

the New Evangelization and Catholic social teaching

Evangelization literally means to announce Good News. Catholics believe the Gospel is Good News for a suffering world—and that we are called to proclaim it. Catholic social teaching helps guide how we proclaim this Good News to a suffering world. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has outlined a pastoral plan for the New Evangelization that focuses on three pillars: faith, worship and witness. Here are some practical ways ministry leaders can incorporate Catholic social teaching through faith, worship and witness:

EVANGELIZE THROUGH FAITH

A deep grounding in our faith begins with an encounter with Christ: his life, death, mission and ministry. Scripture and Catholic tradition reveal that Christ is present in a special way in the poor and vulnerable. We are invited to deepen our relationship with Christ through service to—and in relationship with—those who are poor.

The needs of the poor are met through works of corporal and spiritual mercy—but these acts of mercy are not confined to almsgiving. They include addressing the social and political dimensions of poverty (Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, no. 184). Our Church asks people of faith to look at the root causes of poverty and to seek solutions that address those causes.

Practical Tips:

- Provide an opportunity for parents and children in formation programs to directly encounter those who are poor through a service opportunity. Encourage them to listen to their stories, and reflect on how their experience connects to our faith and reveals Christ.
- Include CRS Rice Bowl in your parish's Lenten faith formation programming. CRS Rice Bowl provides resources for enriching the Lenten practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving for parishes, schools and families. (csrcricebowl.org)
- Incorporate CRS Food Fast into your ministry. CRS Food Fast includes prayer, discussion and activities that help young people reflect on how relationship with people who are poor is part of their faith. (foodfast.org)

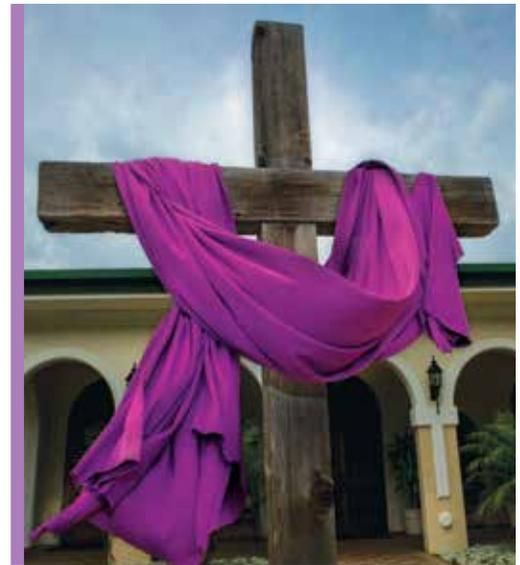


Photo by Karen Kasmauski for CRS

EVANGELIZE THROUGH WORSHIP

At the institution of the Eucharist during the Last Supper, Jesus celebrates the Passover Seder with his closest friends and breaks bread, offering it to everyone—even his betrayer (Matthew 26:20–28). All four Gospels recount the story of Jesus breaking bread and multiplying it into more than enough food for the masses of people gathered. This act of sharing is connected to Christ's sacrifice on the cross, where he gave up his life so that all would live abundantly. Through Christ's sacrifice, we are all transformed for lives of service and solidarity.

Practical Tips:

- Set up donation baskets in the gathering space of your church and invite parishioners to donate nonperishable food. During the offertory collection, bring up the baskets of food items with the gifts of bread and wine and place them before the altar.



Photo by Phillip Laubner/CRS

- Ask families preparing children for First Holy Communion to contribute donations of food for the poor as a sign of solidarity with others at the Eucharistic table.
- Pray for others around the world as a part of any parish gathering. (crs.org/prayers)
- Highlight the social justice themes present in the liturgical seasons of Advent and Lent through Advent reflections from CRS Fair Trade (crsfairtrade.org) and Lenten activities from CRS Rice Bowl (crsricebowl.org).

EVANGELIZE THROUGH WITNESS

Witness is how we proclaim our faith. From the beginning, the Apostles were sent by the Holy Spirit to bear witness to what they had seen and heard (Acts 1:8). The USCCB's Pastoral Plan for the New Evangelization also describes witness as the core vocation of all Christians, stressing that our witness involves affirming the life and dignity of the human person as created in God's image (Genesis 1:26-27). Catholics respect and protect life from conception until natural death. This includes opposing any and all activities that devalue human life as well as promoting God's vision for a human community free from poverty and violence.

Practical Tips:

- Invite parishioners to live out a public witness by advocating for laws that protect the dignity of the human person. Legislative action to support human dignity can take place through local Catholic conferences and through Catholics Confront Global Poverty. (confrontglobalpoverty.org)
- Supply fair trade coffee and tea for parish meetings and host sales of crafts by fair trade artisans. Fair trade is a trading partnership that provides fair wages to producers. By purchasing fair trade items, we witness to our faith in our daily purchasing decisions. (crsfairtrade.org)
- Host a CRS Helping Hands event. Volunteers come together at a hands-on event to package nutritious meals for people in developing countries suffering from food shortages and famine. (helpinghands.crs.org)



Catholic Relief Services is the official international humanitarian agency of the Catholic community in the United States. We are motivated by the example of Jesus Christ to assist poor and suffering people in 93 countries on the basis of need, without regard to race, religion or nationality.