

## Disciples in Mission

### The Purpose of Disciples in Mission

Two thousand years ago, Jesus told his followers, "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age" (Matthew 28:19-20). Jesus' command still holds true for us today; Jesus asks us to go out to make disciples. Pope John Paul II, in *Mission of the Redeemer*, declares, "Missionary activity renews the Church, revitalizes faith and Christian identity, and offers fresh enthusiasm and new incentive. Faith is strengthened when it is given to others." The bishops of the United States, in *Go and Make Disciples: A National Plan and Strategy for Catholic Evangelization in the United States*, tell us that our lives as believers are part of the story of salvation, and we are to share our stories and our faith with others in our everyday lives. *Disciples in Mission* uses the three goals of *Go and Make Disciples* as the basis for a spiritual formation of the parish, a formation oriented to evangelization. It revolves around the call to holiness, the call to welcome and invite, and the call to transform the world in Christ. A shorthand version of these goals is helpful as a memory device: to live our faith fully, to share it with others, and to transform the world in Christ. *Disciples in Mission* helps parish respond to this evangelizing call of Jesus by offering a proven process for implementing *Go and Make Disciples*. It promotes an evangelizing perspective on everything the Church does. It helps to create an evangelizing culture in a parish. It provides a way to form individuals as evangelizing disciples of Jesus Christ.

Over the course of the three years that *Disciples in Mission* runs in a parish, it integrates prayer, the Sunday liturgies, faith-sharing groups for adults and teens, catechesis, family activities, planning, and follow-up activities into a coherent, parish-wide experience of evangelization. By doing this, the missionary dimension of the Church is restored to the heart of the community of faith—and this is the key to the Church's ongoing revitalization.