

# What Does an Evangelizing Parish Look Like?

What would it look like if parishes are successful in evangelizing their parishioners and those in the community?

There are many resources and examples of parishes that have transformed their culture to become evangelizing parishes. [The Amazing Parish](#) and [Parish Catalyst](#) have studied parishes across the country to identify the hallmarks of vibrant, thriving parishes

[Rebuilt](#) chronicles the steps the Church of Nativity in Timonium, MD taken to become more evangelizing, while [Divine Renovation](#) lays out the evangelization efforts of St. Benedict Parish in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Both pastors of these parishes will tell you that you can't just copy what they did and get the same result. Your parish is unique, but in reading about the experience of others you may be inspired to try some things that will help you evangelize from your own strengths.

So while there is no *one* way to make your parish more evangelizing, it is essential to learn about, observe, and come to understand some of the hallmarks that characterize key movements of parishes who have changed their focus to evangelization. It is no surprise that there are some common features.

The following pages provide a summary of some of the pioneering parishes that have re-energized their parishes, and organizations that have researched how parishes have become more evangelizing and cultivated more engaged disciples. These include:

- Amazing Parish
- Parish Catalyst
- Rebuilt
- Divine Renovation
- Becoming a Parish of Intentional Disciples
- Dynamic Catholic

For a more in-depth understanding of these models, dive into their books with your pastoral staffs, councils and ministry leaders.



GETTING READY TO START PASTORATE  
PLANNING OR JUST LOOKING FOR SOME  
GOOD IDEAS?

THIS IS A GREAT PLACE TO START!

**What do these different models have in common?**

**How do these models relate to the Archdiocese of Baltimore's Six Core Mission Priorities?**

**Take a look at the last two pages for a handy cross-reference of themes and the Core Mission Priorities most closely associated with them!**

## AMAZING PARISH

*From their website:* Co-founded in 2013 by Pat Lencioni and John Martin out of their desire to serve and build up the Church. After much prayer and discernment and lengthy discussions with Catholic leaders, they agreed that the Holy Spirit was prompting them to do something to uplift, improve and help parishes turn from maintenance to missionary communities.

With John's experience in business and Pat's expertise in organizational health and leadership, they worked with other Catholic leaders to develop and host the first Amazing Parish Conference, which was held in Denver in August 2014. The response to the conference was overwhelming, confirming that The Amazing Parish model was effective and that parish leaders were hungry to learn.

Since then they have held numerous conferences and have continuously strived to improve their parish support, which includes a website with free resources, free webinars, and coaching/consulting services. They believe countless parishes have been transformed through their involvement with The Amazing Parish movement. They are committed to continue supporting pastors and their leadership teams in parishes as they strive to live Christ's great commission to "Go and make disciples of all nations."

Although every parish is unique, they have found that there are three common "building blocks" that form the foundation of an amazing parish.

1. A Reliance on Prayer and the Sacraments
2. A Commitment to a Healthy Organization
3. A Passion for Evangelization and Discipleship

*Some free resources they make available their website for a pastor, to better understand his role as leader, include:*

1. Pat Lencioni's article "The Courage of an American Pastor" to understand the courage it takes to be a pastor
2. The Better Pastor Book by Pat for a healthy perspective on leading a parish.
3. A Pastor Self-Assessment to assess one's strengths and areas for development
4. A Leadership Webinar, Who Should Be Your Parish Leadership Team - to understand the benefits of surrounding yourself with a leadership team

After completing these first steps and embracing his role as a leader, the pastor is ready to move forward with choosing his leadership team. "No pastor, not even the best one, can run a parish on his own. With fewer priests, more demands from parishioners in a complicated society and a faster pace of life, he can't do it alone. Every pastor needs a leadership team, a special group of people who are collectively committed to helping him make the parish amazing and bring more people to Christ and his Church."

A video is provided for preparation in forming a parish leadership teams

*Some next steps they also include help with are:*

Forming your parish leadership team; Learning how to have an effective parish leadership team meetings; Learning about the 5 behaviors of a healthy team; Videos of training sessions from their conferences; Information on praying together as a team; The opportunity to schedule a free coaching call.

For more information go to <https://amazingparish.org>

## PARISH CATALYST

*Great Catholic Parishes: How Four Essential Practices Make Them Thrive*, by Parish Catalyst founder, Bill Simon, Jr.

*From parishcatalyst.org:*

By soliciting advice in all regions of the country and by conducting visitations...Simon and his researchers chose 244 of the greatest parishes among us. His researchers then conducted rigorous interviews, asking his respondents, "What makes a Catholic parish 'great'?" An unprecedentedly high percentage spoke of four distinguishing marks.

*From these interviews they identified four essential practices of "great Catholic parishes".*

1. Share Leadership
2. Foster Spiritual Maturity and Plan for Discipleship
3. Excel on Sundays
4. Evangelize

*From their website:* Parish Catalyst is a Catholic non-profit that helps parishes experience renewal through collaborative learning and strategic planning. We exist to encourage Catholic leaders to Think Creatively, Act Courageously and Renew the Church.

How can we help you?

### Learning Communities

Learning Communities are the heart of what we do. Here, pastors and their leadership teams learn, dream and plan with other Parish leaders from around the country.

### On-Site Workshops

We create each On-Site workshop with you, uniquely for the needs of your parish. Accelerate growth in Hospitality, Small Groups, Discipleship or reaching Millennials.

### Webinars

Our webinars feature one hour conversations with practitioners and experts, focused on key issues for Parish renewal. Click [HERE](#) for upcoming topics and access to our archive.

THE PARISH is the heart of the Church.

"If a parish proves capable of self-renewal and constant adaptivity, it continues to be the Church living in the midst of the homes of her sons and daughters." -POPE FRANCIS

For more information go to: <https://www.parishcatalyst.org/>

## REBUILT

*Rebuilt – Awakening the Faithful, Reaching the Lost, Making Church Matter* by Fr. Michael White and Tom Corcoran

*From rebuiltparish.org:* Drawing on the wisdom gleaned from thriving mega-churches and innovative business leaders while anchoring their vision in the Eucharistic center of Catholic faith, Fr. Michael White and lay associate Tom Corcoran present the compelling and inspiring story to how they brought their parish back to life. This is a story of stopping everything and changing focus. When their parish reached a breaking point, White and Corcoran asked themselves how they could make the Church matter to Catholics, and they realized the answer was at the heart of the Gospel. Their faithful response not only tripled their weekend mass attendance, but also yielded increased giving, flourishing ministries, and a vibrant, solidly Catholic spiritual revival. White and Corcoran invite all Catholic leaders to share the vision, borrow their strategies, and rebuild their own parishes. They offer a wealth of guidance for anyone with the courage to hear them.

*At the end of each of the chapters, the book has steps that you can take in your parish for each of these signs of an evangelizing parish. There is also additional on-line reflection questions for each chapter at*

<https://rebuiltparish.com/rebuilt-resources/>

*Due to the amount of questions about the book and what they did at the parish, White and Corcoran have written follow-on books that include:*

- *Tools for Rebuilding: 75 Really, Really Practical Ways to Make Your Parish Better* lays out seventy-five foundational tactics that helped to rejuvenate their parish.
- *The Rebuilt Field Guide: Ten Steps for Getting Started* leads your leadership team through assessment and goal-setting exercises and provides meeting templates that include prayer, scripture reflection, storytelling, and “rally cries” that become reminders of the change the team is striving toward.
- *Rebuilding Your Message* shares their carefully honed communication practices to help priests, staff, volunteers, and parishioners better proclaim the irresistible and life-changing Gospel of Jesus Christ at every level.

*You can also check into the Rebuilt effort by doing anything from watching the live streaming of their masses, or following the Rebuilt Podcast or the Pastor’s Blog, to an in-person visit to the Church of the Nativity in Timonium, MD, to attendance at regularly scheduled conferences held at the parish. Church staffs from all over the world have come for visits and the parish welcomes them. Parish staff typically take time to provide a tour and answer questions. Furthermore, The Rebuilt Parish Association (RPA) offers things ranging from on-line access to materials used at the parish, to consultation services that span from a weekend analysis to the bi-weekly consults for a year.*

For more information go to: <https://rebuiltparish.com/>

## DIVINE RENOVATION

*From [divinerenovation.net](http://divinerenovation.net)*

*Divine Renovation: Bringing Your Parish From Maintenance to Mission* - Fr. James Mallon shares with us the many ways for bringing our parishes to life. Through humorous and colourful stories, Mallon challenges us to rethink our models of parish life, from membership-based communities to assemblies of disciples of Jesus who proclaim and share the good news with all peoples.

Accessible and engaging, *Divine Renovation* turns to the Church's many writings on evangelization and mission so as to articulate practical ways for injecting new life into our parishes.

*As a follow-up to the success of his first book, Fr. Mallon then wrote:*

*Divine Renovation Guidebook: A Step-by-Step Manual for Transforming Your Parish*

...this essential guide for pastors seeking to build healthy parishes. Since the release of Fr. James Mallon's first book, *Divine Renovation*, pastors and parish leaders from across the globe have been seeking guidance for implementing the principles and foundations of his vision for parish renewal and mission....*Divine Renovation Guidebook*, (is) an engaging and resourceful guide for building healthy and strong mission-oriented parishes. *Divine Renovation Guidebook* is a must-have resource for pastors and parish ministry teams everywhere.

*To provide further guidance and inspiration to interested parishes (also from the website):*

At *Divine Renovation* we use our experience working with parishes to provide clear and concrete examples how parish renewal is accomplished. We do this through books, written by our team, outlining the personal stories of transformation we've seen. (in addition to those above, *Divine Renovation Apprentice: Learning to Lead a Disciple-Making Parish* by Fr. Simon Lobo and *Unlocking Your Parish: Making Disciples, Raising Up Leaders With Alpha* by Ron Huntley and Fr. James Mallon) We also do this through our podcast where each week we speak with leaders in church renewal as well as those working in inspired parishes across the world about their experiences, what they've learned, and what they've accomplished.

The **Divine Renovation Network** provides parishes with a vast array of action oriented resources, designed to bring parishes from maintenance to mission, as well as opportunities to interact with Father James, Ron Huntley, Dan O'Rourke and a number of other experts in our live leadership sessions...you (have) full access to our full content library, presented in an easy to understand manner which allows parishes to more easily put it into action. Our library is constantly being updated with content that comes from the experience of leading parishes towards mission. We understand the work because we've done the work.

**Leadership coaching** is available to members of the *Divine Renovation Network* ... This is an intensive program and we encourage you to consider carefully entrance into this coaching program. It is designed to accompany you as a pastor as you move your parish from maintenance to mission. When you start, you will meet with your coach intensively for the first couple of months (nearly every week) as you get to know each other. After the first few months coaching relationships move to bi-weekly meetings, often one with the Pastor + Coach and the other with the Pastor, Senior Leadership Team + Coach. You will also be enrolled in a pastor cohort, meeting online with pastors on the same journey.

For more information go to: <https://divinerenovation.net/>

## BECOMING A PARISH OF INTENTIONAL DISCIPLES

*From the website siena.org:*

""It is not the same thing to have known Jesus as not to have known him, not the same thing to walk with him as to walk blindly, not the same thing to hear his word as not to know it . We know that with Jesus life becomes richer."" -Pope Francis, *The Joy of the Gospel*

In her first book, *Forming Intentional Disciples: The Path to Knowing and Following Jesus*, Sherry Weddell, cofounder of the Catherine of Siena Institute, captured the attention of Catholics across the globe as she uncovered the life-changing power that accompanies the conscious decision to follow Jesus as his disciple.

Now, in the groundbreaking *Becoming a Parish of Intentional Disciples*, she has gathered together experienced leaders and collaborators whose exceptional field-tested wisdom and enthusiasm for transforming Catholic parishes into centers of discipleship and apostolic outreach is both inspiring and practical.

The authors consider: The role of intercessory prayer in parish transformation. How "fireside chats" can help a pastor connect with his parishioners and call them to personal discipleship and mission. The co-responsibility of lay people and pastors in the work of making disciples. The revolutionary impact of a discipleship approach to youth ministry. How one parish successfully fostered a culture of intentional discipleship, and much more.

As Sherry asks in her own chapter, "Are we willing to answer the call and pay the price necessary to become a new generation of saints through which God can do extraordinary things in our time?"

*The Catherine of Siena Institute website states that their mission is:*

Advancing the Intentional Missionary Discipleship of Catholics

We do this by:

- Equipping parishes and dioceses to become centers of evangelization and formation, charism & vocational discernment, and on-going apostolic support for the laity.
- Fostering the intentional discipleship of clergy, religious, and lay leaders so that they can be effective evangelizers and formators of the laity.
- Making evangelization and formation resources rooted in the Church's Tradition available to Catholic leaders and laity and by creating new resources as needed.
- Animating discussion, theological inquiry, and pastoral consultation throughout the Church regarding the evangelization, apostolic mission, and formation of the laity.
- Collaborating with interested individuals, groups, and organizations in the service of this mission.

*They offer:*

The **Called & Gifted** discernment process helps people recognize the charisms given to them at baptism that equip them to live out their call in the world.

**Making Disciples** - equips parish leaders to accompany individuals as they encounter Jesus, become intentional disciples and grow as lay apostles.

Our **Parish Missions** offer parishes unique and creative opportunities to fan the flames of renewal, conversion and discipleship in those who come.

**Pastoral Leadership** - We train priests, seminarians, and parish and diocesan leaders at all levels to facilitate the discernment of charisms and personal call at the parish level.

For more information go to: <https://siena.org/>

## DYNAMIC CATHOLIC

Founded by author Matthew Kelly who wrote *Rediscovering Jesus*, *Resisting Happiness*, *The Rhythm of Life*, *Perfectly Yourself*, and *Four signs of a Dynamic Catholic* among others, their mission is:

To re-energize the Catholic Church in America by developing world-class resources that inspire people to rediscover the genius of Catholicism.

And their vision is:

To be the innovative leader in the New Evangelization helping Catholics and their parishes become the-best-version-of-themselves.

*From their website:* Dynamic Catholic isn't just a website. It's a community, a movement, a group of people much like yourself who are trying to make sense of life and live the best life they can.

You will quickly discover that Dynamic Catholic is different. When you call us, you are greeted by a member of our Mission team. These young men and women are passionate about helping you take the next step in your journey. You will find them helpful and hopeful.

It may sound simple, but they say genius is taking something complex and making it simple.

You see, Dynamic Catholic started with a dream: to help ordinary people discover the genius of Catholicism.

Has Catholicism ever taken your breath away? Have you ever stepped back in your mind and thought, "Wow, that is amazing!"

If you haven't, that's OK. Most people haven't. If you haven't experienced the faith like that, then you haven't really experienced Catholicism yet. And in a way, that's exciting.

We're excited for you to have your breath taken away. We're excited for you to be amazed. We can't wait to see the look in your eyes when all the pieces fall into place and life finally makes sense.

Dynamic Catholic has:

Events - Inspiring events that help you see yourself, the world, your life, your relationships, and your faith in a whole new way.

Free Books and CDs- Bestselling Catholic books and CDs that empower you to live with intentionality and help you discover your extraordinary purpose.

Daily Reflections- Short, thought-provoking quotes that open your heart and mind and help you focus on what matters most.

For more information go to: <https://dynamiccatholic.com/>

## Themes from Key Resources on Creating an Evangelizing Parish

Many of the most frequently referenced resources on creating evangelizing parishes share common themes. These themes are categorized below, cross-referenced with the resource and the place where you can find more information about the theme. The Core Mission Priority associated most strongly with each theme is identified as well.

### Evangelizing parishes....

#### Focus on an Exceptional Sunday Experience

##### Liturgy

- A Reliance on Prayer and the Sacraments (Amazing Parish Website)
- Great Parishes Excel on Sundays (Parish Catalyst, Part III)
- Focus on the Weekend Experience (Rebuilt, Chapter 6)
- Make the Message Matter, (Rebuilt, Chapter 8)
- Giving Priority to the Weekend (Divine Renovation, p. 95-101)
- Uplifting Music (Divine Renovation, p. 110-122)
- Homilies (Divine Renovation, p. 123-135)



LITURGY

##### Hospitality

- Great Parishes Excel on Sundays (Parish Catalyst, Part III)
- Focus on the Weekend Experience (Rebuilt, Chapter 6)
- Hospitality (Divine Renovation, p. 101-110)
- Meaningful Community (Divine Renovation, p. 136-153)
- Communicate to insiders and outsiders (Becoming a Parish of Intentional Disciples, Ch. 4)



WELCOME

#### Are Centered on Christ and Devoted to Helping Others Encounter Him

- Amazing Parish (Passion for Evangelization and Discipleship)
- Great Parishes Evangelize (Parish Catalyst, Part IV)
- Experience of the Holy Spirit (Divine Renovation, p. 176-190)
- Encounter Jesus Christ (Becoming a Parish of Intentional Disciples, Ch. 4)
- Commit life to Jesus Christ (Becoming a Parish of Intentional Disciples, Ch. 4)



ENCOUNTER

#### Journey Together in Spiritual Friendship

- Passion for Evangelization and Discipleship (Amazing Parish, Website)
- Mobilize the Next Generation (Rebuilt, Chapter 7)
- Build from Below (Rebuilt, Chapter 9)
- Meaningful Community (Divine Renovation, p. 136-153)
- Formation of Small Communities Strength-based Ministry (Divine Renovation, p. 168-176)



ACCOMPANIMENT

- Transmit faith through kerygma (Becoming a Parish of Intentional Disciples, Ch. 4)
- Provide formation (Becoming a Parish of Intentional Disciples, Ch. 4)

## Are Rooted in Prayer and Plan for Discipleship

- A Reliance on Prayer and the Sacraments (Amazing Parish, website)
- Great Parishes Foster Spiritual Maturity and Plan for Discipleship (Parish Catalyst, Part II)

## Bring Christ to the World as Missionary Disciples

- Great Parishes Foster Spiritual Maturity and Plan for Discipleship (Parish Catalyst, Part II)
- Great Parishes Evangelize (Parish Catalyst, Part IV)
- Get the Parish Out of the Pews (Rebuilt, Chapter 11)
- Be Restorers (Rebuilt, Chapter 12)
- Strength-based Ministry (Divine Renovation, p. 164-168)
- Become an Inviting Church (Divine Renovation, p. 190-195)
- Discerning Charisms for vocation (Becoming a Parish of Intentional Disciples, Ch. 4)
- Sustain Culture of discipleship (Becoming a Parish of Intentional Disciples, Ch. 4)



## Build a Culture of Stewardship for the Mission

- **Healthy Organizations – Supporting the Mission of the Church**
- A Commitment to a Healthy Organization (Amazing Parish, website)
- Don't Rob God (Rebuilt, Chapter 10)
- Clear Expectations Meaningful Community (Divine Renovation, p. 153-164))

- **Leadership – Creating Strong Visionary Leaders as Collaborators**
- Great Parishes Share Leadership (Parish Catalyst, Part I)
- Fall in Love (Rebuilt, Chapter 13)
- Lead Where you Serve (Rebuilt, Chapter 14)
- Strength-based Ministry (Divine Renovation, p. 164-168)

