

Role of the Laity in the New Evangelization

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"Without Purse or Scrip" Liz Lemon Swindle

Overview of Presentation

The Mission and the Laity

- I. The Mission of the Church
- II. Church Teachings
- III. Post-Christendom Society

How the Laity Participates

- I. Call to Holiness and Mission
- II. Discipleship
- III. Missionary Discipleship



Part I: The Mission & The Laity



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The Great Commission

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing 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.”

- *Matthew 28:19-20*

Second Vatican Council

“The Church has received this solemn mandate of Christ to proclaim the saving truth from the apostles and must carry it out to the very ends of the earth. Wherefore she makes the words of the Apostle her own: "Woe to me, if I do not preach the Gospel".”

...The obligation of spreading the faith is imposed on every disciple of Christ, according to his state.

(Lumen Gentium #17)

Vatican II & Church Leaders

- Documents of Vatican II clearly teach us that it is the baptismal call of each of all the baptized is to proclaim the Good News.
- There is a clear call to Holiness and to Mission.
- The work of mission is not simply for a select few, such as the clergy, but for all the baptized.

Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church

The Council's *Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church* teaches:

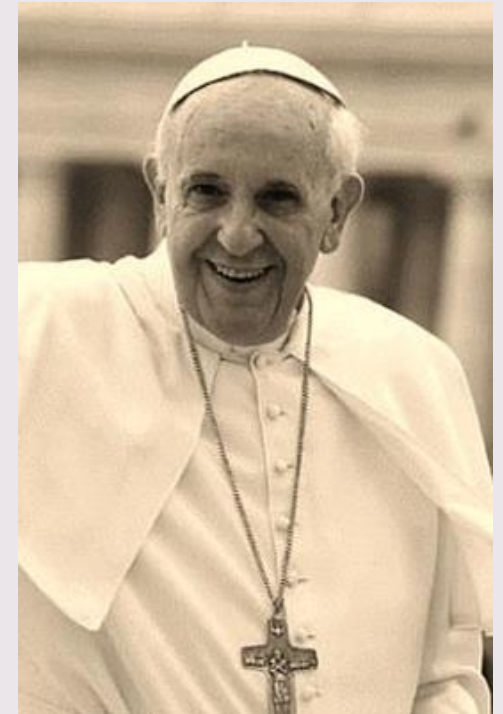
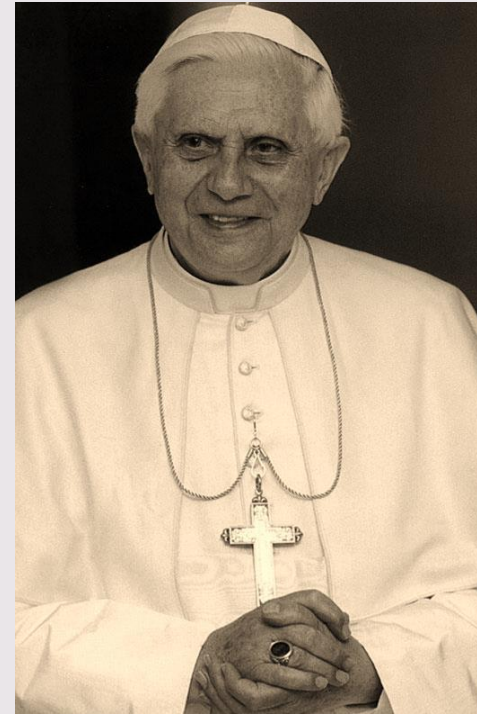
“As members of the living Christ, incorporated into Him and made like unto Him through baptism and through confirmation and the Eucharist, **all the faithful are duty - bound** to cooperate in the expansion and spreading out of His Body, to bring it to fullness as soon as may be (Eph. 4:13).”

Decree on The Apostolate of the Laity

The Vocation of the Laity:

“In the Church there is a diversity of ministry but a oneness of mission. Christ conferred on the Apostles and their successors the duty of teaching, sanctifying, and ruling in His name and power. **But the laity likewise share in the priestly, prophetic, and royal office of Christ** and therefore have their own share in the mission of the whole people of God in the Church and in the world.”

The Invitation and Challenge of Our Church Leaders



Missionary Mandate of the Church

The missionary mandate of the Church has three audiences:

- The mission *ad gentes* (to the nations)
- Pastoral Care (Christians need continued spiritual care: sacraments, education, formation, small Christian communities, retreats, etc.)
- New Evangelization (What makes the New Evangelization new is that it is directed toward the initial conversion of the baptized. Thus it can be understood as the re-evangelization of the baptized).

The New Evangelization

“The evangelizing efforts of the baptized are not simply focused on those who have not heard of Christ. They are also directed toward our brothers and sisters who no longer join us around the Lord’s table.”

USCCB’s *Living as Missionary Disciples*



We are Living in a Post-Christendom Society

In 1974, Servant of God Fulton Sheen said in a conference, “We are at the end of Christendom. Not of Christianity, not of the Church, but of Christendom...”

“These are great and wonderful days in which to be alive. ... It is not a gloomy picture — it is a picture of the Church in the midst of increasing opposition from the world. And therefore live your lives in the full consciousness of this hour of testing, and rally close to the heart of Christ.”

We are Asking for A New Pentecost

“Evangelization can be new in its ardor, methods and expression.”

(JP II, “The Task of the Latin American Bishops, 1983)

Ardor: We must continually renew our passion, our evangelical spirit

Method: We must always seek new methods for bringing the Gospel into the world

Expression: The timeless message of Jesus Christ must always be adapted and translated into our time and place



Part II: How the Laity Participate



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Personal Conversion

Conversion is the free gift of ourselves to God. This is our “yes” our “fiat,” made with God’s grace, to His invitation to communion.

“Accepting, by personal decision, the saving sovereignty of Christ”

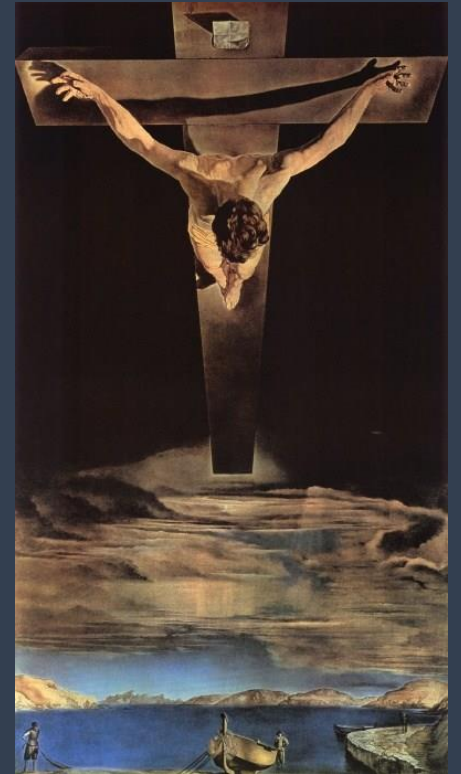
- *Pope Paul II, Redemptoris Missio 46*

A Disciple: The Instrument of the Mission

"Before one can evangelize, one must be evangelized. Before one can disciple others, one must be a disciple."

"Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses...."

- *Pope Paul VI, Evangelii Nuntiandi 41*



What is Discipleship & Missionary Discipleship?

ME – Where we all begin.

ME, Jesus – Where we start to recognize there is Someone else and consider what He has to offer.

JESUS, me – When we choose to become disciples and say “yes” to Jesus. “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your mind, and all your soul.” - Matthew 22:37-38

JESUS, me, others – when we really start to think about living as a disciple and loving others, learning from the Master

JESUS, OTHERS, me – Missionary discipleship, we commit to “Go, make disciples” outside our comfort zone, depending on the Lord to help us “Love your neighbor as yourself” - Matthew 22:39-40

Call to Holiness

Disciples:

Relationship: Has a personal relationship with Jesus

Prayer: Prays every day

Commitment: To Jesus, His Church and to the Kingdom

Worship: At least once a week in the most Holy Eucharist

Study: Sacred Scripture and other Christian writings

Open: Open and responsive to where the Holy Spirit and Jesus are calling me

Participates: In the community and the Sacramental life of the Church

Serves: Others in the name of Jesus Christ

Shares: My personal gifts, time, and treasure with the Lord, His Church, and others

Evangelizes: The world through word, witness, works of mercy, and compassion

Call to Mission

Missionary Disciples:

Relationship: Introduces others to their best friend Jesus

Prayer: Helps others to pray

Commitment: Guides others to make a commitment to Jesus, His Church and to the Kingdom

Worship: Welcomes and invites others to Mass and to the Sacraments

Study: Shares their love of Sacred Scripture and other Christian writings with others

Open: Helps others to be open to the Holy Spirit and where they are being called

Participates: Walks with others intentionally in faith and helps them to discern where the Lord is calling them to participate

Serves: Guides others to serve in the name of Jesus Christ

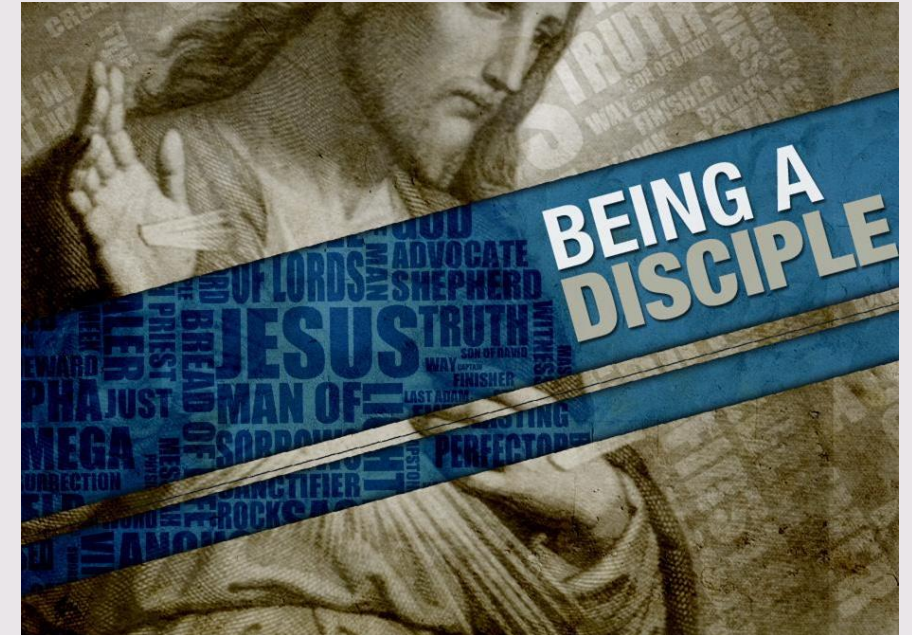
Shares: Helps others in word and deed to be generous stewards of the gifts given to us

Evangelizes: Provides support and formation for others in how to share the Good News

What Does it Mean to be a Disciple?

“Being a disciple means being constantly ready to bring the love of Jesus to others, and this can happen unexpectedly and in any place: on the street, in a city square, during work, on a journey.”

- *Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium #127*



“Always be ready to
give an explanation to
anyone who asks you
for a reason for your
hope.”

- *1 Peter 3:15*



Thank you!