

Faith in Five – Adults Evangelization



1. Christ said to his disciples they would receive the power of the Holy Spirit, to be witnesses to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). We all have the call to be witnesses of Christ, having been given the graces of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. We are equipped with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit with gifts, fruits and charisms.

The word "evangelization" comes from the Greek word euangelion meaning "glad tidings" - essentially, good news. Evangelization must always be directly connected to the Lord Jesus Christ. "There is no true evangelization if the name, the teaching, the life, the promises, the Kingdom and the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God are not proclaimed.

"Evangelization, then, has different implications depending on our relationship to Jesus and his Church. For those of us who practice and live our Catholic faith, it is a call to ongoing growth and renewed conversion. For those who have accepted it only in name, it is a call to re-evangelization. For those who have stopped practicing their faith, it is a call to reconciliation. For children, it is a call to be formed into disciples through the family's faith life and religious education. For other Christians, it is an invitation to know the fullness of our message. For those who have no faith, it is a call to conversion to know Christ Jesus and thus experience a change to new life with Christ and his Church."

([Source](#))

2. According to [Pew Research Center](#), in 2015, "[a]bout half of cultural Catholics say they attend Mass at least once in a while, including 4% who say they attend weekly, 28% who attend once or twice a month or a few times a year and 15% who say they attend less often". This drop in attendance may be due to lifestyle changes and a changing culture.
3. The purpose of evangelization is to bring faith and conversion to Christ. Acceptance of Jesus requires a change of heart, mind and life. Through the working of the Holy Spirit, true conversion can take place when one's life is reoriented to Christ and a relationship is formed with Him and the community of believers, the Church.
The duty to evangelize – why must we do it? ([Source](#))
 - a. The Lord commanded that we go out and make all disciples. (Matthew 28:18-20)
 - b. Salvation is for everyone. Jesus is our Savior. In Him alone is the promise of resurrection and new life
 - c. The gifts God gives us is not for ourselves only. The love of Christ compels us to bring all people to Jesus' Gospel and the experience to know him completely, through the Eucharist.
4. For Catholics, "[t]he [New Evangelization](#) is a call to each person to deepen his or her own faith, have confidence in the Gospel, and possess a willingness to share the Gospel. It is a personal encounter with the person of Jesus, which brings peace and joy. The New

Evangelization provides the lens through which people experience the Church and world around them". It is focused on re-presenting the Gospel to those who have experienced a crisis of faith. As Catholics, we are asked to renew our relationship with Jesus Christ and the Church.

The New Evangelization is not new in content but new in energy and approach; it is an ongoing practice, meant to counter secular culture. It is a priority of the Catholic Church. The experience is strengthened by reception of the sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation. People will not know the love and mercy of God if they do not experience it themselves firsthand. For them to experience this, they have to know about the Gospel, the Good News of salvation in Jesus. Pope Francis says, "The joy of the gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus". ([Source](#)) Not only are we called to share the Good News to those who have never heard about Jesus, but there is a need to evangelize even those who are baptized but no longer practicing the faith.

5. The New Evangelization "does not seek to invite people to experience only one moment of conversion but rather to experience the gradual and lifelong process of conversion: to draw all people into a deeper relationship with God, to participate in the sacramental life of the Church, to develop a mature conscience, to sustain one's faith through ongoing catechesis, and to integrate one's faith into all aspects of one's life."
6. Becoming effective witnesses and evangelists of the Catholic Faith compels us to proclaim the faith from Scripture and Tradition. We ourselves must be evangelized before we can evangelize others. A disciple of Christ must continually renew his or her faith. Being a disciple of Christ means being open to the work of the Holy Spirit in us; to mentor and to encourage in others to do the same. We are strengthened by:
 - a. **Commitment to the Christian Life** - the public profession of one's faith through active participation in prayer, the sacraments, and especially Sunday Mass contributes to the sanctification of the world.
 - b. **Parish Life** - It is in the parish that one becomes engaged with the Church community. We learn how to become a disciple of Christ - nurtured by Scripture and nourished by the sacraments. The parish is where the faith is passed down, lived, and sustained for all members of the Body of Christ, most especially for those members seeking to return.
 - c. **Liturgical Life in Devotions and Piety** – Above all, participation in the Mass is the summit of our faith. By participating in Mass, learning common prayers, and practicing devotions, a person appropriates the teachings of the faith. The prayers, popular devotions, and liturgies of the Church form the basis of "Catholic culture", allowing for the community to pray together and contribute to one's own continuing faith development. Returning Catholics may find a deeper connection with God when they reclaim devotions once learned.
 - d. **The Christian Family** - The family, called the domestic Church, is often the first place where one experiences and is formed in the faith. In fact, "the New Evangelization depends largely on the domestic Church." It is through the example of parents, siblings and extended family members that one most concretely witnesses how to live a Christian life. "Family members learn more of the Christian life by observing each other's

strengths or weaknesses than by formal instruction. Their shared wisdom and experience often constitute a compelling Christian witness.”

e. **Catechists and Teachers of Faith** – pastors, including catechists are powerful witnesses to the faith. They help to develop and foster a culture of witness. They “are entrusted with the duties of teaching the faith, overseeing sacramental preparation, supporting the formation of consciences, and developing a love of prayer in those they catechize”.

7. Our ideas of evangelizing may be based on old-time Christian tent revivals, boisterous preaching and uncontrolled, joyful outpourings of the Holy Spirit. Sharing the Good News does not have to be loud to be effective. As with the prophet Elijah, he heard God in the still small whisper. God’s work is “not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,” (Zechariah 4:6) - overt displays of power are not necessary for God to work.

While evangelizing may seem daunting, we need only to look at Christ’s example of how He invited those to Him. Christ did this through love. “A Christian life lived in charity and faith is the most effective form of evangelization” ([Source](#)). The lives we lead will either draw people towards Christ or not.

Sharing your personal experience with Christ is an easy way to start sharing the faith. When you are genuine and joyful about what is deeply meaningful to you, people will be drawn to that. Pray for the Holy Spirit’s guidance, seek peace and do not be confrontational. Focus on the Lord, be confident, consistent; be open and obedient to God’s will. Ask the Lord what He would have you do. If you are not familiar with aspects of the Catholic Faith, make time to learn it. More importantly, pray for the one receiving the Good News. We can do our part to plant seeds of faith in others; the Holy Spirit will take care to nourish it and make it grow!

For further study on The New Evangelization:

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. (2012). “Disciples Called to Witness, The New Evangelization”. Washington DC. ([PDF](#))

I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.

1 Corinthians 3:6,7

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