

ONE CHURCH



ENCOUNTERING JESUS
EQUIPPING DISCIPLES
AND LIVING MERCY

2021
**Pastoral
Conference**

A lot has happened in the last five years

In 2016, Archbishop Lucas asked Christian faithful in the Archdiocese of Omaha to participate in a process that resulted in a pastoral vision for our local church. There was wide participation. If you recall, you prayed with others about what you heard and what you believed the Lord was telling us. The Holy Spirit was present.

The Holy Spirit-inspired vision is now well-known:

**One church, encountering Jesus,
equipping disciples, living mercy**

Jump ahead to 2020 and the Pastoral Conference. “Vision doesn’t just come into being,” Archbishop Lucas said at the conference. So, to help move the vision forward and better realize what the Lord desires for our local church, Archbishop Lucas used last October’s pastoral conference to draw the curtain on his *Big Goal*:

That each parish in the Archdiocese of Omaha will be a missional community by 2026.

By missional community, he means an outward-looking group of disciples, under the care of the pastor, sent by Jesus to make disciples (Matthew 28:18). All this by 2026.

Yep, that’s Big. Aspirational. But you have to dream big if you’re going to do big things for the Lord. “The Lord is calling all of us to be His disciples and his friends,” Archbishop Lucas said. “He wants to equip us to share the light and the joy of the gospel with others.”

Following last year’s conference, parishes got busy strategizing, dreaming, executing, and experimenting with the three characteristics of a missional community:

- ***Collaborative Leadership***—A way of exercising authority in which pastors invite and equip a certain portion of the Christian faithful to use their gifts in the service of leadership.
- ***Clear Path to Discipleship***—A simple, step-by-step strategy for a parish to make disciples and lead people toward full maturity in Christ.
- ***Culture of Generosity***—A way of Christian living where we come to know that all we have is a gift from God and are invited to return to those gifts with love to our Lord, our parish, and our community.

Now it’s the year of the sequel—Pastoral Conference ’21 (PC21), and the lay faithful is our red carpet special guest.

PC20 was about the three characteristics of a missional community. PC21 will equip you with the essential habits necessary to be a missionary disciple. In other words, PC21 is a continuation of the journey you are on to renew your parish.

Your pastor invited you to PC21 because he knows first-hand your gifts and talents. He wants to unleash your gifts on the world. With your help, he thinks your parish will be a missional community by 2026.

You should be honored. Motivated. Inspired. No one has ever trusted you so much as to invite you to participate in Christ’s work of salvation.

IT’S OUR TIME TO DO BIG THINGS FOR THE LORD.



Prayer for Pastoral Conversion

Heavenly Father,

You have called us together to be one Church:

Encountering Jesus, equipping disciples, living mercy.

Please send your Holy Spirit upon us as in a new Pentecost, and grant us the grace of pastoral conversion so that we may detach ourselves from comfort and devote ourselves more earnestly to your mission.

We pray through the intercession of Mary, Mother of Evangelization, and St. Therese of Lisieux for renewed zeal to make the Good News of Jesus resound in our time.

We ask all of this through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns forever.

Amen.

Prep-work questions for discussion ahead of October 7

Watch the videos and then answer the questions as a group. *Videos for prep-work:* archomaha.org/pc21

1. In the past year, how have you seen your parish becoming a missional community?
2. In which of the three characteristics (*page 2*) does your parish most need to grow?
3. What desires has the Lord given you for the people in your parish and community?
4. How can you help your parish to become more missional?



Prayer and Compassion

PRAYER:

**THE DAILY HEART-TO-HEART ENCOUNTER
BETWEEN THE LORD AND A DISCIPLE**

COMPASSION:

**THE PRACTICE OF SEEKING CHRIST IN
OTHERS AND SHARING IN THEIR SUFFERING**

God tirelessly calls each person to that mysterious encounter known as prayer. Prayer is our response to God who is already speaking, revealing Himself to us. Prayer engages the whole person in a relationship with God. As we contemplate Christ, we must never forget that he is also contemplating us with intense love!

WRAP is a four-step method of guided prayer designed to help us hear the Lord's voice in scripture.

A reader reads the scripture three times aloud.

Then he/she leaves space for the group to silently **Write, Reflect, Apply, and Pray.**

Next, participants are invited to share with the group.



¹WRAP is an acronym and method for Lectio Divina from the book WRAP Yourself In Scripture © by Karen & Lawrence Dwyer published by The Institute for Priestly Formation (2011, 2018). The WRAP Method involves four steps: Write, Reflect, Apply, and Pray with Scripture.



WRAP YOURSELF IN SCRIPTURE

Whoever is willing to lead: follow this basic outline when leading **WRAP** for your group. If you are more comfortable with leading a group through *lectio divina*, feel free to improvise.

- ①. First, open with a brief spontaneous prayer. Pause and recollect yourself to God's presence. Become aware that God is right here, right now. Ask Him for the light of His Holy Spirit to illuminate this time of prayer.
- ②. **W=Write:** (5 minutes)
 - a. Say, "Write out the image, verse or verses that speak to you."
 - b. Read the Scripture passage aloud.
 - c. Say again, "Write out the image, verse or verses that speak to you."
 - d. Pause for 2 minutes to allow each person to notice where the Lord is speaking.
 - e. Say, "Feel free to share if you would like."
- ③. **R=Reflect:** (5 minutes)
 - a. Say, "Reflect on the principle or truth that the Scripture is teaching. Use your imaginative and analytical faculties. Write down your thoughts, feelings, and desires in relationship to the Scripture; and dialogue with Jesus."
 - b. Read the passage aloud.
 - c. Say again, "Reflect on the principle or truth that the Scripture is teaching. Use your imaginative and analytical faculties. Write down your thoughts, feelings, and desires in relationship to the Scripture; and dialogue with Jesus."
 - d. Pause for 2 minutes to allow each person to notice where the Lord is speaking.
 - e. Say, "Feel free to share if you would like."
- ④. **A=Apply:** (5 minutes)
 - a. Say, "Consider how Jesus is calling you to apply the truths from Scripture. Write down your response to the Scripture and how you can apply it beginning today."
 - b. Read the passage aloud.
 - c. Say again, "Consider how Jesus is calling you to apply the truths from Scripture. Write down your response to the Scripture and how you can apply it beginning today."
 - d. Pause for 2 minutes to allow each person to notice where the Lord is speaking.
 - e. Say, "Feel free to share if you would like."
- ⑤. **P=Pray:** (5 minutes)
 - a. Say, "Write a simple prayer related to the verses that offer praise and thanksgiving to God. Ask God to help you respond in faith to His Word. At the end of your prayer, focus completely on Jesus. Rest in His Heart and presence. Receive His strength, His love, and His grace."
 - b. Pause for 2 minutes as each person prays.
- ⑥. Close with the Our Father.



EXERCISE: **PRAY WRAP IN A SMALL GROUP**



WRITE
REFLECT
APPLY
PRAY

- 1 After this the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to come.
- 2 And he said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.
- 3 Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs in the midst of wolves.
- 4 Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and salute no one on the road.
- 5 Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace be to this house!’
- 6 And if a son of peace is there, your peace shall rest upon him; but if not, it shall return to you.
- 7 And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages; do not go from house to house.
- 8 Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you;
- 9 heal the sick in it and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’

Luke 10:1-9



Friendship

FRIENDSHIP:
**A SHARING OF LIFE
ROOTED IN A DESIRE
FOR THE OTHER
PERSON'S GREATEST
GOOD (ETERNAL LIFE)**



EXERCISE:
**PERSONAL
HISTORIES²**

- Where did you grow up?
- How many siblings do you have, and where are you in the birth order?
- Describe a challenge you faced in your childhood.

²This exercise is taken from *The Amazing Parish*.



Invitation

INVITATION:
**AN OFFER FROM A
FRIEND TO A DEEPER
ENCOUNTER WITH JESUS**

EXERCISE:
**PLAN YOUR NEXT
THREE MEETINGS**

1. Who is in your group?
2. Who will lead? Will you rotate week to week?
3. What resource will you use? (You can use a different resource, but we are prepared to support you with the *Encounter Series: Gather*. If you would like to use this series, please join our Flocknote! It will be sent to you soon!)
4. When will you meet? (Schedule your 60–90 minute meetings now!)
 - a. Meeting 1: _____ *Insert date*
 - b. Meeting 2: _____ *Insert date*
 - c. Meeting 3: _____ *Insert date*
5. Where will you meet?
6. How will you communicate as a group? (Group text, email, etc.)

We invite you to meet three more times between now and Christmas

We will provide you with the *Encounter Series: Gather*, a resource designed to help you encounter Jesus in a small group as you pray. You will have a deeper experience of the four habits through friendship, time spent in prayer together, and the opportunity to eventually invite others into a similar experience.

Invite others to *Live Lent Together* starting February 2022.

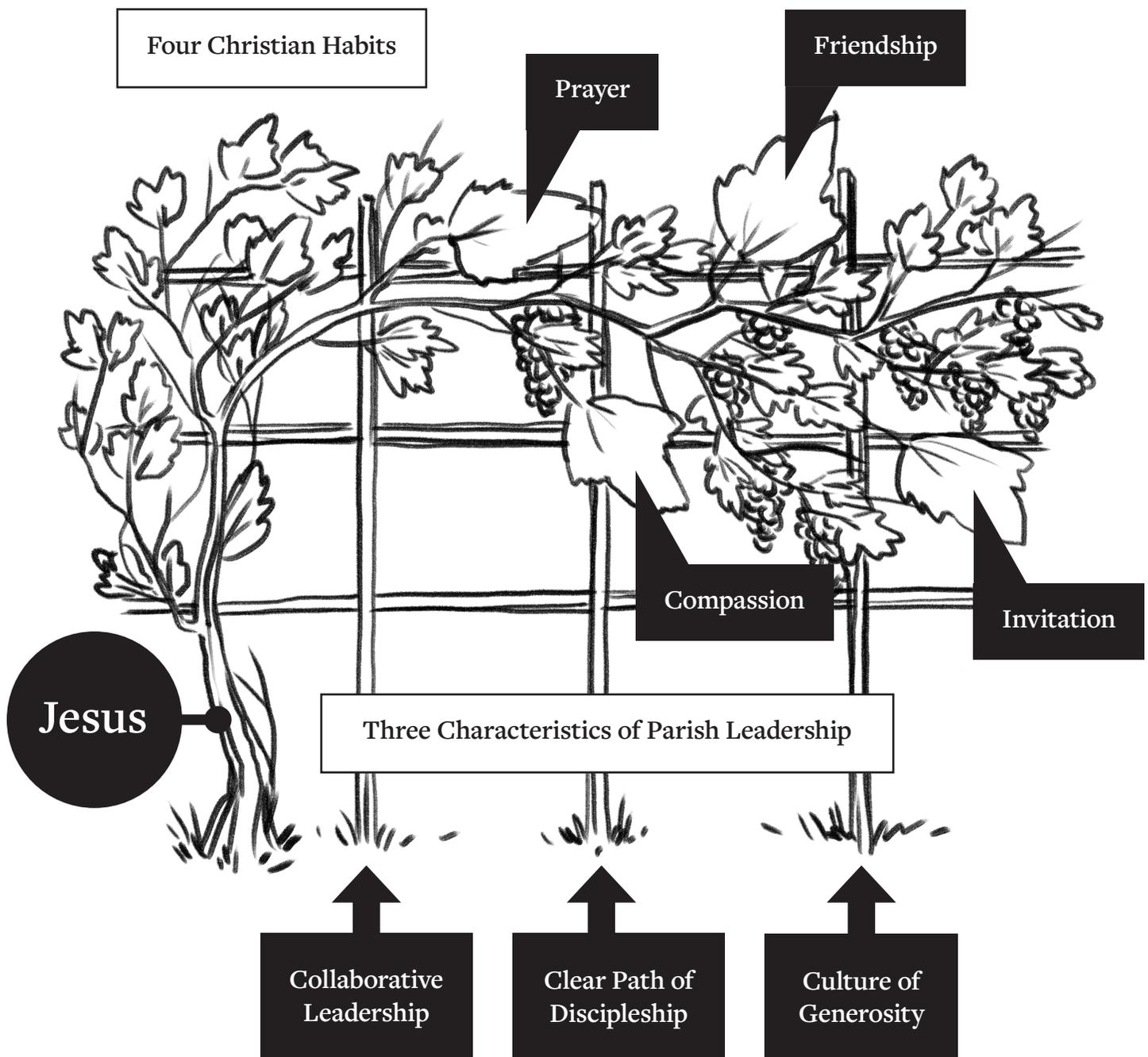
By the end of this three-week series, you will feel confident to invite others into a similar experience. During Lent, we will support you through the *Live Lent Together* initiative, which fosters an encounter with Jesus through scripture, prayer, and friendship with those you invite to participate.



Tying it all together

Missional Communities:

- Stay connected to Jesus as the source of life.
- Embody the three characteristics.
- Commit to practicing the four habits.
- Bear abundant fruit of transformed lives.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

The Pastoral Conference will return

OCTOBER 6, 2022



For videos and other resources, visit:

[ARCHOMAHA.ORG/PC21](https://www.archomaha.org/pc21)