

## HOW TO FIND MORE RCIA INQUIRERS



### A conversation with Rev. John Hurley, CSP

Father John E. Hurley, CSP, is the founder of [New Evangelization Strategies](#), a ministry designed to assist those in Catholic leadership roles focus on the essential mission of the Church. He is the former Executive Director for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Secretariat for Evangelization, the National Pastoral Life Center in New York City, and the Department of Evangelization for the Archdiocese of Baltimore. While in Baltimore, he co-chaired the first three Mid-Atlantic Congresses for Catholic Leaders. Since 2008, he has been serving as a consultant to the U. S. Bishops' Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis.

## 1. Why is it important to actively seek seekers?

⇒ Jesus told us to

*"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, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." (Mt 28:19-20)*

⇒ The Pope tells us to

*"The joy of the gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus....I wish to encourage the Christian faithful to embark upon a new chapter of evangelization marked by this joy..." (Joy of the Gospel, 1)*

⇒ Waiting for the phone to ring doesn't work

Adult baptisms: in 2000 = 77,500 vs. in 2014 = 38,000

Receptions into full communion: in 2000 = 95,000 vs. in 2014 = 66,400

[Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate](#)

⇒ People are in pain and need good news

***"I see the Church as a field hospital after a battle. It's pointless to ask a seriously injured patient whether his cholesterol or blood sugar levels are high! It's his wounds that need to be healed. The rest we can talk about later. Now we must think about treating those wounds."***

**—Pope Francis, interview with Antonio Spadaro**



## 2. What does a welcoming parish look like?

⇒ It knows that welcoming is not a program; it's an attitude, culture, and way of life

⇒ It moves from self-preservation through "the way we've always done it" to a "missionary option" for evangelizing today's world

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### 3. How can RCIA teams discover and welcome more seekers?

⇒ Remember what and whom evangelization is for  
*"We cannot forget that evangelization is first and foremost about preaching the Gospel to those who do not know Jesus Christ or who have always rejected him." (Joy of the Gospel, 14)*

⇒ Don't rush it  
*"Evangelization consists mostly of patience and disregard for constraints of time." (Joy of the Gospel, 24)*

⇒ Three specific steps you can take

#### 1. Pray for vision

- Ask parishioners to pray that the Holy Spirit opens their eyes to visitors
- Ask especially the greeters and ushers
- Also ask the Communion ministers to see this as part of their ministry of bearing Christ to others

#### 2. Train your team and other parish leaders

- Look for strangers at Mass every Sunday
- Shake hands with and meet the stranger
- Introduce the stranger to at least one other parishioner
- Invite the stranger to an upcoming parish event

#### 3. Sing like you mean it

- Advent and Christmas music has a strong impact on seekers
- Ask the choir and musicians to be especially aware of their impact on seekers
- Ask them to pray about their music
- Ask them to align their bodies and faces with the words they sing
- Ask them to smile a lot

⇒ Five ideas from Pope Francis (from *The Joy of the Gospel*)

1. Don't be a sourpuss (85, 10)
2. Talk to people who don't know Jesus (14)
3. Be patient (85, 24)
4. Don't feel like you have to teach everything all at once (37)
5. Go out to those who are poor (53)



**4. What difference will it make to our parishes if we are actively welcoming seekers?**