



## Summary

Most comments about the vision statement centered around the word “evangelizing.” Parishioners expressed concern about the perceived political associations with the Christian right and with groups who are not welcoming to all. There is also a lack of clarity around the intent of the term for us as Catholics and as a faith community. Much conversation was focused on how to define evangelism, which was most often described as: modeling faith through actions and/or service; working to bring people in/back to the Church; being welcoming and inclusive; and building personal faith to share with the world.

In general, feedback was positive for the second part of the statement. Conversations centered around the more conventional interpretations of environmentalism: recycling, composting, and making environmentally conscious decisions. However, there were also many comments about how caring for creation is about more than being green; it is about caring for all peoples and animals as well. When asked how to love God and serve humanity, most responses cited service to the community, social justice work, prayer and spirituality.

## Detail

### Alternative words for evangelizing

- Catholic community or faith community
- Welcoming community
- A Community living the gospel
- Mission-driven or missionary disciples
- Open community.
- Inviting, inclusive, engaging, vibrant or lively
- Add a phrase like “we are striving to be... an evangelizing community, etc.” because we are not there yet.
- Sacramental church. Evangelization comes because we are sacramental

# Vision Statement

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## Perception of “evangelism” to the outside world/society

- The idea is too tied to the Church as an institution and not a specific community
- People equate evangelizing with proselytizing which is seen as a one-way conversation and not a conversation
- Evangelism has political undertones and has been co-opted by fundamentalists and right-wing nationalists.
- Evangelism connotes otherness instead of a welcoming to Christ.
- Evangelism has been tied to groups who are seen as/are not inclusive, who don't have a place for black/brown people, exclude women and LGBTQ people.
- The word reflects a conservative and judgmental version of Christianity, which does not reflect who we are.
- Creates a sense of superiority or arrogance by implying we're evangelized already.

## Evangelizing is not commonly used by Catholics/lack of clarity on what it means for our community

- As an adult Catholic, the word evangelization is contrary to what many have been taught, especially around interfaith conversations
- Many cradle Catholics don't talk about evangelization, it's only since “Renew My Church” that it's been used
- Many Catholics today do not feel comfortable promoting conversion to Catholicism. They would prefer the Church and our parish to be actively involved in interfaith dialogue and ecumenism.
- Evangelization as the work of the entire parish is a new idea. Perceiving church beyond being only a place to talk to God (this should not change) but also that church is about outreach and helping the community.
- Does it mean we should be a community of missionaries? We should be known by our works.
- How do we describe evangelizing? Does this mean converting non-Christians? Can evangelization be something other than standing on your soapbox?
- We are an evangelizing community already. What does our Catholic experience of being an evangelizing community mean?
- Maybe we need more detail of what Fr. JP means by Evangelizing so that we can help to find a better word to get the meaning of the statement across.
- Trusting a new pastoral plan...what is it? Tactical or Spiritual? What does an evangelizing community mean to us? What does living the vision mean to us?
- Who are we evangelizing to: Nominal Catholics who have left the Church... Youth facing different challenges than in the past...

# Vision Statement

## Evangelizing means modeling faith through actions/service to others

- Evangelizing is seen as a call to teach and provide opportunities for others to grow in faith and to live one's faith and be an example to others. Evangelizing is not only for those outside of our parish, but those within. Everyone in our parish is on a different path in their faith journey and we should be there to support, not judge.
- We are a Catholic community, so our goal is to gather more sheep for His fold, if possible, but if all we can do is bring joy, bring peace and love, soften our hearts towards others as we go about the work of peace and justice, we are doing God's work.
- Evangelizing means knowing God in our lives, which can happen in Church, and in places like Retreats and the Rummage Sale.
- We should be proud to be Catholics and take pride in what the church has done. Charitable work, education, things that may seem tertiary to faith. We should live a life consistent with the church's values. We shouldn't be shy about making that part of our identity. Passive evangelization.
- Our liturgies, our education programs, our preaching, our outreach programs and our dedication to Peace and Justice have brought people from all over the city to St. Nicks for many years. We don't need a new way of life or a new reality. If we do it, they will come!
- Focus on inclusion in the community - parish and non-parish. Share in joyous moments and be present during people's challenges.
- At the Parish Mission it was noted that the Comboni let the spirit of God evangelize Africa through other Africans. It is in doing and being Christian that will attract others.
- Serving other marginalized groups is a priority as is addressing and being actively involved in caring for creation. Most contemporary Catholics would embrace fundamental changes to the Church regarding the role of women, sexuality and efforts to make liturgy more accessible.

## Evangelizing means Building personal faith

- Evangelization is how you live out the stories of Jesus in your life, it begins with an understanding of the Gospel in heart and mind
- The evangelizing heart must have an open mind, an open heart and be kind to others. We must frame it as inner transformation and conversion
- The importance of spirituality, knowing the love of God and making that love more concrete should be emphasized
- We are a sacramental community, the body & blood of Christ. We are the Body of Christ, and we are nourished to go out
- Develop a relationship with God through different forms of prayer – meditation, vespers, retreats, etc.
- Rooted in baptism – sharing is part of a baptized person's identity
- To be an evangelizing community we must do internal work, leading us deeper into an encounter with Christ so profound that we become Christ. It's not a metaphor, a real transformation. We need to be fed, and then to act in the world.
- Evangelizing. Is a way of being present with ourselves and others in our world, planet, and universe.
- Being fearless/brave; Be not afraid to tell others re: our Catholicism: always have our Catholicism upfront and ready to share.

# Vision Statement

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## Evangelizing means bringing people in and making room for all

- Youth/young families/school communities.
- Those who have left and/or not come back since COVID.
- Those new to the faith.
- Those estranged from the Church.
- Marginalized communities.
- Those who grew up in the church but have fallen away.
- Diverse peoples.
- To bring people in we need to market our parish to the outside community/create entry points and find ways to address the issues which keep people away.

## Caring for Creation

- Nurturing life is more than just being “green”, it’s caring for those in need
- Helping people be more open to caring for creation starts with getting them to have a personal relationship with Jesus
- All creation is one in Christ, our notion of Christ, through the eucharist everything is joined. God and creation are not separate. We are a part of creation.
- Care of creation means highlighting the sustainability of our grounds and operations of two campuses, adapt to environmental sustainability and living out Laudato Si’.
- We show our love for God by how we serve our community which includes taking care of the earth. We need to care for creation so we can pass on what we’ve inherited to future generations.

## What does it mean to love God and care for humanity?

### Service to the Community

- helping the poor; immigrants; refugees; mission trips, St Vincent DePaul, etc.
- Folding your faith into what you do in the community - go out into the community outside of the church.

### Loving God through prayer:

- Helping everyone through prayers and spirituality even if you can’t help physically.
- For some loving God may mean attending church regularly and contributing financial support.

### Social justice

- Living our faith is serving the community by standing up for those being marginalized
- Manifesting love to others through social justice
- Walking and accompanying everyone.