



Invite One Back

The importance of your invitation

Personal invitations are uniquely powerful. An invitation is not forceful nor aggressive, yet, by nature, it expects a response. Do you remember the last time you were invited somewhere? It may have been for lunch, to an event, or even for a cup of coffee. Invitations say something: “You are important to me”; “It would be good to hear how you’re doing”; “I enjoy your company.”

Jesus used invitations all the time! He invited people to dine with Him, to follow Him, to repent and believe in the Gospel. Jesus invited people to worship and glorify our Heavenly Father. We should do the same today.

An invitation to people who are no longer participating at our parish reminds them that they are missed and they belong within our community. Though there are many reasons why Catholics stop attending Mass, it is safe to assume the majority will only come back if they are personally invited. No matter how long individuals have been away, or what decisions they have made, the Catholic Church remains a spiritual home and community of people in need of God’s love and mercy.

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 single person we have encountered has an eternal destiny. Each person who has ever been a parishioner at our church is a child of God, a person with an immortal soul and, therefore, of infinite worth. Whether our parish is missing just one person, or thirty people, we are incomplete when others are not there.

It is a good reminder for people to know they belong to something bigger than all of us. Our parish families need each of these individual members. Every single person is a vital member of the parish, with unique gifts and talents. Each one of us has a seat at the table of our Lord. It’s difficult to renew our parishes if there are empty places in the pews!

As we strive to do our part during this time when God is pouring out His grace in abundance during the *Jubilee Year of Hope*, we will want to bring people back into deeper encounters with the parish community – the Mystical Body of Christ, the Church, while also guiding them to deeper encounters with the living Jesus,

veiled in the Eucharist. For this reason, the people who are “missing” from being active members of the parish are to be showered with abundant prayer. This initiative is about praying people back into the arms of the Church. May God stir the hearts of those fallen away with a deep desire to return to the parish family, in and through our personal invitations, hospitality, and love. Please commit to praying the following prayer:

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 parish community. We trust in Your love and mercy for every one of Your children. Amen.

Jesus is Our Hope
Jubilee Year of Hope 2025

(Compiled/adapted from NER materials by Ann Lankford, Office for Catechesis & Evangelization)