

## Our Mission

Who are we as a church, what is our identity? What we do is rooted in who we are. As Pope Francis said; we have often lost sight of our identity as a missionary Church, a Church of the Great Commission that is called to 'go and make disciples'.

Many of us have not encountered the Lord personally. We have not made him the total meaning of our life, or yet given our life to him. -this is the purpose for which our parish exist. What is most often lacking in the culture of our parishes is not first and foremost knowledge of the faith but the PASSION and desire for ongoing conversion and mission that emerges from a personal encounter with Jesus. What is the greatest stumbling block to the mission of evangelisation? It is a lack of faith and passion that the Gospel is worth sharing.

LOVE GOD. God wants us to love him **passionately**, with all our heart. He created us for **greatness**. The creative force behind everything (all great art, all great drama, all great music, all great architecture, all great writing) is passion. Nothing great is ever accomplished in life without passion. Nothing great is ever sustained in life without passion. Passion is what energizes life. Passion makes the impossible possible. Passion gives you a reason to get up in the morning and go, "I'm going to do something with my life today." Without passion life becomes boring. It becomes routine. It becomes dull. God created you with the emotions to have passion in your life and He wants you to live a passionate life. Passion is what mobilizes armies into action. Passion is what causes explorers to boldly go where no man's gone before. Passion is what causes scientists to spend late night hours trying to find the cure to a dreaded disease. Passion is what takes a good athlete and turns him or her into a great athlete where they're breaking records. You've got to have passion in your life.

One day a man walked up to Jesus and he asked, "Lord, what's the most important thing in the Bible?" His answer was, "I want you to love God with all your heart and soul and mind and strength." Jesus said to love with passion. Nothing matters more than that. That's the number one thing in life. I want you to love Me passionately. Nothing else matters in life if you don't love God passionately. God doesn't want you to love Him half-heartedly, part-time.

LOVE OTHERS. God is saying I want you to put some muscle into it, put some energy, put some emotion into your relationship with Me. Don't be half-hearted. Give it all you've got. Jesus is saying, "If you're going to follow Me, you've got to go it with passion. You've got to give it some spark, some zip, some enthusiasm, some appetite. I want you to live passionately."

In our culture it seems it's ok to be passionate about anything except God. It is not politically correct -- to be passionate about God. I can be passionate about movies. I can be passionate about sports. I can be passionate about politics. I can be passionate about fashions and clothes. I can be passionate about restaurants. But I cannot be passionate about God. That's a no-no.

In our culture it's ok to be passionate about anything except your religion, except your faith, except your relationship with God. I can go to a rock concert, or a political rally or a baseball game and I can shout my head off. I can get excited. When my team loses I could cry. Nobody thinks that's a big deal. When my team wins I can jump up and dance around and wave my hands in the air. If I do that at a game people go, "He's a real fan!" If I do that in church people say, "He's a fanatic! He's a nut case." You don't want to get too emotional about your faith. Its ok about anything else but not that.

We read in Romans 12:1 "Never be lacking in zeal but keep your spiritual fervor." Keep the fires going in your life. Circle the word "keep." Notice, it's not automatic. It's a choice. It's a discipline. It's something you must maintain. You are not by nature passionate about God. It's something that you must choose to do. You get distracted and everything in life conspires to keep you from being passionate about God. Keep your passion going. Keep the fires going. It's a discipline. It's not just automatic.

MAKE DISCIPLES. In speaking of a change of parish culture, we are called for a renewal, for parish transformation. I would like to see and experience that Holy Family is a healthy and growing faith community that brings people to Christ, forms disciples, and sends them out to transform the world. But for that vision we, all of us need to commit ourselves **to worship, to grow, to serve, to connect and to give**. This grand vision is possible! This is not our achievement or goal, but our parish lifestyle, our purpose, our existence. "To form disciples who joyfully live out the mission of Jesus".

So, what are the characteristics and qualities of the disciples that Holy Family is describing and looking for, and forming? A Holy Family disciple is someone who:

- Has a personal relationship with Jesus
- Can and does share faith with others
- Has knowledge and love of the Scriptures
- Knows basic catholic theology
- Has a daily prayer life
- Experiences real Christian community
- Has a commitment to Sunday Eucharist
- Serves in ministry

I am glad to hear the feedback that our Holy Family Church is an " **Invitational Church**", this is not our program but our attitude and our parish culture in which our church community continually seeks to grow. We are creating and constantly offering opportunities and places for this invitation; (for a healthy relationship and encounter with Jesus). So please now go to the second step of this and have courage to step out of your comfort zone and invite one person each week for the Eucharist. Currently one in three Catholics are no longer connected to the catholic Church. People seek to belong before they believe, therefore we have the Alpha program as a way of "on boarding" people into the life of discipleship.

Have you ever felt that following Jesus can also be somewhat complicated and difficult? Of course, it is! Even Jesus himself said that following him is like walking a narrow path. Why does the path seem unnecessarily difficult? The reason is because Jesus wants us to achieve spiritual greatness. Like any other discipline, whether it be in sports, music, culinary arts, academics – achieving greatness requires motivation, passion and effort. Just look at any of the saints, each of them was a tremendously committed, passionate person. Achieving spiritual greatness is possible for everyone! Yes, following Christ is difficult, and yes there will be challenges at every step of the way, but Jesus promises himself to bring us through it, "*... do not fear, I am with you.*" So to simplify following Jesus, we have our mission: Love God, Love others, make disciples.

Over the next few weeks, we will be giving you the formula to achieve such greatness, we will bring you the spiritual recipe for our great mission. Again, it is simply, Love God - Love others - Make disciples – this is our mission, a process of discipleship that creates opportunity and support for growth and cultural transformation.