

What's the Difference?

CONVERTING OUR MINDSET FROM MAINTENANCE TO MISSION

Archbishop Pérez is asking every Catholic and every parish to work with him to create a culture of missionary disciples in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. This is a strong call to all of us to undergo a conversion of mind, heart and behavior: to move out of the “maintenance” mindset, which tends toward spiritual complacency and a *business as usual* attitude, and into an apostolic mission* mindset, one which is fully awake to the reality that society has lost its sense of God and is therefore in a dire situation.

The person (and parish) animated with an apostolic mission mindset feels the urgency of announcing Jesus Christ with new fire and new strategies to a situation that is not just neutral, but in many respects in opposition to the Gospel. This missionary impulse is directed not only toward those who profess no faith, but also to those who are in our pews and coming to our schools and PREP programs.

What is required of us - parish leaders and parishioners - is to commit ourselves to a deeper life of prayer, a greater outward focus and to incorporate mission-oriented thinking in all aspects of parish life and ministry.

So, what's the difference between the *maintenance* mindset and the *mission* mindset? What does this *conversion to mission* actually look like in the day-to-day life of a Catholic and a parish? The following are some examples that show the difference.

*Archbishop Pérez has asked every priest of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia to read and take seriously the book, *From Christendom to Apostolic Mission: Pastoral Strategies for an Apostolic Age* published by the University of Mary. It explains this vision for the conversion of our local Church. Consider reading it too!

EXAMPLES FOR INDIVIDUALS

Maintenance Mindset

- (1) When you arrive at the parish social after Mass on Sunday, you grab your cup of coffee, move over to the people you know and talk with them the whole time.
- (2) You have a son or daughter who does not go to Mass on Sunday. So, you regularly say to them, "You should be going to church."
- (3) At work or in social settings, you never talk about God, faith or spiritual things because your faith is private. You also don't want to make anyone uncomfortable.



Mission Mindset

When you arrive at the parish social after Mass on Sunday, as you walk into the room, you look around for a new face or someone who has no one to talk to and you walk over to them, introduce yourself and begin a conversation.

You have a son or daughter that does not go to Mass on Sunday. So, you make an extra effort to build a healthy, trusting relationship with him or her. You refrain from nagging them about going to Mass, but might invite them to join you for Mass on occasion. You pray and sacrifice for them regularly, demonstrate integrity by ensuring that your behavior matches what you say you believe, and look for opportunities to share your own experiences of God when appropriate.

At work or in social settings, you are able to engage with people on non-religious topics that are of interest to everyone present. You are also vigilant for openings when you might mention God, faith or spiritual things in a spirit of sharing your personal experience. In general, the people around you know that you are a Catholic, that you have a relationship with God and they would be comfortable coming to talk with you about those things if they wanted to.

EXAMPLES FOR PARISHES

Maintenance Mindset

- (4) On your parish grounds, buildings are not labeled and there are no directional signs because parishioners know the buildings and know where to go.
- (5) At the beginning of your parish meetings, your opening prayer looks like this: you make a quick Sign of the Cross, run through a Hail Mary and then start the meeting.



Mission Mindset

On your parish grounds, buildings are labeled and there are directional signs for the sake of people who might be new or who might be attending your parish's events for the first time.

At the beginning of your parish meetings, you carve out 5 minutes to pray meaningfully. You make a deliberate Sign of the Cross, pause in silence to allow everyone to open their hearts to God, read a short Scripture passage and then pause again in silence to allow everyone to hear God speaking to them through the passage. Then you close with a Hail Mary prayed at a natural, reflective pace. Then the meeting begins.

EXAMPLES FOR PARISHES

Maintenance Mindset

- (6) When someone approaches you for help at the parish, if they are not Catholic or not a registered parishioner, you feel less of an obligation to go out of your way to help them.
- (7) When looking for volunteers to help with parish ministry such as catechists or CYO coaches, you sign up anyone who is willing to help.
- (8) Your parish offers events for active parishioners. You might have a Sunday social after Mass. You offer faith formation talks about a Catholic topic for the spiritually mature, with a title using Catholic words that only seasoned Catholics will understand. These events are publicized in the bulletin.
- (9) At your Parent Talks for PREP or school students who are receiving their sacraments, parents arrive, listen to you talk and then leave. Parents sign themselves in while staff are running around making final preparations for the event.



Mission Mindset

- When someone approaches you for help at the parish, if they are not Catholic or not a registered parishioner, you “turn up the heat” on your warmth and posture of welcome and go out of your way to help them.
- When looking for volunteers to help with parish ministry such as catechists or CYO coaches, you pray about whom to invite, discerning individuals based on their evident love for Jesus, their heart for service and their availability. You personally invite these people to join the ministry. You offer regular retreat days and spiritual formation opportunities for your volunteers to keep them closely connected to Jesus and the Church so they continue to radiate the joy of Christ to those they serve.
- The events your parish offers vary. Some are designed to help active parishioners deepen their faith, some are designed to equip them to reach the lost, some are based on “human interest” topics to engage school and PREP parents. Some events are social, intended to help build relationships in your parish’s neighborhood. You publicize your events in the bulletin, social media, email, through school and PREP communications, and on community events calendars. You also mobilize your active parishioners to invite their friends and neighbors.
- At your Parent Talks for PREP or school students who are receiving their sacraments, catechists are stationed at the door ready to greet incoming parents. The first 15 minutes of the meeting is devoted to a short social time with coffee and snacks while catechists and the DRE mingle with the parents, engaging them in conversation and getting to know them. Then parents are seated and led in a 10-minute Lectio Divina in which they are invited to hear God speaking to them personally. You intentionally use a Scripture passage about Jesus’ love. This is followed by a short talk aimed at building up the parents’ own relationship with God. This is followed by a short discussion of the logistics of the reception of the sacrament.

EXAMPLES FOR PARISHES

Maintenance Mindset

- (10) Your parish staff members are overworked, underpaid, tired and may or may not have an active faith.



Mission Mindset

Your parish staff prays together on a weekly basis. Each staff person has a clear, mission-oriented job description and is paid reasonably for the hours worked. Each staff member is actively growing in their relationship with God, a process regularly encouraged by the pastor. The parish offices are a place where Jesus' active presence in the life of the parish is regularly talked about.

- (11) Your parish offers a few social events each year: a quarterly pancake breakfast after Sunday Masses and a parish picnic. Your active parishioners attend these events and enjoy them.



Your parish leverages its social events to make them into pre-evangelization opportunities. You go out of your way to invite not only active parishioners but also school and PREP parents and people from the neighborhood. At these events, you have parishioners (who are well-formed in missionary discipleship) actively looking for new faces and engaging them in conversation. At the end of each social, your pastor gets up, thanks everyone for coming, and invites everyone to consider attending an event the following week which is designed to help people discover Jesus' personal love for them.

- (12) The success of your parish events is measured by the number of people who attend. If a lot of people came, it was a success. If a few people came, it was not a success.



Your parish measures the success of its ministry by the transformation of individual hearts. You discern whether an event or ministry has effected a deepening of personal friendship with Jesus, conversion of lifestyle or evidence of new missionary impulse. For this reason, your parish prioritizes one-on-one accompaniment and small group ministries, preferring quality over quantity.