



CHRISTLIFE™

CATHOLIC MINISTRY FOR EVANGELIZATION

SUMMER 2021 NEWSLETTER

Parishes Collaborate to Make Disciples,
One at a Time

Lenten Discovering Christ Small Groups
Impact Hundreds

Water on Dry Land

Helping Young Adults Abide in the
Father's Love

DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

The Church faced significant challenges right from the beginning and yet, in the Holy Spirit, obeyed what the Sovereign Lord Jesus commanded them to do: Go and make disciples!

“...they went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that attended it.”

Mark 16:20

They had ‘no silver or gold,’ but what they had they gave freely to all (Acts 3:6). They had virtually nothing; no money, buildings, or personal influence. But they had all they needed to bring salvation to many and to actually transform civilizations.

They faced unimaginable situations—persecutions and martyrdom—yet were undeterred. They understood that Jesus had commanded them to tell others that he was Lord, crucified for their sins, and raised to lead all who repented and were baptized into the fullness of life in the

Trinity! We know it's true don't we?! Jesus changed us, and he wants us to tell others he can change them too!

Today we also face serious challenges as we witness an extraordinary acceleration of wickedness in the world. Yet nothing has changed as to what the Lord Jesus commands us to do and the power he has given us to do it.

Dear friends—you who are committed to our Lord Jesus and feel a part of ChristLife's calling to fulfill the Lord's command—together we want to contribute to the Church's essential mission of helping many people come to know, love, and serve our Lord Jesus, precisely at this time in history!

Earlier this year we completed our “Reach More” campaign aimed at helping more people encounter Christ through three key initiatives:

- 1) improved access to online training and course content,
- 2) new resources for ongoing relational groups and,

3) the Spanish translation of Following Christ.

Thanks to supporters like you, we have exceeded our goal, raising the funds needed to complete the projects. We are so grateful to you!

In this newsletter, we've highlighted the Spanish translation project. Progress reports on the other two projects will be forthcoming.

Thank you for your prayers and continuing financial support and for being a part of ChristLife's mission! If you haven't yet joined in financially supporting our common mission, would you please pray and consider doing so? Thanks.

Pray for us, as we pray for you, that the Lord would continue to open doors for the advance of his gospel!



Your brother in our Sovereign Lord,

Dave Nodar

Founder and Senior Leader



FROM THE CHRISTLIFE BLOG

“GOD SAVED ME WITH A WINK”

Bill looked like he had it all. But something big was missing in his life and he wasn't ready to turn outward for help. That is, until God used a stranger and a wink to set him on a path that ultimately brought him to a personal relationship with Jesus.

READ MORE AT CHRISTLIFE.ORG/BLOG





PARISHES COLLABORATE TO MAKE DISCIPLES, ONE AT A TIME

**BY: DONNA OTTAVIANO-BRITT
DIOCESE OF CAMDEN, NJ**

It is hard being an evangelizer in today's post-Christian world. There are many reasons people have left God behind in pursuit of ... what? Our call is to share the Gospel with everyone, and to help our sisters and brothers encounter Jesus in a deeply personal way, one that is life changing.

"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," wrote Pope Benedict XVI in the Encyclical "Deus Caritas Est." This quote carries so much weight—it is not an idea—it is an encounter.

Sharing the Gospel means talking about Jesus. Easier said than done, but it is literally our vocation regardless of our occupation.

Here are three parishes that reject the idea that evangelizing is too hard. They are bringing God to the people in a singular way, helping one another on this journey—a great example of parish collaboration and sharing.

Holy Eucharist (Cherry Hill), Christ the Redeemer (Atco) and Our Lady of Peace (Williamstown) parishes are

creating a unique space for encounter through the ChristLife process for people in their parishes and surrounding communities.

Jim Scheiner of Holy Eucharist has been part of his parish initiative, inviting people to relationship with Christ through multiple iterations. A staunch advocate of the fruit it bears for participants, he is a wealth of knowledge. He belongs to the parish ChristLife team, and is point leader for the group who attended the Convocation of Catholic Leaders: The Joy of the Gospel in South Jersey in 2019.

"This process helped us prepare for the Convocation and the parish plan we created because we were centered on Christ," Jim said. People's lives are changed and new ministries have started. His own personal fruit are the friends he has made and belonging to a growing Christian community.

The ChristLife process has 2 phases for those on the journey: Discovering Christ, Following Christ and Sharing Christ.

Kathy Correa, a participant at Holy Eucharist, shared her experience. "I realized I was no longer alone and that God loved me. It gave me a family here

(in New Jersey) that I did not have. I was in a group of girls that opened their lives to me, and they are now my friends."

Since the Convocation, and because of Jim's endorsement, the other two parishes decided to move forward and began in the fall of 2019. Jim was the mentor.

Donna LaMonaca, the point leader of the Convocation team at Our Lady of Peace, knew people needed to get involved in their faith more. There are people that come to church every weekend, but they do not know Jesus, she said.

The pandemic did not make it any easier to help them encounter him, but technology helped them continue. "People are surprised to find Jesus as a close friend after this experience," she said.

Fr. Cadmus Mazzarella, pastor at Our Lady of Peace, said rolling out ChristLife is directly related to the Convocation. He has been pastor for many years, and he said this is one of the best things the parish has ever done.

"It created personal connectedness for people. ... It gave us seeds for planting, cultivating and harvesting."

LENTEN DISCOVERING CHRIST SMALL GROUPS IMPACT HUNDREDS

BY: DIANNE DAVIS

When Liz Briehof signed up for Discovering Christ, she didn't know what to expect. Her parish, St. Martin de Porres in Poughkeepsie, NY, had annual faith formation requirements for parents of children in their



Religious Education program. She signed up for Discovering Christ online, because it was the only offering that

would work with her busy schedule as a mom of two young children. But what ended up happening over the weeks, is that she grew to know who Jesus is and why she needs Him.

Liz loved the small group discussion and her facilitator Rocco, who never pressured anyone to share and created a welcoming atmosphere. At the virtual Holy Spirit retreat, Liz committed her life to Jesus. She now yearns to grow her relationship with the Lord and does something she never did before... she carves out time every morning to read a devotion and have daily prayer time!

Elizabeth Guevara de Gonzalez, Archdiocese of New York's Director of Adult Faith Formation, shared, "The Covid-19 pandemic affected us all, and many of us recognized the need for our faith more than ever before. Thanks to the generous hearts of our ChristLife leaders within the Archdiocese, we were able to offer ChristLife online starting this past Lent. With close to 300 participants, we are very hopeful for the fruit that the Holy Spirit will bring."

In Birmingham, AL, Jose and Isabel Santiago attended Discovering Christ as part of their Lenten journey. They both always considered themselves spiritual, but experienced different levels of 'ups and downs' over the last year since Isabel's retirement. But Discovering Christ changed that.

They shared, "Discovering Christ had a deep impact in our spiritual life, especially because it helped us understand how, without the Holy Spirit working in our life, we could never find true happiness and experience

a profound relationship with the Lord. It showed us that there is no greater love than the unconditional love Christ has for us, but most importantly, the responsibility we have as Christians, to live our lives for and in Christ."

Liz, Jose, and Isabel experienced Discovering Christ because of ChristLife partnerships with the Archdiocese of New York and the Diocese of Birmingham. ChristLife trained dozens of teams to offer the ChristLife evangelization process beginning Lent 2021. In New York, over 30 small groups were coordinated and set up. In Birmingham, there were over 50 small groups, some of which were able to meet in person! Together let's rejoice in the hundreds of lives that were changed and pray they would continue to grow as missionary disciples!



He encourages this discipleship process to his brother priests who are seeking new ways to engage their communities in developing a deeper relationship with Jesus.

Donna said she "made a deal with the Holy Spirit" in whom she has great trust. "I knew if Fr. Mazz was supportive, and the hall was available for every date needed for nearly a year, it was meant to be."

At Christ the Redeemer, Laurie Power, director of evangelization and discipleship, said the parish was seeking a way forward to give people a chance for faith sharing. It was also a way of invitation for those away from the church. The focus was on parishioners first before a larger invitation.

Laurie and others visited Holy Eucharist. "We were very impressed with the team, and they are invested in what they are doing," so the team in Atco moved forward to plan.

Joe Bednar, another Convocation attendee, Grand Knight of Council 7463 and member of the planning team believes ChristLife can help bring Catholics back to the church. Each step in the process is about knowing Christ. "As you go through it, it opens up your mind, your heart and your faith."

Andrea Rybacki, a recent college graduate and participant, shared she was not thinking about her faith very much. Her mom invited her.

"Christ is at the center of my life now. I am not on my own," she said.

Her advice to anyone who is invited—be open-minded and give yourself a chance to shift from self-reliance to reliance on God.

Another participant at Our Lady of Peace, Tricia Stefanelli, captures the experience in its essence. "Community is a huge part of what I was looking for. We all look for it, a place to belong, to be open and to faith journey. I met amazing people I would never have met without this experience," she said.

Originally published in the Catholic Star Herald.

Pray for ChristLife as we expand into other dioceses. If your Diocese would be interested in a similar partnership, contact Dianne Davis, dianne@christlife.org

WATER ON DRY LAND

Spanish Translation of Following Christ Will Benefit Thousands

BY: CARLOS CASTAÑEDA

I was first introduced to ChristLife while serving as Director of Evangelization at Sacred Heart Parish in Danville, VA. We are currently offering the ChristLife evangelization process for the fifth time with our bilingual community. The Lord has touched many lives

through ChristLife and brought our community closer together as brothers and sisters in Christ. Praise be Jesus Christ!

In my current role as Producer overseeing the entire process of adaptation into Spanish for the Following Christ series, I believe this project will

come as “water on dry land” to those communities that have not been able to experience the ChristLife series in their native language. It’s exciting to know this will benefit many thousands of people in their call to discipleship!

Dave and the other presenters do a fantastic job sharing the teachings of the Magisterium in a way that is both current and appealing. Together with a talent production house in Lima, Peru, we are working on crafting a “Spanish voice” for the presenters. We want to faithfully capture ChristLife’s evangelization spirit in the Spanish adaptation process.

Our goal is to release the Spanish edition of Following Christ (Siguiendo a Cristo) on the feast of Christ the King - November 21, 2021. Please pray for me and the voice talents throughout this translation process. Thank you!

For more information about this project or running ChristLife in Spanish, email espanol@christlife.org



CHRISTLIFE YOUNG ADULTS UPDATE

HELPING YOUNG ADULTS ABIDE IN THE FATHER’S LOVE

BY: JENNIFER KING

After fourteen months of meeting virtually, ChristLife Young Adults restarted in-person ministry by hosting a retreat for young adults in the Archdiocese of Baltimore. On a Saturday morning in June, over 20 young adults joyfully gathered to focus on Jesus and learn how to remain in the Father’s great love (John 15:9).

Fr. Rob Katafiasz, associate pastor at Our Lady of Perpetual Help in MD, encouraged young adults to see themselves not through the lens of the world or others, but with the eyes of God. From there, he shared ways we can grow in our relationship with God and remain in his love.

Pete Ascosi, ChristLife’s Assistant Director, built upon this theme by encouraging young adults to “keep yourselves in the love of God” (Jude 1:21). From the witness of his own life, he shared practical ways to live this truth in daily life.

This summer, ChristLife Young Adults is hosting a speaker series every other Tuesday called “Ordinary Catholics, Extraordinary Faith.” This series hopes to attract young adults to deeper relationship with Jesus and the Church.

LISTEN TO TWO TALKS FROM THE CLYA RETREAT



ChristLife Young Adults is an outreach of ChristLife to young adults, ages 18-35, in the Archdiocese of Baltimore. Visit www.clya.org to learn more.



ChristLife is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Donations are gratefully accepted in support of the essential mission of evangelization. All donations are tax-deductible. www.ChristLife.org/donate

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