

## **EVANGELIZATION**

### **Father John A. Hardon, S. J. - Marian Catechist Spiritual Formation for Evangelization**

By Carole Breslin, Marian Catechist Newsletter Fall 1999 and with modifications by Dorie Gruss, M.C.

#### **How to Win Souls**

One of our primary responsibilities is the sharing of our Catholic faith in such a way as to win souls for the kingdom of God. How can we convert people? How can we bring people to a deeper appreciation of the treasures of our Faith? How can we share our Faith in the most effective way possible?

#### **We Cannot Without Humility**

We can neither convert nor draw people to a closer relationship with our Triune God. True humility recognizes that we are nothing and thus can do nothing. True humility also recognized that our Creator has endowed each of us with gifts, which we are to make full use of in working for the greater glory of His Kingdom.

#### **With Charity**

"If you truly want to help the soul of your neighbor, you should approach God first with all your heart. Ask Him simply to fill you with charity, the greatest of all virtues, with it you can accomplish what you desire." It is God's grace, His wisdom that works through us, which converts, enlightens and strengthens others in their Faith.

#### **Christ Disciples**

The more open we are to surrendering all of ourselves to the work of Christ crucified, the more we will be able to accomplish. The more we cooperate with His grace, the better disciples we will be for the Lord.

#### **Jesus Our Model Our Teacher**

While the Lord walked the earth He taught the apostles how to teach. When asked which is the greatest commandment in the Law, Jesus answered. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. And the second is like it. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (Mt. 22:37-40)

#### **Self-centered Is Pride**

True love of God is not self-centered. Self-centered is another name for pride. The first thing we must do before we even begin to share the faith is to love God. This seems so basic that we often overlook its deeper meaning. *We must love God more than we love being right. We must not love winning the argument.* What have we won if in winning the argument we have lost the soul? We must not love the glory received for profound insights. If we love the glory

then we have not given glory to God, from Whom the insights came but to ourselves who only related them. If we are self-centered, we are filled with pride. We lack humility. We must learn from Christ who is meek and humble of heart. We must not love the respect, the honor, or the gratitude, for these are the things, which may lead to pride and turning from God.

### **Humility**

Respect, honor and glory belong to God alone. We must love God so truly and honestly and completely as to say if I have done well it has come from God. If I have done poorly, it has come from me. We must recognize that we cannot do what our Lord calls us to do without His help. In recognizing our weakness we find our strength in our loving Lord, Jesus Christ. “....thrice I besought the Lord that it might leave me. And He has said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for thee, for strength is made perfect in weakness.'”

(2 Cor. 12: 8-9)

### **Spiritual Formation**

We will be able to teach others, not because of the little we know about the Church, but because of the graces we have merited. That is why spiritual formation, prayer and Catechesis, is so important. On going Catechesis is not an option. Prayer life is not an option. Spiritual formation is essential for the graces to flow to us and to whom we come in contact. We want to influence people so that we may bring them to God's love. We do it for righteousness, not for self-righteousness. An undying love of Christ should be our one and only motivation.

### **Love Of Neighbor**

We must love our neighbor by dying to self. We must want for them what Jesus wants for them, to be happy with Him in heaven. We do this by sharing God's love with him. We must forget our personal wants and desires and look deeply into the person with whom we are communicating. To be effective in sharing the faith we must first connect with him. We must look into his eyes, focus on what he is saying. People say much more than the words that come from their mouths. We must be aware of their presence and seek to understand all their wants, desires, fears and anxieties. We must see them as Our Lord sees them. Love them as He loves them.

### **Christ-like Love, Charity**

We must love more than those who love us. We must love our enemies, do good to those who hate us and pray for those who persecute and calumniate us. Only with Christ-like love and charity can we convert the sinner, redirect misguided priests and religious. If we walk up to someone, tell him in a loud voice what he is doing wrong and act indignant at what he has done, we have lost him. He will build up a wall of defense to protect himself. First we are to make a statement to affirm the goodness in him, no matter how hard it may be for us to find it in him. Then he will be more open to listen to what we have to say. To present a loving God, we must become loveable.

**Be Faithful**

Even when we think we have done everything right, we will not always be successful. Perhaps the ones we are teaching are not open to God's will. Mother Teresa has said, "God does not ask that we be successful but that we be faithful." We are to expect miracles if we ask.

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