



WORD ON FIRE
INSTITUTE

Member Handbook

2021-2022

Word on Fire Institute

Member Handbook 2021–2022

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Our Mission and the Word on Fire Way

Welcome to the Word on Fire Institute! We are excited that you have chosen to join us in this great adventure.

The Word on Fire Institute exists to form a community of evangelists who have the mission and desire to proclaim Christ in the culture using beauty, goodness, and truth. The training, resources, community, and programs of the Institute are designed for the formation and equipping of men and women around the world, in every vocation, state of life, and profession, to be Christ-centered disciples who can be channels of grace and living invitations to come to know Jesus Christ through his Church.

Evangelization is the introduction of others into a friendship with Jesus Christ. As evangelists we are, first of all, disciples committed to the daily ordering of our own life unto God. The *Word on Fire Way* leads us in the rhythm of breathing in the spirituality of the Movement (formation in the 8 Principles) and exhaling the Mission (actively evangelizing the culture). The formation of evangelizing disciples in the Word on Fire Way embodies our Lord Jesus Christ's commands to *Love God and love your neighbor as yourself* and to *Preach the Gospel to all nations*.

The 8 Principles of the Word on Fire Way

1. **Unwavering Christocentrism** – Everything we do revolves around and returns to Christ.
2. **Evangelization of the Culture** – We are present to the culture and proclaim Christ to its adherents from within.
3. **Special Commitment to the New Media** – We use the internet, social media, and other new and emerging technologies to reach those distanced from the Church.
4. **Rootedness in the Mystical Body** – We rely on the intercession of the saints, who help us as we respond to the universal call to holiness.
5. **Leading with Beauty** – We recognize that beauty provides an essential evangelical invitation to discover the good and the true.
6. **Affirmative Orthodoxy** – We emphasize the Church's teachings, including her restrictions and moral demands, as a way to say "yes" to a fulfilled and joyful life.
7. **Collaborative Apostolate** – We emphasize the importance of both clergy and laity in our apostolate and encourage working together to draw from each other's gifts and roles.
8. **Grounded on the Eucharist** – The Word on Fire Movement is centered on the eternal person of Jesus Christ, and we recognize that the Eucharist and Adoration are vital to evangelical ardor.

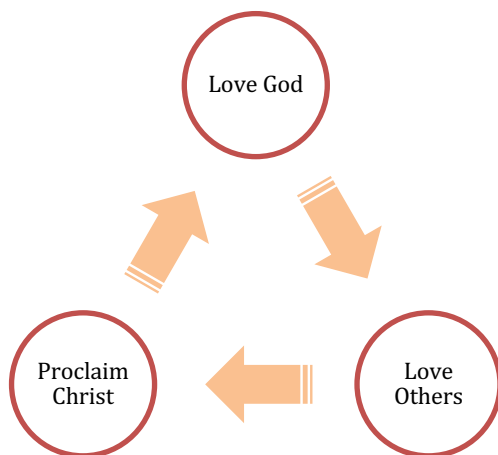
Forming Evangelizing Disciples

Our Lord Jesus Christ gave the greatest commandment as: “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” (Matt. 22:37–39). In the Great Commission, Jesus said: “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. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19–20).

In these two dominical utterances, we have the summary of our mission, and the pattern for our Word on Fire Institute approach to formation as *evangelizing disciples of Christ*.

We must *love God, love our neighbor, and proclaim Christ in the culture*. These are not static, one-time tasks, but rather a dynamic process of lifelong growth, in which our commitment to each aspect of the mission moves us to grow in the other two aspects of our life as disciples of Christ. As Bishop Barron explains, “Christianity, the way of Jesus Christ, *is* a culture, a style of life supported by a unique set of convictions, assumptions, hopes, and practices. . . . It is a milieu into which one must be introduced through a process of practice and *apprenticeship*” (*Centered*, 42).

We can envision this process as a cycle:



This dynamic pattern, specifically embodied in the 8 Principles of the Word on Fire Way, is the basis for all formational programs and resources at the Institute, with the aim that all Institute Members grow in knowledge and love of God, in love of others, and in the ability to proclaim the good news of God in Christ to others who desperately need it.

Love God

To love God with all our *heart and soul*, we must put our faith into practice in every aspect of our lives, and come to know him, in a personal way, through prayer and the sacraments. As Bishop Barron says, “Prayer is not incidental to ministry. . . . It is the lifeblood of the Church’s efforts. Without it, nothing will succeed. . . . At all points, pray, pray, pray” (*Centered*, 105). To love God with our *mind* means to grow in knowledge and understanding of God, including as revealed in Holy Scripture and in the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Loving God is particularly embodied in these principles of the Word on Fire Way:

- Unwavering Christocentrism
- Rootedness in the Mystical Body
- Grounded on the Eucharist

Love Others

To love others is to will their good; it is to participate in God’s love for them. As Bishop Barron explains, “When we root ourselves in the God who has no need, who exists in radical self-sufficiency, we can begin to love the other as he does, for our needy, grasping ego has been transfigured by proximity to the divine way of life” (*Centered*, 32). To love others well, we must know *what* is good for them, which requires a solid understanding of the Church’s teachings, and have the spiritual health and maturity to lead them toward truth with patience, gentleness, and respect.

Loving others also means loving the culture: appreciating what is valuable in it and finding ways to connect with others through the things that *they* find meaningful. Bishop Barron notes that “The best evangelical strategy is one that moves from the beautiful to the good and finally to the true” (*Centered*, 113).

Loving Others is particularly embodied in these principles of the Word on Fire Way:

- Leading with Beauty
- Affirmative Orthodoxy

Proclaim Christ

As evangelizing disciples of Christ, we are charged to proclaim Christ in the culture, motivated by the loving desire to invite others into relationship with him. As Bishop Barron explains,

“Affirmative orthodoxy means no compromising when it comes to the great teachings of the Church, either doctrinally or morally. But it’s expressed in a positive, affirming way rather than a negative and finger-wagging way. . . . We begin with the beauty and the integrity of the Christian thing” (*Centered*, 111).

To proclaim Christ in the culture, we need to “read” the culture and understand the underlying concerns of “nones,” skeptics, and fallen-away Catholics. This includes engagement with entertainment, literature, the arts, politics, science, family life, education, and so on. Bishop Barron explains that “whatever is true, whatever is good, and whatever is beautiful in nature or in human culture participates in [Christ], reflects him, and finally leads back to him. Therefore, the Church of Jesus Christ can and should embrace the positive dimensions of whatever cultural environment surrounds it” (*Centered*, 110).

We also need to be effective and gracious in communication, whether spoken or written, interpersonal or in groups, online or face-to-face. Evangelizing disciples will seek to grow in their communication skills and strategies.

Proclaiming Christ is particularly embodied in these principles of the Word on Fire Way:

- Evangelization of the Culture
- Special Commitment to the New Media
- Collaborative Apostolate

Putting These Principles into Action

It is our goal to form a community of evangelists who have internalized the Word on Fire Way and are united in mind, heart, and mission.

Effective evangelizing disciples have an *integrated* faith, involving heart, soul, and mind; their personal prayer and study bears fruit in witness and outreach to others; and they engage discerningly with the culture. The specific way that any individual disciple lives out this mission depends on that person’s individual talents, interests, and opportunities. However, a balanced and well-grounded disciple will seek to grow in maturity and strength in all three basic expressions of our Lord’s commandments.

Therefore, we invite you, as a member of the Institute, prayerfully to reflect on these elements of formation and the Principles of the Word on Fire Way, in order to discern your interests and strengths, areas of needed growth, and opportunities for evangelization.

Then, seek out the resources and opportunities within the Institute that will help you to grow as an evangelizing disciple. We particularly invite all members to become part of the *Community* through Emmaus Groups, which provide a fruitful context for ongoing formation and fellowship, to make use of the *Courses* for building up your knowledge, and to participate in *Seminars* and other interactive events as you take the next steps forward as evangelists.

May these principles embolden you to share with others your friendship with Christ. May they increase your love for the Church and her divine commission to make disciples of all nations. May they inspire you to delve deeper into the great intellectual and spiritual tradition of the Catholic faith. May these principles serve to form you after the greatest evangelist—Christ, who is the way, the truth, and the life.

The last section of this Handbook provides an Examen: a set of questions for reflection and planning for your growth as an evangelizing disciple over the next year.

Courses and Seminars

The Word on Fire Institute provides video courses for individual study and enrichment, as well as Seminars for deeper engagement. *Courses* are designed for independent, self-paced study on a wide range of topics, while *Seminars* are interactive, intensive short programs limited to 30 participants at a time.

Courses

Each course is focused on a particular topic, with video lectures from a Fellow of the Institute who has expertise in that subject. Ranging from 5 to 12 lessons, the courses are self-paced (except for new courses, in which case the lessons are presented one per week). Each lesson includes a video lecture (with an audio version and transcript as well), a workbook, supplemental resources, and a discussion forum. The courses also include quizzes and other assessment activities that are designed to support full grasp of the material.

Why take a course?

Part of becoming an effective evangelizing disciple includes intellectual formation. This is more than just “knowing things”: it includes disciplined, structured engagement with a topic, guided by someone who is an expert in that material. In our modern culture, it’s very easy to watch YouTube videos and read articles – but how much do we retain from what we watch or read? Does it help us to love God and our neighbor and to proclaim Christ?

The Institute Courses are, in one sense, like YouTube videos in that you can, if you wish, just watch a few of the videos and move on. Indeed, that may be tempting—because most of us have busy lives and lots of distractions!

We invite you to accept the challenge of becoming an *intentional* learner, one who does not merely consume passively but who *engages* with the material, and transforms knowledge into insight and wisdom. This process is not easy or quick, but it is rewarding.

Why (and how) to complete a course

In order to *complete* an Institute course, it is necessary to view every lesson and successfully complete all quizzes within the course. There are no grades for Institute courses, so one might reasonably ask, why should I complete the quizzes? There are three reasons.

First, the quizzes are designed to check your comprehension and retention of the main ideas and important facts from a lesson or the course overall, and in this way to assist your learning. Second, taking the quizzes cultivates an attitude of alertness and engagement. Even a very simple quiz serves as a background reminder to approach the video as *an evangelizing disciple actively seeking to learn* and not as a passive consumer of media content. Third, on a practical level,

completion of courses may make you eligible to participate in particular Seminars and other opportunities for deeper formation in a given area.

How to Get the Most Out of a Course

In order to get the most benefit out of Institute courses, follow these six Ps:

1. Be *prayerful*.

Spend some time prayerfully reflecting on your spiritual and intellectual life, your interests and talents, and your opportunities for evangelization. (The *Examen* at the end of this Handbook is designed to help in this process.) Where do you need to grow further spiritually? Where are the gaps in your knowledge of the Catholic faith, or in your ability to explain it clearly and confidently? What do you feel drawn to learn more about? Where are your opportunities to proclaim Christ? This will allow you to discern which subjects and levels of courses are needed for your growth as an evangelizing disciple, which might not be exactly the same as what immediately interests you.

2. Be *precise*.

Then review the Course listings with special attention to the category, level, and any suggested sequences. When you've narrowed down some options, look at the course page to see the topics of the different lessons and get an overview of its content. Then, choose a course that will help you grow in a specific area. Do not try to do everything at once! Rather, select *one* specific area where you will seek to grow. If you are a member of an Evangelization & Discipleship Emmaus Group (see below), this is a great place to ask for advice.

3. Be *prepared*.

All real learning takes time. Consider the length of the course and schedule time in your calendar for attending to it. Download and print the lesson workbooks and use them for notes and reflection as you go along. Even when a course is self-paced, do not “binge” on the lesson videos; a good pace is 1–2 lessons per week. It's better to schedule consistent short blocks of time than to try to fit in a lot at once. For instance, you could set aside 20 minutes four times a week (perhaps early in the morning, on a lunch break, or in the evening). Use one of those blocks to watch a lesson video. Use the other blocks to make notes on what you remember from the video, to read or watch a supporting resource, to complete lesson workbooks, and so on.

4. Be *proactive*.

Approach each lesson with an active desire to understand the material and to apply it as an evangelizing disciple. Seek out opportunities to discuss the topics in the course discussion forum, the General Forums, or Emmaus Groups. (See below for more on these Forums and Groups, and on the Community Guidelines.) The secular media culture tries to teach us to be passive

receivers of entertainment; in order to be well formed as evangelizing disciples, it's necessary to push back and develop habits of active intellectual engagement.

5. Be *persevering*.

Stick with all the lessons in a course, even if you find your interest flagging or the material challenging. Having a “dip” in motivation mid-course is a normal and predictable experience: you'll grow spiritually as well as intellectually if you use this as an opportunity to develop a longer, stronger attention span. We live in a time when social media and the wider culture actively undermines focused and sustained attention; use the courses to develop deeper habits of engagement and reflection instead.

6. *Ponder* what you've learned.

Set aside time for quiet reflection. For instance, after completing a lesson, set aside 10–15 minutes just to think and pray about what you've learned. What surprised you? What challenged you? Offer it up to God and invite the Holy Spirit to work within you to truly make use of what you are learning.

Course Selection Guidelines

This listing of courses groups them by subject area. To see the full list of current courses, and to see details about the contents of each one, view the Course Listing at the Institute, at [Courses > See All Courses](#).

The labeling of Introductory, Intermediate, and Advanced relates to the amount of prior knowledge of that topic that participants are expected to have at the start of the course. Although there are no pre-requisites for taking any given course, it is wise to consider the courses marked Introductory as the foundational blocks in a category. Depending on your background and prior knowledge, you may be able to take Intermediate or Advanced courses in some areas right away, but even then, the Introductory courses can be helpful in presenting new insights and strengthening your ability to communicate about that topic.

Introductory: requires little or no prior knowledge of the topic; presents basic concepts.

Intermediate: presumes familiarity with the basic concepts of this topic; reinforces, develops, and builds upon those concepts; introduces material that is more in-depth.

Advanced: requires a thorough grasp of the basic concepts and familiarity with intermediate-level material in this area; presents detailed analysis and synthesis of material.

Courses by Category

Since the Institute is constantly developing new courses, the course listings in each track will expand and further categories will be added over time.

Catechetics

Core Principles: *Unwavering Christocentrism, Affirmative Orthodoxy, Collaborative Apostolate*

A solid, clear grasp of Scripture, theology, and doctrine is essential for effective evangelization and discipleship. We can't share the faith with confidence if we're unsure about how to answer people's questions! The courses in this track serve as a refresher of foundational knowledge and a way to fill in any gaps in one's formation. These courses are also highly suitable for catechists, teachers, ministry leaders, and pastors to provide a model and structure for how to present these concepts in parishes and schools.

How Nones Can Misread the Bible – Dr. Anthony Pagliarini ([Introductory](#)/[Intermediate](#))

Seven Myths About the Catholic Church – Dr. Christopher Kaczor
([Introductory](#)/[Intermediate](#))

Apologetics & Practical Evangelization

Core Principles: *Unwavering Christocentrism, Affirmative Orthodoxy, Special Commitment to the New Media*

Christian apologetics is based on St Peter's exhortation to "always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and reverence." (1 Pet. 3:15–16). Effective evangelists also know how to discern the specific needs of their mission field (whether it's at home, in the workplace, or online) and communicate in ways that will be heard and understood, while always engaging in a gracious and charitable way. The courses in this track focus on helping evangelists to present arguments for the truth of the faith, and on providing effective responses to common challenges to, and questions about, Christianity and the Church, in a Christ-centered way.

The Five S's of Effective Evangelization – Elizabeth Scalia ([Introductory](#))

Imaginative Apologetics – Dr. Holly Ordway ([Introductory](#))

The People You Will Meet – Fr. Stephen Gadberry ([Introductory](#))

To the Peripheries! – Fr Damian Ference ([Introductory](#))

Seven Myths About the Catholic Church – Dr. Christopher Kaczor
([Introductory](#)/[Intermediate](#))

Understanding the “Nones” and How to Reach Them – Dr. Stephen Bullivant
([Introductory](#)/[Intermediate](#))

Reaching the Indifferent – Dr. Matt Nelson ([Intermediate](#))

Science for Evangelists – Dr. Stacy Trasancos ([Intermediate](#))

Re-enchanting the Secular – Dr. Matthew Petrussek ([Advanced](#))

Theology & Philosophy

Core Principles: *Unwavering Christocentrism, Affirmative Orthodoxy, Grounded on the Eucharist*

Some Institute members have mission fields that benefit from more in-depth, detailed engagement with theology, philosophy, and Scripture. Pastors, ministry leaders, and teachers at the high school level and above will find the courses in this track to be particularly helpful.

Happiness and the Meaning of Life – Dr. Jennifer Frey ([Intermediate](#)/[Advanced](#))

John Henry Newman: The Greatest Catholic Theologian Since Aquinas – Bishop Robert Barron ([Advanced](#))

Reading Scripture with the Early Church Fathers – Bishop Robert Barron ([Advanced](#))

Re-enchanting the Secular – Dr. Matthew Petrussek ([Advanced](#))

The Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar – Bishop Robert Barron ([Advanced](#))

Spirituality & the Christian Life

Core Principles: *Rootedness in the Mystical Body, Collaborative Apostolate, Grounded on the Eucharist*

The extent to which we live out the fullness of the Christian faith will in large part determine our effectiveness as evangelists. Not only will striving to grow in personal holiness shape our witness to others, but it will provide the strength and support we need as we engage in the spiritual warfare that comes with any evangelization. The courses in this track provide various ways to grow deeper in our relationship with Christ and his Church.

Christian Community as Leaven for the World – Leah Libresco (Introductory)

The Eight Principles of Word on Fire – Jared Zimmerer (Introductory)

From Books to Ballads: How Great Writers Form Wise Catholics – Dr. Tod Worner (Intermediate)

Living Liturgically in the Domestic Church – Haley Stewart (Intermediate)

The Evangelical Spirituality of Thomas Merton – Jared Zimmerer (Intermediate)

Prayer, Beauty, Mission: The Hidden Springs of the New Evangelization – Fr. Paul Murray, OP (Intermediate)

Faith & Culture

Core Principles: *Evangelization of the Culture, Leading with Beauty, Affirmative Orthodoxy*

To evangelize the culture, we first need to understand it: to discern what is right and good about current culture and what is false and harmful, and to recognize the underlying needs, issues, and trends that shape people's reactions to the Gospel. Then we need to engage with the culture, an endeavor that includes artistic creation as well as responding to culture in correcting and clarifying ways. The courses in this track provide a variety of ways to enter into this vitally important work.

Imaginative Apologetics – Dr. Holly Ordway (Introductory)

From Books to Ballads: How Great Writers Form Wise Catholics – Dr. Tod Worner (Intermediate)

Science for Evangelists – Dr. Stacy Trasancos (Intermediate)

Seven Myths About the Catholic Church – Dr. Christopher Kaczor (Introductory/Intermediate)

2019 Digital Summit: Evangelizing the Unaffiliated – various Fellows (Introductory/Intermediate)

Happiness and the Meaning of Life – Dr. Jennifer Frey (Intermediate/Advanced)

Seminars

The Institute now also offers a limited number of *Seminars* that provide more in-depth formation on specific topics. These Seminars are led by Institute Fellows, are limited to approximately 30 participants, and provide an intensive discipleship experience, involving discussion and activities. They are scheduled at specific points in the calendar and are usually three weeks long. During that time, participants meet in an Institute Group specifically designed for that Seminar and take part in various discussions and activities, under the mentoring of a Fellow.

It is necessary to apply for entrance into a Seminar. Each Seminar has its own criteria for application, which may include the completion of specific Institute Courses.

Upcoming Seminar opportunities are posted in the Institute's Community Forums and relevant Small Groups and Emmaus Groups.

If you have applied to and been accepted into a Seminar, you will receive an invitation to join the relevant Group, and will be able to find it at *Community > Groups > My Groups* tab.

Current Seminar Offerings

Education Seminar: This three-week seminar, led by Robert Mixa (Fellow of Education), is for educators who are interested in developing their ability to present the Catholic faith in their classroom. The goal is threefold: to learn how to better teach the fullness of the faith, to check for student understanding, and to develop a customized plan for teaching based on assessment results. Participants will discuss various topics related to teaching strategies and approaches, provide feedback on each other's materials, and develop a lesson plan for use in their own classroom. This seminar is open to teachers of all levels and areas (K–12, college/university, homeschool, private or public schools, etc.).

Writing Seminar. This three-week workshop-based seminar, led by Dr. Holly Ordway (Fellow of Faith and Culture), is focused on helping participants to develop effective writing habits; to participate in a dynamic, Christ-centered writing community; and to discern and respond to opportunities for evangelization through writing. Through small-group activities and whole-group discussions, you'll learn how to make effective use of the writing process (idea generation, drafting, and revision) and how to give and make use of peer feedback in a fruitful and supportive way. You'll be given short writing prompts to complete during the workshop itself. No prior experience in writing is necessary. Membership in a Writing Emmaus Group is required for admission.

Note: Seminar offerings will be expanded as time goes on

Institute Fellows

A full listing of the Fellows of the Institute is available at [Community > Fellows](#). The full-time Fellows of the Word on Fire Institute are:

Jared Zimmerer

Jared Zimmerer is the Senior Director of the Word on Fire Institute. He holds a master's degree in theology from Holy Apostles College and Seminary and is currently a doctoral student in humanities at Faulkner University. He and his wife, Jessica, live in North Texas with their six children. He is an author, speaker, and holds a bachelor's degree in kinesiology.

Bobby Angel

Bobby Angel is the Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger Fellow of Parish Life and Renewal. He holds a master's degree in theology from the Augustine Institute and a bachelor's degree in philosophy from St. John Vianney College Seminary. He is the co-author of *Pray, Decide, and Don't Worry* (Ascension Press, 2019) and *Forever: A Catholic Devotional for Your Marriage* (Pauline Books & Media, 2017). Bobby worked for eight years as a campus minister and theology teacher, and currently lives in Texas with his wife, Jackie, and their four children.

Jackie Francois Angel

Jackie Francois Angel is the Pope St. Paul VI Fellow of Marriage and Family Life. A worship leader, speaker, and songwriter, she is the co-author of *Pray, Decide, and Don't Worry* (Ascension Press, 2019) and *Forever: A Catholic Devotional for Your Marriage* (Pauline Books & Media, 2017). She currently lives in Texas with her husband, Bobby, and their four children.

Richard DeClue

Dr. Richard DeClue is the Cardinal Henri de Lubac Fellow in Theology. He is a graduate of the Catholic University of America, where he earned his doctor of sacred theology degree in systematic theology. Richard has published articles in peer-reviewed academic journals, including *Communio* and *Nova et Vetera*. He has taught at Belmont Abbey College and the Catholic University of America and has certificates in Professional Teaching Knowledge and General Science through the American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence. His primary areas of interest include ecclesiology, theology of revelation, *Communio* theology, and scholasticism.

Robert Mixa

Robert Mixa is the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Fellow of Catholic Education. He received his MTS in biotechnology and ethics from the Pontifical John Paul II Institute. He and his wife live in Dallas, Texas. You can read more of his thoughts, reviews, and interviews at *RobertMixa.com*.

Matt Nelson

Matt Nelson is the author of *Just Whatever: How to Help the Spiritually Indifferent Find Beliefs that Really Matter* (Catholic Answers, 2018). He holds a doctor of chiropractic degree from the Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College and is pursuing a master's degree in philosophy at Holy Apostles College and Seminary. Matt currently lives in Texas with his wife, Amanda, and their three children.

Dr. Holly Ordway

Dr. Holly Ordway is the Cardinal Francis George Fellow of Faith and Culture. She is a Visiting Professor at Houston Baptist University and holds a PhD in English from the University of Massachusetts Amherst. She is the author of *Tolkien's Modern Reading: Middle-earth Beyond the Middle Ages* (Word on Fire Academic, 2021), *Apologetics and the Christian Imagination: An Integrated Approach to Defending the Faith* (Emmaus Road, 2017), and *Not God's Type: An Atheist Academic Lays Down Her Arms* (Ignatius, 2014), as well as numerous chapters and articles on imaginative apologetics, C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, and the Inklings. She is also a Subject Editor for the *Journal of Inklings Studies* and a published poet.

Andrew Petiprin

Andrew Petiprin is the Venerable Fulton J. Sheen Fellow of Popular Culture at the Word on Fire Institute. He is an author and former Anglican cleric who came into full communion with the Catholic Church on January 1, 2019. He earned an MDiv from Yale University and an MPhil from Oxford University.

Joe Zambon

Joe Zambon is the St Thérèse Fellow of Word on Fire Communities. Canadian-born, Joe now lives with his wife and son in Dallas, Texas. Joe has a great love and passion for songwriting that he has been able to share in performances across North America and around the globe. Before moving to the States, Joe received a bachelor's degree in theology from Dominican University College in Ottawa, then served as a campus minister at York University in Toronto for 8 years.

Community

The Institute Community is an intentionally designed space for *formation of evangelizing disciples*. Everything that we do in these communities is intended to help form Institute members as evangelists, in line with the 8 Principles of the Word on Fire Way, for the purpose of proclaiming Christ in the culture.

Many (even most) online environments in the culture show varying degrees of negativity, toxicity, and dysfunction. It is very easy for us to be drawn into habits of behavior that undermine our witness to the faith or to become discouraged from witnessing the negativity of the environment. At the Institute, we seek to redeem the digital space and rediscover the beauty that is born from a vibrant, charitable, missionary community. Our purpose here is not primarily to be a social space (although we hope that strong bonds of fellowship will form among members) but rather to be an intentional place of formation, discipleship, and mentoring for the purpose of going forth on mission.

There are two main aspects of our Institute Community: **Groups** and **Forums**. The style of discussion and type of interaction varies greatly depending on the group, but all abide by the Community Guidelines (which are listed below and can also be viewed online at [Community > Community Guidelines](#)).

Emmaus Groups

The Institute's Emmaus Groups are at the heart of our Community. These small groups exist to help form and encourage Institute members to become effective and joyful evangelizing disciples. The name 'Emmaus,' connecting these groups to the Scriptural account of Jesus meeting with disciples on the road to Emmaus after the Resurrection, signals that these groups have a twofold purpose: that members accompany one another in their growth in the faith and in their work as evangelists, and that members invite the Lord to accompany them in this journey. Thus, the Emmaus encounter is an image of the basic purpose of these groups: to further our mission in the culture as evangelists.

Here, members have the opportunity to pray for one another, to enjoy fellowship alongside Institute members with similar interests, and to support each other through discussion and the sharing of ideas, resources, and opportunities. Because these groups are interactive and member-centered, the Emmaus Groups help Institute members actively engage with and make use of the many resources available at the Institute, as well as forming relationships that can extend into in-person ministry and fellowship.

The groups include Evangelization & Discipleship, Parish Ministry, and Writing (see below for descriptions of each type).

In this small-group setting, members have the opportunity for genuine fellowship and community-building. Groups are limited to approximately 30 participants, and each group has one or more designated facilitators (Peer Leaders) who are trained and disciplined by our Fellows. These Leaders help to guide the conversations, provide resources, and encourage the members of the group to act upon the Word on Fire mission to go out and evangelize the culture.

You can learn more about the Emmaus Groups in [this video](#) from Joe Zambon (the St. Thérèse Fellow of Word on Fire Communities) and Dr. Holly Ordway (the Cardinal Francis George Fellow of Faith and Culture).

How to join an Emmaus Group

Every Institute member is warmly invited to join one or more Emmaus Groups. If you would like to join a Group, go to *Community > Join an Emmaus Group*. This link brings you to the application form. Complete the form and click “Apply.”

At that point, we will add you to a Group. Note that this can take a few days, since this is not an automated process; you may be added to an existing or a newly formed Group, depending on current membership levels in any given Group.

Each Peer Mentor small group is named after a different saint who is the patron of that group. (For instance, the Writing Emmaus Groups include *St. John Henry Newman* and *St. Hildegard of Bingen*.) Once you have been added to a group, that group will appear in *Community > Groups > Your Groups*.

In order to make access easier, we strongly recommend that you bookmark your Emmaus Group’s Discussions page in your web browser, so that you can go with one click to the discussions. We recommend visiting your group regularly, at least 2-3 times per week, to engage in ongoing discussion and fellowship.

NOTE: Make sure that you have messaging enabled, as the Peer Leaders use messaging to provide information about accessing the group, as well as announcements and other useful messages. To enable messaging on your account, you must click on your Profile drop-down menu and select **Membership** and then **Info**. At the bottom of the Info page there is a box **I am over 18 years of age** that needs to be checked. Finally, click **Save Profile** and you will now be able to send and receive messages.

Types of Emmaus Groups

There are several types of Emmaus Groups. Members may join one in each category if they wish.

Evangelization & Discipleship: The Emmaus Groups in this category are for the encouragement and growth of Institute members who desire to deepen their relationship with Christ and to be more confident in sharing him with others. Discussions include topics such as our identity and mission as beloved children, disciples and apostles, the Word on Fire approach to evangelization using the 8 Principles and recognizing the “seeds of the Word” in our culture and relationships that offer avenues for introduction to God via the beautiful, good, and true. Group members have the opportunity to bring personal questions to the group for prayer, feedback, and support. The E&D groups are open to members at all stages of their spiritual journey and experience with evangelization.

Parish Ministry: These Groups are for the encouragement and support of Institute members involved in parish ministry. Discussions include topics such as current challenges of parish life, the pastoral programs that are bearing fruit, and ideas and strategies to help parish leaders think “outside the box” and improve outreach to the disaffiliated. Members in a Parish Ministry Emmaus Group can expect to grow in communication and leadership skills, increased network connections with parish leaders around the country (and globe), and a chance to build up the Body of Christ. Experience or current involvement in parish ministries is helpful but is not required.

Writing: The Writing Emmaus Groups are for the support and growth of Institute members who wish to evangelize through writing. Discussion includes topics such as the writing process, different types of writing, reaching one’s audience, and publication. Members are warmly invited to request feedback from group members on their work in progress; instruction and guidance is provided on how to give and receive feedback in a charitable, effective manner. Writing Emmaus Groups are open to writers of all stages (published or unpublished), and cover writing in all forms, genres, and audiences (parish newsletters, fiction, poetry, blog posts, books, etc.). Members who are not active writers, but who wish to support the development of good writing by offering peer feedback, discussion, and prayer, are also encouraged to join.

Special Interest Groups

The Institute also has Groups of varying size that are formed around specific interests or projects. These may be ongoing or scheduled for a limited time, depending on the group. These Groups can be found on the Institute site in the drop-down menu at [Community > Groups](#). They are open to any Institute member who wishes to participate; some are large, others small. Some of our Special Interest Groups include:

- *Pray the Rosary*
- *Club 451: Word on Fire Book Club*
- *Year of Saint Joseph*
- Scheduled short-run Groups on various topics

Some of these, such as the *Club 451: Word on Fire Book Club*, are Public Groups. If you wish to join this group, just click on *Join Group* on the group page, and you will automatically become a member of that group.



Other Special Interest groups may be Private Groups; if so, click on *Request Access* and your request for membership will be sent to the leader or moderator of that group.

General Discussion Forums

The Institute also has a set of Community Forums, which are open to all Institute members. They can be accessed via the *Community* menu. These wide-ranging Forums provide a “practice ground” for learning to communicate effectively and graciously in a digital environment.

In order to be effective evangelists and powerful witnesses to Christ in the culture, we must develop effective, Christ-centered ways of engaging with media, involving both how we *receive* media (consumption, interpretation, and reaction) and how we *share* media (communication and interaction with others). To get the most out of discussion in the Forums, you should engage with the intentional view that this is a place of preparation for mission. Pray before you post. Approach the Forum discussions as a place to grow both intellectually and spiritually; use the Guidelines (below) as an aid to examination of conscience and as a guide to Christ-centered interactions. See the Spiritual Growth section of this Handbook for an examination of conscience and other prayers to support your engagement in discussion.

Community Guidelines

In order to support all members in the Groups and General Forums, all contributions to the discussion should fit the following criteria: they should be *Purposeful*, *Charitable*, *Orthodox*, and *Christ-centered*. The Community Guidelines provide a full explication of these four core criteria. They can be found on the Institute site at [Community > Community Guidelines](#).

Purposeful: It advances the mission of the WOFI, supports the spiritual and intellectual growth of fellow members, and/or strengthens fellowship among members.

Positive contributions *will*:

- be relevant to the general project of evangelization;
- encourage focused, deep discussion and the thoughtful exploration of ideas;
- help other members feel valued and welcomed in the discussion.

Positive contributions *will not*:

- be hasty reactions to the latest news;
- dominate a discussion, tending to the exclusion of other voices, either by excessive length of posts or by excessive frequency of posts;
- make other members feel belittled or unwelcomed in the discussion;
- be excessively self-promotional of one's own resources, web presence, or content (i.e., not "spam").

Charitable: It shows respect for others, recognizing a wide range of different perspectives and experiences; it expresses disagreement in constructive ways and seeks understanding; it recognizes the importance of tone and refrains from sarcasm, mockery, or condescending language. It builds up the Body of Christ; it is fundamentally oriented toward the good, true, and beautiful.

Positive contributions *will*:

- avoid broad generalizations and aim for specificity and clarity (e.g., "Many atheists act as though there is such a thing as objective truth, but they often don't admit it");
- seek to understand before reacting to a perceived error or disagreement (e.g., "It sounds to me like you're saying X, but I want to make sure I'm understanding you correctly. Could you explain?");
- express disagreement in respectful and constructive ways, building on the positive (e.g., "I agree that X is an important issue, but I'm not fully in agreement about the way that you suggest approaching it . . .");

- use language carefully and clearly, refraining from posting negative speculation or inference as if it were fact and avoiding hyperbole, exaggeration, and sarcasm;
- assume good intentions in others' posts and respond accordingly; focus on the content of discussions without making assumptions or judgments about the person making the post;
- respect the privacy of fellow members and not share information or posts outside the WOFI Forums without direct permission.

Positive contributions *will not*:

- use generalizing or totalizing language (e.g., “Atheists are immoral idiots.”);
- react in disagreement before attempting to understand or clarify a point;
- express disagreement in totalizing ways (e.g., “That’s ridiculous. / You’re completely off base. / This is completely wrong.”)
- post rumors, gossip, or negative speculation;
- exaggerate for rhetorical effect, use sarcasm or mockery, make personal attacks, or treat disagreement as a personal attack;
- share information or materials from the WOFI Forums without direct permission.

Orthodox: It is based on acceptance of the fullness of the Catholic faith, as expressed in Scripture and in the magisterial teachings of the Church; if the post is addressing or exploring an objection to them, it does so in a way that seeks understanding and clarity from the teachings of Scripture and the Church. Positive contributions:

Positive contributions *will*:

- draw on the resources of the Catholic tradition, magisterial teaching, and Scripture;
- distinguish between areas of Catholic teaching and areas of legitimate personal preferences (e.g., the Real Presence vs. Ordinary Form / Extraordinary Form Mass preference);
- address areas of disagreement with non-Christians and with non-Catholic Christians with respect, bearing in mind the areas of agreement;
- focus on underlying ideas and issues, without assuming that others draw the same political or social conclusions about a topic.

Positive contributions *will not*:

- post inaccurate or misleading information about the faith;
- conflate points of Catholic teaching with areas of legitimate personal preferences;
- use disparaging or dismissive language about non-Christians or our separated brethren;
- assume that a particular political or social view is identical with Catholic teaching on any particular topic.

Christ-centered: It expresses an overall tone, approach, and witness that is Christ-like. It bears in mind that we are all sinners living in a fallen world. It is grounded specifically and directly in prayer and expresses love of neighbor.

Positive contributions *will*:

- seek to understand the point of view of those who do not share our faith;
- look out for the well-being of others in the discussions (by reporting posts to the moderators as needed)
- accept fraternal guidance or correction from WOFI moderators, if occasion arises, as part of discipleship
- be grounded in prayer, worship, and the reading of Scripture to be continually formed in a Christocentric way that is grounded on the Eucharist

Positive contributions *will not*:

- contribute to the furthering of negative discussions with the excuse of “venting” or “just sharing my opinion”
- reject fraternal guidance or correction from WOFI moderators
- neglect prayer, worship, and the reading of Scripture in favor of more time spent online

Correction and Guidance

If a moderator finds that an Institute member has posted or otherwise communicated with members or faculty in a way that goes against these guidelines, the fraternal correction and guidance may include:

- private email discussion for guidance;
- removal of the post or thread in question;
- suspension of posting privileges (for varying lengths of time).

We encourage all Institute members to reflect on these Community Guidelines as a “road map” to charitable interactions online, and to endeavor to interact in positive and constructive ways in all online contexts, whether within the Institute or outside it.

Community Responsibility

The Word on Fire Institute takes seriously the welfare of its members. The Community Guidelines set out the expectations for behavior in the Groups and Forums; if you experience or observe behavior that violates these Guidelines, we ask that you please report the post in question (by clicking in the upper right corner of the post and selecting “report”), and an Institute moderator will review it. If an issue or conflict arises within a Peer Mentor Group, we encourage you immediately to bring it to the attention of one of the designated Peer Mentor Leaders (there are always two per group).

All Word on Fire staff and faculty have received safe environment training. For any questions or concerns regarding Safe Environment / Safeguarding issues, please get in touch with Joe Zambon, Fellow of Communities, at jzambon@wordonfire.org.

Further Institute Resources

As a member of the Institute, you have access to many resources and events, including our quarterly journal *Evangelization & Culture*, an extensive video library at Word on Fire Digital, and summits that are exclusive to Institute members. We encourage you to make use of these resources intentionally and thoughtfully as part of your growth and formation as an evangelizing disciple. The *Examen* at the end of this Handbook provides a way for you to prayerfully consider what courses and other resources will be most useful to you at any given time.

How to Get the Most Out of Institute Resources

With so many resources available to members, it is important to have a plan for engaging with this material. The *Examen* at the end of this Handbook will help you to set personal goals for your own study and growth as an evangelizing disciple.

Your personal plan and goals will aid you in determining which resources to focus on at this time. Also prayerfully reflect on your opportunities for evangelization and ministry. This might be your family (the domestic church) and friends; your workplace; your local parish; online media; or it might involve personal conversation, writing, speaking, or service. If you are a ministry leader, consider the needs of your audience. There is no “one size fits all” for these materials.

Once you’ve selected a resource, allow yourself time to engage with it deeply. It’s better to progress at a slow, steady pace that allows deep engagement and reflection than to rush through and skim the surface of many resources.

At the beginning of your viewing or reading, ask the Holy Spirit to guide you; pray for docility of mind and heart, and express to our Lord your desire to grow in knowledge, love, and virtue. Then engage with the material attentively. If you need to replay or re-read a section, then take the time to do so. If you need to pause to think about something, then by all means do so. It can be helpful to take notes, so that you can reflect later on what you read or watched.

Finally, take time to reflect on what you’ve watched or read. How has it helped you grow? How can it bear fruit in your life and ministry? Consider discussing what you’re learning in the Peer Mentor Groups and Community Forums.

Overview of Resources

Evangelization & Culture

Evangelization & Culture, the Journal of the Word on Fire Institute, is published quarterly and is offered exclusively to Institute members. Members also have online access to past issues of the journal via the [Journal](#) drop-down menu on the Institute site.

Evangelization & Culture exists to be a tangible representation of the Institute's mission to lead with beauty in order to bring others to the knowledge of truth. It features academic writing from premier theologians and inspiring bits of literature, culture, and daily life from fellow missionaries on the journey to know and serve Christ. In addition to a few independent regular columns, each edition of the journal also offers multiple articles by a variety of experts that center on a specific theme.

Word on Fire Digital

All Institute members have full access to the complete [Word on Fire Digital](#) library, which includes:

- *The Rosary with Bishop Barron*
- Bishop Barron's Sunday sermons
- The *CATHOLICISM* and *Pivotal Players* video series
- Topical programs, including *The Sacraments*, *The Mass*, and more
- Talks and lectures by Bishop Barron on various subjects
- Other videos, including Stations of the Cross
- Programs for Younger Audiences, including *Catholicism: Pilgrim Journal*
- ENGAGE mini-courses for parishes

General Word on Fire Resources

The following free resources are available on the general Word on Fire website, wordonfire.org:

- [Videos by Bishop Robert Barron](#)
- [Articles by Bishop Robert Barron](#)
- [Word on Fire Blog](#) (various authors, including Institute Fellows)
- [The Word on Fire Show](#) (video podcasts)

The [Word on Fire Store](#) also has many resources available for purchase, including books, films, and study materials. With its own publishing house, Word on Fire also offers a variety of books that members will find useful for their personal formation as well as their evangelization efforts.

Suggested Starting Points

To help you get started, here are a few recommendations for Word on Fire Digital resources that are particularly useful for various groups or purposes.

For spiritual growth

- Sermons
- The Rosary
- *Pivotal Players* Series
- Topical Programs:
 - *Untold Blessing*
 - *The Mass*
 - *Seven Deadly Sins, Seven Lively Virtues*
 - *Conversion*
- Talks & Lectures:
 - Stations of the Cross Reflections

For catechesis and theological formation

- *CATHOLICISM* Series
- *Pivotal Players* Series
- Topical Programs
 - *Eucharist*
 - *The Sacraments*
 - *The Mass*
 - *David the King*
 - *The Mystery of God: Who God Is and Why He Matters*
 - *Priest, Prophet, King*
- Talks & Lectures:
 - Catholicism and Beauty
 - Conversation with Dr. Craig

For parishes & parochial schools

- *CATHOLICISM* Series
- *CATHOLICISM*: School Enrichment
- ENGAGE – Mini-Courses
- Topical programs:
 - *The Mystery of God: Who God Is and Why He Matters* [Suitable for older teens and adults]
 - *Conversion*
 - *Eucharist*

For families & homeschooling

- Sermons
- The Rosary
- *CATHOLICISM* Series
- *Pivotal Players* Series
- Topical Programs:
 - *The Sacraments*
 - *The Mass*
 - *Conversion*
- Talks and lectures:
 - Word on Fire Pilgrimage episodes
 - On the Gospel of the Family
- For Younger Audiences:
 - *CATHOLICISM* Pilgrimage Journal
 - *CATHOLICISM*: School Enrichment

Spiritual Growth in the Word on Fire Way

Becoming an effective evangelizing disciple of Christ involves a commitment to a prayerful, Christ-centered, Eucharistic life. The following resources are intended to help you grow as a disciple of Christ through the Word on Fire Way.

Prayers

Prayers specifically for the Word on Fire Way

A morning prayer for evangelists

Lord Jesus Christ, in every age you call and send apostles out to be your witnesses to proclaim the Good News that “Jesus Christ is Lord!” and that “Christ is risen from the dead!” Today, help me to respond joyfully to your call. Today, help me to move out of my spaces of comfort and into the places of encounter. Today, help me to bear witness to your love. Amen.

A prayer for evangelists

Lord Jesus Christ, you have given your Church the mission to proclaim the Gospel to all the nations. May our efforts to fulfill this mission be guided by the Holy Spirit so that we might be a leaven of new life, salt of the earth and a light to the world, worthy missionaries and faithful to you. Make us valiant witnesses to the faith of the Church, and inspire us to speak the truth with love. Help us to communicate to others the joy that we have received. Help us to be united, but not closed; humble, but not fearful; simple, but not naïve; thoughtful, but not overbearing; contemporary, but not superficial; respectful of others, but boldly your disciples. May we bear into the world the hope of God, which is Christ the Lord, who rose from the dead and lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever. Amen.

Canticle of Christ the Center

All praise and all thanksgiving to Jesus
 For God has come to save his people

All praise and all thanksgiving to Christ
 For God's anointed has fulfilled the divine mission

All praise and all thanksgiving to the Son of God and the Son of Man
 For God has made us His adopted children and partakers of the divine nature

All praise and all thanksgiving to the Word Made Flesh
 For God has assumed a human nature and accomplished our salvation in it

All praise and all thanksgiving to the Lamb of God
 For God has offered himself as the one sacrifice to take away the sins of
 the world

All praise and all thanksgiving to the Divine Physician
 For God has come to heal our infirmities

All praise and all thanksgiving to the Living Bread Come Down from Heaven
 For God has nourished his people with his flesh and blood

All praise and all thanksgiving to the First Born from the Dead
 For God has defeated death's ancient curse

All praise and all thanksgiving to the Resurrection and the Life
 For God has said "those who believe in me, even though they die, will live"

All praise and all thanksgiving to Jesus Christ our Lord
 For God has won the victory, and lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen.

Prayers to grow in a Christ-centered life and to connect with the Mystical Body

Prayer before a meal, with an emphasis on evangelization

Bless us, O Lord, and these thy gifts, which we are about to receive from thy bounty, and grant that fed wholesomely upon them, we may be able to offer due service to thee, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

A litany of saints for evangelists

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us.
St. Joseph, patron of the universal Church, pray for us.
St. Peter and St. Paul, pray for us.
St Thomas Aquinas, pray for us.
St. John Henry Newman, pray for us.
St. Thérèse, patron of Word on Fire, pray for us.
[add your own particular patron saints] . . . pray for us! Amen.

Prayer to Our Lady of Walsingham

Grant, we pray, almighty God, that as in the mystery of the Incarnation, the blessed and ever-virgin Mary did conceive your Son in her heart, before she conceived him in her womb, so we, your pilgrim people, rejoicing in her motherly care, may welcome him into our hearts, and become a holy house, fit for his eternal dwelling. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

A morning intention

Lord Jesus Christ, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer you this day all my prayer, work, joys, and sorrows, for all the intentions of your most Sacred Heart, in union with the holy sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world, for the intentions of the Holy Father, and for my own intentions, as follows . . .

Prayer to the Sacred Heart of Jesus

O Heart of Love, I place all my trust in you, for, though I fear all things from my weakness, I hope all things from your mercy.

The Jesus prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Prayer to St. Michael

Holy Michael, archangel, defend us in the day of battle. Be our safeguard against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do thou, prince of the heavenly host, by the power of God, thrust down to hell Satan and all wicked spirits who wander through the world for the ruin of souls. Amen.

An Examination of Conscience for Evangelists

Have I taken the time to grow in friendship with God?

Have I actively participated in the sacramental life of the Church?

Have I allowed the fear of rejection or humiliation to prevent me from sharing Jesus with others?

Did I do what I wanted to do or what the Lord wanted me to do?

Was I charitable toward those whom I encountered online or in person?

Did I propose or impose the Gospel?

Did I fail to listen and understand because I was focused on winning an argument?

Have I taken time to study and learn the faith?

Did I give God the glory upon seeing the good fruits of evangelization or did I attribute them to my own efforts and works?

Recommended Further Resources

The Word on Fire Bible

Centered: The Spirituality of Word on Fire

The Rosary with Bishop Robert Barron

Food for the Soul: Reflections on the Daily Mass Readings by Peter Kreeft

Bishop Barron's Daily Gospel Reflection emails

Personal *Examen* and Plan: My Path as an Evangelizing Disciple

Becoming an effective evangelizing disciple is an ongoing process of spiritual, intellectual, and personal growth. This *Examen* provides questions for personal reflection and the opportunity to set personal goals for yourself, based on the 8 Principles of the Word on Fire Way.

We encourage you to use the questions in this *Examen* to prayerfully reflect on how you can grow as an evangelizing disciple in the next year. It includes suggestions for how to move from your personal insights to practical growth as a disciple in the Institute. The *Examen* is ideal to do during a Holy Hour in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, but it can be done at home prayerfully as well.

The *Examen* is for your personal use. You may find it helpful to share some of your insights with your Peer Mentor Group, but this is entirely up to you. We do recommend that you draw on the insights of your *Examen* to seek out others who have similar goals, so that you can take courses or study resources at the same time and discuss what you are learning.

Keep in mind that discipleship is a lifelong process! If you complete this *Examen* thoughtfully, you will surely find that there are more opportunities for growth than you can do at once. The final section of the *Examen* offers a way for you to prioritize your goals for the coming year. We suggest that you select a particular day in the Church's calendar as a regular time each year to look back on your goals from the previous year, reflect prayerfully on your growth, and to set new goals for further growth, trusting in God's help and relying on the intercession of our Lady and all the saints.

Examen

I. Loving God

What aspects of my life could be more fully conformed to Christ? Do I regularly make use of the sacrament of Reconciliation? How can my life be more Christ-centered?

What areas in my knowledge and understanding of God, Holy Scripture, and the teachings of the Church would benefit from further study or deeper study?

Does my prayer life include asking the intercession of the saints? How can I grow in this area?

Do I have a parish “home base” where I regularly encounter God in the sacraments of his Church? Do I support evangelization and discipleship in my local area?

Putting insights into action:

Prayerfully consider what specific things you can do this year to become more Christ-centered. This may include devotional and prayer practices and changes in your daily habits.

Choose a topic to study in the coming year that will help you grow in your knowledge of God and the teachings of his Church, and choose a course in that topic. Consider regular participation in a Peer Mentor Group to discuss what you are learning.

Prayerfully discern a patron saint for this year, learn about that saint, and ask for his or her assistance as you grow as a disciple of Christ.

Consider ways in which you can grow and serve as an evangelizing disciple in your local parish.

II. Loving Others

Do I understand the “way of beauty” as an evangelical strategy? Do I recognize and love what is good, true, and beautiful in the culture, or do I default to culture-war antagonism?

Do I understand the Church’s teachings as they relate to the welfare of individuals on issues such as marriage and family, sexuality, and social teachings, including those regarding work and the environment? What areas are hardest for me (spiritually or intellectually)?

Where are there opportunities in my day-to-day life and interests for me to lead with beauty and exercise affirmative orthodoxy as an evangelist?

Putting insights into action:

Choose an area of culture (film/TV, fiction, art, music, etc.) to engage with more deeply in this coming year and to discuss with others. Consider participating in a Writing Peer Mentor Group.

Choose a specific topic in Church teaching that you find challenging to understand or explain. Complete a course in that topic.

Prayerfully discern areas of your day-to-day life where you can be a witness to Christ. Commit to regular practice of communication skills and to prayer for humility, patience, and charity.

III. Proclaiming Christ

Do I tend to be passive in accepting the culture, or defensive in rejecting the culture? Where do I need to grow in discernment and in learning how to “read” the culture?

Do I display humility, charity, patience, and grace in all my interactions online as well as in person? Is my witness to Christ clear, consistent, and compelling? Do others feel able to ask me questions about the faith?

Do I fully appreciate that the Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life? To what extent can I become more deeply rooted in the Eucharist as an evangelizing disciple?

Putting insights into action:

Choose a course or other resource to study in the next year that will strengthen your ability to discern goodness, truth, and beauty in the culture.

Consider participating regularly in an Evangelization & Discipleship Peer Mentor Group in order to practice the skills of gracious and effective evangelization in the new media.

Choose a course or seminar that will help you to gain skills in practical evangelization.

Choose an aspect of study or prayer that will help you to have a deeper devotion to our Lord’s Real Presence in the Blessed Sacrament.

Plan

Prayerfully review your notes from this Examen and develop a plan for the coming year.

With God's help, I will grow in my knowledge of God and of the teachings of his Church by making thoughtful use of the following courses and other resources:

With God's help, I will strengthen my ability to proclaim Christ to the culture by the thoughtful use of the following resources and/or participation in the following groups and activities:

With God's help, I will become more Christ-centered in my life and witness, and strengthen my connection to the communion of saints, by the following sacramental and devotional practices:

I will review and renew my *Examen* on the feast day of _____ .

St. Thérèse of Lisieux, patron of Word on Fire, pray for us!