

**2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in OT: Yr. B – 2021**  
[1 Sm 3:3b-10, 19 • 1 Cor 6:13c-15a, 17-20 • Jn 1:35-42]

In our Gospel, we meet the first two disciples to follow Jesus. Today, there are about 2.5 billion Christians. How did the faith spread so rapidly? Evangelization, or handing on the joy of the faith, is the supreme duty of every baptized person.

John the Baptist began evangelizing by pointing to Jesus and saying, “*Behold the Lamb of God.*” Immediately his two disciples, one of which was Andrew, started to follow Jesus. Jesus stopped and asked them, “*What are you looking for?*” Jesus did this because He doesn’t need any more casual acquaintances, He needs committed friends. This is why the Gospel mentions the odd detail that it was 4 p.m. If Jesus died on the Cross at 3 p.m., then the four o’clock hour is about living out of the Resurrection by making more disciples and expanding the Church. Hence, John the Baptist led Andrew to Jesus, then Andrew ran to his brother, Simon Peter, and exclaimed, “*We have found the Messiah!*” Here are some practical strategies we can utilize to continue this pattern of evangelization:

When someone asks us a question about the faith or challenges us, we feel like we have to be know-it-alls. Not true, we have to be genuine, polite, and sincere. If we don’t know how to respond say, “*I don’t know, but let me get back to you after I ask my priest or look it up.*”

Every human pursuit and conversation has the potential to be an opening for Christ. Whatever someone is passionate about or suffering from is an open door we can stick our evangelizing foot into. Why? We all pursue happiness and it’s source is Christ; we all experience suffering which gives us insight into Jesus’ Crucifixion.

Persistence and prayer payoff in the long run. God hasn’t given up on the soul we are evangelizing and neither should we. It’s not about winning the argument; it’s about reintroducing a soul to God.

When approaching a family member, make your unconditional love for them known, no matter what they choose. Ask forgiveness for any past hurts. Become interested in what they are interested in to find common ground. Plant seed gifts of a CD, book, or article about the faith; put it in their car, house, or send it. Leave them with a question they can mull over such as “*Can you see proof of God’s existence when you look at Creation?*” Or, “*What does God look like when he looks at you?*”

When talking to a fallen away Catholic, a fruitful dialogue about the faith begins by listening to where they are at, not telling them where they fall short. Don’t be afraid to ask them questions such as, “*What bothers you most about Catholicism?*” Or, “*What has changed your mind that God exists?*”

When meeting with someone of another denomination pick three things, positive and negative, to discuss. For example, familiarize yourself with their tradition and tell them three points that you appreciate. Remember, everything that is true, good, and beautiful is a sign of God. Then ask them to list three things they dislike or don’t understand about Catholicism.

We can take the Gospel further than St. Paul did in his day. St. Paul not only traveled extensively, he used the cutting edge communication of the Roman Empire – letters. These letters were distributed by the equivalent of pony express on paved highways taking only 2-3 days across the entire Roman Empire! The Vatican invested in a radio tower in 1931 to spread the Gospel across continents. We can place a voice or video call, send email, text, record a video, or use social media to spread the Gospel globally.

We need to remind people why Jesus came – to save us from our sins. If we have no concept of sin, then why do we need a Savior? During Advent we sang, “*O come, O come Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel...*” This points to the fact that we have allowed our self to be kidnapped and held for ransom by sin. We are

helpless to break free on our own, but wait expectantly for a Savior to rescue us. Replace the word “sin” in the New Testament with “addiction” and we get a better idea of the hold it has on us.

Realize that young people are inspired by works of justice. We have remarkable teachings on social justice and historically what made the Catholic Church great was its outreach to the poor and marginalized. In high school, my youth group traveled to upstate New York to take part in the Appalachia Project. We worked on restoring people’s homes. I had little building experience and little sleep, but I found the encounter transformative because I was helping people in the name of Christ and dialoging with other passionate teens.

Don’t let the pattern of evangelization end with our generation. In every era, using every tool and talent, we must bring people to God, and God to His people. For Pope Francis said, *“Every Christian is challenged, here and now, to be actively engaged in evangelization; indeed, anyone who has truly experienced God’s saving love does not need much time or lengthy training to go out and proclaim that love.”*