



**Evangelization & Mission
Great Lent 2019
Parish Level Activities
Blessing & Dreams Session**

For clergy leading the parish community gathering begin by reading the Preamble.

Preamble

Last June, clergy and lay delegates of our Saint Josaphat Eparchy gathered for the convention entitled **Planting Crosses: Evangelization and Mission in the USA**. The conference focused on parish renewal and how to establish new missions in regions of the eparchy where our Church is not yet established.

During the Convention, the delegates developed specific proposals and directives for the life of our parishes and St. Josaphat Eparchy in the area of Evangelization and Mission activities. There is a desire in our Eparchy to continue our growth – a true call to worship.

In order to grow, our parishes need to learn how to move from **Maintenance to Mission** by nurturing a culture that is missionary, forming the faithful and welcoming others to join us.

During the Great Lent 2019, **(between Sundays, March 10 – April 7, 2019)**, please schedule a meeting with the broader parish community in order to discuss these important proposals and directives. The delegates from your parish community can assist you in this process.

The session can be divided into two parts:

- a. **Count our Blessings** – How do we already fulfill our mission of Evangelization as individuals and as a parish community?
- b. **Dare to Dream** – Imagine: What might be possible to better fulfill our mission as the Church in the area of Evangelization & Mission activities?

GOAL

The goal is to revitalize our parish communities through evangelization and outreach initiatives. We are called to awaken among the faithful the experience of hearing and responding to the Kerygma of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; to inspire them to serve and discern their gifts and charisms, and support mission activities in the local parishes; that we may go forth and spread the “Good News” of our Lord Jesus Christ!

After the parish gathering, please send examples of best practices and the next steps that your parish community is planning to implement to the attention of Bishop Bohdan J. Danylo at the chancery office, so we can share these best practices with our clergy and faithful in the St. Josaphat Eparchy **no later than May 1, 2019.**



Introduction prayer at the parish meeting:

Prayer: Heavenly King, Advocate, Spirit of Truth, Who are everywhere present and fill all things, Treasury of Blessings, Bestower of Life, come and dwell within us; cleanse us of all that defiles us, and O Good One, save our souls.

The priest reads from the Acts of the Apostles:

So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

(Acts of the Apostles 2:41-47)

Notes for the priest:

The preceding text describes the first fruit of the preaching of the apostles following the descent of the Holy Spirit: about three thousand souls were baptized and daily new followers were joined to those who were saved. The Missionary Character of the early Church is so obvious, that it seems hardly necessary to point it out. We see it in as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, how quickly the preaching of the Gospel spread throughout the civilized world. We read in the writings of St. Paul and the other apostles how the newly founded Christian communities are instructed and reprimanded. The

missionary character of the Church is also depicted in such figures as St. Andrew the first-called, and how he brought his brother Simon to Jesus, or in Philip who called Nathaniel (John 1: 40-41, 45-46). Similarly, the weak or sick go and proclaim how Jesus cured them: the leper (Mark 1: 45), dead-mute (7:36), the paralytic (John 5: 15). The Missionary character of Christianity even influenced the Greek word εὐαγγέλιον (literally: “Good News”). When something good happens, that person feels the need to share it with others.

A. Count our Blessings Session

How do we already fulfill our mission of Evangelization as individuals and as a parish community?

Anyone who wants to be an example for others, must in advance first examine oneself.

St. Ephrem the Syrian

Notes for the priest:

In the past, for some reason, it was thought that our Church was called to live in its own Ukrainian or even Halych ghetto, and that any mission to foreigners, to the non-baptized, to those yet to be enlightened by the Word of God was not for us, rather, this was the work for the more mature ecclesial communities, and especially for the Roman Catholic Church. However, the very nature of the Church means that it must bear witness to Christ and so share the good news with others. The fact that we continue to preserve the spiritual riches of the Kyivan-Byzantine tradition should not be an obstacle, on the contrary, when our tradition manifests itself in authentic

Christian teaching and beautiful liturgical celebration, it provides a living testimony to the spiritual value of our tradition in contrast to the emptiness of today's materialistic culture.

Today on the territory of our existing parish communities, there are a multitude of people, who thirst for the Word of God. Not all of them are Ukrainians, nor of Ukrainian descent. However, if we are convinced that Christ is the Savior of humanity, and the Only Way to the Father, then it would indeed be strange if we did not feel the obligation to share with them

the treasure of our faith, which we have received by the grace of God. The Lord reminds us: “freely you received, freely give.” (Matthew 10: 8)

In addition to this, it is important to establish new parish communities especially among migrants. Pastoral ministry under such conditions has its own requirements and challenges; however it can be a great blessing for the people and wonderful opportunity for pastors. Our parishes become a new spiritual home for these people, an opportunity to provide mutual assistance, and a center for spiritual and social life.



Parish Community discussion questions:

How do we already fulfill our mission of Evangelization as individuals and as a parish community?

Personal Examination of Conscience

Please print these questions for all participants. Ask parishioners in the quietness of their hearts to meditate upon these questions for a few minutes:

1. Am I sincerely a disciple of Christ?
2. In my life does the Holy Spirit, the Advocate, help me pray each day?
3. Do I love God and neighbor?
4. Do I personally promote a missionary spirit in my life?
5. Is it evident from my behavior that I am a Christian?
6. Am I willing to begin a conversation with strangers about God, my faith or the Christian perspective on various social issues?



Examination of Conscience for parish community discussion:

How do we already fulfill our mission of Evangelization as individuals and as a parish community?

Please print these questions for all participants in order to discuss them.

1. Does our parish community actually promote a missionary spirit?
How?
2. What could be done in our parish for strengthening its witness to Christ in the world?
3. Does our parish promote accessibility, openness, and readiness to share its spiritual treasures with all, who thirst to encounter Christ?
4. What areas in our parish life are we are holding on to that we need to hand over completely to the Lord in order to follow Him more closely?
5. Where are we and what needs to be done not only to survive, but to thrive as parish community?



B. Dare to Dream

Imagine: What might be possible to better fulfill our mission as the Church in the area of Evangelization & Mission activities?

Everyone is called to obey the Gospel, with sincere humility, to preach the word and give witness to the Truth, even if others hinder this, and persecute you even to death.
St. Basil the Great

Notes for the priest:

Missionary Spirit in Parish Life

If my parish is also called to live in a missionary spirit, what do we need to focus our attention on? To be a missionary parish does not necessarily mean that its members go out to the city center and begin to preach (although this would not be a bad thing!). A missionary parish is a welcoming and hospitable community both for its faithful and for strangers. Its members shine with the light of the Gospel, have a good word for everyone, are people of prayer, give example of an honest, upright life, and shine with good works - they are a light for the world, and the salt of the earth (see Matthew 5: 13-16). These characteristics are first manifested towards those who are closest: to family-related and non-related children, brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers, to fellow parishioners, to those who hold office in the community. Then these same characteristics find expression outside the parish, towards members of other religious communities and congregations, to the civil authorities, and even to total strangers, whom they may meet for the first time.

As a community, the vibrant parish follows the missionary activity of our Church in other parts of the world, and is able to respond favorably when

assistance is needed, and support missionary activity wherever it may be required. Within one's own environment to be a missionary today means not being afraid to openly witness your faith. A vibrant parish educates its children and youth in a missionary spirit, so that they may know the foundations of their faith and not be afraid to speak of them before others. The simplest sermon, to which we can encourage all our faithful, is to make the sign of the cross, reminding ourselves and others of God's presence: when we go past a church, when we begin a journey (eg. in a bus, train or airplane), before meals, etc. In general, we should ask ourselves a very simple question: can someone tell that I am a Christian simply based on my behavior, or not. We should remember that in our midst there are many, who have left the Church for a variety of reasons, or they don't attend simply because no one has ever said to them: "Come and see!" (John 1:46).

Most importantly, we need to live in our community, and the pastor must lead his congregation in such a way, that it is resplendent with evangelical joy and a godly life. In the end, a missionary spirit should be evident in all a parish does, because when it is a sign of God's presence in the world, in itself that proclaims the Good News. When the Church speaks today of evangelization, it is usually in such a broad sense, encompassing the fullness of Christian life.



Parish community discussion on “Dare to Dream”:

Imagine: What might be possible to better fulfill our mission as the Church in the area of Evangelization & Mission activities?

Please print these questions for all participants.

As a parish community we ought to imagine: What might be possible to better fulfill our mission as the Church in the area of Evangelization & Mission activities within next year, two or three years:

1. How can our parish grow from maintenance to mission?
2. What can we do to help support the growth of our parish?
3. How can we best provide ongoing formation for our faithful that inspires them to reach out beyond their comfort zones and evangelize others?
4. How do we help our parish to grow?
5. Can we form a group of faithful who will participate in helping our parish grow?
6. Can I participate in activities to help promote my parish to the community at large thereby bringing Christ to those fallen away and make new disciples?
7. If I know someone or a family that has moved to a new city, do I let the clergy know, so they can contact them and possibly form a new parish?



Practical steps in fulfilling our goals of Evangelization and Mission.

Please share these steps and goals with the parish community and discuss them.

REACHING OUT TO OUR NEIGHBORS

Personal/Family: Do we know someone in our family or a former parishioner who has left the church? Reach out to these people and invite them to Divine Liturgy on Sunday. If they say no, ask them if it would be ok to pray for them. Ask them if there is a particular person or special intention that they would like you to pray for.

Parish: Clergy and faithful shall come together either at the Parish Council Level or a new evangelization committee to reach out to those who have left the church by inviting them back. This means to send out an invitation by letter and ask them to come to church for a special feast day or other reason(s). After inviting them, follow up by a phone call.

Parish: Have a coffee social or meal after Divine Liturgy on Sunday and invite parishioners and the faithful to participate. This helps build community and visitors can have an opportunity to get to know the parish and the people.

PARISH COMMUNITY

Personal/Family: Let us become aware of the activities of our parish that occur during the week and dedicate some of our time or talents to these activities. Recognize the God-given talents of our children and encourage them to share those talents for the good of our parish and for others.

Parish: Clergy shall invite the youth in the parish to learn how to defend the faith fearlessly, so when they go out from the parish, they can defend the faith and make new disciples.

GROWTH OF OUR PARISH

Personal/Family: As a family, what have we done over the last year to help our parish grow? Go to the pastor and tell him what personal responsibility I am ready to take on in the life of the parish.

Parish: Let us think about how volunteers are organized in our parish and what we might do better, so that our parishioners recognize their personal responsibility for the parish community.

MAKING OUR PRESENCE KNOWN

Personal: How can I use social media to contact friends and family members and tell them about our church and faith?

Parish: Let us find some new ways to advertise our parish services (billboards, social media, pamphlets). Let us help parish groups find additional members.

CHARITABLE WORKS

Personal/Family/Parish: As a family and as a parish, let us resolve to engage in some form of charitable work once a month for the benefit of someone who lives close and is in need.