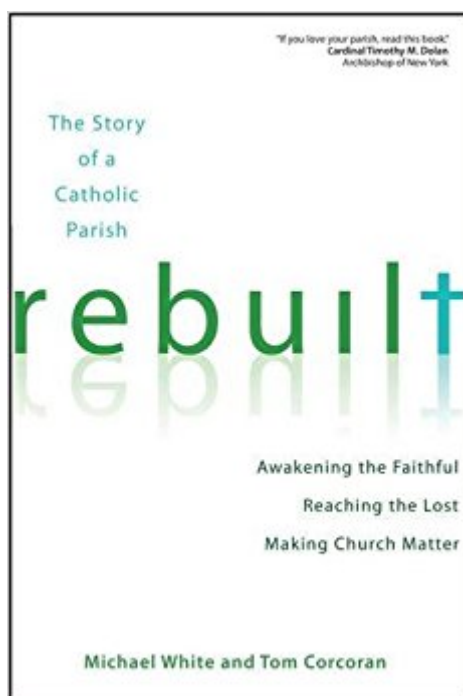




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# Rebuilt: Awakening The Faithful, Reaching The Lost, And Making Church Matter



## Synopsis

Drawing on the wisdom gleaned from thriving mega-churches and innovative business leaders while anchoring their vision in the Eucharistic center of Catholic faith, Fr. Michael White and lay associate Tom Corcoran present the compelling and inspiring story to how they brought their parish back to life. *Rebuilt* is a story of stopping everything and changing focus. When their parish reached a breaking point, Fr. Michael White and lay associate Tom Corcoran asked themselves how they could make the Church matter to Catholics, and they realized the answer was at the heart of the Gospel. Their faithful response not only tripled their weekend mass attendance, but also yielded increased giving, flourishing ministries, and a vibrant, solidly Catholic spiritual revival. White and Corcoran invite all Catholic leaders to share the vision, borrow their strategies, and rebuild their own parishes. They offer a wealth of guidance for anyone with the courage to hear them.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"I think it will be a bit of a barn burner when it comes out." --Rev. Michael Roach, Pastor of St. Bartholomew Roman Catholic Church, Manchester, MD  
"Father Michael White, whom I have known for many years, and his pastoral associate, Tom Corcoran, write with remarkable honesty and humor, telling us about what happened to them. Through trial and error, success and failure, and with some unexpected experiences along the way, they learned a lot about parish life. But most of all, they learned to fall in love with their parish. . . . This is a book that takes the New Evangelization seriously. *Rebuilt* is an excellent resource for parishes seeking new ideas

and a fresh approach to bringing the faithful closer to Christ in the third millennium." --Archbishop William E. Lori, Archbishop of Baltimore "This story of Catholic parish renewal is a must-read for pastors and future pastors. It provides an amazing testimony to the transforming power of God's love when we say a generous yes to following Jesus in true discipleship, centered in word and sacrament." --Rev. John Horn, S.J. , President-Rector of Kenrick-Glennon Seminary, Archdiocese of St. Louis "This is an eminently practical how-to book by two ordinary parish leaders doing extraordinary work. They challenge us to learn from their experience of growing a healthy parish built on the radical call of Gospel hope, focused on making disciples, and committed to reaching the lost." --Theresa Rickard, O.P. , Executive Director, Renew International "Vibrant parishes are essential if we are going to re-propose the genius of Catholicism to the people of our times. Rebuilt is much needed and well written. White and Corcoran are stunningly honest, insightful about the real problems facing parishes today, and passionate about helping your parish become the best version of itself." --Matthew Kelly, Author of Rediscover Catholicism "A must read for anyone serious about parish engagement, membership, and financial and spiritual growth. It should be required reading for pastors, new priests, and parish councils." --U.S. Catholic

Michael White received his bachelor's degree from Loyola University Maryland and his graduate degrees in sacred theology and ecclesiology from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. After being ordained a priest of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, he worked for five years as personal secretary to William Cardinal Keeler, who was then archbishop. During that time, he served as the director of the papal visit of Pope John Paul II to Baltimore. During his tenure as pastor at Church of the Nativity, the church has almost tripled in weekend attendance from 1,400 to over 4,000. More importantly, the commitment to the mission of the Church has grown, evidenced by the significant increase of giving and service in ministry. Thomas Corcoran received his bachelor's degree from Loyola University Maryland and completed his graduate work in theology with Franciscan University of Steubenville. Corcoran has served Church of the Nativity in a variety of roles that give him a unique perspective on parish ministry and leadership. Beginning as a youth minister, Corcoran later held positions as coordinator of children's ministry and director of small groups. He currently serves in the position of associate to the pastor and is responsible for weekend message development, strategic planning, and staff development.

The authors essentially remind us of our commission: to go find the poor and marginalized in society - spiritually or physically poor or marginalized. To go authentically minister will lead others to God. In

other words, if we are authentic disciples, others will be attracted to how we minister and want to know the God who has taught us to love this way. I completely agree. In the reading of the book, I often find myself agreeing with their assessments of the "why" underlying a problem, but then see some problems with the "how" that works in their parish. Some things seem downright gimmicky, such as a coffee shop in the narthex to gather those who aren't comfortable enough to go into church. Overall, I think their assessment of many parishes will resonate. I think the underlying principles they state are pretty good, too. But to look at this as a cookie-cutter answer to your parish's problems would probably not be a wise approach to the book.

The book is the story of the revitalization of a small, set-in-its-ways parish and its slow transformation into what I describe below. I attended the Church of the Holy Nativity in Timonium, a Roman Catholic Church, when I first moved back to Baltimore, MD and was looking for a neighborhood to move to. This place was a shock to a life-long traditional Catholic. The Church was packed, like they used to be in the fifties. The altar area was more like a rock concert stage. There were two gigantic flat screen monitors on either side with cameras showing either the priest, the lector, the choir or the altar depending on the moment. The church lighting was professionally handled. When the lector came on, a spot lit him up and the rest of the altar went dark. When the liturgy moved back to the priest, he had a spot and the others went dark. There were NO kneelers in the church. The homily was excellent. The Gospel reading were displayed on the screens as they were read. The words to the hymns were also handled by the monitors. I thought I was in the "Church-of-what's happening-now". There were confessionals with priests available right after mass. I availed myself of this great convenience. Afterwards, I drifted into the church coffee lounge where high-quality coffee was served free and pastries were being sold. The front of the old church had been expanded into a glassed in atrium so that parishioners could mingle after mass without going outside into the weather. The coffee shop was part of this glassed in area and contained bistro tables and chairs for impromptu discussions between parishioners. There was an information table at the center of this area with three or four parishioners answering questions, guiding people, etc. It was a bee hive of very happy activity. Children were abundant. I understand for their Christmas and Easter mass, they rent a very large facility at the nearby Timonium State Fairgrounds. Anyway, the book is the story of how a priest assigned to a small shriveling parish, ended up with what I just described!! I gave it 4 stars more for content. I didn't like the writing style.

The foundation of a church alive in Christ is clearly displayed through this book. The thought

patterns are clear and logical, but moreover the power of the Spirit is clearly visible. As a leader in a large, vibrant Catholic Church I have been challenging our Parish to encapsulate why we are successful. Why do we draw from the cities around us. Why we should be different. This book help to affirm every positive effort, but also provides good guidance on how to better understand the underlying drivers of why success happens. We are all tasked to build God's Kingdom. This book helps to answer the age old question of how, but more importantly - why we should continue to try to go beyond the routine to build it as a lamp for all to see and warm in our light. God Bless and we'll done.

What an outstanding book, something that will help any parish community to grow and become more welcoming. We took some pointers out of this book and implemented them in our parish with a huge success. We were also honored to attend the conference they offered so we were able to experience it first hand., and it was worth every effort to get to Timonium, MD and learn from this team. The book was a purchase from a friend as a gift, after hearing about my experience and how I was able to help my parish she was hoping to do the same in hers. Rebuilt: Awakening the Faithful, Reaching the Lost, and Making Church Matter by Michael White, Tom Corcoran (2/28/2013)

"The most cogent argument for disbelief is the complacency of believers." Mike White's chronicle of attempting to reinvigorate the faith and mission of a large suburban parish is a compelling story of transformation. He accurately captures the essence of many a catholic parish, immersed in a culture of complacent faith and demanding religious consumerism, re-organizing the parish for evangelization. His willingness to take the best of the competing models of church in US culture and attempt integration with authentic Catholic tradition, sacramental life and gospel values is inspiring. I shudder, however, at the prospect of this book being taken as a template for many. The success of the Timonian transformation is less about what was done, and more about a prophet carefully and courageously heralding a message that "is not one of comfort and joy." To expect what is leaving our seminaries today to provide prophetic leadership in the mode of Mike White is quixotic. Chapter 4, "War in Heaven" which describes the tactics of engagement for confronting and challenging intransigent attitudes requires highly refined leadership skills, humility and experiment. A caution to pastors who use these methods as a pretext for "introduction of a new order" without entering a spirit of lamentation, submission, chastisement, and collaboration, seeking the Holy Desire, rather than their own.

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