

# *Sharing the Gift: Study Guide*

## **QUESTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION AND GROUP DISCUSSION**

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### **Section I: Introduction**

- How comfortable would you feel explaining your faith to a non-Catholic?
- How do I “live my faith well ...” so that others might ask me about God because they are sure he is with me? (Zech 8:23)
- How does the call to evangelization represent a solution to being endlessly bogged down in the debates over important issues outlined by the Bishop?
- What are the signs of the times which make the call to evangelize so urgent in this day?

### **Section II: Biblical Basis for Evangelization**

- How can I extend “communion and fellowship” to others, such as family, friends, coworkers and neighbors?
- For many reasons (famous movies, commonality across all denominations) stories from the Old Testament are very familiar to many people. What figures, passages or stories from the Old Testament do you think are the most helpful in getting people to consider the Christian faith? How?
- Which passages from the Gospels could you most easily share with passion and conviction to help others know Jesus?

### **Section III: Early Church**

- When you look at the early Church’s success in growing the faith from a small band of Israelites to the dominant religion in the Mediterranean world, what do you think was their secret sauce?
- The early Christians were anxious to evangelize and had a sense of urgency. Does that sense exist in the Church today? Why or why not?
- How do the risks of being a Christian today compare to the risks of being a Christian in the early Church?
- Bishop Wack states that the Church is the people of God. As a Catholic, how have you helped spread God’s kingdom in your family?

### **Section IV: Origins of Christendom**

- “In essence, Christendom constitutes a society that is guided by Christian ideals, beliefs, morals, etc.” How and where do you see society guided by Christian ideals, beliefs and morals today?
- How is the Church still facing persecution today?
- Bishop Wack challenges us to protect our Catholic faith as perfectly as possible. Share a story in the past year when you have had to protect your faith.
- What saints from the era of Christendom motivate you to go on mission and proclaim the Gospel?

### **Section V: The Death of Christendom**

- Bishop Wack says, “We can no longer be content with opening our church doors and watching people come in.” What can we do instead?
- How have you experienced in your own life the transition from Christendom to a predominantly indifferent or hostile society?
- What cannot be taken for granted when sharing the Catholic faith with others?
- Have you seen any of your family members leave the Catholic faith? How did you respond?

## **Section VI: Renewal**

- What qualifies someone to be a missionary disciple in your eyes?
- How can we assist people to open their hearts to the person of Jesus Christ?  
What new methods must be employed in the New Evangelization? Name an example of the New Evangelization in action.
- If you were Peter and God asked you to spread his kingdom all over the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee, where would you start?
- If you were asked what is the "kingdom of God," how would you respond?
- What do you think our society would look like if we were all in full communion with God?

## **Section VII: What does Evangelization look like today?**

- What does evangelization look like today? (Hint: It does not have to be getting in front of a video camera.)
- Bishop says that evangelization put simply "is a means to awaken in people's hearts a love of God, and an adherence to the Gospel of Jesus Christ." How was the love of God awakened in your own heart? What were the important moments and who were the important faces who helped you "awaken your heart to the love of God"?
- How do you continue to renew your relationship with God besides weekly Mass?
- While many are familiar with Christianity as a concept (in some form or another) what are ways the faith can become fresh, new and exciting to them?
- What types of conversations and interactions have you seen move people from indifference, to the Gospel, to excitement about the Gospel?
- What might you say to a friend who tells you, "I don't need organized religion; I have my own personal belief in God."?

## **Section VIII: Evangelizing in the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee**

- How do you demonstrate your Catholic faith in everyday actions (and not just on Sundays)?
- Can you give three examples of how you and your family participate in your parish's evangelization efforts?
- Who is someone in your parish who is effectively fulfilling the role of evangelizer besides your priest?
- When is the last time you evangelized to a family member, a friend or a stranger?
- What resources would you recommend to help others grow in their faith?
- What strategies or attitudes in your parish or other parishes in the diocese have you seen bring success in the work of evangelization?
- What are the most obvious obstacles to evangelizing in our 18 counties and bringing more people into full communion with Christ in the Catholic Church?
- What makes our 18 counties particularly fertile ground for the work of evangelization?
- "Go and make disciples of all nations ..." (Mt 28:19), how will you choose to evangelize when you leave this discussion?

## **Section IX: Mary and the Saints Who Will Guide and Assist Us**

- Do you have a patron saint or namesake or confirmation name? How is that name/saint significant to you?
- Name one saint and one of his or her qualities that you strive to be like.
- What saint do you admire for his/ her evangelizing methods?