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In the history of Catholicism in America, we have been treated usually at the low end of the totem pole. How people viewed and understood the teachings and beliefs have been twisted and screwed and many ways. Even during the founding of our country, there was discrimination towards Catholics, and only one Catholic signed the Declaration of Independence. The dynamics of the Catholic church In the United States have changed and evolved over time. Even from how the first missionaries arrived and ministered to the Natives out west, to how the church is now having to minister to the growing population of hispanics. Currently we see a decline of people in the church and we also see a rebirth of people in the church. The Catholic Church is also a social church, meaning we serve others, by serving them we show them who Christ is. Because let us be honest most Catholics aren’t always the best at asking others to go mass with them, since there is a certain level of understanding to have to be able to fully appreciate the beauty of the mass. Our church is the universal church, and yet it is a personal relationship with Christ.

The United States has developed in the country that we are, we can see in points of time in history how our church has changed, and had to face what secular culture puts up for us to deal with, weather good or bad. And with that at times the church has had a hard time keeping people in the pews on sunday, part of that is that people had not been evangelized and caticized to the best that they could have. This is why during St. John Paul the Great time as pope, he became a forefront person to talk about the idea of the New Evangelization. This is not about converting the non-believers, but reconverting those who have fallen away from the church.

Something that makes the Catholic Church so special and unique is that we truly believe and celebrate the Eucharistic mystery every single day. As Francis Cardinal George said “All evangelizers proclaim who christ is. Catholics evangelizers proclaim a Eucharistic Christ” (Hahn, pg 48). We can use that as a tool, and as a starting point in order to share our faith. As people who are called to spread the good news each and everyday in how we live our life, we need the Eucharist as a grounding point to be able to share our faith. As St. John Paul the Great wrote in Ecclesia de Eucharistia in 2003 “The Eucharist thus appears as both *the source* and *the summit* of all evangelization, since its goal is the communion of mankind with Christ and in him with the Father and the Holy Spirit.” (n. 22) You have to know Christ in order to share about him. If we have people who know, love and serve God in their everyday, others can see that in them, then are a living example, we can’t be scared of living our faith for others to see. With that the more we know and love Christ, the more we can and will share about our faith.

An issue we have seen in the development of our country that has hurt people’s understanding of themselves is the advancement of technology and media becoming such a previalate thing in our lives. The media culture we live in have lead people to becoming individualistic, materialism, and wanting things instantly. Even though information is widely available on the internet these days, that also means, that false information can be taken as the truth, and people can learn about different points of views and opinions all of the world. With industrialization, we have globalization; where we become disconnected from the people who make and grow the thing we purchase. We aren’t just disconnected with where things come from, we have also become disconnected with who we are and with each other.

“The culture industry perpetually cheats its consumers of what it perpetually promises.

The promissory note which, with its plots and staging, it draws on pleasure is endlessly prolonged; the promise, which is actually all the spectacle consists of, is illusory: all it actually confirms is that the real point will never be reached, that the diner must be satisfied with the menu. (Adorno & Horkheimer pg 10)

The culture industry is when people mainstream of how we think and what we consume in media and what we we buy. It is damaging because people start to have the idea that we have to have and look a certain way to have good self image and to be someone in our world. “The fusion of culture and entertainment that is taking place today leads not only to a deprivation of culture, but inevitably to an intellectualization of amusement” (Adorno & Horkheimer, pg 12). People are formed of what they believe based on what culture tells them.

There are Catholic programs that have a good media presence, but in a sense it can still easily be described as part of the subculture of modern American Catholicism. Even as much as Catholic groups have a presence online to spread the Gospel. It is only going to stay online until people start to talk about it and actually doing the practices and having the personal encounters with others. As St. John Paul the great originally wrote in *Redemptoris Missio*

*"*It is not enough to use the media simply to spread the Christian message and the

Church's authentic teaching. It is also necessary to integrate that message into the `new

culture' created by modern communications... with new languages, new techniques and a

new psychology" *(37).*We can’t be afraid to talk about our faith. We can’t have religion become this taboo subject that we keep in the conframs of our house or at church. The main way we can spread the Word, is by seeking Christ and desiring the faith that He has planned for us. We need to live a life of joy, love, peace, grace that shows others what we have and that it is something that they might desire, that is something that can sustain them. It’s not always what we say, but who we are at our core.

Fr. Rob Galea, originally from Malta and currently serving in Sandhurst Diocese, Victoria Australia, recently released a Youtube video on his idea on how to bring young people to the church. The four point that he brought up about attracting young people to the church are; outreach, don’t be afraid to reach out to them; they are looking for community and not just in conframes of the church events; Help them find their purpose, give them a purpose in coming; feed them- give them the tools they need to grow in their faith.

The Catholic Church is the original church, we have tradition and doctrine. It has been through wars, the reformation, it is the universal church. We may admire for everyone to be Catholic and to bring back the glory of the traditions and practices that the church had at one point. We have to work with what is happening in our secular society and in the world to work towards this idea. The future is in the power of the young people, bringing them to know Christ in the Eucharist and encountering Him in those who are marginalized. “Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord. *and* Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.” These are two versions of the dismissal rites for the mass, if we went and did what we are reminded of at the celebration of the mass, who knows where we will be in 10, 15, 25, 50, 100 years from now.

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