

Re-evangelization

Re-evangelization is a call for all practicing Catholics, and indeed, “all the faithful to move from a faith of habit, sustained perhaps by social context alone to a faith which is conscious and personally lived. It is a Catholic life of growing from only ritual practices into a personal relationship with Christ. So that having been renewed in their own faith, and convinced in their relationship with Christ, they will be better equipped to lead others to the truth that is Christ”.

John Paul II EA no.78.

Re-evangelization is the act of rediscovering the basic and the certainty of the word of God in worship and practice as our way of life worth of martyrdom. Re-evangelization, or new evangelization, is not an ideology, it is the act of understanding our faith and appreciating it all the more to the point of sharing it with others.

Many people argue that if it is not broken, it should not be fixed. I agree with this school of thought, except in the situation where “leaving it the way it is” will be grossly expensive over time or the unbroken part may be obsolete. The obvious truth is that as Christians, and more so Catholics, our relationship with Christ is broken and is breaking all the more. We recall with regret that Egypt, Syria, Turkey, Sudan, Jordan, Bosnia, Palestine (just to mention but a few), were all Christian countries, overly Catholic, too. These countries produce both wonderful saints and great martyrs. Today, the name of Christ is barely mentioned. Some of those countries are 100% in the absence of Christianity. However, they are striving religiously, but not in the name of Christ.

The birth place of Christ is no more Christian. In the places where the gospel was first preached with positive results, most of their demographic religious preference is any way of life but Christian.

In 1970, the population of Christians in Europe went down to 38.5%, and in 2012, this demography continued on the downward slope to 23.7%. The population of Christians in Europe continues to decline while that of other faiths continue to rise.

In the United States, less than 15% of Catholics aged 18-25 attend worship on a weekly basis. Generally, in 1910, North America represented 5% (15,150,000) Catholics worldwide. In 2010, she has only grown 3% and represents 8% (88,550,000) of the Catholic world. This 3% growth is insignificant when understood from the changes in our history between 1910 and 2010. While proud to be Catholic, among this demography, more than 46% do not attend mass. Most practicing Catholics attend mass only occasionally. If any person say to you “I have a deep spiritual relationship with God but I don't belong to any organized religion”, chances remain that person was baptized Catholic.

That is why there is need for a new-evangelization. Re-evangelization, or new-evangelization as John Paul II worded it in *Redemptoris Missio* 33, is a call for each of us to deepen our faith, believe in the gospel message and go forth to proclaim the gospel. Re-evangelization is a commitment to the call for “all the faithful to move from a faith of habit, sustained perhaps by social context alone, to a faith which is conscious and personally lived. The renewal of faith will be the best way to lead others to the truth that is Christ”. *Ecclesia in America*, no. 73.

Hence, the Diocese of Pueblo is committed to a life of intentional discipleship. Where every Catholic is called to a practical and conscious-lived life of faith in their relationship with Christ and one another, re-evangelization is a needed road in our time because “an entire group of the baptized have lost a living sense of the faith, or even no longer consider themselves members of the church, and live a life far removed from Christ and His gospel.” In this situation, what is needed is a reintroduction of fervent faith of responsive discipleship.

There are five main natural stops to partake in re-evangelization, namely:

- We must **learn and relearn our faith** and understand our relationship with God as Christians. We do this by studying the teachings of the Church and by praying the bible.

- It was in Antioch of Pisidia the pagans called the early saints “Christians” because of the life they lived. If we must go on mission to others, our lives must first **be lived authentically Christian in nature and Catholic in practice.**
- Jesus sent his disciples to go and cast out demons, even though they preached repentance. All intended disciples should **first repent of their unchristian lives, discard the demons of their lives and be better prepared for the missionary mandate of Christ.**
- We must learn to **pray.** Prayer is not only what is discussed with God, it is more of the life we live daily in His name.
- **Christian faith is meant to be shared.** If the church stops her life of evangelization, she dies. In the ability to share our faith as a way of life, and what we let go in order to maintain peace and friendship is not acceptable. To this Jesus says, “Whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this faithless and sinful generation, the son of man will be ashamed when he comes in his Father’s glory with the holy angels” (Mk 8:38; Lk 9:28). Christian faith is not politics, it is our way of life, so it must be shared otherwise it will suffer death overtime.
- Finally, **we must be open to martyrdom.** The message we proclaim is more important than our physical lives. Being a Christian connotes suffering. Suffering is an experience of pain by a (rationally) sensible being. To be Christian and a Catholic is a conscious decision. Added to this decision, Jesus warned his disciples, “If you wish to be my disciple, you must deny yourself, take up your cross daily and follow me”. (Lk 9:23)

The reward for evangelization is the preservation of our faith, our way of life, our relationship with God and one another. The danger of non-evangelization is the opposite. Jesus is sending us out two-by-two to preach repentance and to cast out demons.

Let us pray that our own limitation may not blur the glory that is meant to shine through us.

DID YOU CAST OUT YOUR OWN DEMONS?