

# The Evangelical Catholic Recognizes Heroic Work for Apostolic Advancement at Biennial Event

*Fr. Paul Soper and Joseph Adams honored with distinguished award*

**San Antonio, TX, January 23, 2025**— At its second [Priests for an Apostolic Age Conference](#), an innovative gathering of clergy focused on working together to advance the Gospel in a modern context, the Evangelical Catholic hosted the Avery Cardinal Dulles Apostolic Activity Award Banquet. The ceremony honored two individuals for responding to the Great Commission of “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations.” The *ad intra* award was presented to Fr. Paul Soper of the Archdiocese of Boston, and the *ad extra* award was given to Joseph Adams of the Diocese of Cleveland.

“Avery Cardinal Dulles was one of the world’s most prominent theologians until his death in 2008. He was a powerful voice in America advocating for the Catholic nature of evangelization and the necessity to equip Catholics to fulfill the Great Commission,” noted the Evangelical Catholic President Jason Simon. “Our goal with this award is to provide a platform that shines a light on models of exemplary apostolic activity that truly embody the hopes of Cardinal Dulles’ teachings and further the apostolic vision of the Church.”

The Awards Banquet was the capstone of the Priests for an Apostolic Age Conference, an event co-sponsored by the [Catholic Leadership Institute \(CLI\)](#), specifically created to equip bishops, priests, and deacons for apostolic leadership. This year’s conference was attended by 150 members of the clergy, including four bishops, who received inspiration and practical tools to recharge their ministries and instill a culture of missionary discipleship in their communities.

The awards come from a question first posed at the Second Vatican Council: “How does the Church of the 20th century respond to the Master’s Ultimate Commandment?” In answer to the question, the Council sought to clarify the Church’s mission both within (*ad intra*) and reaching outward (*ad extra*) to more fruitfully make disciples.

Fr. Paul Soper was honored with the *ad intra* award. Formerly the Director of Evangelization for the Archdiocese of Boston, he currently serves as the Archdiocese’s Secretary for Ministerial Personnel. Soper was instrumental in architecting and implementing Boston’s multi-stage parish collaboration process, which included education, training, and consulting for clergy, staff, and laity throughout the region to help the Church refocus on its essential mission of evangelization. Soper has been a promoter of Catholic Leadership Institute’s revolutionary [Disciple Maker Index](#) since its inception in 2013. The Disciple Maker Index is a 75-question survey that offers profound insight into where parishioners are in their faith journey and their experience of parish life.

Joseph Adams of Avon Lake, OH, in the Diocese of Cleveland, received the *ad extra* award, an honor bestowed on a layperson. Adams is a lifelong Catholic who has now retired from his position as a senior

partner in a large public accounting firm. A robust travel schedule and long hours left little time for a real relationship with Jesus. Yet, his prayer for growing closer to Jesus was answered when he was invited into [Reach More™](#) Mission Training, a lay formation process offered by the Evangelical Catholic that equips parishioners to lead intentional lives of discipleship and evangelization. As a result of his training and formation, Adams now gathers business friends and contacts for drinks, Scripture discussion, and sometimes cigars. The group has been growing for four years and men of various levels of spiritual engagement attend. Joe is thrilled that the Holy Spirit led him to provide this place where men can grow in faith through friendships and Scripture, even if they're not ready to be Catholic or go to Mass.

Individuals were nominated across both award categories, *ad intra* and *ad extra*. Many among them are engaged in everyday work answering the Great Commission that has resulted in the prolific advancement of the Gospel. Award recipients were selected from a nominating committee of leaders from parishes, dioceses, and Catholic organizations.

For more information about The Evangelical Catholic, visit <https://www.evangelicalcatholic.org>.

Jason Simon is available for comment. To request an interview, contact Joanne Runyon at the Evangelical Catholic at [jrunyon@evangelicalcatholic.org](mailto:jrunyon@evangelicalcatholic.org).

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**About the Evangelical Catholic:** The Evangelical Catholic is a non-profit organization dedicated to transforming lay people into zealous leaders who are equipped to joyfully make disciples in their communities. This is done through their hallmark Reach More™ formation process, which establishes participants in prayer and the sacraments, forms them in apostolic consciousness, and trains them in practical ways to lead their circles of influence into discipleship.

**About Catholic Leadership Institute:** Catholic Leadership Institute provides bishops, priests, religious, deacons, and lay persons in the Roman Catholic Church with world-class, pastoral leadership formation and consulting services that strengthen their confidence and competence in ministry, enabling them to articulate a vision for their local church, to call forth the gifts of those they lead, and to create more vibrant faith communities rooted in Jesus Christ.