



# Session 1

## “Do Not be Afraid”

Christina Semmens  
Thursday Morning

# Current Societal Landscape

- Myriad of technological distractions, mindless diversions and “noise” abound 24x7 (music, TV, movies, computers, internet, social media, video gaming, drugs, pornography, celebrity culture)
- “-isms” abound (atheism, agnosticism, relativism, materialism, consumerism, etc), and have created a completely self-absorbed culture with a rampant fatalism that communicates the message that life has little to no real meaning
- Damage of this reality is that 13% of all teenagers consider suicide; 8% have actually tried it
- Columnist Robert Lockwood from Our Sunday Visitor newspaper describes the “new fatalism” permeating the young as well as the lack of faith present in young people.  
“...this is not because they actually dismiss faith, but because they have never been given any faith to begin with...Children without faith not only become adults without faith, but also adults who will pass that faithlessness on to their children.”

# The Current Landscape of Discipleship

- Decline in Sunday mass attendance and participation in the sacraments --infant baptisms (42%), Confirmation (43%), marriages by (46%), etc
- Apparent lack of sacramental fruitfulness in the lives of many who still partake in the sacraments
- Radical drop in ALL vocations
- Divorce, cohabitation, shrinking family size, etc
- Collapse of Christian culture has profoundly impacted the beliefs and actions of Catholics (i.e. 57% of younger Catholics express belief in some form of reincarnation)
- Little to no difference in attitudes between Catholics and secular elites regarding belief as well as moral issues—a “Moralistic Therapeutic Deism” is prevalent

# *Forming Intentional Disciples* by Sherry Weddell

Two major points:

“The majority of Catholic in the United States are sacramentalized, but not evangelized.”

“...they **do not know** that an explicit, personal attachment to Christ—personal discipleship—is normative Catholicism as taught by the apostles and reiterated time and time again by the popes, councils, and saints of the Church.”

---Weddell, *Forming Intentional Disciples*, 46

# A Reality to Break Your Heart

only **48%** of Catholics

were absolutely certain that the God they believed in was a God with whom they could have a personal relationship

*--Forming Intentional Disciples, 44*

# Mass and Younger Catholics

“...for younger Catholics, the level of attendance at worship services is directly correlated to the certainty that it is possible to have a personal relationship with God...the younger the group, the lower the number who were certain that God was personal and who said that they went to Mass every week.”

“Only 40 percent of Catholics 18-29 years old, were certain that it is possible to have a personal relationship with God, and only 34 percent of them reported being at Mass on a weekly basis.”

*---Forming Intentional Disciples, 44-45*

# Other Key Points from *FID*

- Intentional Discipleship is Ecclesial
- Discipleship matters for everyone
- Seek stories, not labels
- There are many frameworks (i.e. FOCUS, Evangelical Catholic, RENEW Intl) for the describing the journey to intentional discipleship and *FID* offers another
- Expect charisms (spiritual gifts) and grace

# The Challenge Before Us

“The spiritual winds blow both ways in our postmodern world: *into* and *out of* the Church. Our spiritual climate provides us with real opportunities...and very definite threats if we do not adjust our evangelizing, catechetical, and pastoral practice to the unique challenges of the times in which we live.”

--*Forming Intentional Disciples*, 18



# What has been the Church's Response during the last 50 years?

- Second Vatican Council
- St Pope Paul VI—*Evangelii Nuntiandi*
- St Pope John Paul II—*Novo Millennio Ineunte*
- Pope Benedict—the “New Evangelization”
- Pope Francis—*Evangelii Gaudium*



# Church's Response

- Second Vatican Council

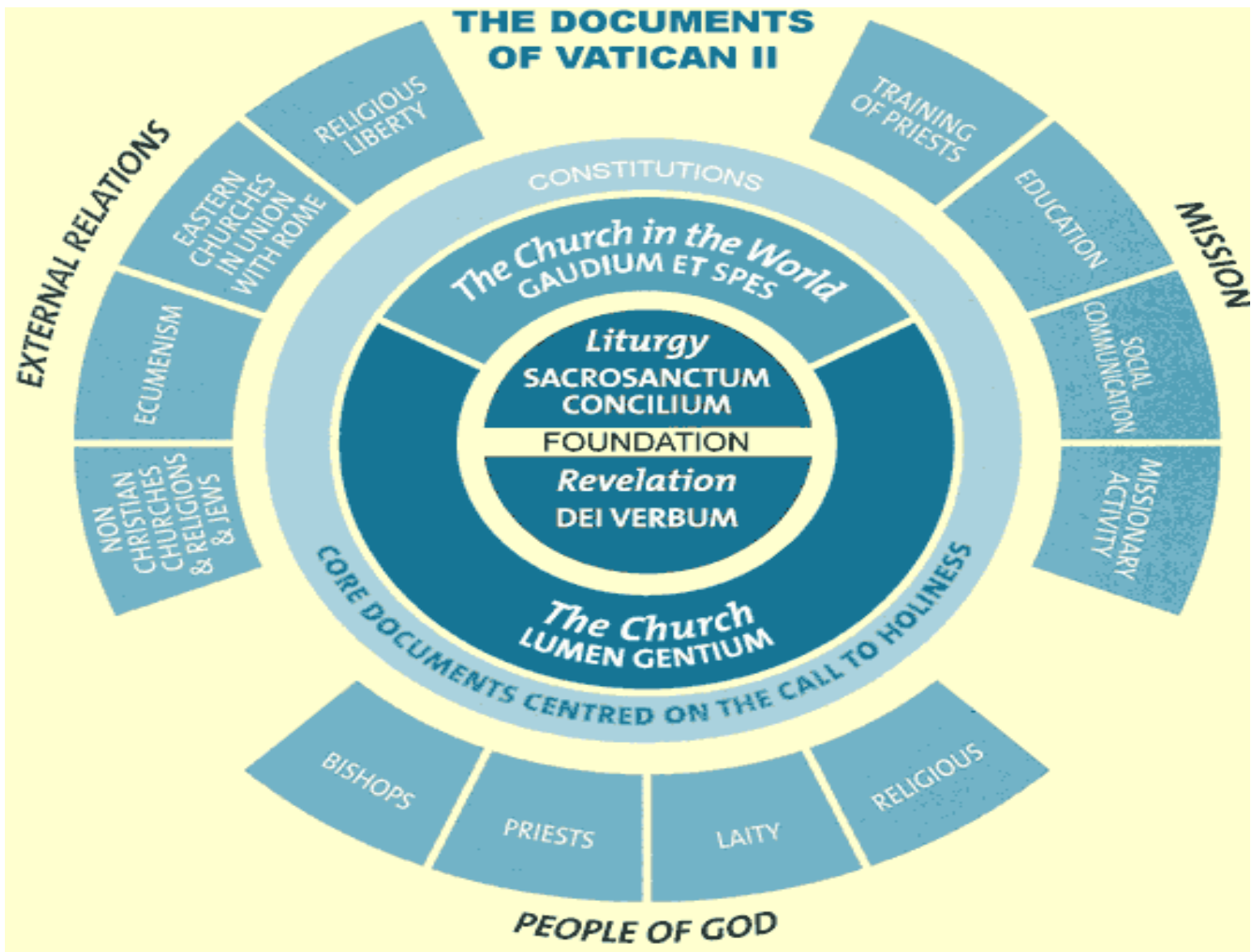
- Held from 1962-1965

- St Pope John XXIII saw the need for an updating of the Catholic Church (aggiornamento) and to seek Christian Unity, and Vatican II was the result. He died before the Council concluded, but his death-bed message included: “The moment has come to discern the signs of the times, to seize the opportunity and to look far ahead.”

- 16 documents emerged from the three sessions

- The documents use the word “evangelization” more than 200 times—more than was used in ALL 2000 years of the Church Councils held prior





This diagram was first published in *The Sower* Vol 23 No 1, January 2002 and is reproduced with their kind permission. <http://www.maryvale.ac.uk/>

# Major Themes from Vatican II

- Renewal of the Church
  - Opened the door for languages besides Latin to be used during Mass
  - Development and implementation of Lectionary
  - Emergence of ecclesial communities and movements
  - Idea of the communion of all the baptized; all states of life (clerical, religious and laity) are “called to holiness”
- Reconciliation with other faiths
  - Allowed for Catholics to pray with, and encouraged friendship with other Christian denominations and non-Christian faiths
- Focus upon human rights, peace and social justice in the modern world

# Blessed Pope Paul VI

- One of Blessed Pope Paul VI's substantial achievements was to steer the Second Vatican Council to a closure. He promulgated all its sixteen documents and closed the Council on 8 December 1965.
- Chose the name "Paul" as he wished to model his papacy upon the apostle Paul and his evangelizing of the world—first pope to visit all six inhabited continents
- Writes *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (*On Evangelization in the Modern World*) in 1974

"Evangelization is the grace and mission proper to the Church, her deepest identity." (*EN*, 14)

"...it is an absurd dichotomy to wish to live with Jesus but without the church, to follow Jesus but without the church, to love Jesus but without the church."  
(*EN*, 16)

"The world is calling for evangelizers to speak to it of a God whom the evangelists themselves know and be familiar with as if they could see the invisible." (*EN*, 76)

# St John Paul II

- First uses the term “New Evangelization” in 1979 at Nova Hoota in Poland, then four years later in Haiti to the Latin American bishops
  - In 1990, writes *Redemptoris Missio (Mission of the Redeemer)* concerning the Church’s missionary activity in the world, “...the moment has come to commit all the Church’s energies to the new evangelization. No believer in Christ, no institution of the Church can avoid the supreme duty to proclaim Christ to all peoples.”
  - Apostolic Letter, *Novo Millennio Ineunte (At the Beginning of the New Millennium)*, published on January 6, 2001, laid out the pastoral plan for the Church’s journey into the third millennium, with a strong and urgent reference to young people, specifically:
    - Young people are yearning for authenticity, generosity, and desire to be witness in the world
    - Youth is the perfect time to present the ideal of Christian holiness that is born from love
    - To be able to give, we must first draw near to Christ and fully understand His message
    - To follow Jesus is to walk in His footsteps, to adopt His way of life, and to believe in His values
    - For disciples of Christ, the cross is a sign of love, not of torture
    - Should not be afraid of proposing and inviting young people to follow Christ
- “...if Christ is presented to young people as he really is, they experience Him as an answer that is convincing and they can accept his message, even when it is demanding and bears the mark of the Cross.”

**DO NOT BE AFRAID.**

**DO NOT BE SATISFIED WITH  
MEDIOCRITY.**

**PUT OUT INTO THE DEEP,  
AND LET OUT YOUR  
NETS FOR A  
CATCH.**

**-BL. POPE JOHN PAUL II**

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# Pope Benedict XVI

- *Deus Caritas Est (God is Love), Spe Salvi (Saved in Hope) and Caritas in Veritate (Charity in Truth)*
- "New Evangelization" is a constant call
  - Is for everyone
  - Not just about foreign missions; need to re-evangelize de-Christianized people
  - Being Catholic "is not a kind of clothing to be worn privately or on special occasions, but it is something living and all-encompassing, capable of assimilating all that is good in modern times."
  - Need for interior conversion, proclaiming the Kingdom of God, encountering the person of Christ and focusing upon our ultimate goal of eternal life with God



"The New Evangelization we need so urgently today is not to be attained with cleverly thought out ideas, however, cunningly these are elaborated: the catastrophic failure of modern catechesis is all too obvious."

--*The Yes of Jesus Christ*, 35



# Pope Francis

- *Lumen Fidei (The Light of Faith)*
  - “Joint” document with Pope Francis using material already prepared by Pope Benedict prior to his resignation with a few additions.
  - Discusses how faith is the light that dispels the darkness and illuminates the way a human being is.
- *Evangelii Gaudium (The Joy of the Gospel)*
  - Pope Francis’ Apostolic Exhortation that presents a sweeping vision of the Church and a “call to action” for the world’s believers
  - At the heart of this vision is a powerful invitation for each of us to embrace Christ’s call to spread the good news of the Gospel through evangelization and missionary discipleship
  - Becoming missionary disciples means to live and share our faith through word AND action

# *Evangelii Gaudium*

## Major themes addressed in *Evangelii Gaudium*

- Proclamation of the Gospel (Krygma)
- Two sources of evangelization
  - God loved us first
  - Our ability to accept the Gospel into our lives
- Missionary Disciple
- The Parish
- The Poor
- Decentralization of the Papacy



# Wisdom from “Papa Francesco”

We must “...help believers to grow spiritually so that they can respond to God’s love ever more fully in their lives...” and reach out to “...the baptized whose lives do not reflect the demands of Baptism, who lack a meaningful relationship to the Church and no longer experience the consolation born of faith.” (EG, 15)

“I dream of a ‘missionary option,’ that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church’s customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today’s world rather than for her self-preservation.” (EG, 27)

“To be evangelizers of souls, we need to develop a spiritual taste for being close to people’s lives and to discover that this is itself a source of greater joy. To be Mission is at once a passion for Jesus and a passion for his people.” (EG, 268)

“It is striking that even some who clearly have solid doctrinal and spiritual convictions fall into a lifestyle which leads to an attachment to financial security, or to a desire for power or for human glory at all cost, rather than giving their lives to others in mission. Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of missionary enthusiasm.” (EG, 80)

“The proclamation of the Gospel kerygma leads a person to, one day be “overwhelmed and brought to the **decision** to **entrust himself** to Jesus Christ by faith”

-- St Pope John Paul II, *Catechesi Tradendae*, 25

- . “**Being Christian** is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the **encounter** with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a **decisive** direction.”

-- Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, 1

For me, faith is born from the encounter with Jesus. A **personal encounter**, which has touched my heart and given direction and new meaning to my existence.

-- Pope Francis, Letter to *La Repubblica*

# Looking Ahead

“Young people are the window through which the future enters the world. They are the window, and so they present us with great challenges...”



“This means that we have to create the material and spiritual conditions for their full development; to give them a solid basis on which to build their lives; to guarantee their safety and their education to be everything they can be; to pass on to them lasting values that make life worth living; to give them a transcendent horizon for their thirst for authentic happiness in their creativity for the good; to give them the legacy of a world worthy of human life; and to awaken in them their greatest potential as builders of their own destiny, sharing responsibility for the future of everyone.”

--Pope Francis, Address, July 22, 2013