



Come and See

I write on the second day of the New Year with Christmas barely behind us, but my thoughts are already turning toward Easter. And it's fitting that they do, for the Son of Mary was born for us in Bethlehem to die for us on Calvary and raise us up to life with Him in God. Everything in Christmas points to Easter.

It is up to us to point the way there too, by the way we live our faith and invite others to share it. Pointing the way to Easter is what we do when we evangelize, either as individuals or as participants in a common effort. This coming Lent, for example, selected parishes will begin to reach out to fallen-away Catholics in a multi-year campaign called "Come and See."

It will be a work of invitation, not of exhortation or instruction. To take part, you won't have to "convert" people or teach the faith to them. All you'll need to do is *invite* them to come to your parish for a one-time video presentation (from Father Robert Barron's *Catholicism* series). There they'll be invited to come to further sessions, but that's their decision. You've done your part if you get them to come to the first one. As Pope Francis keeps making clear to us, all we need to do is try to gain a hearing for the Word of God and let His grace and mercy take it from there.

It sounds simple and it is meant to be. Initial indicators give grounds for hope. This Advent, two parishes—one large and one medium-sized—agreed to pilot the program in both English and Spanish. The first parish committed to invite 500 people to the event in January and has thus far delivered over 700 invitations; the second parish committed to invite 200 and has already exceeded that number. The next *Chronicle* will report on how many of the invited attended.

Our intent is to select two or three parishes each Advent and Lent over the next several years to learn what works and what doesn't and to build momentum for more. If you're interested in this promising project, feel free to contact Barry Metzentine at the Diocesan Office.

Everything in Christmas points to Easter. Urged on by the angels, the shepherds came to Bethlehem to "see" the Child; summoned by the star, the eyes of the Magi found him there too. Both came because they were invited, and both had some traveling to do. St. John sets out the pattern early in his Gospel. "Master, where do you stay?" two soon-to-be disciples asked Jesus. "Come and see," he replied. They came, they saw, and they stayed, because they found way more than they knew they were seeking.