



This event actually empowered me to go to my members in the Haitian community, to share everything that I learned here to help them understand exactly what discipleship is and what we need to do to bring more people into the Church.

- Peter Dickenson, Finance Counselor
Immaculate Conception Haitian Mission

DISCIPLESHIP DAYS

Growing our parishes has been a concern for many parish leaders post pandemic. In response to feedback from our previous "Parish Growth Summit" a diocesan pastoral team planned and presented a free, immersive dive into parish growth at Discipleship Days held in three different locations January 26, 27, and 28, 2023.

"Our diocesan pastoral team collaborates with our parishes to unlock the potential for amazing ministry now and in the future," said Dr. Lois Locey, Chancellor for Administration and Chief Operating Officer of the Diocese of St. Petersburg. **"Our goal is to support and energize parishes' efforts to cultivate servant leaders who live out their baptismal calling, nurture disciples through vibrant encounters and empower communities to become missionary-focused."**

Discipleship Days, funded through donations to the Catholic Ministry Appeal, drew more than 350 clergy, lay ecclesial ministers and volunteer leaders from 75 parishes and six schools.

The headline speaker for Discipleship Days was the energetic and engaging,

author, TV host, renowned chef and national Eucharistic Preacher, Father Leo Patalinghug. Practical and applicable sessions provided attendees the unique opportunity to renew both personal and faith communities' commitment to the mandate of Jesus Christ to "Go and Make Disciples."

In addition, participants experienced inspirational sessions by Dr. Locey, Dr. Armando Chavarria, Executive Director of Missionary Discipleship, Rev. Chuck Dornquast, Diocesan Vocation Director and Carlos Flores, Director of Intercultural Ministries on the "path" to discipleship. Small group sessions focused on strategies for overcoming obstacles and short and long-term discipleship in parish communities.

Because discipleship and growing the Church are vital to our future, the Diocese of St. Petersburg is hoping to make events like Discipleship Days a part of how we courageously live the Gospel.

