Faith Formation

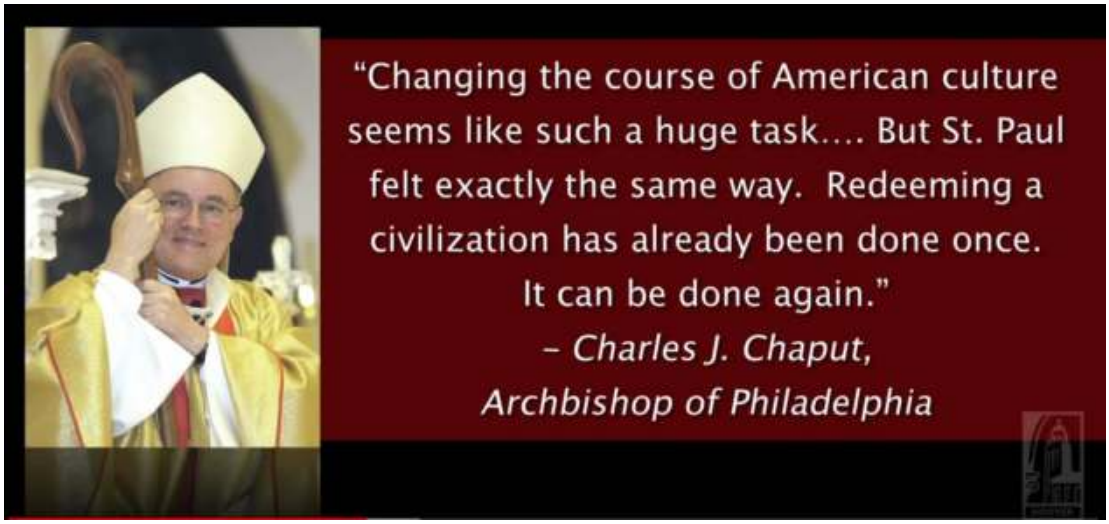
Evangelisation and Missionary Discipleship

Saints Peter, Paul and Patrick

Part 1: Paul - Apostle of Christ

Do We Need a St. Paul Today?

Content Resources used in Faith Formation Meeting on Sunday June 7th, 2020



To Evangelize

https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/evangelize

- To *evangelize* is to share religious beliefs, especially Christian ones, with other people. Preachers and ministers *evangelize* from the pulpit in their churches every Sunday.
- Certain Christians believe that it's important to evangelize to others — to preach the gospel and convey what they believe. In some cases, Christian missionaries travel to foreign countries to evangelize. The ultimate goal for those who evangelize tends to be converting non-Christians to Christianity. The word *evangelize* comes from the Church Latin *evangelizare*, "to spread or preach the Gospel," with the Greek root *euangelizesthai*, or "bring good news."

- vocabulary.com

Mission of the Catholic Church

Evangelisation

https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zcrgh39/revision/7
and Redemptoris Missio (Pope John Paul II)
https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio.html

- The Catholic Church's mission is to carry out and continue the work of Jesus Christ on Earth. The Church, and those in it, must:
  - Share the Word of God
  - Help those in need
  - Live as examples to all
- Through this, missionaries aim to evangelise individuals and convert them to the Catholic faith.
- The sharing of the Gospel and the life of Christ started with the commissioning and sending out of the 12 apostles.
- ***"Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you" - Matthew 28:19-20***
- At this command, Jesus is sending his first disciples out to continue his work and share the Word of God with the whole of humanity. This work and tradition is continued today by missionaries travelling the world, spreading the Gospel message and evangelising.

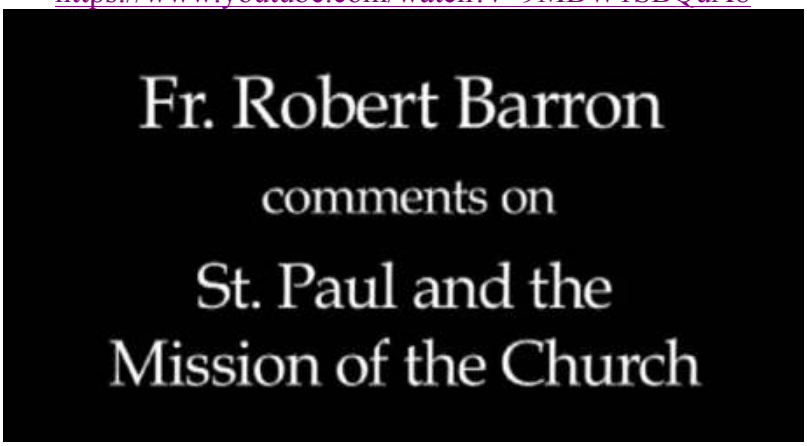
Ten Great Reasons to be Catholic

- Dynamic Catholic

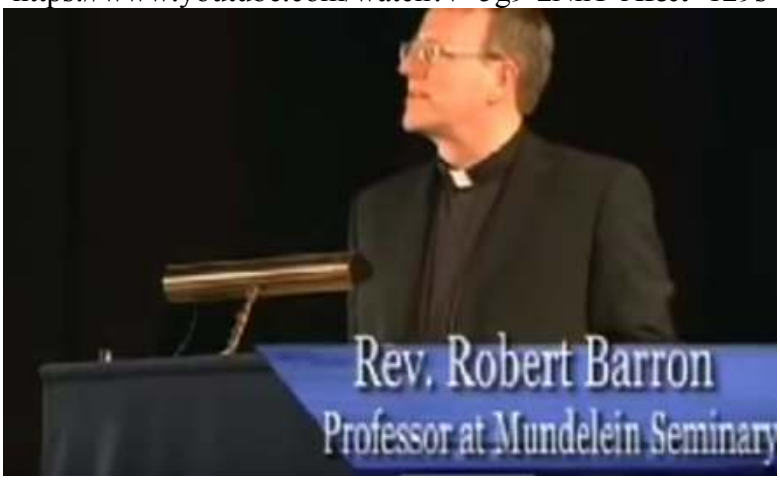
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tfOXBw-v9Ts)

Peter and Paul
The Indispensable Men
Catholicism Series – Bishop Robert Barron
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8qUW7IxapdU

Bishop Barron on St. Paul and the Mission of the Church
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9MBW1SBQuA8



St. Paul of Tarsus - Fr Robert Barron
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5g9-zNhT-AI&t=129s



Arrival of Christianity in Japan

Source - Wikipedia

A painting of Saint Francis Xavier, held in the Kobe City Museum
Saint Francis Xavier, S.J. (born April 7, 1506 – December 3, 1552), was a Navarrese Catholic missionary and saint who was the co-founder of the Society of Jesus. He also was the first Christian missionary to venture into Japan, Borneo, the Maluku Islands, and other areas. Xavier was about to extend his missionary preaching to China when he died on Shangchuan Island.

Alessandro Valignano (February 1539 – January 20, 1606) was an Italian Jesuit missionary who helped supervise the introduction of Catholicism to the Far East, and especially to Japan.
Valignano paved the way for a closer relationship between Asian and European peoples by advocating equal treatment of all human beings. He was a great admirer of the Japanese people and envisioned a future when Japan would be one of the leading Christian countries in the world. He famously wrote that the Japanese "excel not only all the other Oriental peoples, they surpass the Europeans as well".[6]
He sent to Europe four Japanese noblemen, led by Mancio Ito. This was the first official envoy from Japan to Europe.
Valignano founded the St. Paul's Jesuit college in Macau in 1594.
Valignano died in Macau during January 1606 and one of his Jesuit admirers noted in his Panegyric: "In [God] we lament not only our former visitor and father, but, as some would have it, the **apostle of Japan**."

Itō Mancio (伊東マンショ, c.1569 – 13 November 1612) was a Japanese Catholic priest. He was born in Tonokoori-gun, (now Saito, Miyazaki), to a noble family.

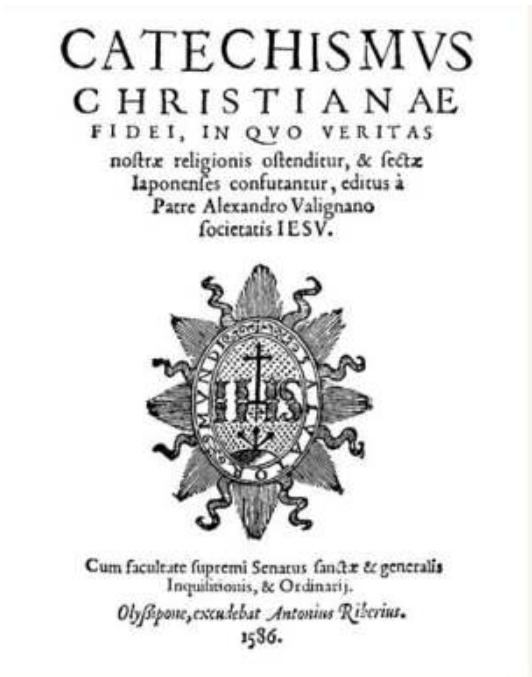
Itō Mancio studied theology and Latin at the seminary in Nagasaki. As leader of the Tenshō embassy (1582-90) he traveled to Europe where he met Popes Gregory XIII and Sixtus V in Rome. He returned to Japan in 1590, joined the Society of Jesus in 1593 and later became a priest. He engaged in missionary work in northwest Japan but soon was expelled from the local Kokura domain and then moved to the Nakatsu Domain. He was finally exiled to Nagasaki and became a teacher at the seminary, where he died of disease in 1612.

Tensho embassy of 1582

Four young Japanese Christians visit Europe as official ambassadors

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tensh%C5%8D_embassy

The four Japanese sent by Alessandro Valignano to Europe, with Father Mesquita, in 1586.


CATECHISMVS
CHRISTIANAE
FIDEI, IN QVO VERITAS
nostræ religionis ostenditur, & sectæ
Iaponenses confutantur, editus à
Patre Alexandro Valignano
societatis IESV.

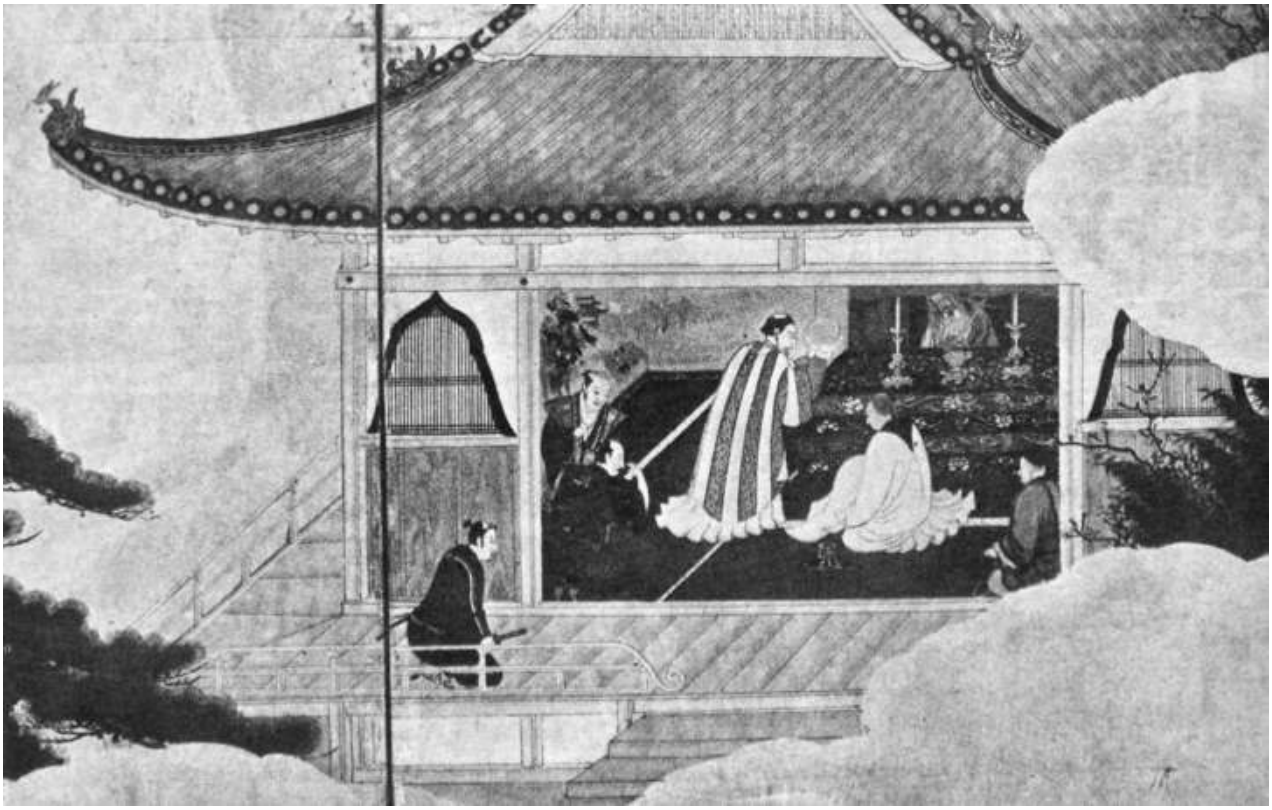
Cum facultate supremi Senatus sanctæ & generalis
Inquisitionis, & Ordinarij.
Olyssipone, excudebat Antonius Riberius.
1586.

"Catechismus christianae fidei" by (Lisbon, 1586) in Japan

A book written by **Alessandro Valignano** was the fundamnetal basis for Christian evangelism in Japan. It covers Western academic knowledge including philosophy and science.

Statue of the Saviour
This statue was discovered in Osaka.
The image of a prayer with rosary was popular by Japanese Christians
http://www.seinan-gu.ac.jp/museum/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/10umi.pdf

Kirishitan book in Japanese 16th century
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Kirishitan_book_in_Japanese_16th_century.jpg



Celebrating a Christian Mass in Japan
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:CelebratingAChristianMassInJapan.jpg

Keichō Embassy (慶長使節) of Hasekura Tsunenaga

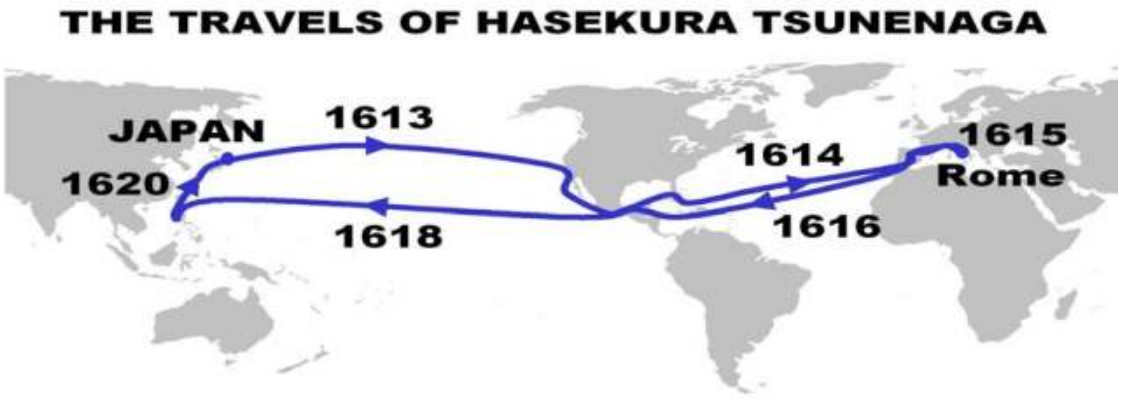
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hasekura_Tsunenaga

Hasekura's portrait during his mission in Rome in 1615 by Claude Deruet

Hasekura Tsunenaga was a kirishitan Japanese samurai and retainer of Date Masamune, the *daimyō* of Sendai of Japanese imperial descent with ancestral ties to Emperor Kanmu.

In the years 1613 through 1620, Hasekura headed a diplomatic mission to Pope Paul V.

Rosaries found in Hasekura's estate in 1640



Hasekura's embassy to the Pope in Rome in 1615. Japanese painting, 17th century.
Crossing the Pacific aboard the San Juan Bautista, a ship built for the purpose by Masamune, Hasekura transited New Spain (arriving in Acapulco and departing from Veracruz) and visited Spain and various other ports-of-call in Europe on the way. This historic mission is called the *Keichō* Embassy (慶長使節), and follows the *Tenshō embassy* (天正使節) of 1582. On the return trip, Hasekura and his companions re-traced their route across New Spain in 1619, sailing from Acapulco for Manila, and then sailing north to Japan in 1620. He is conventionally considered the first Japanese ambassador in the Americas and in Spain.

- Source - Wikipedia

7 Characteristics
Every Authentic Evangelist Must Have

https://catholic-link.org/7-characteristics-authentic-evangelist/

- Catholic Link –

-

- Characteristics of an authentic evangelist:
- 1. A Solid Faith
- 2. Coherence of Life
- 3. Much Humility
- 4. Faithfulness in the Little Things
- 5. A Solid Interior Life
- 6. Lots of joy! ("A sad saint would be a sorry saint.")
- 7. Continual Formation (Read a Lot, Write…)

The painter paints, the writer writes, the dancer dances. Following this logic, we could say that **the evangelist evangelizes**. But, is this true? Is it really true that the person who evangelizes is an evangelist? In order to take Christ to others, it's necessary to experience Him first, since no one can give what he or she doesn't have, nor love what he or she doesn't know. Being an authentic evangelist doesn't come out of the blue, it is the result of a gradual process that takes some time. It is a constant learning from the teacher on the part of the disciple. It's the fruit of a close relationship, of a friendship. That relationship reflects on the deeds of the evangelist. **How can I be an authentic evangelist?** How can I give testimony to the world of what I believe and who I am? First and foremost, strengthen your own relationship with the Master; second, make a personal examination, and see if these 7 characteristics reflect your life. If that is the case, you're on the right track.

Characteristics of an authentic evangelist:

1. A Solid Faith

This is essential. Without faith, we cannot evangelize. I'm not talking only of having faith in Christ, the Father, and the Holy Spirit, but also having faith in the Church and her Teachings. I've heard some people say: *"I evangelize, I take Christ to others…but I don't really agree with the Pope…"* How come you don't agree with the Pope? Are you Catholic or not? We must not only believe what benefits us or what we like; we must believe what God has revealed and disposes for our salvation. **Our faith is complete, it cannot be a "cafeteria" faith, where we take only what we like, and leave the rest**. This is why the authentic evangelist must say to the Lord: *"I do believe, help my unbelief!"* (Mk. 9: 24), and renew daily his or her commitment to Christ, to knowing and loving Him more.

"Faith is the realization of what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen. Because of it the ancients were well attested. By faith we understand that the universe was ordered by the word of God, so that what is visible came into being through the invisible…while keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, the leader and perfecter of faith. For the sake of the joy that lay before him he endured the cross, despising its shame, and has taken his seat at the right of the throne of God" (Heb. 11:1-3. 12,2).

2. Coherence of Life

St. Padre Pio of Pietrelcina used to say: *"Do good everywhere, so that everyone can say: 'this is a son of Christ.'"* Ask yourself: Do my deeds reflect Jesus? Can those who see me say that I am an authentic Christian? (Think about it…) **Do not think that coherence of life is a heavy burden, something unbearable. On the contrary, it's what gives us happiness and encourages us to continue walking on the right path**. Humility is the key. By recognizing that we are in constant need of God, and that He wants to need us. We cannot evangelize, we are not the true light; but let our mission be the reflection of the Light of God. It is Christ who lives and evangelizes in us. We must ask God for humility, this is the only way we will be a living testimony of Jesus.

"A man named John was sent from God. He came for testimony, to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to testify to the light" (Jn. 1:6-8).

3. Much Humility

Here I want to elaborate on the characteristic I introduced in the previous point. What does it mean to be humble? *"Humility is truth,"* said Saint Teresa of Avila. And this is very true. We cannot be what we are not. Humility means to be a true child of God. Humility means to recognize that we are sinners. Humility means to know that without God there is nothing we can do! Humility means not to believe that we are superior than others, believing that we are better. Humility has a practical effect in every Christian's life. One is humble by *being* humble, and this takes some effort, too. In order to be always humble, **it's necessary to practice humility**. This is a very important element of Evangelization. I am humble when we know that the work is not mine, but God's. When we don't take credit for something we haven't done. Whose is the Kingdom of God? Whose is the Church? Everything belongs to God, we merely collaborate, we only contribute. Humility always, that's the Christian attitude.

"Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves, each looking out not for his own interests, but (also) everyone for those of others. Have among yourselves the same attitude that is also yours in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:3-5)

4. Faithfulness in the Little Things

Saint Josemaría Escrivá said: *"Rest assured that you will usually find few opportunities for dazzling deeds, one reason being that they seldom occur. On the other hand, you will not lack opportunities, in the small and ordinary things around you, of showing your love for Christ"* (Friends of God, 8). That's it. He couldn't have said it better. The ordinary, what is small in our eyes, is a great opportunity to be faithful in our love for the Lord, For example: when we are on a bus, we can offer our seat to someone else; when we're standing in the bank line, we can cede our place to an elderly or disabled person… all these are the "small things of life" which, with love, become great things!

"The person who is trustworthy in very small matters is also trustworthy in great ones; and the person who is dishonest in very small matters is also dishonest in great ones. If, therefore, you are not trustworthy with dishonest wealth, who will trust you with true wealth?" (Lk. 16:10-11).

5. A Solid Interior Life

Interior life? This simply refers to the intimate union with Christ. A real, natural, personal, and constant union. Union with Christ? Yes, spiritually speaking, being united with Christ means that He is always present in our life. He really is, but we can increase that union through constant dialogue and conversations with Him (prayer), through the theological virtues (faith, hope, and love), and by actively partaking of the Sacraments. In short, by making God a central part of our life, and doing everything in our hands to strengthen this relationship everyday. Careful! Interior life can be easily lost! Yes, when we prefer other things, when we stop going to Mass simply because we are in our comfort zone, when we stop praying. The interior life doesn't guarantee that everything will be alright all the time; indeed, sometimes the opposite happens, and we're given more occasions to grow in that love of God through tribulations and sorrows. The important thing is to walk always hand in hand with God, united with Him.

"Love the LORD, your God,c follow him in all his ways, keep his commandments, hold fast to him, and serve him with your whole heart and your whole self" (Josh. 22:5).

6. Lots of joy! ("A sad saint would be a sorry saint.")

Joy is one of those things that is easily transmitted. Sometimes when we're sad, it only takes a smile from someone to cheer us up. Joy goes beyond the moment. Saint Francis of Assisi said: *"Above all the graces and all the gifts of the Holy Spirit which Christ grants to his friends, is the grace of overcoming oneself, and accepting willingly, out of love for Christ, all suffering, injury, discomfort and contempt,"* this is where real joy is. We are not happy when we don't have any problems or sorrows, but when we're capable of seeing God with us, that carries our cross and encourages us to continue. Joy is, in synthesis, to know that God, our Merciful Father, loves us. Can anyone aspire to something better than this? No. God's love is the greatest thing, that's why we're joyful.

"Rejoice in the Lord always. I shall say it again: rejoice! Your kindness should be known to all. The Lord is near. Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God" (Phil. 4:4-6).

7. Continual Formation (Read a Lot, Write…)

School, colleges, institutes, etc. are institutions that helps us to learn. The church as Mother and teacher also provides us with this space of formation in the Christian field, which we call catechesis. Every Catholic has gone through at least 3 years of catechesis. 3 years! And, what have we learned? Hmmm… Sometimes we don't know how to respond to the questions of our non-Catholic friends. The problem is that we don't thoroughly know our faith. This is why there exists continuous formation. It's not enough to know "something" about our faith, we must go deeper. Knowing the Bible, mainly, the Sacraments, grace, forgiveness, love, etc. To read, write, share the faith, talk about it with others, and create study groups are all good ideas to set ourselves up to always be learning more about Christ and his teachings.

"Thus says the LORD: Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, nor the strong man glory in his strength, nor the rich man glory in his riches; but rather, let him who glories, glory in this, that in his prudence he knows me, Knows that I, the LORD, bring about kindness, justice and uprightness on the earth; For with such am I pleased, says the LORD" (Jer 9:22-23).

After having read and analyzed these 7 points, I invite you to make a commitment to the Lord. It's always good, as a fruit, to commit to do something. Working to improve a defect, being more constant in our ministry, attending and paying attention in Mass, praying for half an hour every day, etc. That way we'll know that what we have reflected on has a real impact in our life. The Christian life is to constantly be at work. "One who doesn't progress in his or her spiritual life, goes backwards," because life is constantly moving and we're swimming against the current. So, start up and don't stop walking with Christ, helping your brothers and sisters with joy and coherence of faith, praying always for those who are weak in their faith, and always letting Jesus transform your life, day by day.

This post by Edgar Henriquez originally appeared here for Catholic-Link Spanish, and was translated by Lorena Tabares.

Ten Keys to Effective Evangelization

By Dr. Jeff Mirus (bio - articles - email) | Dec 12, 2012

https://www.catholicculture.org/commentary/ten-keys-to-effective-evangelization/

One of our supporters wrote recently to ask what was supposed to be "new" about the New Evangelization. He had found that many people seemed to be waiting for Rome to issue instructions on a new *kind* of evangelization, different from the past, which would somehow solve the *problem* of evangelization. But this is a misunderstanding. The New Evangelization is called "new" because it is directed at people in once-Christian cultures. Individuals within those cultures may need to hear about Christ almost as if for the first time, but taken as a whole, we can see that these once-Christian peoples and once-Christian cultures need to be evangelized "anew".

It is perhaps unfortunate that many Catholics have come to expect that their duties will always be encapsulated in "a program". But in general, this habit developed because of the weakness of the Church and the Faith in the West over the past few generations, a weakness by which "programs" somehow came to replace spiritual growth and commitment. I note with gratitude that our bishops are beginning to realize this. For example, when the USCCB announced its campaign of prayer and fasting for marriage and religious liberty earlier this month, Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone of San Francisco said: "It's not meant to be another program but rather part of a movement for life, marriage, and religious liberty, which engages the New Evangelization and can be incorporated into the Year of Faith."

Yet vestiges remain. Just this week Baltimore's Archbishop Lori emphasized at a conference in Rome the need for collaboration among the bishops in North, Central and South America to make evangelization effective. There is nothing objectionable in Archbishop Lori's call for collaboration, especially insofar as he recommended that we all turn to Our Lady of Guadalupe. But in fact collaboration at the episcopal level has very little to do with evangelization—and will not make it effective—unless each bishop labors to renew the faith in his own diocese. It is here that a new evangelization must begin, as each seeks to transform nominal Catholics into holy Catholics. For one of the most important aspects of authentic holiness is a sense of *mission*.

These considerations prompt a modest exercise. I wish to offer ten points which will lead to authentic spiritual renewal, a keen sense of mission, and effective evangelization. In enumerating these points, I will move from goals, through disciplines of renewal, to tools of evangelization. I make no claim that the list is exhaustive. After all, even the number ten is something of a gimmick.

But I believe all of these points must be incorporated into what we might call an effective Christian life, a life that evangelizes—a life that draws others to Christ.

Goals

What sort of person do we desire to become if we are to be effective evangelizers? It goes without saying that this effectiveness will necessarily depend on the grace of God, and so we must open ourselves to grace as widely and deeply as possible. Our Lord's life must flow through us to others. For this purpose, concepts like faith, hope, charity and holiness come to mind, but they are perhaps too vague to be useful, so I will first focus on four "ways of being" which define what we want to become.

1. Personal Relationship with Christ: This will surprise nobody, but it still needs to be stressed. It is very easy to become what we might call a Catholic by rote, that is, somebody who follows a kind of minimal set of rules, living the Christian life in an essentially *prescriptive* way. Such a person frequently asks, "What do I need to do to at least make it to purgatory?" Or "What does the Church require of me to be a 'good Catholic'?" It is often observed that this attitude was far too widespread among the laity in the first half of the twentieth century, and that an important part of the purpose of the Second Vatican Council was to shake the Church out of this sort of complacency. In any case, our Christian life must be defined and motivated first and foremost by a personal love of Jesus Christ.

2. Personal Relationship with the Church: Any significant theological reflection will reveal that this point is simply another side of the first point. The Church is the Body of Christ, united by Christ's assimilation of us to Himself in the Eucharist, and inseparably joined to Christ the Head. All that Our Lord offers to draw men and women into union with God is made available through the Church. This is a consequence of His saving passion, death and resurrection, the fruits of which are specifically actuated by her sacraments and, in a different way, by her Magisterium, which safeguards Revelation so that we "may be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim 2:4). This fundamental ecclesial reality is often obscured by the sins and weaknesses of the Church's members, but we must never permit it to be obscured in our own spiritual perception. In other words, the second point is like unto the first: Our Christian life must be defined and motivated by a deep personal love of the Church.

3. A Different Way of Living Morally: This too may go without saying, and yet it is easily overlooked by Catholics who do not lead what we call an "examined" life. Our moral behavior must become the behavior of a Christian, that is, of a saint. How we live in our daily life—in our personal and sexual relations, in our speech, in our social attitudes, in our use of time, in our priorities—must be marked by Christian, that is, saintly values. Obviously, if we are serious about the first two relationships, Christlike ethics will follow. And if this difference in moral living really becomes a "way of being" for us, it will be noticed. We need frequent self-examination in light of the Commandments and the teachings of the Church, extending their implications into every dark corner of our old habits and self-love, in order to develop the robust moral habits of a Christian.

4. Different Attitudes, Responses and Emotions: There is more to the difference I am describing here than avoidance of serious sin. As we mature in the Christian life, we find (or ought to find) that we do not react to news, entertainment, surprises, victories, defeats, stresses and strains as our neighbors do. Our ears do not perk up at the prospect of gossip; we do not thirst for the same popular entertainments; our fashions are not dictated by celebrities. If we are struggling with some difficulty, we are not sad or short-tempered. Should we be humiliated in some way, we are not downcast. Contradicted, we take no offense. Victorious, we deflect credit and never gloat. Boasting is to us a shameful reminder of the weaknesses of the "old man". We do not seek to avoid

responsibility. In the calm, inner-directed stability of our "being", we become more pleasing to God and immensely more attractive to others.

Disciplines of Renewal

The four points above certainly qualify as a tall order. How do we habituate ourselves to these "ways of being"? I am not interested here in what the Church, or the bishop, or the priest "ought to do" to make this happen. Each person's spiritual perfection will bear fruit in the realm of his own life and responsibilities. But how does each and every Christian grow in these ways? In response to this question, the answer will not be so surprising, and it certainly will not be new. It is the perennial three-fold path:

5. Prayer: Put simply, the Christian life cannot be lived without prayer, and plenty of it. I include in this category the all-important regular reception of the Sacraments of the Church, which have a special power to fill us with the life of Christ—but a power than we can effectively utilize only if we have the right dispositions. And the right dispositions grow through prayer. It is through prayer that we learn to know God, to know ourselves, to recognize the difference, to discern God's will generally and particularly, and to increase in the theological virtues of faith, hope and love. Among other forms of prayer, Eucharistic adoration should play an important role, for obvious reasons. In any case, to put the matter very simply, Christians pray; if they do not, they are not really Christians. Eventually, they learn to pray always, practicing the presence of God, but most often they must set aside specific time for prayer, in accordance with their vocational duties. Even Our Lord went off frequently to pray. See also the advice given in **Lk 21:36, 1 Thes 5:17 and Eph 6:18**.

6. Spiritual Reading: Here we have the most accessible form of spiritual instruction and direction, the practice of slowly reading and meditating on Scripture and the works of the great saints and doctors approved by the Church. Our interpretations of these things, through our deep love of the Church, will always be subject to correction by Church teaching, a sound spiritual director, or at least a perusal of the *Catechism*. Nonetheless, spiritual reading should be both an important foundation of our prayer life and a vital means of spiritual, intellectual and moral formation. We should never be far from a good spiritual book, with which we can focus our minds, combat distractions, and open ourselves in a safe and constructive way to the movement of the Holy Spirit in prayer. For nearly all souls, spiritual reading immensely accelerates spiritual growth. God works in us in many other ways, of course, but for a literate person, it takes an extraordinary action of God, really an extra miracle of grace, to compensate for an unwillingness to take advantage of solid, prayerful spiritual reading. On this see also **2 Tim 3:16**.

7. Charitable Works: Works of charity are at once a spiritual discipline and a fruit of our love of God and neighbor. Here I treat them primarily in the former sense—as a means to the end defined in our first four points. Charity always involves personal sacrifice; there is, after all, nearly always something that we would rather be doing. We must cultivate the discipline of charity as a part of our habituation to the Christian life. For this reason, I include within "charity" those penitential exercises which we ought to perform out of love for God, to curb our passions, strengthen our wills, and "make up what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ" (Col 1:24). And although our left hand ought not to know what our right hand is doing (Mt 6:3), Our Lord did call attention to charity as an important aspect of evangelization: "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (**Jn 13:35**).

Particular Tools for Evangelization

Perhaps all of the foregoing is too obvious. But perhaps that is part of the point. There is no magic bullet for evangelization, no particular program to guarantee results, no decree to be passed down

from on high to generate mass conversions. If we are waiting for something like this, we will wait in vain. I will not deny that at different times and places, new forms of effective witness have been developed and implemented which have born great fruit in particular situations. Hopefully we can find equally fruitful ways of reaching out to people and getting their attention in our own time. That is a discussion for another day. But a more pressing question is simply this: What important tools of the Christian life ought each one of us to sharpen so as to improve our results in spreading the Gospel?

8. Knowledge of Scripture: The two great sources of Revelation are Scripture and Tradition, but while Tradition benefits people spiritually insofar as it is lived and handed on, as it seeps into our bones over time, Scripture has a direct and immediate spiritual power as the Word of God. This is not primarily a matter of proof-texting. That is something one might do in apologetics with Protestants, who already accept the authority of Scripture but misunderstand the fullness of Divine Revelation on various points. Here I am referring to something like what happened to the eunuch for whom Philip interpreted the words of Isaiah (Acts 8:26-39). There is salvific power in Scripture. We do well to work it into our discussions, helping to explain the Word of God made flesh by the Word of God in Scripture.

9. Traditions and Customs: In our secularized societies, we have lost much of the warp and woof of the Christian life in our daily personal, familial and community habits, customs and celebrations. I am referring here to traditions with a small "t", both the kinds of little practices and customs which populate the liturgical year section on CatholicCulture.org and the larger habits of family prayer, meals in common, hospitality, rules of Christian courtship, and all such methods of more easily incorporating a guiding spirituality into work, recreation and life as a whole. Those who are admitted to our circle will observe such things. Practical questions will frequently arise, and we must provide answers. For example:

"With our children, we did not allow 'dating'; we promoted and allowed only wholesome group activities with opposite sexes until such-and-such an age." Or "Here is a grace you can say before meals, and one you can say after, ensuring that all come before the opening grace, engage in family conversation, and leave the table only after the closing." Or "We have a Eucharistic procession in our parish on Corpus Christi—it promises to be a beautiful day, why not join us?"

Just so: Our faith should be reflected in a thousand concrete ways, both small and large. By excluding its beneficent influence from any segment of life, either out of laziness or fear, we lose immense opportunities for both ourselves and others.

10. The Skill of Detachment: Let me close with something that might seem a bit unusual. I believe all effective evangelists need to recognize (and live in accordance with) sharp distinctions between, on the one hand, all that is definitely revealed by God as essential to Christ and, on the other hand, all of our favorite opinions on such things as politics, culture, entertainment, private devotions, personal dress, and a hundred other things which prevent our interacting with others as the potential kindred spirits that they really are. St. Paul put this eloquently: "I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (1 Cor 9:22). If we want to preach the Gospel, we cannot insist that our prescriptions on everything from foreign policy to sacred music must also be received and accepted as oracles of God. How often we get in our own way, putting others off because we intrude so much of ourselves into every discussion! The goal in evangelization is for us to speak in a way that enables others to hear, not us, but Christ. For this to happen, detachment from our own prejudices, preferences and opinions is essential.

Not Done Yet

A word to the disappointed: I know you did not find a new formula here, a new discovery of how to "make evangelization work". As I said earlier, if this is what you are looking for, you are looking for something that does not exist; you are relying on programs in an area in which we must rely on Christ's desire to use our poor efforts as a conduit of grace. Nonetheless, two caveats are in order.

First, it would be wrong to conclude that nothing more is necessary. The unique challenge of what the Church is calling the *new* evangelization is that it must take place in a culture in which Christianity is partially known yet widely rejected as an affront to civilized behavior. Our culture frowns on the introduction of Jesus Christ in any but the most private circumstances. We have been raised in and formed by this highly secular culture, and we have imbibed its prescriptions. Speaking of Christ, of Faith, of Church is really not quite the thing. It simply isn't done! Not by a gentleman, anyway. Self-evidently, evangelization cannot occur unless we can overcome this inculturated reluctance in ourselves. Only if that is overcome can we explore possible specific paths or tactics of evangelization which might bear fruit (as we began to do in Evangelization Ideas). Obviously there is more work to be done regarding practical methods, but only the spiritual growth outlined above can lead us to break the barrier of respectability which our culture has established between man and God.

Second, if evangelization ultimately depends on the kind of growth and commitment outlined above, it would still be wrong to argue that we should not involve ourselves in Christian witness until we are perfect. We will never be perfect; nor does Our Lord require perfection before we dare to preach. For His part, He loved all of us while we were still in our sins, and even with all of our sins, by His sacrifice Our Lord has made us as worthy to speak His name as others are to hear it. This essay is about how to become more effective at evangelization, not about how to begin. We must remember that we are not trying to promote ourselves. Rather, we are trying to promote Jesus Christ—partly for the reason that He is more than willing to make up for all of our deficiencies.

This brings me back again to the last of the ten points, *detachment*. Self-detachment is part of knowing the difference between who we are and who God is. After all, it is not we ourselves who are the way, the truth and the life. In a previous essay on the three most important characteristics of an evangelizer, I stressed humility, hospitality, and trust in God. This is the way to begin. Let people criticize our own weaknesses, as long as they criticize them in the light of Christ. Let them shoot the messenger, as long as they get the message.

The Five Traits of an Evangelizing Parish

(based on the book, 'The Evangelizing Parish' by Cardinal Francis Arinze)

Vladimir Mauricio-Perez - Denver Catholic October 11, 2018

https://denvercatholic.org/the-five-traits-of-an-evangelizing-parish/

Far from being a place where people can hide and live comfortably, the parish is a Eucharistic community that is called to "launch into the deep" because it is, "by nature," missionary, as the first Christians were. It is called to be open to the surrounding community, to those who have not received the Good News, says Cardinal Francis Arinze, former Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, in his new book *The Evangelizing Parish* (Ignatius Press).

Ahead of his presentation on the book at the John Paul II Lecture Series in Denver Nov. 6, here are five essential qualities that he says make up an *Evangelizing Parish*.

All of its 'major actors' cooperate

Cardinal Arinze assures that in an evangelizing parish, the chief actors of the parish community are active in their own respective ways: the parish priest, other priests, religious brothers and sisters, the lay faithful, ecclesial movements, Catholic associations and small communities.

Other than being an administrator of the goods of the parish, the pastor acts as the extension of the bishop, the cardinal says, and "should have a deep experience of the living Christ and be priest with a burning missionary spirit in going in search of the lost sheep." He should also be distinguished for his "sound doctrine" and "integrity of morals." Pastors should strive to live in fraternity with other priests and welcome the charisms of the religious brothers and sisters, who "can be of great help in the parish witness of Christ."

The lay faithful make up 99.9 percent of the Church worldwide and share in the evangelizing activity by cooperating in inner-Church affairs and in the secular order. “Their activity is so necessary within the Church communities that without it, the apostolate of the pastor is often unable to achieve its full effectiveness,” the cardinal writes. Their participation in the parish ranges from forming or partaking in faith formation programs to serving the poor and helping in parish building projects. Called to evangelize the temporal order, they are to bring the spirit of Christ beyond the parish, to the family, workplace and even politics.

It teaches the faith

An evangelizing parish is a place where its members are nourished. With cooperation of other priests, religious, or the laity, the parish priest has the duty of teaching and preaching God’s word to the parish community, “so that, rooted in faith, hope and charity, they will grow in Christ, and as a Christian community bear witness to that charity which the Lord commended,” Cardinal Arinze writes, quoting the Second Vatican Council.

“Sacred Scripture has a key and honored place in the imparting of the Christina doctrine,” he says. And assures that all ordinary activities, communities and movements should be examined in its light, “’to see if they are truly concerned with fostering a personal encounter with Christ, who gives himself to us in his word.’” The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* also has an honored place, for it allows priests and catechists to give genuine religious instruction to the people in our time.

Moreover, the priest should see the homily as a “major area of responsibility” in which he beautifully presents the liturgical texts. The cardinal urges that homilies not be too long and strive to cover most areas of the Catholic faith over a period of about three years.

It prays

“Effective witness to Christ is not an exercise to be achieved by mere human effort,” Cardinal Arinze states. “Prayer and Christian life are inseparable.” The Holy Eucharist occupies a central place in this regard because from it, “as from a font, grace is poured forth upon us; and the sanctification of men in Christ and the glorification of God… is achieved in the most efficacious way possible.” For this reason, the parish priest must foster great reverence for it. “The way in which the priest celebrates Mass becomes, in a sense, a homily without words because it manifests his faith… and influences the congregation,” he says. While the Lord’s day is “the major weekly event at which the parish community gathers before the Lord,” the priest is to see that Mass is celebrated daily and promote that it also be reverenced outside of the celebration of Mass.

The other sacraments also have their importance in the life of evangelization of the parish, the Cardinal says. The required preparation for some sacraments provides an opportunity to help children and parents develop a relationship with Christ.

Moreover, besides promoting devotional groups of prayer, the parish community must work to teach its members the value and practice of personal prayer.

It opens out

Far from settling down to a type of “business as usual” method, “a parish is expected to look out in a dynamic way for what it can do for Christ,” the cardinal writes. There are in most parishes people who have not yet been reached with the Good News, lapsed Catholics and people who are poor and sick, he says. This going forth “can disturb one’s personal comfort,” but “readiness to make sacrifices for the Kingdom of Christ is part of what is required of the evangelizer.” Since a parish

community is to be “permanently in a state of mission,” it must always reach out, “as it should, to everyone living within the parish boundaries.”

The parish community should seek to enter into dialogue with non-Catholics, non-believers or non-Christians, in the light of proposing the Gospel of Christ. The parish should also reach out to the poor in the community or worldwide. Cardinal Arinze quotes Pope Francis’ warning to parishes who remain comfortable without helping the poor, saying that such community “will easily drift into a spiritual worldliness camouflaged by religious practices, unproductive meetings and empty talk.” The priest and community should also seek to accompany the sick or the homebound through personal visitations.

The cardinal further warns about the danger of “departing” the secular culture to form a secluded “Christian society,” for such action would contradict the apostolate specific to the laity to evangelize the secular sphere. Instead, he calls for hope and patience: “No matter the initial difficulties, the seed… will eventually sprout from the local ground… When Jesus sent his first disciples to evangelize the world, there were no Christian communities. The challenges posed by society were formidable. But the disciples did not quit.”

It fosters special apostolates

Among the many aspects of an evangelizing parish that Cardinal Arinze spells out, he also chooses to give attention to special parish apostolates that help the aforementioned characteristics take place. Among these are the apostolates to the family, to young people, to the education of children, to elderly citizens and to devotional groups.

In these, he highlights the importance of helping families pray together, educating their children in the use of social media, fostering vocations to the priesthood and religious life and forming groups according to professions that help the faithful be witnesses to Christ in their work.

- ***Compiled by Neil Day***
Aug 1st 2020