

How Do Our Roles in the Church and the World Intersect?

Normally when Catholics think about “getting more involved” in church, they think about religious activities like lecturing at Mass, teaching catechism to children, joining a prayer group or bible study, being involved in a parish organization, or organizing some charitable outreach into the community. Of course, all of those are important ways of being “active” as a Catholic.

But as I have been emphasizing in this blog series, for the laity being an active member of the Church means, first and foremost, embracing the heart of the Church’s mission—which has a fundamentally *outward* focus. The natural habitat of the Church is the slums, the palace, the office, the bank, the farm, the supermarket, the home. Active Catholics bring Jesus out into the streets, bringing the “mind of Christ” to bear on every aspect of family and business, of politics and economics, of civic life and culture.

In a sense, all of the activities we engage in *inside* of our churches—the “religious things” we do—are meant to foster in us a hunger for our outward-bound world mission. In fact, this is how the Mass itself is structured. We are called out of our everyday lives into the celebration of the liturgy to encounter Christ and receive His grace, to offer up our lives as a living sacrifice of thanksgiving and be empowered to “Go out!” We are sent to consecrate every nook and cranny of our varied worlds with the treasures of wisdom, life and love we have received in Mass. God calls us into our parish churches to worship as a community of faith, Christ’s Body, so as to be drenched in Christ’s fire and cast outside the church walls into the world to set it ablaze!

So where do Church and world intersect? Everywhere! For if the Church is nothing other than the world made right by God’s redeeming grace, and if the members of the Church are those who “do the world” the way God intended it to be done, then anywhere and everywhere Christians find themselves in the world is THE point of intersection.

At this intersection between Church Street and Main Street, we will find the saints—those men and women through whom God loves our broken and wonderful world into civilization of life and grace, justice, love and peace. Into a City of God.



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