Research and Findings of Matthew Kelly’s

THE FOUR SIGNS OF A DYNAMIC CATHOLIC

How Engaging 1% of Catholics Could Change the World

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Lake-Geauga District Meeting
March, 11 2013
OVERVIEW

• Context
• Research Methods
• Basic Findings
• Curious Findings
• What I Like
• What Bothers Me a Bit
• What Needs Navigation
• Conversation
CONTEXT

• Saw Matthew Kelly present at Catholic Leadership Institute’s *Episcopal Ongoing Formation and Support Conference* 1-22-2013

• Gleaned some interesting insights into his research and findings
RESEARCH METHODS

• Cost: $800,000+
• Used corporate market researchers
• 3,000+ interviews with “Dynamic Catholics” (and sometimes their family and friends)
• Some data, participants obtained from parish records
• Factor analysis implied
• Path analysis implied
CONCLUSION:

• Impossible to evaluate findings without knowing specifics of research methods, research population, or seeing the actual data.

• BASED on research, not WRITTEN AS research!

“I’m writing for your average Catholic, not your average sociologist, Dave!”
RESEARCH QUESTIONS

• Is it true “80 / 20” rule operative in Catholic parishes (a.k.a. the Pareto Principle)?

• If so, how are the 20% different from the 80%?

“When it is useful to them, men can believe a theory of which they know nothing more than its name” — Vilfredo Pareto
BASIC FINDINGS

• 6.4 percent (not 20%) of registered parishioners contribute 80 percent of the volunteer hours in a parish
• 6.8 percent (not 20%) of registered parishioners donate 80 percent of financial contributions
• There is an 84 percent overlap between the two groups.

CONCLUSION:
“Roughly 7 percent of Catholic parishioners are doing almost everything in their faith community and paying almost entirely for the maintenance and mission of the parish. “

Since the” Pareto Principle” is valid everywhere but the Church. I suggest you call this exception “Kelly ‘s Catholic Corollary”
EXTRAPOLATION:
If you engage 1% more: go from 7% to 8%...

“It would result in 15 percent more volunteer hours, which would allow you to serve other parishioners and your community that much more effectively. It would also bring about a 15 percent increase in revenue, which would allow your parish to invest in powerful and important ministries that would further drive engagement.”

Matthew Kelly, The Four Signs of Dynamic Catholics, P. 14
BASIC FINDINGS
(continued)

• Labels the 7% of highly engaged Catholics as “DYNAMIC CATHOLICS”

• They have four things (i.e., “signs”) in common:

1. **PRAYER:**
   Dynamic Catholics have a daily commitment to prayer.

2. **STUDY:**
   Dynamic Catholics are continuous learners.

3. **GENEROSITY:**
   Dynamic Catholics are generous.

4. **EVANGELIZATION:**
   Dynamic Catholics invite others to grow spiritually by sharing the love of God with them.
BASIC FINDINGS
(continued)

• The four signs are a model to reengage disengaged Catholics
• PRAYER and STUDY foster GENEROSITY and EVANGELIZATION.
Regarding **PRAYER**, Dynamic Catholics...

- Have a daily routine of prayer, setting aside a specific time and place to pray and make it a priority
- Have a routine *within* the routine (a model of prayer they use)
  - Reading the Bible
  - Praying the morning prayers of the church
  - Reading from a spiritual book (e.g., “God Calling”)

**BASIC FINDINGS**

(continued)
Regarding **STUDY**, Dynamic Catholics...

- Are continuous learners
- Have a regular routine of study
- Spend an average of 14 minutes a day learning more about the faith
- Often give away the books they read to others (a form of evangelization)
- Discuss what they’ve learned with others (another form of evangelization)
Regarding **GENEROSITY**, Dynamic Catholics...

- Understand how God, others have been generous to them and with them
- Are generous with time, talent, money, possessions, and virtue (e.g., patience, kindness, etc.)
- Have generosity as a central tenet of their value system
- Express generosity in their personal relationships and social roles: husband, parent, child, neighbor, boss, coworker, parishioners
Regarding **EVANGELIZATION**, Dynamic Catholics...

- Register their lowest scores in this area (Scale 1-10: EVANGELIZATION avg. score = 4.9 vs. 6.8 or higher on Prayer, Study and Generosity)
- Report having had conversion experiences or “ah ha” moments
- Most often say they share their faith in the following ways:
  - Pass books and CDs around
  - Invite people to Catholic events
  - Bring godly perspectives into conversations
  - Learn Catholic teaching and defend faith when attacked
  - Help people answer their questions when they doubt Catholic faith
  - Demonstrate the love of God through faithful and generous friendships
CURIOS FINDINGS

DYNAMIC CATHOLICS (the 7%) have a dark side

- They can be territorial, excluding others from joining groups or activities.
- They often speak in a “church language” that the 93% don’t understand.
- They suffer from “spiritual amnesia,” meaning that they have forgotten or block out how resistant to God they were at different times in their spiritual journey, or how far from God they have been at times in their lives.
  - Robs them of the ability to relate to others who are less engaged.
  - Also often makes them intolerant of less engaged Catholics, thinking that those people should just “get with the program.”
- Kelly: “Whatever shortcomings the 7% have can be overcome if they embrace the four signs more completely.”
WHAT I LIKE

• Easy to read and understand with no jargon
• Offers practical advice and models
• Encourages “baby steps” (reasonable, doable)
• Presents a model a parish could use in conjunction with (or to foster) the “New Evangelization”
WHAT BOTHERS ME A BIT

• Repetitive
• Unreflective Dualism
  – Church = Truth; World = Darkness, secularism, relativism.
  – Church teaches God’s truth is also in the world
  – Desired characteristics of new Pope (accountability, transparency, good administrator)
• Overly Cognitive Approach
  – Obstacle to faith is primarily ignorance
  – If people only understood the “genius” of Catholicism
  – Partly a reflection of his own path
  – Mentions experiential side as an after thought
• Room for Dialogue?
WHAT NEEDS NAVIGATION
(from with parishioners)

• New Evangelization emphasis on adherence to Magisterium vs. Vatican II emphasis on deference to conscience. Generational differences present?
• Dualism of rhetoric a turn-off to some
• Where change is needed
  – Re-formation of individual Catholics AND reformation of inhibiting Church policies and practices
  – Kelly emphasizes both needed to advance the mission
CONVERSATION
(Regarding THE FOUR SIGNS OF A DYNAMIC CATHOLIC)

• How does this research resonate with your experience?

• What excites you? Concerns you? Gives you hope?

• How do you see the book connected or disconnected from the New Evangelization?

• How might you use the book as a tool in your parish ministry?

• What further questions do you have about the book?
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RESEARCH, PLANNING, LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT, CHANGE MANAGEMENT

Enhancing Organizational Effectiveness to Achieve Positive Results

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