

Go and Teach all Nations (6-5-11)

Alleluia!

Alleluia! (echo from congregation): Alleluia!

He is risen! (echo): He is truly risen!

Such a joyous season.

So many of our Easter season prayers start or end with “Alleluia!”.

I love it!

The Commission from Jesus

As you see on the front lawn of church, we have a message for this Easter Season.

“Alleluia! Be joyful! Be faithful! Go Witness!”

Why “Go Witness”?

Jesus, our brother and our boss, says so!

Didn't you just hear me read in the Gospel of Matthew:

“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations.”

History

Through the last 2000 years Christians have spread the Good News about Jesus.

In the Acts of the Apostles we read of Peter and Paul and others preaching to the Jewish communities which were spread around the ancient world and also

preaching to the pagan communities around the know world.

Over the centuries we have heard of missionaries to India, Europe, Africa, Russia, China, Japan and the Americas.

The spread of the Word has been so effective that 1 out of every 3 people in the whole world is a Christian.

Half of all Christians are Roman Catholics.

The other half of Christians is divided into 38,000 Christian denominations.

In the USA 78.4% of the population is Christian.

I smile as I think of Jesus as both brother and boss.

I can almost hear him snicker,

“2000 years.

One third of the world is Christian.

So, after 2000 years you only have one third of the job done?!”

Recent Evangelization Guidance

Yet with all that experience the Church has continued the invitation initiated by Jesus, the invitation to Evangelize the world.

The Second Vatican Council in the 1960s called us to find new and better ways to explain the faith to people of today.

We have heard that invitation echo from Pope Paul VI back in the 1975 in his document:

On Evangelization in the Modern World

Pope John Paul II throughout his time as pope asked us to re-evangelize and recently again Pope Benedict XVI again invited us all to Evangelize.

Our own US bishops have taken up the cause of Evangelization and have given us here in the US guidance in a 1992 document

Go Make Disciples

In that document they ask us, the Church, to address Evangelization in three ways.

Guess where they start!?

Yes, they start with us, the church-goers!

The second place to Evangelize is with non-practicing or fallen-away Christians. Have you heard the abysmal statistic: What is the second largest denomination of Christians in the US? Ex-Catholics!

And, thirdly, the bishops guide us to Evangelization of the unchurched. With this modern age of communications we almost assume that everyone has heard of Jesus.

But our modern age also has so many things that occupy our time and energy that people have not had time to pay attention to the Lord.

I even heard a cute line lately.

Do you know what the “busy” means?

Being Under Satan’s Yoke.

I get a kick out of that Because it is so simple and so true.
Satan does not have to get us into all kinds of evil works ... he just has to keep us distracted enough with busyness that we do not have time to consider the Lord.

And there are lots and lots of people suffering with that affliction, busyness.

Local: The Archdiocese of Detroit (AOD)

The AOD has made Evangelization one of the key areas for emphasis.

That emphasis started several years ago but is clearly one of the most important issues to our current Archbishop, Bp Allen Vigneron.

A few years ago the AOD gave us guidelines on how to implement Evangelization.

Reading their guidelines we can see a trail of ideas from the Scriptures, to the Second Vatican Council, through the popes and bishops.

Here is some of the guidance they give us here at Corpus Christi as we look at ways to bring the Good News to others.

The AOD suggests we look at Evangelization in six areas.

Active Catholics

A call to ongoing conversion

Nominal Catholics

A call to hear the Gospel anew – re-evangelization

In-active (Alienated) Catholics

A call to reconciliation

Children

A call to be formed into disciples through

the family's faith life

and religious education

Other Christians

A call to the fullness of the Catholic faith

Non-Christians (unchurched)

A call to conversion to know Jesus

And thus experience a change to new life

With Christ

And with his Church

Three components of Catholic Evangelization

Witness – our lives of holiness – “actions speak louder than words”

Word – sharing the Gospel – “I was really moved by the Scripture story of the raising of Lazarus.”

Service – ministry of charity – “listening”

Listening

Going home to die ...

I have not been to church for 23 years because of a marriage problem with the Church

..

Replying

When I have had that situation here's what I have done and it worked for me

...

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Taking the hand of someone in need (charity)

The Our Father:

“Our Father, who art in heaven; hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; they will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

I can't help but think that we have a job description in there somewhere.

What should I be doing to bring about the kingdom?

How can I help the Lord's will to be done in the here and now?

You are invited!

Next Saturday at 9:30am in the Rainbow Room we want to work on formulating our parish Evangelization Committee.

It will be an umbrella organization providing guidance and support to our many Evangelization efforts.

If you have interest in such work, please pick up one of these fliers from the table at the back of church.

I would love to see you next Saturday morning.

I bet Jesus, our brother and our boss, would like your help as well.

If that is not a good time for you but you would like to help, just talk to me some time.

No time in your life for another activity?

Make a little time each day for prayer for the success of Evangelization,

especially here, locally.

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