

# What Is a Parish Twinning Relationship?

(Adaptable for School Relationships Too!)

From Dr. Mike Gable, Mission Office Director (513) 421.3131 x.2630

For details, see [www.catholiccincinnati.org/mission](http://www.catholiccincinnati.org/mission) or [mgable@catholiccincinnati.org](mailto:mgable@catholiccincinnati.org)

It is an experiential learning process for the entire church community to develop a **Christ centered** mission oriented parish. It is a coming together of a parish in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati with another church in another part of the U.S. or overseas, in an active, mutual and on-going faith commitment of solidarity.



**What does such a relationship accomplish for a parish?** By building bridges of faith, Catholics link together spiritually, culturally, and in a mutual sharing of resources, **in Jesus' name.**

**What does such a relationship involve for a parish?** It involves crossing over into other cultural, economic, political, linguistic, & religious environments. It may also help connect people of various cultures locally too!

## Twinning IS about....

- Growing and sharing faith journeys together with Our Lord
- Learning from each other spiritualities, service & worship styles
- Building a mutual relationship of solidarity between parishes
  - Promoting social justice and peace with/for each other
- Developing friendships with people of other cultures/nations

## Twinning is NOT about....

- Changing others but maybe ourselves
- Imposing our way of life, culture
- Only building infrastructure
- Only fund raising

## So...What Is Needed for a Good, Successful Twinning Relationship?

**1. Prayer** is a foundational principle that calls us to build a partnership based on our common faith in God together. This may involve daily prayer & weekend liturgy petitions for each other, prayer networks, and retreats, days of reflection with twinning partners, etc. that build this spiritual bond and relationship thru Christ.

**2. Communication** is a crucial element between the twinning partners that entails mutual listening, sharing, understanding, patience, and the learning of new means to express concerns, challenges, joys, faith and social life. Make use of letters, videos, skyping, pictures, phone calls, e-mails, etc. It's much like building a successful marriage or personal friendship. Find local **interlockers** familiar with the other culture to guide you.

**3. Cultural Sensitivity** is a attitude and desire to learn from one another's faith, culture and daily experiences. Discernment of one another's gifts and values to share becomes a responsibility of each party in the relationship. An attitude of mutual equality is essential to the relationship (moving away from paternalism and dependency). Twinning can awake us to the gifts & needs of members of other cultures locally as well.

**4. Involvement for Social Justice** is required as lives are shared and injustices surface. Promotion of human dignity and equal rights becomes an essential element of the relationship. Parishioners are called to not only contribute resources (Charity model) but to work on issues together that may involve more community and social change efforts (Solidarity model).

**5. Broad based involvement** is a must. Include the whole parish! Religious ed. program, the youth group, parish social action groups, all ages, PSR, and school participation, Ongoing mutual visits to each others' communities are strongly encouraged. (Limited travel subsidies are available from the Mission Office)

**6. Goal Formation of both twinning committees** is needed to:

- Identify each other's gifts and needs in the context of spreading the Gospel message and being in solidarity (with compassion & commitment); **NOTE!** Work in conjunction with the local bishop and your interlocker.
- Formulate goals, expectations, and desired outcomes for this relationship;
- Plan strategies demonstrating how goals will be achieved, indicating responsible parties and sign a covenant.
- Evaluate your endeavors about every 3 years. Consider closure methods to the relationship when needed.

**7. Assumption and Responsibility of Roles** are key since strong lay leadership is necessary on the part of both parties to plan, activate, and promote creative ways to develop and sustain the relationship.

**8. Parish Celebrations** of the twinning relationship are recommended on feast days, liturgically during Advent/Christmas, Lent/Easter and during visiting times. Enjoy your friendships in Christ!

**9. NOTE!** Have twinning relationships improve support for Pontifical Mission Societies, i.e., World Mission Sunday collections & the Missionary Childhood Association to support our 1,150 mission dioceses in Africa & Asia.