



The John Cardinal Foley Chair of Homiletics & Social Communications
SAINT CHARLES BORROMEEO SEMINARY, OVERBROOK

Faculty Lunch on 11/14/19

“Best Practices in Parish Disciple-Making”

(1) Measuring Parish Life

- our “empty pews” ...
 - roughly 1,450 fewer parishes than 50 years ago
 - average use of church capacity = 47%
 - weekly Mass attendance = 17%
- the “Disciple Maker Index”
 - comprehensive data ... 132,000 parishioners in 600 parishes in 28 (arch)dioceses
 - from actively engaged ... 90% of respondents attend Mass on at least a weekly basis
 - key outcomes:
 - would recommend parish to others ... 52% strongly agree
 - parish helps with growth as Catholics ... 40% strongly agree

(2) The “Best Practices” of Top Performing Parishes

- having the presence of strong **leadership** ... the pastor is *the* key!
 - 4x more likely to report growth as Catholics
 - 9x more likely to recommend the parish to others
- interacting through social **communications** ... transparency, clarity, interactivity
 - 1.5x more likely to recommend parish to others
- cultivating a Christian **community** ... “welcoming & accepting”
 - 1.8x more likely to report spiritual growth
 - 2.1x more likely to recommend the parish
- fostering beautiful and vibrant **liturgy** ... the unique parish product!
 - vibrant & engaging Mass
 - 1.8x more likely to report growth as Catholics
 - 2.3x more likely to recommend the parish to others
 - relevant & effective preaching
 - 1.5x more likely to report growth as Catholics
 - 1.7x more likely to recommend the parish to others
 - does the parish provide these Sunday experiences? ... only 35% strongly agree with each
- sharing time, talent, and treasure with **generosity** ... everybody “contributes”
 - the parish provides opportunities to serve those in need ... only 31% strongly agree
 - the parish follows up with those interested in involvement ... only 26% strongly agree

(3) Faculty Discussion

- general reactions to the DMI data
- specific recommendations for seminary formation