

“What is the Mission of the Church”
A Guide for Catholics
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A Course Outline
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Session #1	Session #2	Session #3	Session #4	Session #5	Session #6
<p>The Changing Understanding of Mission <i>[Chapter 1]</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction and Orientation <i>The Gospel in a Nutshell (pg. 1)</i> • Understanding of Mission before Vatican II <i>Mission was about the Salvation of souls and the Establishment of the Church</i> • New Understanding of Mission <i>Developed in the writings of Vatican II Fathers, Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul II</i> • Mission and Table Fellowship <i>A good symbol of mission is the family table and the Eucharistic table: Mission is concerned with responding to physical and spiritual hunger.</i> 	<p>God’s Mission: Old Testament – The Gospel <i>[Chapter 2]</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God’s Mission and How Jesus preached, served and witnessed to God’s Reign. <i>Mission is what God does and who God is. (Gittens) . . . Jesus is the first and greatest evangelizer (EN 7) and the purpose of the church is to prolong and continue this mission of Jesus (EN 15)</i> • Jesus’ Mission Table Fellowship <i>The Gospel of Jesus is seen in :“how his parables called his disciples to be forgiving, how his miracles called them to be agents of healing and wholeness, how his exorcisms called them to be opposed absolutely to evil, how his inclusive lifestyle called them to be inclusive” (Bevans/Schroeder) - all this captured in His practice of table fellowship.</i> 	<p>God’s Mission: Acts of the Apostles <i>[Chapter 3]</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the steps of the early disciples by walking through the Acts of the Apostles. (7 stages) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expect Jesus to return soon; stay waiting in Jerusalem. [Acts 1] 2. Receive the power of Holy Spirit; begin to give witness of Jesus – to other Jews. [Acts 2-5] 3. With Stephen and the confrontation between the Hebrews and Hellenists beginning of shift beyond traditional Judaism. Acts 6-7] 4. With baptism of Ethiopian eunuch by Philip, the circle of believers widens. [Acts 8] 5. Conversion of gentile Cornelius (and Peter!) = turning point for Christianity. [Acts 10:1 – 11:18] 6. In Antioch – the Church is born = Christians; clear move beyond Judaism. [Acts 11:19-29] 7. Universal mission: Years of development/challenge. [Acts 12-28] 	<p>Six Distinct Moments of Christian Mission <i>[Chapter 4 and 5]</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six Distinct Moments of Christian Mission <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Early Church (100-201) - Ordinary baptized Christians primary agents of mission, witnessing through simple actions and words in daily life. 2. Monasticism (313-907) - Monks become main instruments of mission. . . Gospel being inculturated. 3. Mendicant Orders (1000-1453) - Renewal coming not from monks and nuns but primarily through laity who embrace radical lives of poverty. 4. Conquistadors, Prophets, and Jesuits (1492-1773) - Move beyond – into the Americas, the Philippines and Asia; very few missionaries; some powerful preachers. 5. Civilizers, Evangelizers, Volunteer Societies (1792-1914) - Protestantism main missionary movement; by 1814 Catholic Church begins recover. . Century of Africa. 6. Emergence of World Christianity (1919-1989)- Transformation of Mission; new understanding; Christianity a world phenomenon. 	<p>The Why, Who and Where and What of Mission: 3 Documents – 6 Forms <i>[Chapter 6 and 7]</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why Who and Where Mission? <i>To share the good news we have experienced and come to know. That good news is about God’s mission of love, the reign of God, and Jesus, the Savior of all..</i> <i>Each of the documents emphasize that “the missionary activity is a matter for all Christians – for all dioceses, parishes, institutions and associations.” (RM 2) . . . across all frontiers of place, race, religion.</i> • What is Mission About? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Witness and Proclamation 2. Liturgy, Prayer and Contemplation. 3. Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation. 4. Interreligious and Secular Dialogue 5. Inculturation 6. Reconciliation 	<p>Spirituality and Practice: The How of Mission <i>[Chapter 8]</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Spirituality of Mission <i>We need to develop a spirituality of humility and openness to do mission with an attitude and approach of humble listening BUT like the prophets of old we also need to challenge others to be faithful to God and remind them of the injustices in our treatment of others. We can call this a SPIRITUALITY of PROPHETIC DIALOGUE.</i> • The Practice of Mission <i>cf: The 1997 U.S. Bishops statement “Called to Global Solidarity: International Challenges for U.S. Parishes” in which the Bishops outline an extensive list of practical suggestions and actions that individuals and parishes can engage in. Many dioceses have found this document very helpful in moving from basic principles to parish ministries and activities.</i> • Appendix: <i>A good Parish Assessment Tool developed from the U.S. Bishops’ document.</i>