

Who Me?!!!! Evangelize?!!!!!!

"But how can they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how can they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone to preach? And how can people preach unless they are sent? As it is written, 'how beautiful are the feet of those who bring [the] good news!'" (Romans 10:14-15)

Evangelization means bearing witness to our faith in Jesus Christ through our deeds and through our words. Deeds must be followed by words. Catholics find it easier to perform acts of charity and compassion and tend to hesitate to give their reason for such action: faith in what Jesus Christ has commanded us to do. Does a couple in love hesitate to talk about their love with their family and friends? Do we freely recommend a good restaurant or movie to someone? Yet when it comes to our Catholic faith, do we freely share that Jesus Christ is a central part of our life?

You might be thinking, "It's easy to talk about my love for someone and to recommend a good movie or restaurant, but, how do I share my faith in Jesus Christ?" As a start, one should study the life of Jesus in the scriptures as a model for us, in particular, the story of the woman at the well (*The Samaritan Woman*, John 4) and the appearance of Jesus on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24). These are just two examples of many accounts of evangelization in the life of Jesus.

Susan Blum Gerding, in her book, *Share Your Faith: A Behavioral Approach to Evangelization Training* (Jeremiah Press, 1990), enumerates the following practical ways an individual can share their faith:

- I tried to establish a friendly relationship with someone whom I didn't know at all or didn't know well.
- I visited a stranger (home, hospital, neighborhood, or other visit).
- I shared what it means to me to be a Catholic with someone.
- I spoke with high regard of the Catholic Church in general, my own parish, or my own parish priests/staff.
- I encouraged someone to turn to or draw closer to God.
- I shared my faith in God with someone.
- I told a "faith story," an incident when I felt God had intervened in my life.
- I assured someone of how much God loves them just the way they are.
- I assured someone of God's power.
- I shared what difference Jesus had made in my life.
- I prayed with someone privately or in a small group (other than family, prayer groups, or parishioners at Mass).
- I prayed with someone, specifically inviting Jesus into his/her life in a more personal and powerful way.
- I invited someone to go to Mass.
- I invited someone to go to a parish meeting or activity other than Mass (included meetings in homes).
- I encouraged someone to be of service to others.

Can you imagine what our community would look like if every baptized Catholic tried some of these behaviors every week? May I summarize the above behaviors in the following questions, which I regularly propose to myself?

- Do I try to regularly share my faith with my children (adult children, grandchildren)?
In what specific ways?
- Have I ever told my faith story to another person?
- Why not start by sharing your faith once each week with another person?