



Invite
One Back
Initiative



Bishop's Introductory Letter



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

May the Eucharistic Love of God greet you!

In this third year of the Eucharistic Revival, the Church and the Holy Spirit have invited each of us into a renewed reverence for the gift of the Holy Eucharist in our parishes and Catholic communities. Truly, a gift beyond measure!

Knowing the great gift of grace we have received in the Eucharist, we have also been entrusted with the call to share this gift with others. Evangelization is a sacred duty bestowed upon us by Jesus Christ himself. Our Lord's Great Commission (Matthew 28:19) calls us to proclaim the Good News to all nations, inviting them into a transformative relationship with the living God. This commission extends not only to those outside the faith but also to our fellow Catholics who may have fallen away for one reason or another.

The fourth invitation of the Leader's Playbook for the Year of Parish Revival is Missionary Sending, and this resource is a "toolkit" to aid your Parish Team as you respond to the Holy Spirit's promptings to "Invite Back" those who have been away from the regular practice of the Mass—particularly since COVID-19. Under the direction of the pastor, each parish will discern how to go about personally inviting those who have been away from Mass. Ideas range from letters to postcards to phone calls.

As we look back over these past few years, we can see that the pandemic was such a painful, confusing, and uncertain time. COVID-19 has impacted all our individual lives tremendously as well as our parish communities. Many of us yearn to have full participation in our Masses, especially on Sunday.

Our efforts in evangelization and inviting Catholics back to Mass are not just about increasing numbers or filling pews. Rather, our efforts are about guiding people to intimate encounters with Jesus Christ and leading souls to salvation, allowing them to experience God's love, mercy, and goodness.

It is important to invite these people back because it is a great act of love! It is also one of the simplest and most effective ways to evangelize. Love desires to be shared once it is received. The source and summit of the Christian life is participation in the Eucharistic sacrifice, where we encounter the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Most Holy Sacrament. Our faith is nourished and our souls are strengthened through this encounter, which is essential for our spiritual growth and vitality.

Let us pray earnestly for the Holy Spirit's guidance and fortitude to carry out this sacred mission. Let us embrace each soul with open arms, rejoicing as they return to the embrace of the Church and our parish communities through the gift of the Eucharist.

In Our Eucharistic Lord,



+ Andrew A. Cozzens

BISHOP ANDREW COZZENS

Chairman of the USCCB's Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis



Why Invite One Back?



A large portion of our communities believe in the Eucharist but are not physically encountering the Eucharist or their fellow parishioners.

With the *Invite One Back* campaign, we are asking you to identify which parishioners haven't returned to your parish and to invite them back to Mass. Jesus challenges us: "If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them goes astray, will he not leave the ninety-nine in the hills and go in search of the stray? And if he finds it, amen, I say to you, he rejoices more over it than over the ninety-nine that did not stray. In just the same way, it is not the will of your heavenly Father that one of these little ones be lost" (Mt 18:12-14). Just so, you are invited to go out and find the 5% in your parish. Invite them back to worship with you on Sundays. Let them know that they are missed, desired, and appreciated. This is hard to do but necessary.

Every parish is composed of people who are but a conversation or an invitation away from returning to the practice of their Catholic faith. There are people down the street from you (or maybe even next door or in your own home) who are missing out on Catholic community—an essential part of our spiritual lives. There are souls who are aching to be nourished by the Bread of Life. May we seek them out and invite them back. May they return to a community that desires to welcome them.

And may we be reminded that if this entire Eucharistic Revival was for just one soul to return to God, then it would all be worth it.



Inviting One Back: The Spirituality of Invitation



Do you remember the last time that you were invited somewhere? It may have been a wedding, a lunch date, or a cup of coffee. But invitations mean something. They say something: “I want to be with you”; “I enjoy your presence”; “I want you to be a part of my life.”

Invitations are uniquely powerful. An invitation is not forceful nor aggressive, yet, by nature, it expects a response. Jesus used invitations all the time! He invited people to worship and glorify God, he invited people to follow him, he invited people to dine with him, and he invited people to repent and believe in the Gospel. We should do the same today.

Though there are many reasons why Catholics stop attending Mass, it is safe to assume the majority will only come back if personally invited. No matter where individuals are or what decisions they have made, the Church remains a spiritual home and community of people in need of God’s love and mercy. An invitation reminds them that they belong within our community and that their presence is missing.

If even one person is missing from our parish, their absence matters! In the words of the great Christian writer, C.S. Lewis: “There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal.” Every person we have encountered has an eternal destiny. Every person who has ever been a parishioner at our church is a person with an immortal soul and, therefore, an infinite amount of value. Whether our parish is missing just a single soul, or five souls, or five hundred souls, we are incomplete without one another.

As we strive to do our part for the Eucharistic Revival, we need to not only bring people into deeper encounters with the physical Body of Christ, veiled in the Eucharist, but we also need to bring people into deeper encounters with the Mystical Body of Christ, the Church. We need to bring people back into our parishes. We need to remind people that they belong to something bigger than all of us. Our parish families, our Eucharistic communities, need each of their individual members. Every single parishioner is a vital organ to their parishes because every single person is a vital organ to the Mystical Body of Christ at large. Every single one of us has a seat at the table of our Lord. It’s difficult to have Eucharistic Revival in our parishes if some of our members are missing!

For this reason, we are asking that each parish’s invitation be covered and saturated with prayer. This campaign is not simply about inviting people back but praying people back into the arms of the Church, and the only way that we can be successful in these invitations is by allowing God to work in and through our invitations.

Personal prayer is tremendously important. So, too, is communal prayer. Intercession allows the entire Church community to partake in this initiative. Lifting up this campaign as an intention at a Sunday Liturgy or including a petition during the Intercessions of the Faithful at Mass is a simple yet powerful way to pray collectively as a Church. Consider publishing a prayer in your bulletin such as:

God our Father,

You never cease to seek out your children—the lonely, the frightened, the hurt, and the lost. We pray for all our parishioners who have been missing from our parish community and Eucharistic celebrations.

Through the intercession of Mary, please pave the way for conversations and invitations that welcome them back to the Catholic Church and our [insert parish name] Parish community. We trust in your love and mercy for every one of your children.

Amen.

Furthermore, we are asking that parish small groups and church ministries take unique ownership of this portion of the campaign. For example, groups that meet to pray the Rosary could offer up prayers for those who will be invited back to Mass. Parish team members could offer a weekly Holy Hour for the outreach initiative. Or men's and women's ministries could pray for the men and women, respectively, who have drifted away from the Church.

For a full toolkit of resources including letters, postcards, and phone scripts with conversation tips, please visit eucharisticrevival.org/invite-one-back. Resources are available in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese.