

Evangelize? WHO ME?

In times past evangelization was thought to be the work done by priests, religious and missionaries to spread the Gospel among those in faraway lands and our way of helping was mostly through financial support. But beginning with Pope Paul VI, all our Holy Fathers have called for each of us to be actively and fully committed to the task that has become known as the New Evangelization. This prompting of the Church by the Holy Spirit is a response to the times we are living in, a reminder of our vocation and our mission as disciples of Christ.

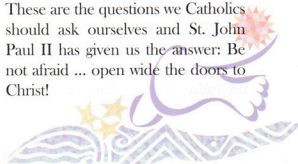
We live in a pluralistic, secular, dechristianized society and being a practicing Catholic is countercultural. The world constantly asserts that faith should be a private matter and pressures us to keep it to ourselves. Oftentimes it seems as Catholics we are fearful and defensive about sharing our faith. Are we hiding our light under a basket? Are we ill-prepared to proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord? Are we "being Catholic" only in our parishes where it is less difficult



Saint Paul

in front of Basilica St-Paul-hors les-Murs, Roma

because others think like us? Are we forgetting that as Christians our very existence challenges the spirit of this world? Have we replaced fear of God with the opinions of men? These are the questions we Catholics should ask ourselves and St. John Paul II has given us the answer: Be not afraid ... open wide the doors to Christ!



Be not afraid when the world pressures you not to be different but to conform. Be not afraid to be rejected, ridiculed or thought less of. Jesus said blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and speak all manner of evil against you falsely because of me. We need not be afraid for we know if Christ is for us who can be against us and we should also know that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ

Jesus our Lord. Jesus established his Church to draw all peoples to himself. As Catholics it should be our joy to tell everyone we meet about Christ our Saviour. We should share his Good News with those people who pass through our lives, and as St. Paul said woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel!

We embrace the Gospel not because it is good news, but because it is the best news, because it is

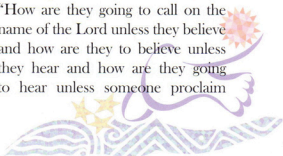
Truth. The joy that we receive by allowing Christ to be the center of our lives can be attractive to others and contagious. But since not all people have eyes to see or ears to hear, it is necessary to reach out, to share by word and deed with others the reasons we have for the hope that is within us. St. Teresa of Avila tells us Christ has no body now on earth but yours, no hands but yours, no feet but yours. No matter how unqualified we feel we are,

God has given each one of us a mission to fulfill

The Catechism and Scripture teach that our responsibility is all the greater and more pressing when it is only through us that people can hear the Gospel and come to know Jesus. "How are they going to call on the name of the Lord unless they believe and how are they to believe unless they hear and how are they going to hear unless someone proclaim



Christ in Rio de Janeiro



him and how is someone going to proclaim him unless they are sent" (Rm 10:14-15) Each one of us is being sent. The true apostle is on the lookout for occasions of announcing Christ by word, either to unbelievers or to the faithful.

But how do we share? How do we evangelize? Our Lord has told us how, I give you a new commandment, love one another as I have loved you. By this everyone will know you are my disciples. There is no way to evangelize other than love. We just love. We just say yes to Jesus every single day. We give the Lord everything, 100% and trust in him. If that seems frightening it is because we ourselves still need to be evangelized. A person may say "I don't know if I'm able to give Jesus everything?" Why not? What do we have to lose? We will lose nothing but gain everything and become true apostles of Jesus. We will not only be hearers but also doers of the Word. We will give up baubles for treasure and gain eternal life!

But how do we begin? How do we begin evangelizing? All the saints tell us the same thing: prayer is

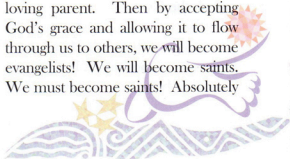
the beginning. Adoration, scripture reading, the rosary, meditation – all deepen our prayer. In prayer we encounter God's Presence and feel God's love. We allow God to form our mind and will.



Jerzy Hulewicz (1886-1941)

Crucifixion, 1918

We love God because He loved us first. Knowing that God loved us first gives us the desire to respond with love. This love will make us want to immerse ourselves in Christ, much like a child who longs to be held in the arms of its loving parent. Then by accepting God's grace and allowing it to flow through us to others, we will become evangelists! We will become saints. We must become saints! Absolutely



no one and nothing can stop us! It is our free choice. Each of us can really become a saint. We really can! If we are not saints already it is only because we do not really want to be. Being a saint means trying to give God everything, trying to live and breathe and have our being in Him. Being a saint requires love. To love is to sacrifice. Sacrifice and giving is the secret of joy. If we become saintly

always been countercultural. Each of us is called to more fully live the life of Christ without compromise, to follow the Master without compromise, to proclaim the Gospel without compromise. To allow ourselves and to will ourselves to be transformed by the love of Christ. To live heroic virtue, to love, to become saints. This is our destiny. For this we have been created. And by this we evangelize.



then all our efforts, our fathering and mothering, our working, playing, studying and teaching will be evangelistic, will work to the glory of God.

The Gospel has always been countercultural. Saints have always been countercultural. Prophets have

**Our Lady Star of the
New Evangelization,** pray for us.

**Our Lady Star of the New
Evangelization,** help us.

Peter and Linda Krushelnyski

