

ST PATRICK'S PARISH 2020

Parish 2020 was launched in parishes throughout Sydney in December 2016. Parish 2020 is a response to the call for a new evangelization; a call to mission. The aim of Parish 2020 is "to understand ourselves more as a missionary church" It tells us that we need to change from maintenance to missionary. We need to evangelise, to make disciples.

Parish 2020 is about driving a change from what is today a maintenance Church to a missionary Church, to drive us to be evangelists through our actions and words and thus to bring others to the truth; to make disciples for Christ. It is NOT about converting others to Catholicism - it is about reaching out and accompanying others on their journey to God.

As you entered the church today, you would have noticed a new banner proclaiming: **Go make disciples**. The banner shows, at the top, the crest of the Marists, who have been serving this church for 150 years. Below that is an image of a fishing boat, with a cross and shroud. Jesus first made disciples out of a motley crew of fishermen and other simple folk in Galilee by calling them to: "Come follow Me". With sandals on their feet and staffs in their hands, these first disciples followed Jesus around Galilee and Judea, and then on to Jerusalem, where he was crucified and then rose from the dead. He issues the same invitation to us today.

Before He was taken up to heaven, Jesus directed His disciples: "Go and make disciplesI am with you always...." Matt 28:18, 20
He issues the same directive to us today: Go Make Disciples. This is often referred to as The Great Commission.

Go is a verb, requiring action

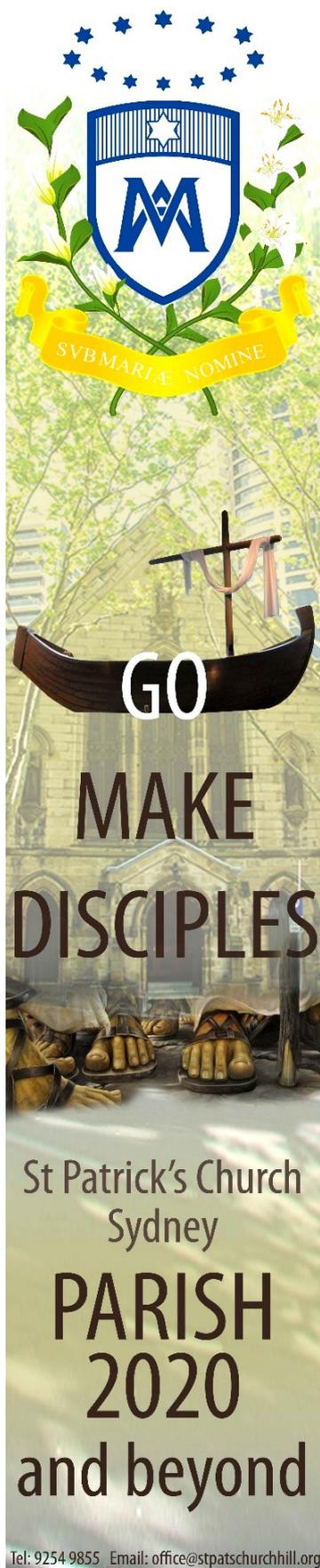
Make is also a verb: we must build or create something

Disciples: followers of Jesus Christ, people who have a relationship with Jesus.

How will we do this?

We are asking each person to reach one other person and bring them to experience Jesus. Imagine how great it would be if every person attending St Pats today made one disciple. Then that disciple would go out and make another disciple and so on. The ripple effect would be far beyond awesome!

St Pats 2020 has a five step plan that will help you to Go Make Disciples. We call them: **Know** someone, **Show** them what a disciple looks like, **Sow** the seed of discipleship in them, **Grow** that seed, **Flow** - encourage them to reach another one.



Committee for Parish 2020

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St Pat's 5 step plan to help you "Go make Disciples"
was announced at the Masses on the weekends (9-23 December 2018)

STEP 1: KNOW someone

The step for this week is very simple: Bring to mind a person you especially want to think about during these weeks of focus on discipleship. Who is it in your life that you want to help get to know, love and serve Jesus Christ more?

Maybe your choice is:

-A Lost person who is struggling in some way. They are distant from God and may even be non-believers.

-A Lukewarm person who may be a nominal Catholic. They attend Mass every now and then. They go through the motions, but their faith isn't so strong that they have made the decision to change the way they live to follow the Lord.

-Maybe there is a person who is lost or lukewarm but has real leadership potential.

They may be someone who can lead and serve in the Church.

REFLECTION

Imagine you are in the presence of Jesus: in your garden ... at your workplace ... watching the waves ... in your family room...

Jesus looks you in the eye and says your name: for example (say your name)

Then he says: (Your name) **Go Make Disciples**

At the Masses last weekend, St Pat's 5 step plan to help you "Go make Disciples" was announced.

You may have heard the story, sometimes called: **"I have no other plan"**

I ask you to imagine the dramatic, physical, ascension of Jesus into Heaven. The angels there wait for details of His strategic plan for delivering His salvation offer to the world. Imagine some of the conversation between Jesus and the Angels. They asked: *How will you let the entire world, throughout the ages, know about the Salvation Offer?*

(Jesus was in public ministry for only 3 years)

Jesus replied: *"I have trained My men and women,"* came the simple answer.

"To evangelize the whole world?" they questioned with utter astonishment.

"Yes, indeed. Every person in every nation, from every city, every tribe, every culture and every language."

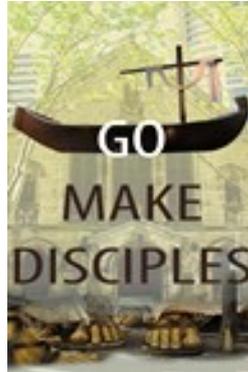
"How many have You trained for such a mammoth task?"

"A handful," responded the Lord.

"A handful," they gasped. "But what if they fail?"

"If they fail, I have made no other plans."

"But isn't that a grave risk to take?" they probed.



By now the entire rank of angelic host was fascinated with Jesus' simple, yet audacious plan.

"No. Through Me they have experienced the Father's compassion and grace. And in response to My love they will make My very last command of making disciples their very first concern. And in the power of the Holy Spirit they will announce My Father's gracious offer of forgiveness everywhere they go and to everyone they meet."

Jesus glanced past the sea of angels and gave the Father a wink.

"Well, what kind of men and women did you choose? Are they the sharp, dynamic, articulate types with charismatic leadership and exuberant personalities that can draw in the crowds?" the angels inquired.

"Let's see," Jesus interrupted. "I chose a few smelly, uneducated fishermen, a couple of leather-skinned shepherds, a greedy tax collector, a political zealot, some disillusioned religious folks, an old, widowed grandmother, several prostitutes, a prisoner, a doctor, a business-woman, a tent maker and some others."

"But Lord, how can You entrust the greatest enterprise of history to such as these? The risk is too great. Surely they will not succeed."

Seeing that the angels had run out of questions, Jesus replied, "It is not a risk because they will not fail. I have made no other plans to spread the Good News of My redemption and offer of eternal life with the Father. I have trained My men and women. And they will NOT fail!"

AND THEY DID NOT FAIL As from the beginning, Jesus remains committed to just one simple plan. He wants to use each one of us to reach one other person with the truth of the Gospel. **We are His plan.** Let's do it. Let's make disciples.

Now, I invite you to pause and take a moment of silence and - hear Jesus say to you: *"I love you"*

Pause

Hear yourself say to your disciple: *"Jesus loves you"*

Pause

I **pray** that you will be able to deliver Jesus' message - the *Good News* and be able to let the Holy Spirit do the work within your disciple

STEP 2 SHOW yourself as a disciple

In Step 1 we asked you to get to **know** who you might wish to disciple and bring to a deeper relationship with Jesus. In Step 2 we are asking you to show that person what a disciple looks like, as demonstrated by you.

Discipleship is caught, not taught. It is the path we take to seek the Lord everyday – through prayer and meditation. It is the way we lead our lives and the witness we give to others to follow. It is pro-active. Some ways by which can witness might be:

Be Filled with the Spirit It is the Spirit who transforms a life. It is important to be in a right relationship with God one-self before you talk to others about how they can know God. That is what gives you a credible platform to speak boldly of God, It is both compelling and contagious.

Be Joyful

We need to be joyful in our spirit and approach. We are telling the good news. People might ask why we are so joyful; joy is infectious. Exude calm and peace.

Do good to other people.

Family, friends and work colleagues will follow your example. Be a good friend and good listener.

When eating out or having a coffee

Say a small grace before your meal. Make the sign of the cross. Wearing a religious symbol E.g. a cross/crucifix is good.

Keep a look-out for a neglected person in your environment

Check that all your work colleagues are OK, especially the unpopular or neglected person. They have a story. Enquire about their loved ones.

Be conscious about using the Lord's name

Use the Lord's name reverently: E.g. 'O my God'

Responding to the question: What did you do on the weekend?

Don't be afraid to say 'I went to Church'. Acknowledge the Lord in your speech.

Show a strong work ethic

The excellence of our work gives witness to others. Be familiar enough with the Scriptures to be able to accurately and coherently present the gospel to others. "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have" 1 Peter 3:15

AVOID arrogance or preachiness

Pope Francis asks us to always 'have a deep reverence for the experiences of others'. Our task is to listen and guide but not to judge and condemn.

Be Authentic – above all be authentic.

People don't care about how much you know, they want to know how much you care. Don't put on a front, but instead maintain a humble attitude.



STEP 3 – SOW the seed of discipleship in your focus person

This is the step where you meet your focus person. You listen and guide. This is a sacred task but one that occurs in our daily lives. We walk with others day in day out. Now we are walking with people to lead them closer to God. 'Some Ways by which we can meet them might be:

Pray for Opportunities: Pray that you will let God use you to deliver the message and let the Holy Spirit do the work within the other person.

Show interest, care and love. E.g. they may have a sick parent, family member or they may be unemployed etc. Let them know that you are praying for them. Give them a prayer card, e.g. St Peregrine is the patron saint of cancer. Ask them if they would like a medal to give the sick person. (\$1.50 at St Pat's). Think about the other person; what do they need at this stage in their journey?

Invite them for coffee Don't let your first conversation be your last. You don't even have to mention the faith. Allow things to flow naturally.

Tell your own stories about the faith

Be supportive towards them. Give them something practical to do in regards to their faith. Point the person in the right direction; guide them to prayer.

Connect through Social Media and Text Messages

Online is comfortable. It's safe. They are in control. No one is challenging them. It's just them and their computer/phone. They are quiet. And they can really focus. It is the perfect environment for God to speak to them. You can always ask the person later if they went to the site, what they thought of it.

Talk about Jesus Share posts about God. Be upfront about your faith. *You may say something like: "I know a great site that takes on the hard questions about life and God...like why is life so hard, and how do you know God exists. May I text it to you?"*

Invite them to a Film Night at St Pats/ or your parish. This is a non-threatening event. Pizza is served before the film!

Share books/booklets/Prayer cards.

Ask Questions As you talk to others about Jesus, don't do a stand-up monologue. Engage in a conversation, but at the same time, keep the focus on the message of the gospel. Jesus taught by asking questions.

Ask for a Response Respect their right to come to their own conclusions about topics.

Remember the father of the Prodigal Son, arms open, and heart ready. We are not bystanders nor are we judges. Meet people where they are.

In your successes give thanks to God always and God be with you.

Step 4 GROW:

Walk with them. This may take several days, weeks even years.

Pray for yourself and your disciple. Pray that you will hear God speaking to you as you accompany your disciple. Pray for them. Be aware and discuss any obstacle that might stand in the way of freedom for them, Are there past hurts? Is there self-pity or selfishness? Do they suffer from indifference? Pray to Jesus to remove any habits or obstacles such as fear, anger, aggression or perfectionism

Discover who Jesus was, this will lead your disciple to God.

Read the Bible - or watch the movie - Jesus of Nazareth: Spend 5 minutes each day reading the gospel. Download LAUDATE, this free App may help. It has huge amounts of prayers, readings and podcasts.

Relationships are about the head and the heart. God doesn't want us to merely know about him he wants us to find him with our whole being; he wants us to know him personally and to have a relationship with him. **Make a retreat or get involved in meditation**

Participate in community activities: Volunteer opportunities, breakfast at St Pat's. Check out your parish for more information on local opportunities.

Lead them to helpful books or websites. Ones that will give them a clearer picture of Jesus.

Journal. Focussing on what they are *thinking and feeling* helps them grow. Reflecting on what experiences they have will show patterns, E.g. If there was an altercation at work; ask 'how did I contribute to that' or 'what could I do differently next time?' (Journal-ling may assist in the examination and reflection of their thoughts, questions, discoveries & new insights).

Continue to offer support no matter where they are in this journey. Don't try to push someone up to the next level. Instead, support them with empathy and encouragement. Keep offering invitations that could open them up to an encounter with Christ. Look at the following steps:

1. **Initial Trust:** A person makes positive associations with Jesus Christ, the Church, or an individual Christian. He may not trust God at this threshold, but he may trust a believer in God.
2. **Spiritual Curiosity:** A person is intrigued and interested in learning more about Jesus Christ but not yet ready to make a personal life change.
3. **Spiritual Openness:** At this threshold a person is now open to the possibility of personal change but not yet ready to make the commitment. Here a person recognizes and acknowledges that an intimate relationship with Christ is possible.
4. **Spiritual Seeking:** Here a person moves from passive to active seeking to know God and seriously wrestles with the beliefs, teachings, and way of life that come with the commitment of discipleship.
5. **Intentional Discipleship:** At this final threshold, a person has made the conscious commitment to follow Jesus Christ and reorients his or her life toward a fully Christian way of living that requires selfless love of God and others.

Remember that as they are searching for God that God is searching for them.

Ask questions. Questions are better than answers. Jesus used questions when He taught? Questions are a powerful way to teach? You can teach through their answers. **Answers change lives.**



Rather than being the expert, you play the role of fellow disciple—more experienced, sure, but always learning yourself. As people move along the journey they begin asking you and others lots of questions about the faith. Sometimes these questions seek to clarify and sometimes they seek to challenge. Discerning the motives behind the questions makes a huge difference as you walk with someone.

• **Clarifying Questions:** Clarifying questions seek to understand and explain what we believe. They express an open mind. A clarifying question is something like: Why do Catholics pray to Mary and the saints when they can just pray to God directly? Don't you feel weird telling your sins to a priest?

• **Challenge Questions:** Often people are coming from backgrounds that cause them to rigorously question our beliefs about the Catholic faith. Usually these kinds of questions reveal an oppositional stance rather than an open mind. For example: Don't Catholics worship Mary?

Why do I have to confess my sins to a priest? Doesn't God forgive me through prayer?

Instead of giving good answers to all their challenge questions, help them ask better questions. Disarm the threatening approach by establishing your position as a learning disciple, too, and try to think of clarifying questions to ask leading up to the challenge. For challenging questions about Mary, for example, you might respond with questions like: When you have something going in your life, I pray for you right? You ask me to pray for you to God? Who is the closest possible person to Jesus Christ? Wouldn't you want that person to pray for you?

You might say during this conversation: "The way I think about praying to Mary and the saints isn't like worship. We only worship God, but I can use all the prayers I can get. Mary, the Mother of God, is the closest person possible to Jesus. The saints were as close as you can get, too. I like the idea of them praying for me!"

• **Opposition Statements.** Sometimes you won't hear challenges in the form of questions at all. You will hear someone make statements in opposition to Catholic beliefs. Rather than feel threatened or criticized personally, think of some questions for them to consider. Always keep in mind, though, that there are often personal histories attached to the statements that make it difficult to change their opinions. (Divorce and receiving communion, for example, can be an emotionally-charged road block.) If someone were to say "I just don't see how Catholics can't let gay people get married." The questions you might ask to help them discover better answers are:

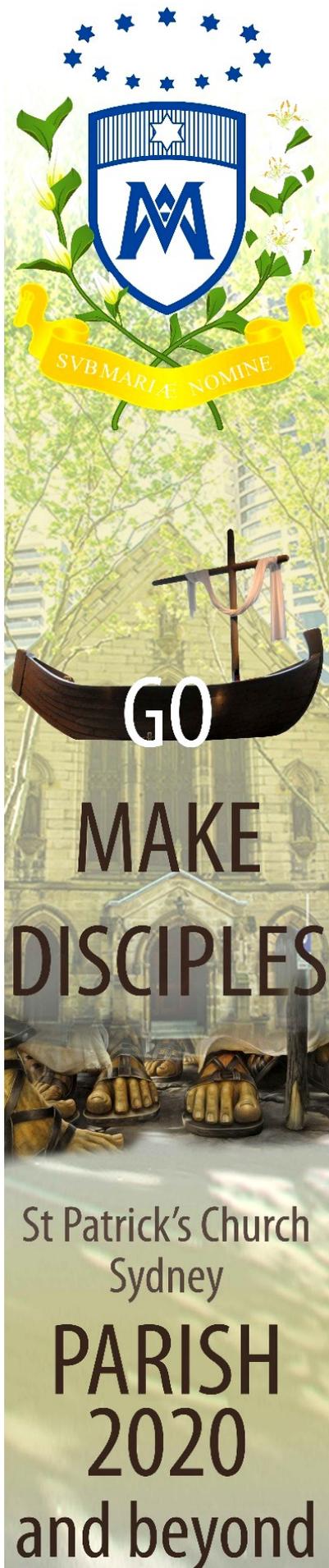
Why do people get married in the first place? Do you think this aligns with God's purpose for marriage?

What is the purpose of marriage in the Catholic Church?

What did Jesus say about marriage in the Bible?

What did St. Paul say about marriage?

These questions may take a while to answer (there is no easy answer to challenging questions!). This gives you the opportunity to explore the answer together. To address hot button issues, you have to spend the time to read and research answers to core questions like "What is the purpose of marriage?" or "Why do you have to be in full communion with the Church to receive communion?" This means getting books for you to read and sharing what you learn together.



STEP 5 FLOW – Final Step.

Helping others follow Jesus cannot be done without risk. Discipling involves difficult things—saying no, persevering through troubles, knowing when to bear with someone, and *being patient*. Your invitations might be disregarded, your advice rejected. We disciple not just through our strength, but through our weakness. Making disciples isn't the work of experts. It is the work of the Holy Spirit. The command that Jesus gave to the first people that followed him was: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **Go** therefore **and make disciples** of all nations... **And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.**" (Matthew 28:18-19)

You have helped another to follow Jesus? You have invested and shared and poured and prayed and accompanied and they are better equipped for wherever they go next. Nurturing His followers toward becoming multiplying disciples was at the core of most everything Jesus did. Behind each of His powerful miracles, simple parables, gentle touches and scathing rebukes was a heart that beat, burned and broke for those who were lost. His unparalleled passion to rescue the lost was transferred in full force when He sent the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

Now it is time to invite your disciple to 'Go, make disciples'. Keep your focus person in your heart in prayer before the Lord in love. Your work in the future with that disciple will be continued by the HOLY SPIRIT.

BEYOND PARISH 2020

Please remember that the 'Great Commission' is to go on for you throughout your life and that as Jesus said: 'remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age'.

Therefore, for you, if and when your focus person has become a follower of Christ, you are invited to return to Step 1, and start the process of following the 'Great Commission' with another person.



From Evangelii Gaudium - Pope Francis
Every Baptized member of the Catholic faith is called to evangelize and is called to be a missionary disciple. "In

virtue of their baptism, all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciples (cf. Mt 28:19). All the baptized, whatever their position in the Church or their level of instruction in the faith, are agents of evangelization" (#120). "What I would like to propose is something much more in the line of an evangelical discernment. It is the approach of a missionary disciple, an approach 'nourished by the light and strength of the Holy Spirit'" (#51). "The Church is herself a missionary disciple" (#40).

Helpful Readings

Evangelii Gaudium - Pope Francis' First Apostolic Exhortation

The Art of Accompaniment - Bill Huebsch

The Joy of the Gospel - Pope Francis

The Joy of the Gospel - Bill Huebsch

Google:

10 things Pope Francis wants you to know about Evangelization

A church worth fighting for by Robert Barron