



NATHANAEL 2019-2022

**Lay Faith Formation,
to form missionary disciples**

VISION

**This document is addressed to: priests, deacons, and parish life directors
to provide information
for the upcoming Nathanael 3-year Lay Formation Program**

Renewed Vision

Designed for the baptized to respond to 4 calls flowing from their baptismal vocation:

- 1. The call to new Evangelization**
- 2. The call to be Church in communion**
- 3. The call to lay Christian leadership in the Church**
- 4. The call to lay Christian leadership in society**

Involving the spiritual support of parishes to their candidates.



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A. WHAT IS THE NATHANAEL LAY PROGRAM?

Jesus and Nathanael

John 1:43b, 45-46

*He (Jesus) met Philip and said, "Follow Me." ... Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph, from Nazareth." Nathanael said to him, "From Nazareth? Can anything good come from that place?" Philip replied, "**Come and see.**"*

1. **It is a program of lay formation and a process of discernment** designed to help the baptized recognize ever more clearly their personal baptismal vocation and bring it to fulfillment.

- a) The program is based on **four calls that flow from our baptism:**

- the call to new evangelization,
- the call to be Church in communion,
- the call to lay Christian leadership in the Church, and
- the call to lay Christian leadership in society.

This will naturally lead to involvement in areas such as evangelization through marriage and family, work, social justice and charity.

- b) In order to prepare candidates to respond to these four calls, Nathanael offers them **an opportunity to follow a formation consisting of:**

- a knowledge of personal growth,
- a rootedness in prayer,
- a rootedness in scripture,
- a foundation in church tradition, on the faith and teachings of the Catholic Church

...in order to become missionary disciples prepared to follow the mission of Christ as laypersons.

2. **It is an authentic Response to Baptismal Vocation.** The program enables a candidate to give a more conscious and authentic response to their baptismal vocation. This will emerge from a sound understanding of our faith, the Church and its mission in today's world.

- a) **All the Baptized are Called.** From the beginning, the Nathanael Lay Faith Formation Program has embraced and promoted the guiding principles of the Second Vatican Council that called upon all the baptized to cooperate in the mission of the Church. In 1970, Pope Paul VI said it this way: *One of the truths most strongly asserted by the Council is as follows – All Christians are called to participate in the mission of the Church; an invitation as well as an obligation. For this reason, there should be no*

*passive Christians in the mystic Body of Christ. Each and every one must collaborate in different ways, but through shared responsibility, to the apostolic work of the Church.*¹

3. It is a response to the urgency of Missionary Evangelization. Following the Council, popes started talking about the new evangelization. In his encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*, John-Paul II declared the urgency of missionary evangelization stating that, in today's world, *it is the primary service that the Church must provide to every person and to humanity as a whole.* He urged the Church to commit totally to the new evangelization: *No believer in Christ, no Church institution should neglect this important duty - to proclaim Christ to all people.* The work of evangelization, he adds, *concerns all Christians, all dioceses and parishes, all institutions and ecclesiastic organizations.*²

a) Recognize and Promote the Dignity and Responsibility of Lay People to achieve New Evangelization. To achieve this, the Council emphasizes that *priests must recognize and promote the dignity and responsibility of lay people in the Church, willingly take into account their wise counsel, assign them to positions of trust in the service of the Church, give them leeway in the tasks that they take on, and even encourage them to undertake new projects on their own.*³

b) Evangelization is Ecclesial. The mission of the Church is to bring together all of humanity in loving communion with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God *wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth* (1 Timothy 2:4), that is, about Jesus Christ (cf. John 14:6).⁴

Pope Francis adds that *It is important never to forget a fundamental principle for every evangelizer: one cannot announce Christ without the Church. Evangelization is not an isolated individual or private act; it is always ecclesial.*⁵

4. It is an approach to create unity and Communion. *I do not pray for these only, but also for those who believe in Me through their word, that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they may be in Us, so that the world may believe that Thou has sent Me.* (John 17:20-21)

¹ Paul VI, General Audience August 11, 1971, *Co-responsibility of the laity in the mission of the Church: no passive Christians*, No. 46

² John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, 1990, Nos. 2-3

³ Vatican II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, No. 37

⁴ Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 74

⁵ Pope Francis, *Message for World Mission Day 2013*, No. 3

The vocation and testimony of the baptized Catholic is that of unity and of communion. *Just as a branch of the vine cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, so also the baptized cannot bear fruits, unless they abide in the vine.* (John 15:4)

All are called, each with their gifts and charisms, to this union with Christ to form Church. It is the Holy Spirit who unites us in communion and leads us to perfect union *like a people made one by the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.* ⁶

5. It is a call to Lay Christian Leadership. Different styles of leadership are presented in Nathanael:

- a) Servant Leadership.** In becoming familiar with servant leadership, the candidate will learn to assume responsibility in the Church or in society in the manner of humble service for others and in taking Christ as a model. This Christian leadership implies attitudes that unite and build communion in the Church or elsewhere.
- b) Shared Leadership.** While it is closely related to the concept of servant leadership, shared leadership speaks to the practical aspects, the “how to” of leadership. It is based on the distribution of roles or responsibilities according to the abilities or charisms of each person. In the Church, we need an organisational leadership that builds community. The candidates shall become aware of this style of leadership that also contributes to creating communion.

⁶*Lumen Gentium*, No. 4