



MAY JESUS CHRIST BE PRAISED!

FEB. 09, 2020 / PRESENTATION OF OUR LORD

Spiritual Ponderings:

Mass and Evangelization II

A few years ago, a group of ex-Protestant ministers now Catholics gathered together and wrote a series of articles about what attracted them to the Catholic Church. They called the series *Catholic For a Reason*. The third volume of this series was titled: *Catholic For A Reason III: Scripture and the Mystery of the Mass* and focused on what it was about the Mass that they found so inspiring. For the month of February, I have decided to reflect with you on an article titled “The Mass And Evangelization” and it was written by Curtis Martin. Quotes from his article will be in bold and my commentary will be in normal font.



Many Catholics are not comfortable as evangelists. In our modern world, we are trained to live and let live, not to impose our views upon others. But, as we have seen, these attitudes have to be reexamined in light of Jesus’ Great Commission. We ought not to impose our views on others, but we have been commissioned by Christ Himself to charitably propose the truth of the Catholic faith to everyone.

We have to remember that being evangelizers is not also a call to be successful. It is more a call to plant the seed and to allow God to take over. If we get caught up with numbers, we will begin looking for force conversions and end up defeating our own purpose and drive more people away from the Church.

If we take a deeper look, we can see at least six reasons (3 this week and 3 next) why many Catholics are hesitant to share either faith with others.

1. Lack of belief in objective truth. As long as religion is seen only as a matter of preference, then our missionary zeal is thwarted. Catholics don’t believe that Jesus is God only for Christians; we must believe that He is God, period. If Jesus is God, then those who do not accept His claims of divinity are wrong—not evil—but wrong, broken by sin and in need of the healing and forgiveness that only Jesus can give. Telling someone about the forgiveness of Jesus Christ should be like telling someone suffering from cancer about a cure.

Our evangelization story can be really simple and follow this pattern. I was (describe how I was worse off before my faith conversion), then I met Jesus and now (describe how I am better off for having met Jesus). My would be I was a man who felt really depressed in life, then I developed a relationship with Jesus, and now I have a brand new joyous outlook on life. So as long as I think my life is better off for having faith and religion, I should want to share it with others.

2. A misunderstanding of the Church. Many people view separation from God as the only problem caused by sin. This is certainly the most significant effect, but not the only one. God originally created us to share kinship with Him and with one another. Humanity is intended to be a family. Salvation history can be summarized as

God's gracious initiative to reconstitute the broken family of Adam into the family of God. Being disinherited from God's family through sin is precisely what we are saved from.

We all want to belong and who would not want to be a part of God's family. The Church has its problems because it is made of human beings like you and me but it is the only place that has lasted for two-thousand years despite those problems. We are meant to be saved as a community and not as individuals.

3. A reluctance to use the name of "Jesus". Evangelization is essentially making an introduction, and in order to introduce someone, you must know his name. Catholics seem to be comfortable speaking about "the Lord" but find it more difficult to use the name "Jesus". Ironically and tragically, the name of our Lord is sometimes only heard when used in vain. Others, who would never dream of offending our Lord, show a sort of misguided reverence by never speaking His holy name. Listen to wisdom of Mother Church: "But the one name that contains everything is the one that the Son of God received in his incarnation: Jesus. The divine name may not be spoken by human lips, but by assuming our humanity the Word of God hands it over to us and we can invoke it: "Jesus" "YHWH saved" (Ex 3:14; 33:19-23; Mt. 1:21) (Catechism 2666).

As an introvert, I really hate being the center of attention and sometimes I feel like if I say Jesus's name then I will become the center of attention but then I think how I would feel if he refused to acknowledge my presence.

BREAKING OPEN THE WORD

February 9 2020 ♦ Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time ♦ Lectionary: 73 ♦ Gospel MT 5:13-16

Jesus said to his disciples: "You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned? It is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house. Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father."

Spiritual Reflection: Let us know confuse today's Gospel with a pep talk. God seriously wants to transform us into the instruments of peace.

Spiritual Questions:

1. Do I believe Jesus when he says that I am the salt of the earth? If so, how so? If not why?
2. How do I experience opportunities of servant leadership?
3. How does my sacramental theology and its practice reveal the light given to others?
4. Is my baptism shining as bright as it could be?
5. How does your weakness display God's grace?



Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Thought of the Day

Humility is, of course, the very ground of holiness.

Almighty God, my parish is composed of people like me. I help make it what it is.

There is nothing so great as the Eucharist. If God had something more precious, He would have given it to us. - John Vianney

We have a strange illusion that mere time cancels sin. But mere time does nothing either to the fact or to the guilt of a sin. - C. S. Lewis

Compassion asks us to go where it hurts, to enter into the places of pain, to share in brokenness, fear, confusion, and anguish. Compassion challenges us to cry out with those in misery, to mourn with those who are lonely, to weep with those in tears. Compassion requires us to be weak with

the weak, vulnerable with the vulnerable, and powerless with the powerless. Compassion means full immersion in the condition of being human. - Henri Nouwen

Friday

Pay attention to the people God puts in your path if you want to discern what God is up to in your life. - Henri Nouwen

Saturday

Hope is willing to leave unanswered questions unanswered and unknown futures unknown. Hope makes you see God's guiding hand not only in the gentle and pleasant moments but also in the shadows of disappointment and darkness. - **Henri Nouwen**

PRO-LIFE



February 2020

Prayer for People to Answer the Call to be People of Justice

We pray that Christians may do all they can to exert their influence for the cause of the Gospel morality and justice. May they show concern for the poor, the planet, and for peace.

In a special way may they never remain silent when there is a question of preserving life or destroying it, but always let our voice be heard bravely on the side of the God of the living.

God we ask you to be a refuge and fortress for those who have fallen away from the Church. Please rescue them from what ever evils led them away from your Son's Mystical Body and bring them back to Your Holy Church.



St. Monica Society

Please join us in praying a special prayer each month for Catholics who have fallen away from their faith.

Catholic Prayers

A SPIRIT TO KNOW YOU

Gracious and Holy Father, Please give me: intellect to understand you, reason to discern you, diligence to seek you, wisdom to find you, a spirit to know you, a heart to meditate upon you, ears to hear you, eyes to see you, a tongue to proclaim you, a way of life pleasing to you, patience to wait for you and perseverance to look for you. Grant me a perfect end, your holy presence, a blessed resurrection and life everlasting. (By St. Benedict of Nursia, ca. 480-547)

PRAYER OF SELF-ABANDONMENT

Father, I abandon myself into Your hands; Do with me whatever You will. Whatever You may do, I thank You. I am ready for all, I accept all. Let only Your will be done in me, And in all Your creatures. I wish no more than this, O Lord. Into Your hands I commend my spirit; I offer it to You, Lord, and so need to give myself, to surrender myself into Your hands, Without reserve and with boundless confidence, For You are my Father. Amen.



Humor

What do you call a priest in charge of the school play? The spiritual director.

—Man: What is a million years like to you? God: Like one second. Man: What is a million dollars like to you? God: Like one penny. Man: Can I have a penny? God: Just a second.