

LEADERSHIP FORMATION

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Serving
the Charismatic Renewal
in the Catholic Church

Equipping Lay People to Evangelize

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TEACHING OUTLINE

To evangelize is :

- A. the mission of the Church**
- B. the mission of laity**
- C. to present the Covenant with God**
- D. illustrated by the plan of the Catechism**

The lay person and the Holy Spirit

- A. belong to one another**
- B. Work together**
- C. Use specific tools**
- D. Are driven by holy initiative**
- E. Make room for variety and diversity.**

Vatican II When Pope John XXIII convened the Second Vatican Council, he stated: "The upcoming Council flows from the Lord's command: *Go therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptise them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. And teach them to observe all the commands I gave you*^{1,2}.. The purpose of Vatican II was to call the Church and each of its members to evangelize: to love God and to bring the Good News of the New Covenant to a dying world.

The people of God The Church is the Body of the Son of God continuing His mission on Earth: *to seek out and save what was lost*³ and to give believers *power to become children of God*⁴. Each member of that body has a specific function to play. It is the role of the Spirit to guide and empower all members, including laity, to fulfil their calling. *The laity derive the right and duty with respect to the apostolate from their union with Christ their Head. Incorporated into Christ's Mystical Body through baptism and strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit through confirmation, they are assigned to the apostolate by the Lord Himself. They are consecrated into a royal priesthood and a holy people in order that they may offer spiritual sacrifices through everything that they do, and may witness to Christ throughout the world*⁵.

Pentecost: Covenant and the Holy Spirit The Feast of Pentecost for Jews is the commemoration of the Covenant through Moses at Mount Sinai. God established a Covenant with the Israelites as His People by giving them the Ten Commandments to which they adhered. God told man how he was to love God with all his heart, soul and mind (3 commands) and love his neighbour as he loves himself (7 commands). But the Israelites were not able to abide by the Decalogue: it was too hard and they were a stiff-necked people. So are all the other descendants of Adam. No one is saved by the Law. The Law is a guardian that makes us understand our sinfulness. Man is saved by grace by believing in Jesus.

God told His people that one day He would establish a New Covenant, one where He would supply the power for His people to live Godly lives. *I will use you to show the nations that I am holy... I will give you a new heart and a new mind... I will put My*

*Spirit in you and will see to it that you follow My laws and keep all the commands I have given you.. you will be My people and I will be your God*⁶. At Pentecost, JESUS supplied man with the power to live a holy, consecrated life, to love as God Himself loves: *When the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you will be filled with power and you will be witnesses*⁶.

Jesus did not come to abolish the Law but to fulfil it. Pentecost is thus revealed to us as God sending His Spirit on all flesh to enable anyone to love God and man according to the Ten Commandments. Also, Pentecost is God sending His Spirit-filled children into the world to witness with power. The "New" Covenant is Jesus and the Holy Spirit, the two arms⁷ of God restoring fallen man to God's grace. Man is *"called by grace to a covenant with his Creator, to offer him a response of faith and love"*⁸ To be equipped for evangelisation is to understand and to live by grace in the two arms of God. *"What God commands He makes possible by His grace"*⁹ *Apart from Me you can do nothing*¹⁰

To evangelize is to bring someone into a personal Covenant with God To all who receive JESUS as their Saviour and obey Him as their Lord¹¹, the Father puts His stamp of ownership by giving the Holy Spirit as promised¹² thus joining the believer to His Son, bringing him into a new life, a divine life, thinking like God and living like JESUS. This is the work of the Holy Spirit. This is the New Covenant. Henceforth the disciple can grow and lead a holy, Spirit-filled life, without which it is futile to evangelize. He will grow in his understanding of the ways of God, and be equipped with the tools provided by God.

God is first How is one to understand the plan of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*? Here is a probable key. It has four divisions: the Creed with 39% of the text; the Sacraments, 23%; the Commandments, 27%; and prayer, 11%. Yet, doctrinally, it is only two parts. *On the one hand, the mysteries of faith in God, One and Triune, as professed (Creed) and celebrated (Sacraments) make up the first 62% of the Catechism. On the other hand, the Christian life of faith – faith working through charity – expressed in a Christian manner of life (Decalogue) and in filial prayer (Pater) form the other 38%. What is the theological and catechetical message? God is first, grace is first. This is the true hierarchy of truth. Man is sinful. Without the preceding doctrine of the sacraments – which implies also the teaching about the mystery of the*



Church and of justification - the precepts of the Decalogue seem to exceed our human capacity. But basing ourselves on faith and the sacraments, we look at them with confidence and vigor³.

The disciple's role in evangelisation is to offer and consecrate himself to God. Because *..the eyes of the Lord roam over the whole earth, to encourage those who are devoted to Him wholeheartedly⁴*, the disciple should cry out: "Send me, Lord!". Fr. Bob Bedard built a thriving parish filled with young, Spirit-filled people in Ottawa, Canada by having parishioners repeat often this prayer: "Lord, whatever You want me to do, I will do". Pray for boldness. Ask to be led by His Spirit.

Then, as the Lord leads, build relationships (you are part of the Good News), present Jesus, invite a response, intercede, become a mentor, and accompany him on the road to Life. One sows the Word of God, another reaps. The Word is alive and *it will not fail to do what God plans for it, it will do everything that God sends it to do⁵*. In most hearts, the Word of God has to be sown many times before it produces Life. God says: *"I watch over My word to see it fulfilled"⁶*.

The Spirit guides and inspires the disciple in what he is to say and do. There are many obstacles to God's word. Man's intellect cannot receive it. *The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God for they are foolishness to him and he cannot understand them⁷*. Man is saved by grace, not argument. Only God can convince man of the reality of His Covenant. *God's Spirit joins Himself to our spirits to declare that we are His children⁸*. This is how faith is born and grows: *Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God¹⁹*.

God's power tools Gradually one learns to master the different power tools provided by God such as: the Holy Scriptures, the Sacraments, prayer, the charismatic gifts, the ministry gifts, Christian Unity, works of charity, personal testimony, the virtues and mysticism (God-experiences). All

of God's people, lay and clergy, are called to service using these tools. God anoints whom He wants to serve Him in the ways He chooses. Much more needs to be said about each of those tools and training in them offered to laity.

Spirituality of initiative Some lay people are mandated by the Church for a particular task or ministry. All laity are mandated by Christ Himself through Baptism and Confirmation. Laity has a spirituality of holy initiative. They are called to obey Jesus who guides each by His Holy Spirit⁹. Thus, laity should not hesitate to take all sorts of initiatives to serve the Lord and accomplish their God given mission in keeping with the teaching of the Church in matters of faith and morals. Therein lies the joy of evangelisation.

Variety and diversity The Spirit continuously creates new forms of serving God. Lay people serve the Lord at the parish and diocesan level often in Sacrament-related ministries in accord with the local shepherd.

Lay people put their talents (arts, music, drama, public speaking, academic, medical, fund-raising, interpersonal, organisational, leadership, etc.) into evangelisation. Lay people start or continue Covenant Communities. Still others start ministries such as Prayer groups, Schools of Evangelisation, Bible Colleges, Soup kitchens, Conferences, Summer camps, visiting the sick or imprisoned or elderly, etc.. Lay people exercise spiritual gifts with remarkable results: *Now to each man the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good¹*. 



Notes

1 Mt 28 :19-20; 2 Lk 19: 10; 3 Jn 1: 12; 4 Vatican II Laity 3; 5 Ez 36: 23, 26-28; 6 Ac 1: 8; 7 Catechism 292:8 id. 357; 9 id. 2082; 10 Jn 15:5; 11 Ac 2: 36-40; 12 Ep 1: 13; 13 Mgr Christoph Schönborn, Introduction to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* p. 47-48; 14 2Ch 16: 9; 15 Is 55: 11; 16 Jr 1: 12; 17 1 Co 2: 14; 18 Rm 8: 16; 19 Rm 10: 17; 20 Vatican II, LG 37; Laity 24, 25, 26; 21 1 Co 12:7.

Questions for discussion

1. **What is the link between:**
 - A. Pentecost and the Covenant?
 - B. The Covenant and the Ten Commandments?
 - C. The Ten Commandments and the Holy Spirit?
 - D. The Holy Spirit and evangelisation?
2. **How do you understand:**
 - A. The purpose of Vatican II?
 - B. Plan of the Catechism?
 - C. The New Covenant?
 - D. The spirituality of initiative?
3. **What is evangelisation?**
4. **What tools does God provide to evangelize?**
5. **Why is a spirituality of initiative necessary for lay people?**

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