



ON BEING MISSIONARY PARISHES HOW IS OUR PARISH MISSIONARY?

QUOTATIONS

Scripture

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him... In him, we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which (the Father) lavished upon us, ... according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth (*Ephesians 1:3-10*).

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age (*Matthew 28:19-20*).

For as many of you as were baptised into Christ, have put on Christ (*Galatians 1 3:27*).

Liturgy

By the mystery of this water and wine, may we come to share in the divinity of Christ, who humbled himself to share in our humanity.

Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord!

(Roman Missal)

Catechism of the Catholic Church

Lay people also fulfill their prophetic mission by evangelisation, that is, the proclamation of Christ by word and the testimony of life. This has a specific property and peculiar efficacy because it is accomplished in the ordinary circumstances of the world' (*Lumen Gentium 35, the Second Vatican Council*).

By uniting their forces, let the laity so remedy the institutions and conditions of the world when the latter are an inducement to sin, that these may be conformed to the norms of justice, favoring rather than hindering the practice of virtue. By so doing they will fill culture and human works with a moral value (*LG 36*).

This witness of life, however, is not the sole element in the apostolate; the true apostle is on the lookout for occasions of announcing Christ by word, either to unbelievers... or to the faithful (*Apostolate of Laity 6:3, The Second Vatican Council*).

To teach in order to lead others to faith is the task of every preacher and of each believer (*Thomas Aquinas*).

Catechism of the Catholic Church 904-909

Pope Paul VI

Evangelisation is the essential mission of the Church.

Evangelisation in the Modern World (Evangelium Nuntiandi 14)

Pope Francis

There are Christians whose lives seem like Lent without Easter. An evangeliser must never look like someone who has just come back from a funeral!

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Part four of four Parish Reflections and Discussions

There is a profound connection between evangelisation and human advancement. The Gospel is not merely about our personal relationship with God, and religion restricted to the private sphere. It is concerned with society, since all Christians ... are called to show concern for the building of a better world.

In Mary, the interplay of justice and tenderness, of contemplation and concern for others, is what makes the ecclesial community look to her as a model of evangelisation.

Christian life is simple; a Christian does not need to do strange or difficult things, but put Jesus at the centre of his or her daily choices (*Homily at Mass, Jan 09, 2017*).

COMMENTARY

Whilst a parish is to care for its members in all areas of their lives (as we saw in Chapter III), it is also to be outward-looking as an evangelising parish and encourage all of its members to see themselves as evangelisers. For if **evangelisation is the essential mission of the Church**, then it is also the **essential mission of the parish**. Its aim is ultimately to bring all people into the very life and love of the Blessed Trinity by spreading the Gospel. In fact, it is our conviction of God's unconditional love for every single person, lived out in all of its practical consequences, that should attract others to the life of our parish.

We evangelise when we share the faith joyfully with others, and invite all people to hear the Good News. Everyone is included in the plan God formulated in Christ **before the foundation of the world...**a plan to unite all things in him. It is this (absolutely) Good (and the radically new) News that the **love of Christ** urges us to communicate to others, **for we are convinced that he died for all** (2 Corinthians 5:14). It is why we are sent out at the end of every Mass, to **Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord!** Indeed, how could we keep this to ourselves? We want to be, in Pope Francis' words, 'missionary disciples.'

Christians evangelise by leading lives so inspired by the Gospel that Jesus Christ may be at the centre of our daily choices for the transformation of society. The ministerial priest's proper vocation is to 'build up the Body of Christ' through preaching, teaching and the Sacraments; it is the mission proper to the laity to accept 'the world as a task', by living in such a way that the Gospel we hear and the grace we receive transforms every aspect of our lives and thus promotes true human advancement. This is an on-going, life-time's process for each of us, in which we are especially helped by the grace of the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.

Mary, who lived the ordinary lay life of a daughter, friend, neighbour, wife and mother – albeit to an exceptional Son! – served the Kingdom of God by doing small, every day things with an immense love for God, as St Mother Teresa of Calcutta used to say. In Our Lady, **the interplay of justice and tenderness, of contemplation and concern for others** can be a model for us all, showing us the full implications of the Gospel.

Our Blessed Lady really can teach us how to let the **Holy Spirit** make evangelisers of us all, co-workers in the **Father's** desire to transform the world, all human relationships and each situation in the Son, by setting them free from sin and death and filling them with the grace of the Resurrection.

And so we pray:

*Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful
and kindle in them the fire of your love.
Send forth your Spirit, Lord, and they shall be created.
And you shall renew the face of the earth!*

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DISCUSSIONS AND ACTIONS

- How does our parish evangelise, and encourage us to be evangelisers?
- Does the parish provide ways to help us deepen the knowledge of the faith and our spiritual lives, in order to help us all to be missionary disciples in the everyday circumstances of our lives?
- What would help our parish to take up all the challenges of evangelisation more effectively?

In a time of silence, take a moment to ponder all of these things, and then make a personal decision:

- Take a few minutes to make a personal decision arising out what has resonated with you from these reflections.
- Name one thing you could do together to transform your parish in this way.

*Pray together the prayer **Our Mission Together.***