



ALIVE IN JESUS CHRIST
ROCKTOLEDO.COM
[19 Counties. One Mission.]

PARISH BUILDING | NEW EVANGELIZATION PROPOSAL: DIOCESE OF TOLEDO

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Overview

After 25 years of developing and leading successful Catholic movements nationwide, in 2013 Greg Schlueter was engaged by the Diocese of Toledo to build a New Evangelization capacity as Secretariat Leader for Evangelization and Parish Life.

Without the requisite structure or capacity, an entirely new model was developed informed by prominent Catholic partners, defining new resources (*Forming Intentional Disciples / Rebuilt / Dynamic Catholic*), and engaging active involvement of prominent pastors and leaders throughout the diocese.

Against the backdrop of dramatically declining mass attendance and general faith engagement (77,000 of 330,000 Catholics), and a long season of parish restructurings, the “beta model” promised to transform a parish into a vibrant community of intentional disciples within five years, and be an occasion for exponential expansion to other parishes. This “Level 5 Parish” concept involves a 3-5 year growth cycle per parish (below).

Aware of the many challenges, Bishop Leonard Blair blessed the plan: “Strike out boldly.”

Emerging Success Story

Within one year the model demonstrated its impact by full engagement of a beta parish in the Level 5 growth cycle (St. Joan of Arc), and demonstrated its capacity for expansion by engaging four other areas throughout the diocese (including two deaneries), comprising 24 parish communities. This is not static. New pastors and leaders are inquiring every week.

Other 2013 Highlights:

- Active advisory / partnerships with Peter Herbeck (Renewal Ministries), Tom Peterson (Catholics Come Home), Joe Hensler (FOCUS), Matt Pinto (Ascension Press), Matthew Kelly (Dynamic Catholic), Devin Schadt (St. Joseph Confraternity), Steve Bollman (That Man Is You), Mark Berchem (NET)
- Advisory and management teams comprised of 15+ pastors and 30+ key leaders.
- Diocesan-wide engagement by pastors and parish teams in reading *Forming Intentional Disciples* and *Rebuilt*.
- 3000 participants in 14 evangelization and worship events.
- 200 leaders representing 15 different parish teams participated in the three-part Igniting Dynamic Parish Communities series.



- Dynamic websites, RockToledo.com and PresenceForChristmas.com, with supportive multimedia and resources, reaching 20,000+.
- Weekly RT Gathering Guide / RT180 videos engage the faithful in the adventure throughout the week; these are participated widely at the Rock Toledo website, and increasingly are being embedded in parish websites.
- C.O.D. Fish (Community of Disciples, Acts. 4:32-34) developed for personalized evangelization and prayer at various events, reaching over 5000.
- Hundreds participated in the 30/3 Challenge.

Statement of Need

Parishes in the Diocese of Toledo are in a steady state of decline in terms of mass participation and depth of faith-engagement. Of 330,000 Catholics, only 77,000 attend mass (October, 2013), continuing the downward trend of approximately 2,500 every year. National studies reveal that 40% do not believe in a relationship with God ([source](#)). A majority of Catholics disagree with Church teachings ([source](#)). Some studies indicate that as many as 95% of churches are going in the wrong direction.

A principal success indicator is an institution's capacity to navigate from a "self-referential" (Pope Francis), "business as usual" (Cardinal O'Malley) and maintenance-driven culture to a mission-driven culture (Starks).

Statement of Response: Principles for Success

A pastor from a turnaround parish explained, "The reason there was so much conflict and contention, the reason the church was dying, was that we weren't focused on the mission Jesus Christ gave us... had lost it's 'transforming power' in people's lives." (*Rebuilt*, 47)

"If we aren't planning to become communities of intentional disciples, we're planning to fail."

- a. Vision** of parish as an interpersonal "culture of encounter" (Pope Francis) where all are engaged in the great adventure of discovering and living our best selves, created in Jesus Christ, in light of our Catholic faith;
- b. Becoming** is basis of doing: we can not give what we do not live (Acts. 4:32-34);
- c. Organic** development: One becomes 12 becomes 72;
- d. Continuum** from un/de-churched to intentional disciples: Levels of entry and engagement, deliberately geared toward going deeper;
- e. Thematically** integrated according to Source and Summit (Eucharistic);
- f. Culturally-relevant:** Distinguishing between "the substance of the ancient doctrine of the faith" and "the way it is presented" (Pope John XXIII);
- g. Charism** identification, engagement, support and growth;
- h. Leadership** informed by best wisdom and practices;
- i. Sustainability:** capacity for parish leadership to eventually progress on its own;
- j. Big picture concept:** Integrating all elements (Level 5 Parish)



Principal Partnerships

Peter Herbeck (Renewal Ministries), Tom Peterson (Catholics Come Home), Joe Hensler (FOCUS), Matt Pinto (Ascension Press), Matthew Kelly (Dynamic Catholic), Devin Schadt (St. Joseph Confraternity), Steve Bollman (That Man Is You), Mark Berchem (NET).

RockToledo | Historical Overview:

- A strategy was developed, and continues to be refined, with processing from top leaders in the New Evangelization, including the above “**Principal Partnerships**”
- This strategy is informed, refined and implemented in an ongoing way by a **Management Team** of key leaders who meet weekly (15+), and a larger **Advisory Team** that meets monthly (30+).
- **Level 5 Parish Concept** (beta) specifies the parish-building landscape (see below).
- **RockToledo.com** is the big-picture movement name, including a dynamic web-platform for engagement ([site](#)), communication and organization. Definitional branding: “19 counties. One mission.” Specified by “Alive in Jesus Christ.” (18,103 visitors to date)
- We began with **IGNITE** on Pentecost, 2013. The goal of this monthly Eucharistic Adoration event was simply to unite people in mission-kindred prayer. “More than just a moment, a movement,” this model is based upon nearly two decades of a Catholic renewal experience involving a “Burning Bush.”
- Simultaneously, pastors and teams were encouraged to be engaged by reading *Forming **Intentional Disciples*** and ***Rebuilt***. This has taken diocese-wide.
- **Igniting Dynamic Parish Communities** three-part series preceded the last three IGNITEs ([media](#)). Led by Peter Herbeck of Renewal Ministries, these were participated by 200 people, comprising 15 parish communities.
- **Presence for Christmas** is a “four-week journey into the heart of Christmas” involving four consecutive weeks of an IGNITE-type event, integrated with special messaging (“This year give *presence* for Christmas”), branding, [web](#) (12,385 visitors to date), the 30/3 Challenge and the RT Gathering Guide (etc.), and cultural messaging.
- **RT Gathering Guide** and **RT180 Video** are engaging means to get families and groups to regularly talk and pray, and thus make the adventure of liturgy accessible in an ongoing way ([info](#)). New every week corresponding to subsequent Sunday readings, this high-quality content is easy for parishes to embed in their websites. In the RT180 video a new priest every week shares an impactful story, connects it to the Gospel, and issues a specific challenge (180 seconds, also as in “to do a 180”).
- **30/3 Challenge** ([info](#)) is an exciting way for pastors to unite families in the adventure: families commit to gathering 30 minutes three nights a week for four weeks, based upon the RT Gathering Guide. Pre and post surveys help parents to



see the real, relational impact of family spending meaningful time together.

- **RT Communications.** A weekly e-zine to opt-in “members” (over 1100) and pastors keeps all connected to the ongoing adventure. This also includes a periodic text-blast, and fully integrated with Facebook ([page](#)) and Twitter.
- **Mission Ignition Retreat** followed the first, full cycle of IGNITE, for pastors and their leaders to understand more fully what it would take to implement IGNITE as part of an overall, parish-building strategy. Seven different communities participated.
- **Developmental:**
 - (1) Discipleship Academy to form, equip and support leaders for parish-based parish building in an ongoing way.
 - (2) Core team formation through ALPHA, then extended inside-out continuum.
 - (3) Extending IGNITE to pre-event for community called SPARK (relationship-level engagement). Integrated with various, personalized parish outreach.
 - (4) Faith formation (TBD).

Official IGNITE Parishes

Main Beta:

St. Joan of Arc / Fr. Adam Hertzfeld / Nicholas De La Torre

Little Flower (Toledo) / Fr. David Nuss

First Tier Expansion Locations:

(1) St. Agnes Deanery:

Base: Most Blessed Sacrament / Msgr. Michael Billian / Matt Yeager

Christ the King, Corpus Christi, Gesu, Regina Coeli, Saint Catherine of Siena, Saint Clement, Saint John the Baptist, Saint Michael the Archangel, Saint Pius X

(2) St. Juan Diego Deanery:

Base: Resurrection / Fr. Nelson Beaver / Melissa Heichel

St Joseph (Plymouth), Holy Trinity (Bucyrus), St Joseph (Crestline), St Bernard (New Washington), St Francis (Willard), Sacred Heart (Bethlehem)

(3) St. Wendelin, Fostoria / Fr. Nicholas Weibel / Jon Hay

(4) Immaculate Conception (Port Clinton) / Fr. John Missler / Anne Cook / Bob Geiger



Components (strategically integrated)

- 1) Customized Web / Logo / Platform (locus for base-building, communications and organization, both MI specific, and other New Evangelization-specific)
- 2) CORE: Weekly Gathering Guide / Video featuring priest (seeking full engagement with diocese communication channels)
- 3) ALPHA / Parish Core team formation and ongoing support
- 4) IGNITE. Monthly. Ancient-New Encounter with Jesus Christ.
- 5) SPARK. Monthly. Prior to IGNITE. Relational outreach to community, inside-out: Regular, periodic church, de/unchurched.
- 6) Live Events: Priests, Leader, Lay, Community
- 7) Presence for Christmas + Cultural Marketing
- 8) Special formation and training seminars and retreats (towards Discipleship Academy)
- 9) Social media (Facebook / Twitter)
- 10) Target-purposed regular communications (weekly E-zine, Mobomix)
- 11) Special Multimedia (advertisements, promotional, testimonial, etc.)
- 12) Promotional Development / Marketing (posters, bulletin announcements, etc.)
- 13) General availability for parish / deanery consultation

Metrics

Engaging us for the 3-5 year growth cycle will have the following, measurable results:

- 1) Increase number of intentional disciples (5Y Target: 35% community);
- 2) Increase mass attendance (5Y Target: 200%);
- 3) Increase number of formed parish employees and leaders (5Y Target: 100% formed);
- 4) Increase parish engagement (time, talent and treasure) (5Y Target: 200% increase);
- 5) Increase missioned-parishes (extension to others) (5Y Target: 50% diocese).

Model: One New Evangelization-Missioned Parish Extending to Others

Organic, biblical approach: One becomes 12 becomes 72. Selected on basis of existing leadership, parish readiness and capacity for outreach to other parishes [3G extension]

- 1) Demonstrates viability of real model and plan for other parishes.
- 2) Becomes means for mission-extension to other parishes (through formation of leaders).
- 3) Catalyst for collaborative building in other parishes.

“**Level 5 Parish**” **Concept** specifies parish-building landscape within the 3-5 year growth cycle.

Level 1: Active Intentionality (Evaluation)

A pastor and his team are engaged in reading parish-building material (e.g., *Forming Intentional Disciples / Rebuilt / Dynamic Catholic*) to become an intentional community of disciples. They attend IGNITE. Mission Ignition retreat. Ongoing guided support.

Level 2: Committed Plan & Fulfillment Capacities

The concrete plan, timeline and fulfillment capacities are on paper and in motion. See Parish Building Growth Cycle (below).



Level 3: Internal Becoming (Forming Intentional Disciples)

After a minimum of one year, the parish is on track to doubling number of intentional disciples annually.

Level 4: External Outreach (Engagement of Geographical Region)

Parish has full infrastructure, build and capacity, and is actively engaging all in their geographic area in the adventure of life in Jesus Christ.

Level 5: Parish-Building Multiplier

Parish mentors other parishes in development

Parish Building Growth Cycle | Based upon “Level 5 Parish” Concept (beta)

Presumes pastor/team ownership. Time is contingent upon circumstances. Generally 3-5 year growth cycle resulting in parish having self-sustaining / growth capacity.

0-6 Months: Level 1 Active Intentionality (Evaluation)

Leaders engaged by *FID / Rebuilt / Dynamic Catholic*. Attending IGNITE. RT Gathering Guide / RT 180 embedded and promoted. Mission Ignition retreat. Support communications.

6-8 Months: Level 2 Committed Plan and fulfillment capacities in place and in motion.

8 - 24 Months: Level 3 Internal Becoming (Forming Intentional Disciples)

- 8 Months: Parish based monthly IGNITE begins
- 12 Months: ALPHA for key leaders begins
- 15 Months: Monthly SPARK for churched begins
- 15 Months: ALPHA cycles through for churched in parish

Include all support communications.
Likelihood that periodic and un/de-churched will plug in here.

36 Months: Level 4 External Outreach (Engagement of Geographic Region)

36 Months: Mass Impact begins. Personalized and marketed forms of invite to surrounding community. Based upon SPARK > IGNITE > Mass model.

48 Months: Level 5 Parish-Building Multiplier

Parish actively adopts another parish to support and mentor in process.

Ongoing consultation and development per parish-building infrastructure
Discipleship Academy
Faith formation capacity (i.e., catechesis)
Parish-based retreats (like CRHP, ACTS)



Parish Integration

Not “another program,” everything we do is strategically geared to supporting a pastor’s existing, primary purpose: to make the adventure of the Mass accessible. As such, there is no end. Components such as SPARK, IGNITE and ALPHA are strategically integrated to enable a parish, in a cyclical way, to more fully accomplish it’s mission and be a catalyst for other parishes.

Diocesan Integration

We share the purpose of building parish communities. Per continuity of all involved thus far, we propose continuation of Rock Toledo as the overall brand, with corresponding platform and related “deliverables.”

For optimal success, we seek your active partnership in integrating with all diocesan endeavors and channels. For instance, our shared mission will be advanced if the *Chronicle* regularly publishes info on upcoming RT180/ RT Gathering Guide (featuring diocesan priests). Also, if various New Evangelization endeavors (conferences, etc.) integrate with Rock Toledo- connecting participants to the “then what” purpose to which their endeavors are directed (parish community).

The Rock Toledo platform exists and will be utilized to promote any and all evangelization endeavors at the service of parish building.

