to prepare for the Convocation *as a team*, whether attending as a delegation from a diocese, organization, or other community or group. This team approach will be highlighted first as a lens to look at all the various aspects of preparation and implementation.

Delegates can adjust these suggested preparation tips to fit their specific circumstances. Realizing time may be limited before the Convocation, it is still important for participants to do some kind of preparatory activity, the extent of which is at the discretion of the delegation.

Praying, Thinking, Acting as a Team

Delegations at the Convocation are called to learn and teach each other, as well as interact with leaders from other delegations. The formation of delegations is at the discretion of the bishop and organizational leadership. It is hoped that, where possible, delegations will represent a broad spectrum of leadership, inclusive of emerging leaders and culturally and generationally diverse. It is also recommended that dioceses think of forming broader teams within the local Church who can pray for and support the attending delegation and assist the delegation in implementing the Convocation afterward.

Team members of diocesan delegations have been chosen by their bishop to be active participants in the Convocation and not simply passive receivers. They are collaborators with their bishop in his leadership of the diocese. Similar points apply to organizational delegations chosen by their leaders. Prior to arriving at the Convocation, each team should discern the needs of their diocese or organization in terms of living missionary discipleship more fully as encouraged in Pope Francis's *Evangelii Gaudium*. The sessions at

the Convocation are meant to give the team an ample examination of the current needs and issues of the Church in the United States. Sharing information, especially what is working and challenges you face in your diocese, with teams from other dioceses is an important aspect of the Convocation. Discussion among team members prior to, during, and after the Convocation is central to a good discernment of needs, issues, and possible responses in each context.

Team-Building Exercises: Practical Tools for Formation and Collaboration

Before the Convocation:

- Ask for the guidance of the Holy Spirit as the team discerns, plans, and acts. Start your first team meeting with time for each member to share their joys and concerns.
- Keeping in mind the co-responsibility of all the baptized for the mission of the Church, consider who is not on the delegation or team (for various reasons) but should still be involved in one way or another with the Convocation.
- Read selected portions of *Evangelii Gaudium*.
- Look at the breakouts offered at the Convocation and make sure that members of the delegation will attend different sessions.
- Prepare to share what is working well in your diocese or context: work together as a team to develop a “Top Ten” list of what is going well and five areas of challenge that you may want advice about. You might even plan some possible new activities or ways of fostering missionary discipleship. You can share all these successes, challenges, and possible ways forward with other experts at the Convocation.
- Plan at least one time (besides the last day) to get together as a delegation at the Convocation.

During the Convocation:

- Remember and/or write down a few specific points from each session you attend to share with the delegation.

Preparation for the Convocation

- Be open to different opinions on the topics, speakers, or the responses. Remember, we are looking at all we do in the light of missionary discipleship.
- Look deeper and further into the topics brought up at the Convocation and ask questions that pertain to your pastoral context. Consider what areas of research might help you to understand better how to reach people in the mission field.

After the Convocation:

- Plan a debriefing session for the delegation after they return home from the Convocation. This session can also include those who were unable to attend.
- Navigate conflict with open mind and heart in charity and kindness.
- Encourage one another in implementing the plans developed out of the Convocation.
- Support and pray for one another in each person's respective ministries or work with the Church.

Spiritual and Strategic Preparation

We do not become saints alone but rather in community. Many of the canonized saints of the Church were friends with other canonized saints (for example, Sts. Francis and Clare, Sts. Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross, St. Ignatius Loyola and his companions, including St. Francis Xavier), to say nothing of the other people the saints knew who helped them grow in holiness. As you prepare for the Convocation, consider that everyone you meet is called to be a saint, and the people who are at the Convocation are all striving to become one, just like you are. This gathering is meant to connect you to one another and to inspire new generations of missionary disciples.

At the heart of all saintly men and women is a foundation of prayer. We can be effective apostles of Christ only when we are united with him on a deeply personal level. It is important to prepare spiritually

for your participation in the Convocation. Just as athletes train mentally and physically for upcoming sporting events, so too should Convocation participants prepare, so that their hearts may be ready to receive the graces offered at the event.

Here are a few suggestions:

- Read and pray with one of the following passages of the New Testament, considering how this passage connects with your call to missionary discipleship. Each passage focuses on some aspect of the Convocation: the mission field and outreach; the call to leadership; unity in the Church; the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- Practice the prayer of *lectio divina* and take time every day (if possible) to return to the passage that you choose, asking God to continually reveal deeper meanings to you:
 - Matthew 11:28-30: The invitation of Christ to all who labor and are heavy burdened
 - Matthew 28:16-20: The call to make disciples of all nations
 - Mark 6:7-13: The mission of the Twelve (see also Mt 10:1-42 for a lengthier commissioning, or Lk 10:1-12 for the sending of the seventy-two disciples into the towns and villages of Galilee)
 - Mark 10:35-45: The ambition of James and John, and the invitation of Christ to true greatness
 - Luke 5:1-11: The call of Simon Peter
 - Luke 10:29-37: The parable of the Good Samaritan
 - Luke 15: The parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son
 - John 17:6-26: The prayer of Jesus for the disciples, that “they may all be one”
 - Acts 2:1-11: The descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost

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- 1 Corinthians 12:1-31: The unity and diversity of gifts in the Church, the Body of Christ
 - 1 Timothy 4:6-16: Paul's counsel to Timothy as a minister and leader in the Church
 - 2 Timothy 1:6-14: Paul's advice to Timothy on his gifts (see also 2 Tim 2:14-26 regarding leadership in a fractured Church)
- Read and reflect on *Evangelii Gaudium* (EG). Find a passage, section, or paragraph that particularly strikes you and bring it to prayer, or consider some the following key passages that were helpful in the development of the Convocation program:
 - EG nos. 1-13, 50, and 259-261, on unity, joy, and evangelical discernment
 - EG nos. 287-288, on Mary as the Mother of Evangelization
 - EG nos. 14-18 and 50-109, on charting the landscape and mission field in a spirit of evangelical discernment
 - EG nos. 19-49, 110-134, 160-175, on the radical call to missionary discipleship
 - EG nos. 3, 24, and 27, and *Misericordiae Vultus*, no. 10, on mercy and renewal
 - EG nos. 76-109, on naming and healing our woundedness
 - EG nos. 20, 23-24, 48-49, and 176-258 on going to the peripheries and the social dimension of evangelization
 - EG nos. 61 and 255-258, on the call to witness to the faith in the world
 - EG nos. 19-49, 110-134, and 259-288, on equipping missionary disciples to be successful, effective, and Spirit-filled evangelizers

- Let the words of your chosen passage(s) sink in, and come back to them multiple times, every day if possible. Discuss it with colleagues, friends, and family members. Consider these questions:
 - What is striking about these words of Pope Francis?
 - What is challenging about this passage?
 - How does this passage apply to you or your mission?
 - How is Christ asking you to change or grow in response to this passage?
 - If you could respond directly to the Holy Father about this passage, what would you say to him? How might he respond to you in return?
- Read the statement from the USCCB Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis, *Living as Missionary Disciples: A Resource for Evangelization*, Part 1, “Theological Summary of the New Evangelization.” Find the document online at: <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/new-evangelization/index.cfm>.
- Spend time with your favorite saints, blessed, or holy people who are important to you or your apostolate or ministry, or who inspire or motivate you to engage in your apostolate, ministry, or focus area. Read their biographies, pray with their words or writings, and ask for their guidance as you seek to follow them as a missionary disciple. Consider the following:
 - How did they come to fall in the love with the Lord?
 - What were the challenges of their times, and how did they respond to them?
 - How did they build community with other leaders and disciples?

- What kind of leader were they?
 - What was the impact of their missionary discipleship?
- Pray with Mary, the Mother of Evangelization, the one who said “yes” to the angel to bring forth Christ to the world, the one to whom Pope Francis entrusted the fruits of *Evangelii Gaudium*: “She is the Mother of the Church which evangelizes, and without her we could never truly understand the spirit of the new evangelization . . . She is the missionary who draws near to us and accompanies us throughout life, opening our hearts to faith by her maternal love” (nos. 284, 286). Praying the Rosary is the first and favored way to unite ourselves to Jesus through Mary.
- Reflect on Mary as the Immaculate Conception (patroness of the United States) and Our Lady of Guadalupe (patroness of the Americas). Devotion to Our Lady has been foundational for Catholic communities across our continent and has been especially important for Catholic immigrants to the Americas. The leaders of many of these communities looked to Mary for the strength they needed to persevere despite the opposition and rejection they faced in their new home.
- Reflect on the image (or images) of the Blessed Mother that most appeals to you, and consider how (or if) that image has been a part of your family’s journey over the years. Spend time considering one of the images or titles of Mary that you are least familiar with as well; how does the multiplicity of ways of seeing Mary speak to both the universality and the particularity of the Catholic faith? Pray a litany of the Blessed Mother.
- Engage in your own favorite Catholic devotions, keeping the Convocation (and all those across the country who, like you, are preparing for this event within their dioceses, organizations, or other communities or groups) in your mind as an intention in those moments of prayer.

Consider offering some of your Masses for its fruitfulness and for the other leaders you have yet to meet.

In addition to personal prayer, remember that an important way to prepare spiritually and strategically for the Convocation is by meeting in small groups with other delegates and with other Catholic leaders in your community. To assemble these small communities, consider:

- Who are your main collaborators? Who is already working alongside you in the work of ministry in and with the Church?
- Who might the untapped, potential collaborators in your community be? Consider those in other ministry areas; those at the diocese or parish; those in apostolic movements; those in religious communities; those in academic institutions and higher education; Catholic business and community leaders; emerging (young adult) leaders or people in other cultural families or other generations who may have new perspectives to bring to the conversation.
- Read and discuss how parishes can make use of the USCCB Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis statement, *Living as Missionary Disciples: A Resource for Evangelization*, especially Part 2, “Developing a Pastoral Plan for Missionary Discipleship.” Find the document online at: <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/new-evangelization/index.cfm>.

As you gather these people together in preparation for the Convocation, reflect on the following:

- What does your landscape look like? What is your local mission field?
- Who is not being reached by the existing efforts of church communities in the area? Who is not in the pews? Who is not in church leadership? Who is struggling on the margins of your local area? Who does not have the

opportunity to experience the love, mercy, and compassion of Christ and the community of the Church?

- Who are in the peripheries in your local area: the poor, the marginalized, the often ignored? What cultural families in the area are not represented in the pews? Is each generation present? Where can those mentioned above be found?
- How would you define leadership and missionary discipleship?
 - Who do you see as leaders in the Church and society?
 - How are you taking on the mantle of missionary discipleship?
- Reflect on your own journey as a Catholic leader:
 - How do you encounter Christ on a regular basis?
 - How did you become more active in your faith?
 - How does being a leader in the Church affect your striving for holiness?
 - Who called you to leadership in the Church?
 - What are your struggles or temptations in being a missionary disciple in the Church? (See *Evangelii Gaudium*, Chapter Two, Part II)
 - What do you consider successful moments as a leader?
 - What are your hopes and dreams for the Church, for your community, for your family, and for your own future as a Catholic Christian?
- Reflect on the concept of success for your community, parish, and local Church.
 - Who or what defines success?

- How will you know you have been “successful” in renewing the Church along the lines of *Evangelii Gaudium*?
 - When and where is success (or progress) possible for your local community? What would it look like?
 - What prevents you from achieving this success today?
 - How can you begin to remove those obstacles?
 - How will you bring other collaborators to the table?
 - How will you begin to work toward success in the Church?

At the Convocation, delegates will have an opportunity to choose some strategy-focused breakout sessions on practical ways to move forward. These breakout sessions, held on Monday, July 3, will offer an exploration of the following focus areas:

- *Evangelii Gaudium* at the Parish: Revitalizing the Local Community
- The Life and Dignity of the Human Person: Strategies for Promoting and Living Catholic Social Teaching
- Welcoming the Stranger: Ministry with Migrants, Refugees, and Immigrants
- *Laudato Si'*: Practical Strategies for Caring for God's Creation
- *Amoris Laetitia*: Families as Principal Agents of the New Evangelization
- Sharing Christ's Story, Sharing Our Story: Effective Witness and Communication
- Moments of Return: Sunday Mass, Holy Days, and Sacraments in Evangelization

- In a Global Age of Polarization: Civil Dialogue, Bold Witness, and Healing Divisions
- Communicating the Church's Vision of the Human Person and Human Sexuality
- Missionary Disciples in Solidarity with the Suffering Church
- Faith, Reason, and Science: Learning and Teaching the "Why?" and "How?"
- Reaching Out to Those Hurt by Leaders and Members of the Church
- Identifying and Meeting the Changing Needs of All Parishioners
- Faith in Action: Advocacy and Organizing with Poor and Marginalized Communities
- Engaging the "Nones" and Ministry with Inactive and Disconnected Catholics
- Vocations, Formation, and Seminaries in the Work of Missionary Discipleship
- Leadership Formation and Lay Ministry in the Work of Missionary Discipleship
- Addressing Violence and Racism in Our Communities
- Catechesis: Forming Young People in the Joy of the Gospel
- Raising Up Latino Leaders: Missionary Discipleship in the Process of *Encuentro*
- Growing by Attraction: Evangelization Through the Beauty of the Word of God
- Missionary Discipleship and Business Leadership

The Convocation will close on Tuesday, July 4, with a motivational call to become Spirit-filled evangelizers equipped for excellence in all that we are called to do. This is followed by a period of time when the various delegations will have a chance to pull in all that they heard and learned—and begin to develop achievable goals and practical strategies in the year(s) ahead. In this way,

participants will be able to move from preparation and experience to future-focused action.

In all of this, be prayerful and honest with yourself and others. Imagine what is possible, but also be realistic about resources and abilities. Ask for the Holy Spirit's guidance throughout your meeting.

Practical Preparation

There are certainly some practical considerations to keep in mind prior to this major event. These details are important for your participation at the Convocation. The most up-to-date information on these logistical items will also be available on the Convocation website (www.usccb.org/convocation).

- When booking travel, fly into Orlando International Airport (MCO). Try to arrive at least three to four hours before the Opening Mass on Saturday, July 1, at 2:00 p.m. EDT. This will give you enough time to travel to and check into your hotel, eat lunch, and pick up your credentials from the registration area, as well as take time for prayer and reflection prior to the event.
- Pre-arrange transportation from Orlando International Airport to your hotel (typically Mears buses or other shuttles are available) if you prefer not to take a taxi or use shared ride services.
- Registration check-in opens Friday, June 30, (and will remain open throughout the Convocation) at the Hyatt Regency Conference Center, across from the Orange County Convention Center (OCCC) on International Drive. This will be the location of all plenary and breakout sessions.
- The *Convocation for Catholic Leaders* officially begins at 2:00 p.m. EDT Saturday, July 1, 2017, with an Opening Mass at the Hyatt Regency Conference Center.
- The following meals are provided for you through registration: dinner Saturday (July 1), lunch and dinner

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Sunday (July 2), lunch and dinner Monday (July 3), and a box lunch Tuesday (July 4). Breakfasts are not included in the price of registration.

- While the Convocation takes place mostly at the Hyatt Regency Conference Center, meals will be served in the Orange County Convention Center's West Building, accessible to the Hyatt Regency by a covered sky bridge (about a ten-minute walk). The West Building is also connected directly (via sky bridge) to the Rosen Plaza Hotel and the Rosen Centre Hotel.
- The Convocation will include a lot of walking (between plenary and breakout sessions, meals, liturgies, and hotel accommodations), so please pack comfortable shoes. Take necessary breaks and pace yourself throughout the event.
- The attire for the Convocation is business casual.
- If you booked through the Convocation registration system, you will be staying at one of the five main hotels near the central Convocation activities: The Hyatt Regency Orlando (9801 International Drive); the Rosen Plaza Hotel (9700 International Drive); the Rosen Centre Hotel (9840 International Drive); the Hilton Orlando (6001 Destination Parkway); and the Rosen Shingle Creek (9939 Universal Boulevard). Shuttle buses will run between these properties in the morning and evening hours. There are also sky bridges between some of these locations.
- Transportation options (and in many cases, tickets and passes) to Orlando events and attractions are available in the lobby areas of all hotels. There is also a special "I-Drive" trolley shuttle that is available (for an extra fee, though some hotels offer complementary passes); the schedule for these shuttles can be found online or at the concierge service desk in hotel lobbies.
- Restaurants are available north and south of the conference center area on International Drive, a number within

walking distance. However, when planning meals at these locations, please be aware that distances to these locations can be deceiving—and it may take longer to walk back and forth than you expect. Please account for the travel time in making reservations before or after Convocation activities. There are also restaurants in the conference hotels.

- The Convocation concludes after the Mass of Sending at the Hyatt Regency Conference Center (at approximately 3:30 p.m. EDT) on Tuesday, July 4, 2017.
- Prior to your day of departure, check with the bell services desk at your hotel for luggage storage options on the day of and after your hotel check out.
- There will be security posted at the Convocation events. If you note any suspicious behavior or trouble, please alert one of the security personnel, who will handle the situation. No one except registered Convocation participants (who are all adults, 18-years-old or over), and any guests of the hotel management, is allowed in the conference center space during the events.
- Because of the times we live in, please be aware of your surroundings at all times, and be attentive to basic security protocol. Be safe and help others to be safe, too.

Participation at the Convocation

The basic schedule of the Convocation was provided above following the introduction and key questions. Below are additional details to assist your participation during the Convocation.

Convocation Masses

As you can see in the schedule, each day of the Convocation will include the celebration of Holy Mass, keeping the Eucharist at the center of the gathering. As each day has a different theme that reflects the journey through the process of forming missionary

disciples. Mass—and particularly the homily—will be a time to reflect on these themes and ponder the movements of the Holy Spirit in your and other participants' hearts and minds.

- Try to arrive in the worship space early enough to be able to quietly recollect your thoughts before Mass.
- Remember that the Mass is a unifying moment for the Church; pray for peace and healing of divisions within the Body of Christ.
- Pray for the Church in the United States and for all God's people, especially those on the peripheries and those disconnected from the faith community.

Convocation 101: Engaging the Vision

On the first day of the Convocation, everyone will attend a breakout based on their role or ministry area:

1. Bishops
2. Pastors/Priests and Deacons
3. Diocesan Leaders
4. Parish Leaders
5. Leaders in Movements, Lay Apostolates, and New Communities
6. Organizational and Institutional Leaders

This breakout session will give participants an overview of what to expect and how they, in their specific role, will be asked to engage the vision, issues, and information presented throughout the four days of the Convocation. This will also be an excellent networking opportunity with others around the country in similar roles in the Church and society.

Reflect on these questions before the orientation in order to share your thoughts with others:

- Where do I see success and joy in my work in bringing the Gospel to people and forming missionary disciples?

- What are my challenges and frustrations with my role in the Church?
- What are my hopes and dreams for the Church and for my particular role in the Church?

Plenary Sessions

In these sessions, participants will listen to bishops and key leaders explore the major themes of the Convocation. Through stories, ideas, and exhortation, the plenary sessions, using short and crisp presentations and panel conversations, seek to inspire and motivate.

- Come ready to learn and be challenged as well as affirmed in your work.
- The plenary speakers will only touch on each topic briefly, so ask yourself: What more do I want to know or do to go deeper?

Please be respectful of the plenary session presenters, keynotes, bishops, and panelists, and their time and energy, during the main stage sessions and in the hallways afterward.

Breakout Sessions

The breakouts, led by the bishops and key experts in the field, will be a chance to hear in more detail about the issues at hand. They will also be times to engage in smaller group conversations with other leaders. The breakouts will present the topic in a “see-judge-act” format, with the key experts exploring what they observe in their focus area, leading into large group conversation in which the panel and the participants evaluate the situation, and rounding out the session with small group discussions on local realities and practical ideas for moving forward.

- It is recommended that members of delegations attend different breakout sessions so that teams can discuss different topics, compare experiences, and bring multiple ideas back to the delegation. To ensure this, please discuss

the Convocation schedule as a team and determine who should go to which session.

- Bring your questions and comments from the plenary sessions to the breakouts.
- Be open to meeting others (especially those you have never met before and/or may never meet otherwise), and hearing their perspective on the topics or issues discussed.
- Begin to think about (and write down) practical strategies and implementation of the topics in your local community, ministry, or apostolate. It would be helpful to reflect on your ministry using the “see-judge-act” model. Reflecting on what is working well, what are present challenges, and what are paths forward will help prepare for the breakout sessions and discussions.

Please be respectful of the breakout session presenters, bishops, and panelists, and their time and energy, during these particular sessions and in the hallways before or after.

Team/Delegation Meetings

There will be various opportunities to gather as diocesan/organizational delegations during the course of the Convocation, particularly at mealtimes. The time that has been specially dedicated for delegations to discuss practical strategies and next steps is on Tuesday, July 4. Boxed lunches will be available for pick up at any time between the end of the morning plenary session (10:30 a.m.) and the closing Mass (2:00 p.m.), and delegations may meet for all or part of that time in any available space around the Hyatt Regency Conference Center and the Orange County Convention Center.

- Be sure to discuss beforehand which breakout sessions your delegation members will attend so that the team gets a well-rounded experience.

- Before arriving in Orlando, it may be a good idea to decide together on delegation meeting times: break on Sunday, breakfast on Tuesday, etc.

Meals and Breaks

While there will be fruitful conversation in plenaries and break-outs, there will also be great opportunities in the hallways, over meals, or during free time. Intentionally use your time well. The meals and breaks give you the chance for further engagement and even deeper dialogue in a more casual setting.

- If you're tired or need time to process a talk or a conversation, feel free to take a break. There are plenty of places around the convention center to sit, relax, grab a bite to eat, or if time allows, head back to your room.
- Make time for prayer and silence: there is a Blessed Sacrament Chapel set up for Convocation participants. You may also choose to find a quiet space in the hotel, conference center, or outside. Respect the quiet time of others as well.
- Use the breaks and mealtimes to introduce yourself to other Convocation participants. You have a lot in common!
- If you want to learn more about the resources available to you as a Catholic leader, be sure to check out the exhibits and sponsors' tables located in and around the convention center.
- Don't forget to eat! It may be tempting to skip a meal in favor of conversation, but you don't want to be distracted from the talks by an empty stomach. Even more, meals will help with being fully energized to make the most of your Convocation experience.

Your Story

You have been invited to the Convocation because you can help advance the call of Pope Francis to form missionary disciples in your diocese, parish, ministry, organization, or apostolate. The Spirit has graced you with particular gifts to build up the Church. As St. Paul reminds us, “There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit . . . one and the same Spirit produces all of these, distributing them individually to each person as he wishes” (1 Cor 12:4, 11).

The bishops want you to bring your story, your experience, and your wisdom to the Convocation, as well as your openness to conversion and growth. At table and small group discussions, in one-on-one conversations, and during large-group Q&A time, please share your input and perspective, but be willing to be challenged and be respectful at all times.

- Be sure to bring business cards with you so that you can connect with people during and after the Convocation.
- Actively participate in dialogue with other participants throughout the Convocation, perhaps actively seeking out people whose experience you do not share, with the knowledge that you *do* have much in common and could learn from one another.
- Reflect on how the experience of the Convocation itself can impact your story going forward: will you allow this event to move you in new and unexpected ways?

The Orlando Area

Our Lord said to the disciples, “Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest” (Mt 11:28) and to the seventy-two missionaries, “Stay in the same house and eat and drink what is offered to you, for the laborer deserves his payment” (Lk 10:7). One of the reasons the Convocation is being

held in Florida is to offer Catholic leaders a place of beauty and rest. While the weather may be hot and humid, the Orlando area offers many options for relief from the heat and chances to gather with friends, colleagues, or family at the region's many attractions before or after the Convocation.

If time and budget considerations allow, try to spend a few extra days in the area prior to or following the Convocation. Enjoy Orlando as you wish: the theme parks, the pools, the restaurants and entertainment options, or the many amenities of your resort or hotel.

Digital Engagement

Plan for digital engagement during and after the Convocation, especially to share the insights of the Convocation with those unable to attend.

- It is anticipated that parts of the Convocation will be live-streamed or telecast. Invite members of your local community to follow along and include them in post-Convocation gatherings.
- Consider forming a “digital engagement team” who can plan a strategy for following and engaging with the Convocation online, as it is available.
- Develop questions for small group conversation online—between those participating in Florida and those at home (use social media tools or teleconference services).
- Create a social media group (via Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram or another service), in order to regularly post videos and content prior to, during, and following the Convocation. Follow @USCCB on these platforms, and use the hashtag #CatholicConvo. *(Please note that the 2017 Convocation of Catholic Leaders participants are responsible for the content created by them on social media regarding the Convocation.)*

Journal for the Journey

Saturday, July 1, 2017

As you arrive in Orlando and get settled before the formal beginning of the Convocation, what are your hopes for this experience? How can you prepare yourself to enter into the next few days?

The focus of the Opening Mass was unity, joy, and evangelical discernment. What are your thoughts about these three components of the Convocation? What did you learn from the homily?

This afternoon, you met with the other stakeholders, in similar roles in the Church. How do you hope that experiencing the Convocation together will transform your relationships with each other and lead you to more vibrant evangelizing efforts?

This evening, you experienced a cultural festival, dinner, and Marian devotion. What stood out to you?

Sunday, July 2, 2017

This morning's plenary was on the landscape and mission field. Was any of the information presented new to you? What caught your attention? How can these facts help inform your ministry?

Which breakout session did you attend today? What were the highlights?

This afternoon's plenary was on the call to missionary discipleship. How do the bishops who presented the topic embody this call? How do you hope to implement this call in your ministry?

Today's Mass focused on mercy and renewal. How did you experience mercy during last year's Jubilee of Mercy? How can that experience help renew your ministry?

Tonight, you experienced an evening of reflection and prayer focused on the healing of wounds. What personal wounds did you bring to this service? What communal wounds do you think the Church needs to address? How can you better approach the people you serve with the knowledge that they are wounded and bring Christ's healing to them?

Monday July 3, 2017

This morning, Convocation delegates participated in a Eucharistic procession. How does this activity highlight the need to bring Christ to the world—to the peripheries? What did it mean for you personally?

Today's plenary focused on going to the peripheries. How do you go to the peripheries in your ministry? What can you do better?

Which breakout session did you attend this morning? What were the highlights?

Which breakout session did you attend this afternoon? What were the highlights?

Today, we celebrated Mass for the *Fortnight for Freedom*.
How aware are you of the challenges to religious freedom in America today? How does our witness as a Church depend on this freedom?

Tonight, there was an engaging experience of witness and praise.
How did God speak to you through the beauty of music, song, and word? Did it strengthen or challenge your faith in any way?

Tuesday July 4, 2017

The final plenary focused on equipping Spirit-filled evangelizers for excellence.

How have you experienced the Holy Spirit this week? Do you feel better equipped for ministry? Prepare some thoughts now to share with your team members this morning at the goal-setting breakout session.

The Convocation is over, but the journey to become the missionary disciples that Christ calls us to be is not. What are your personal goals and plans to implement *Evangelii Gaudium* in your personal life and ministry?

Beyond the Convocation

The real work of the Convocation is not what happens in Orlando but what follows in the days, weeks, months, and years beyond this gathering. When you return home, you will return to your mission field, in the midst of everyday life and its struggles. With this in mind, it is important for participants to plan for the return home.

Here are a few suggestions on how to plan for after the Convocation:

- Before departing for Florida, schedule at least two post-Convocation meetings with the delegation for the late summer or early fall of 2017. This will be a time to more fully process any insights or ideas generated by the event.
- Challenge the delegation to plan a few post-Convocation meetings with other collaborators and those unable to attend. Try to get these on the calendar right away.
- Consider convening a local event or synod (in your diocese, at the parish, among several parishes, or within your institution or apostolate, at organizational gatherings, or during any upcoming conferences). You may simply follow the Convocation format, walking through *Evangelii Gaudium*, or you may want to adapt it to your local needs. Begin thinking about invitations, the planning team, and logistics. If you prefer to use the Convocation format, it would be as follows:
 1. Celebrate the unity of being together as Catholics under the banner of Jesus Christ. Consider an Opening Mass that unites different cultures, ministries, generations, experiences, and perspectives.
 2. Report and reflect on the landscape and mission field of the local Church and community in your area.

3. Remind local leaders of the radical call of missionary discipleship—and of their role in the story of evangelization.
 4. Look at those on the existential, geographic, generational, cultural, and economic peripheries of the local community and consider how to best invite these people into the Church.
 5. Explore practical strategies and ideas for evangelization, missionary discipleship, and promoting the Church's social teaching. Invite experts and leaders who are successful evangelizers to share their stories.
 6. Consider the implementation of new evangelization plans (within the parish, diocese, apostolate, organization, community, etc.). What (concretely) can you do next? What is possible now or a few months from now? How do you catch hold of the momentum from the Convocation?
 7. Ask participants to reflect on what it means to be a “Spirit-filled evangelizer” and call them to excellence in all that they do in Christ's name. Close the gathering in prayer, relying on the grace of God to make these plans fruitful.
- Schedule listening sessions with local leaders on the issues that were brought up at the Convocation. Ask them if the information that arose in the plenary and breakout sessions line up with their lived reality, and if not, what is missing or seems incorrect. Ask for additional ideas on how the Church can respond to Pope Francis's call to missionary discipleship.
 - Encourage the emerging leaders you met at the Convocation, and all young leaders in your local community, to continue in their good work serving Christ and the Church. Accompany them as they continue to

discern their vocational call. This is especially important as the Holy Father calls the entire Church to reflect on this accompaniment model in preparation for the XV Synod of Bishops on “Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment.”

- Seek to support other participants after the Convocation for Catholic Leaders is over. Reflect on the following scripture passages and pray for the participants you have kept in touch with from your delegation or from other delegations:
 - “We must consider how to rouse one another to love and good works.” (Heb 10:24)
 - “Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, as indeed you do.” (1 Thes 5:11)
 - “Above all, let your love for one another be intense, because love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaining. As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God’s varied grace.” (1 Pt 4:8-10)
- How can you “rouse one another,” “encourage one another,” “build one another up,” and above all, love and serve other Convocation participants in the weeks, months, and years to come?
 - Pray for your fellow delegates on a regular basis, and pray for all those who experienced the Convocation in-person in Orlando or who followed along at home. Mutual prayer will be a source of strength for the journey.
 - Offer support and advice, encourage, and accompany other Catholic leaders by meeting up socially (especially with those in your community) at

- church activities or by phone, email, and through social media.
- Help one another implement ideas, and hold one another accountable through regular communication and participation.
- Host or attend a retreat, an evening of prayer, or a day of recollection to pray about and reflect on what was experienced at the Convocation—and how you are doing in the journey of going forth as a missionary disciple.
- Involve local leaders in other events or activities in the universal Church: The Fifth National *Encuentro* Process (2017 through the national gathering in September 2018 with implementation in 2019 and beyond), the Catholic Social Ministry Gathering (which takes place annually; the next being held in February 2018), the next World Meeting of Families (August 2018), the preparation for the upcoming Synod on “Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment” (October 2018), the next international and stateside World Youth Day celebrations (January 2019), and many other national and international experiences.
- Regularly evaluate yourself and your team’s work, asking questions such as:
 - How well are we living out the vision of Pope Francis and *Evangelii Gaudium*?
 - How aware are we of the local landscape and mission field around our community?
 - How have we personally accepted the Lord’s radical call to each of us to become Spirit-filled missionary disciples?
 - How are we engaging the social dimension of evangelization, and as a result, how are we being

proactive in reaching out to the peripheries in culture and society?

- What practical strategies have we implemented as a result of the Convocation?
- Have we been successful in our efforts?

It is important to set goals for the delegation to meet (benchmarks, as it were) in the time following the *Convocation of Catholic Leaders*, as well as to engage leaders who were unable to attend. The true success of the Convocation is completely dependent on prayerfully achieving those goals.

Remember: the message of the Convocation is for *all* Catholic leaders, and in a real sense, for *all the baptized*—and we pray that more missionary disciples may be formed across the United States as a result of our shared participation in this special moment in the life of the Church in our nation.

Appendix and Helpful Resources

In addition to Pope Francis's *Evangelii Gaudium*, it can be helpful for participants to read:

- Vatican II: *Gaudium et Spes* (1965) and *Ad Gentes: On the Mission Activity of the Church* (1965)
- Bl. Paul VI: *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975)
- St. John Paul II: *Christifideles Laici* (1988), *Redemptoris Missio* (1990), *Ecclesia in America* (1999) and *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (2001)
- Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI: *Caritas in Veritate* (2009)
- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Resources:
 - *Living as Missionary Disciples: A Resource for Evangelization*, Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis (2017)
 - *Disciples Called to Witness*, Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis (2012)
 - *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*, Committee on the Laity (2005)
 - *Go and Make Disciples: A National Plan and Strategy for Catholic Evangelization in the United States*, Committee on Evangelization (2002)

For those who wish to explore the landscape and mission field and gain an understanding of the peripheries across the United States more in-depth, here is a list of select sources:

- The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA): <http://cara.georgetown.edu/> and <http://nineteen-sixty-four.blogspot.com/>. Several CARA studies were done in collaboration with the USCCB:
 - *Cultural Diversity in the Catholic Church in the United States* (Special Report: October 2016):

- <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/cultural-diversity/upload/Cultural-Diversity-Summary-Report-October-2016.pdf>
- *Research Review: Lay Ecclesial Ministers in the United States* (February 2015): <http://www.usccb.org/upload/lem-summit-2015-cara-research-review-on-lay-ecclesial-ministry-2015.pdf>
 - *Catholic Schools in the United States in the 21st Century: Importance in Church Life, Challenges, and Opportunities* (June 2014): <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/catholic-education/upload/CARA-Catholic-Schools-Data-Points-white-graphs-2014.pdf>
 - *Catholic New Media Use in the United States* (November 2012): http://www.usccb.org/about/communications/upload/Catholic_New_Media_Use_in_United_States_2012.pdf
 - *Ordination Class Reports*, an annual snapshot of those recently ordained to the priesthood (1998 to 2016): <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/vocations/ordination-class/index.cfm>
 - *Profession Class Reports*, an annual snapshot of men and women who recently entered consecrated life (2010 to 2015): <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/vocations/consecrated-life/profession-class/index.cfm>
 - *Sacraments Today: Belief and Practice among U.S. Catholics* (April 2008): <http://cara.georgetown.edu/sacramentsreport.pdf>
 - *Marriage in the Catholic Church: A Survey of U.S. Catholics* (October 2007): <http://cara.georgetown.edu/Publications/MarriageReport.pdf>
- *American Catholics in Transition* by William V. D'Antonio, Michele Dillon, and Mary L. Gautier (Rowman &

- Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2013): a sociological overview of the Catholic experience in the United States
- *Catholic Parishes of the 21st Century* by Charles E. Zech, Mary L. Gautier, Mary M. Gray, Jonathan L. Wiggins, and Fr. Thomas P. Gaunt, SJ (Oxford University Press, 2017): the most recent overview of parish life in the United States, including data points on leadership, pastoral administration, cultural diversity, and parishioner perspectives
 - *Young Catholic America: Emerging Adults In, Out of, and Gone From the Church* (Oxford University Press, 2014), *Souls in Transition: The Religious & Spiritual Lives of Emerging Adults* (Oxford University Press, 2009), and *Soul Searching: The Religious & Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (Oxford University Press, 2005) by Christian Smith: analyses based on longitudinal studies of youth and young adults in collaboration with the National Study of Youth and Religion (NSYR)
 - *After the Baby Boomers: How Twenty- and Thirty-Somethings Are Shaping the Future of American Religion* by Robert Wuthnow (Princeton University Press, 2008): information on the religious engagement of emerging adults
 - *Changing Spirituality of Emerging Adults*, a project developed by Dean R. Hoge: a study of the spirituality of emerging adults; available at <http://archives.lib.cua.edu/findingaid/changspir.cfm>
 - *National Study of Catholic Parishes with Hispanic Ministry* (<http://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/schools/stm/pdf/2014/BC-NatlStudyParishesHM-Rep1-201405.pdf>) and *Hispanic Ministry in the 21st Century: Urgent Matters*, ed. Hosfmann Ospino, Elsie Miranda, and Brett Hoover (Convivium Press, 2016): in-depth analysis of Catholic culture among Hispanic Latinos

- The Emerging Models of Pastoral Leadership project: a multi-year research project with some data available in an online archive hosted by the National Association of Lay Ministry (NALM), available at <http://nalm.org/resources/emerging-models/>
- *The Next Generation of Pastoral Leadership: A Closer Examination of the Current Reality* (NALM, 2012): <http://www.usccb.org/upload/lem-summit-2015-next-gen-emerging-models-report.pdf>
- The Pew Research Center: a subsidiary of The Pew Charitable Trusts; a secular, non-partisan, non-advocacy “fact tank” with a mission to inform the public on issues, attitudes, and trends shaping the United States and the world; see www.pewresearch.org and www.pewforum.org (the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life); notable studies include:
 - *Millennials: A Portrait of Generation Next* (2010): <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2010/02/24/millennials-confident-connected-open-to-change/>
 - “Nones” on the Rise (2012): <http://www.pewforum.org/2012/10/09/nones-on-the-rise/>; about the growing trend of non-religious affiliation among young adults
- The Barna Group: a research and resource company focusing exclusively on cultural and religious trends; geared primarily toward evangelical Christians; see www.barna.com.
- Polling organizations that can identify trends among the general population: Gallup (www.gallup.com), Rasmussen Reports (www.rasmussenreports.com), and Quinnipiac University Polling Institute (<https://poll.qu.edu>); these can be helpful in understanding the broad context of life in the United States.

Notes

- 1 Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (EG), no. 1 (Washington, DC: Libreria Editrice Vaticana–United States Conference of Catholic Bishops [USCCB], 2013).
- 2 EG, no. 1.
- 3 EG, no. 27.
- 4 EG, no. 25.
- 5 EG, no. 50.
- 6 EG, nos. 27 and 33.
- 7 EG, no. 20.
- 8 EG, nos. 259–283.
- 9 EG, no. 120.
- 10 EG, no. 287 and also nos. 25 and 30.
- 11 EG, no. 25.
- 12 EG, no. 169.
- 13 EG, no. 170.
- 14 EG, nos. 272 and 210, respectively.
- 15 Pope Francis, Address of the Holy Father, Meeting with the Participants in the Fifth Convention of the Italian Church, Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore, Florence, November 10, 2015.
- 16 EG, no. 31.
- 17 St. John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles Laici*, no. 32 (December 30, 1988).
- 18 EG, no. 25.
- 19 EG, no. 173.
- 20 Pope Francis, Homily at the Basilica of Ss. Peter and Paul, Philadelphia, PA, September 26, 2015.
- 21 Ibid.
- 22 EG, no. 31.
- 23 EG, no. 23.
- 24 EG, no. 33.
- 25 EG, no. 20.

- 26 EG, no. 53.
- 27 Throughout the Old Testament, God calls the Jewish people to care for the poor and needy, the widow and the orphan. In the Gospels, Jesus identifies himself with the poor (see Mt 25:35), proclaims the good news to the poor and liberty to captives (see Lk 4:18), and tells his followers to sell their possessions and give to the poor (see Lk 12:33), among many other times that he addresses the poor in particular. The early Christians followed suit, sharing “all things in common” (Acts 2:42-47), being considered holy when helping the poor (see Acts 9:36), sending contributions to the poor (see Rom 15:26), and being called to care for widows and orphans (see 1 Tim 5:3, Jas 1:27).
- 28 EG, no. 230.
- 29 EG, no. 262.
- 30 EG, no. 259.
- 31 EG, no. 261.
- 32 EG, no. 268.
- 33 For example, see USCCB, *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*, 33-49, on the areas of formation applicable for those who minister in the Church.
- 34 USCCB Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis, *Living as Missionary Disciples: A Resource for Evangelization* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2017).
- 35 EG, no. 46.



The Catholic Apostolate Center is a ministry of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate (Pallottines)–Immaculate Conception Province that collaborates with the USCCB, dioceses, and national organizations to create formation programs and online resources for the New Evangelization. It assists Catholic leaders in deepening collaboration with one another while providing formation and apostolic opportunities through hosting conferences, webinars, and presentations.

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