

LENT
2016

SHARING JESUS

Talk 4: Sharing Church

Quote 1: "I dream of a 'missionary option', that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church's customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today's world rather than for her self-preservation"

Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium, 27

Quote 2: "The reason the church was dying, was that we weren't focused on the mission Jesus Christ gave us. We were doing a lot of things; we were just doing the wrong things for the wrong reasons and ignoring the one thing we should have been doing." *Michael White and Tom Corcoran, Rebuilt.*

North Country Nick

North Country Nick is the quintessential lost person in our mission field at Gate of Heaven Parish. Nick is a good guy. He is a hard worker and loves his family. He is in his 30's, is married (often not in the church), and has a couple kids. He has known a lot of family instability in his life, and is committed to making his marriage work and raising his kids right, but doesn't always know how to do that.

His kids and their activities play a central part in his life. He is connected with many other young families through the schools, sports, and other activities. Increasingly his kids' activities take more and more of his time, especially on the weekends. When he gets a break from these activities and from work, Nick loves to spend time in the outdoors with his buddies, hiking, hunting, and snowmobiling. He watches a lot of sports. Nick believes in God, but doesn't have time to think about him too much. He enjoys his time in nature and with friends, and looks for fulfillment there. He drives a truck.

Nick grew up Catholic but denominational differences don't mean much to him. He went to church off and on with his family and his parents sent him to CCD, but he left the faith as soon as he could after Confirmation. He remembers CCD and church as boring experiences that have no real meaning in his life. He lacks knowledge of the Catholic faith and of basic Christianity. He is aware of scandals in the church, but is mostly just apathetic towards the faith. His only return to the church in the last 10 years has been for his grandmother's funeral.

There is a lot of pressure on Nick. Jobs are scarce and opportunities few. Nick has thought about moving his family downstate, but has found consistent work and appreciates this area as a great place to raise his family. He has a lot of debt, one of his kids is sick, he has some marital problems, and he has battled addiction and depression. He is content enough, but would be open to direction and healing, if he knew where to find it.

Small Group Questions

- 1) What was one significant insight you gained from Fr. Matt's homily?
- 2) Which character do you most relate to in the story of the Prodigal Son? The Father? The younger son? The older brother?
- 3) Have you met people like North Country Nick? How could you share your faith with them?
- 4) What could our parish do to better reach out to North Country Nick?
- 5) Have you been praying for people in your life who need the gospel? This Lent have you been able to share your faith with anyone or have you at least become more aware of opportunities to do so?