

Divine Renovation: Summary of Introduction and Chapter 1 (Part 3 of 4)

The mission of the church is described in Matthew 28:19-20: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you”.

Fr. Mallon points out the four tasks Jesus gives his Church in this verse; go, make, baptize, and teach, explaining the grammatical hinge of the sentence, “make” – literally **make disciples**. As a church it seems our weakest point is the essential task at the very heart of the commission!

Defining the key term “disciple” as learner, Fr. Mallon describes a disciple of Jesus as engaged in a lifelong process of learning from and about Jesus, committed to this intentional process of growth and relationship.

As to how many parishioners this term can honestly be applied to, the sad news is probably somewhere from 6-10% of regularly attending Catholics in an average parish. Contributing to this disappointing condition are paradigm shifts in the last generation that have not been reflected in the pastoral practices of the Church. Culture no longer automatically supports faith and church. Even though we weren’t necessarily making disciples in any greater numbers in the past, the cultural norm supported the appearance of the practicing Catholic.

Without the cultural props and the social current turned against us, the only solution going forward is to return to what Jesus asked of us 2,000 years ago; to not just make believers, or practising Catholics, but to make disciples (p.22).

As to what awakens the hunger for Jesus: Evangelization, the Good News. We can speak of the Good News in many ways “**but in the end it is possible to simplify the message into one word: Jesus**” (p.22).