



*How to Leave the  
Footprints of Faith on the  
Hearts of Our Children*

A PRESENTATION TO THE FAITH COMMUNITY OF  
PADRE SERRA PARISH  
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# The Situation Today



More Catholics are leaving the faith than ever before - more so than in any other religion.

A new study examines why so many young adults are leaving the faith at such an early age.

# The Challenge...



60% of those who leave the Church are  
between the ages of 13-23.

(Pew Research Center 2015)



“Of all the major denominations, Catholicism has experienced the greatest net losses as a result of affiliation changes, despite these losses having been largely offset by Hispanic immigration to the United States,” according to a 2018 study.

# Going, Going, Gone: The Dynamics of Disaffiliation in Young Catholics

- ▶ The 2018 study looked at a sample of former Catholics, aged 15 to 25. This group is often characterized as "nones" because they claim no particular religious affiliation.
- ▶ 36%: disaffiliated young millennials (ages 18-24)
- ▶ 34%: disaffiliated older millennials (25-33)

# Going, Going, Gone

- ▶ 22.8% of the general population is unaffiliated – about 56 million people.
- ▶ 36% of young millennials (18-24) and 34% of older millennials (25-33) are religiously unaffiliated. (Pew Research)

# Going, Going, Gone...

74% said they stopped identifying as Catholic between ages 10 and 20, with a median age of 13.

# Six major root causes:

1. Event or series of events leading to doubt.
2. Increased cultural secularization.
3. New sense of freedom after abandoning religious belief.

4. Rejection of a faith they say was forced on them.

5. Conviction that it is possible to live an ethical life without religion.

6. Willingness to reevaluate their faith if presented with rational argument or evidence.

# Considerations...

- ▶ There does not appear to be any significant way for the Church to attract back many who have left the faith. Some do return at some point as they age. This is the “life-cycle effect” that is more common to all religions.
- ▶ • Church scandals, specific teachings, or personalities surprisingly seem to be less important than many assume.

# Post-Modernism: The Times in Which We Live



A late 20<sup>th</sup> century movement characterized by:

- ▶ Broad skepticism
- ▶ Relativism: and Pluralism: Plurality of communities, cultures and truths can exist alongside one another.
- ▶ Suspicion of reason: Looks beyond reason to non-rational ways of knowing, giving greater importance to emotions, experience, intuition.
- ▶ Information Age runs parallel with Postmodernism. Nationalism giving way to the global village. Increased loyalty to a more local context.