

**Forming Intentional Disciples** – We have reached the end of our series on Sherry Weddell’s best seller book “Forming Intentional Disciples”. We hope that this has been helpful as we seek to implement our parish vision and mission to bring all to Christ and Christ to all.

Every parish and every parishioner should ask this important question: Am I growing in my own personal relationship with Jesus? And have I helped others have a personal encounter with Jesus? This requires both a good individual spiritual life and a fruitful sacramental life celebrated within the bigger family of the parish. The priests play a key role in making this happen, but they cannot do everything.

All of the lay faithful are called to play an active, creative role in bringing Christ to all and all to Christ. But we first need to deepen our own personal relationship with the Lord. God has blessed us with the riches of the Catholic Faith. We need to keep exploring the amazing depth and beauty of this treasure. Meditating on Scripture is an immense help. Reading and reflecting on the Catechism of the Catholic Church will help us appreciate our Faith. Reading the lives of the saints is very inspirational.

We have a beautiful RCIA programme in place and are currently meeting every two weeks to deepen our understanding and appreciation of our Faith. Everyone is welcome to join us. As we get to know Jesus more personally, we also get to know our heavenly Father and the Holy Spirit. The door is opened to union with the Holy Trinity. As our faith knowledge and love of Christ becomes more personal, we move beyond “engagement” and a purely institutional “faith”. This is what creates a spiritual climate that fosters real growth within the parish. Sherry Weddell and her team promote what they call the “Prayer of Openness”. This is something we are now using in the Called & Gifted programme. Sherry writes: “It basically involves inviting others to talk to God in their own words and tell God that they are open to the possibility of personal and spiritual change.



I have never seen God not respond in powerful ways to someone who prays an authentic prayer of openness. It is not a scripted one-size-fits-all prayer, because what the individual praying has to say to God is based upon his/her lived experience of God, where he/she really is in the spiritual journey and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Part of what makes such a simple act a doorway into a personal relationship with God is that it is an authentic prayer from the person’s heart in the person’s own words.” Short model prayers are helpful like: God, if you are real, please let me know; Lord, help me to be open to your purposes for me; Jesus, I want to follow you. Help me to grow as your disciple; Jesus, show me how I can be an instrument of your love and provision for others.

The key thing is to simply tell God in your own words that you are open to the possibility of personal and spiritual change. Let’s all pray together for a deep, spiritual renewal of our parish. Intercessory prayer plays a key role in bringing about renewal. In doing this, we are simply uniting ourselves to Jesus. The glorified Jesus, now sitting at the right hand of the Father and simultaneously sacramentally present in every tabernacle in the world on earth is constantly interceding for us. He is “able for all time to save those who draw near to God, since he always lives to make intercession for them” (Hebr 7:25).