

# A Mission Church

## EVANGELIZATION

*Jack Patnik, free of charge and without any coaching or solicitation, again provides a lay person's perspective of evangelization for us to ponder. Enjoy! – Fr. Tom*

Oh no - a bulletin handout on the "E" word. Doesn't Father Tom know evangelization is for Protestants. That's why we have Priests and Nuns - to go to remote parts of the world and make converts. I can't get on a street corner and preach. That's just not me. Give me a break. I go to Mass regularly. I lead a good life. That's what's important. What more does he want from me? Have I covered all the negative responses to the call to evangelize?

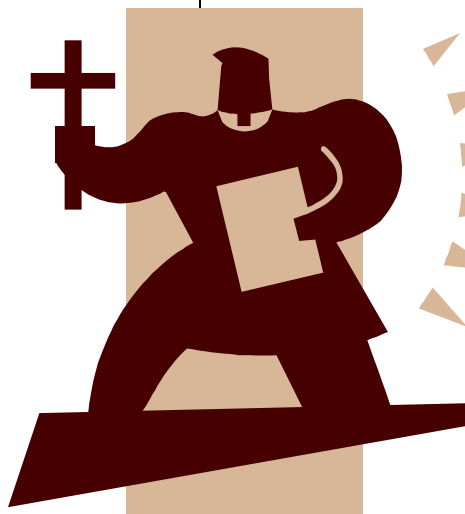
Since the God First initiative started and with the incorporation of the Mission Church aspect, we've been building up to the necessity of evangelization. Father Tom has been building to it powerfully but gently. He has been the "good" cop. Let me be the "bad" cop. Let me confront you with what you don't want to deal with. Let me rattle your comfort zone. Let me raise the issues that raise my anger at God for asking them and raise my anger at myself for my responses to these issues. I struggle with these issues continually and am in no better condition than any of you. So this is not a lecture. This is a shared self reflection. Take it for what its worth.

I was fortunate enough to have been catechized with the Baltimore Catechism. As with anything it isn't perfect. But it has its good points. One is that it presents Catholic Christian doctrine in a clear and logical manner that is understandable by youth. The fact that many of us memorized rather than understood is not the catechism's fault. Be that as it may, the reason I bring this up is that if one knows and understands the first three questions and answers, everything else makes sense. Let's review:

- [1]. Q: Who made us?  
A: God made us.

- [2]. Q: Who is God?  
A: God is the Supreme Being who made all things.
- [3]. Q: Why did God make us?  
A: God made us to know Him, to love Him, to serve Him and to be eternally happy with Him in Heaven.

(Note: the newer versions of the Catechism water down answer #3. But I know what I know, and it's the answer I've presented).



OK. So I know why God made me (one of the "big" life questions that drive our search for meaning). I think I know Him (more on that later). I think I love Him (more on that later). But how am I to serve Him? I'm a husband and father and do the best I can. I work hard to support my family. And my work does benefit others. I go to Mass regular and give money to the Church. I even help at the Festival. What more can I do?

What more does He want?

That is the question - not what more does he (Father Tom) want, but, what more does He (God) want? Do I really think that almighty God created the universe, became man, suffered and died for my sins just so I could exist in a narrow comfort zone? I sure hope not. That would be a great price for so little return.

Let's look at what Jesus wanted from his Apostles. Remember that Jesus founded the Church on the Apostle Peter and that the Apostles built the Church. Remember that we are the Church - the body of Christ. We are to be Jesus to the world and have received the same calling as the Apostles. When He first called them he told them He told them He "would make them fishers of men". (Matthew 4:18-20 and Mark 1:16-18). So right from the start Jesus told His men that they were to bring others to

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Him (evangelize). After His death and resurrection but before His ascension, Jesus told His Apostles to “make disciples of all nations”. (Matthew 28: 18-20 and Mark 16:15). So Jesus’ last instructions to His Apostles, His Church and us are to make disciples of all (evangelize). Can it be any clearer?

OK. It’s clear. But I can walk the walk. I don’t have to talk the talk. Wasn’t it St. Francis of Assisi who said, “Preach the Gospel always using words only if necessary”? He did. Yes, it’s true that we have to walk the walk and that actions speak louder than words. How is that working for me? How many people are coming to Christ based on the life I lead? Let’s look at that.

In the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 9:2 19:9 19:23 22:4 24:14 & 24:22) Christianity is referred to as the Way. What does that mean? It means that Christians lived in a Way that was so radically different than others that it was notable. As the chorus of the song says, “*and they’ll know we are Christians by our love*”. Is my life so radically different in my love that it is notable? No. I’m not a whole lot different than most people in 21<sup>st</sup> century America. I’m concerned about my family and its wellbeing, my job, my retirement and not losing what I’ve accumulated. I’ve been taught to put God first, everyone else second and myself last. My family can attest that I don’t put myself last. St. Francis’ life drew people to Christ. Mine hasn’t.

But I’ll tell you that I’m a “good” person. So what does He want from me? When Jesus was called “good teacher,” He replied, “Why do you call me good? No one is good but only God alone”. I’m just a person who can be nice and occasionally does good things. I best never forget that I am a sinner totally dependent on God for everything. Maybe I should mention that occasionally to others because my life isn’t telling anyone about God’s mercy.

Even if I was walking the walk, the times are different than St. Francis saw in 13<sup>th</sup> century Italy. Everyone was Catholic there and then if in name only. But today we are a nation of Christians of many sects, as well as Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, agnostics, atheists, etc. Many live as morally, if not more morally, as me, the “good” church going Catholic. So how would anyone come to know the salvation (and need for it) that Jesus brings just from my actions? Maybe I need to proclaim the Good News. But I can’t give that which I don’t have.

Do I know God or just know about Him? And how much do I know about Him? How much have I studied God since I made my confirmation? Does my adult faith formation consist of sometimes paying attention to the readings at Sunday Mass only? Has my

prayer life led to a personal relationship with God? Or is God just the Supreme Being in the heavens with whom I only have contact when I “need” something? Throughout the Old Testament (particularly Ezekiel) God proclaims, “Know that I am God”. Do I really accept that or does my pride lead me to think that “I am” God and can/should run things?

Do I love God or do I love myself? Is God first or am I? How can I love someone if I don’t know them? Jesus tells us (Matthew 22: 36-38 and Luke 10: 26-28) that the greatest commandment is to, “love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind”. I know I’m not there yet. And in the same verses Jesus tells us the second greatest commandment is like the first and that is to “love your neighbor as yourself”. I have too many worries and concerns to notice my neighbor let alone love him.

Do I serve God as He asks or do I do what I’m comfortable with and expect Him to be satisfied with that? Do I lead people to God or to Satan? (Off color or racist jokes or remarks, gossip, obsessing on hobbies or partying don’t lead people to God and if not to God where?) Do I proclaim the Good News of the gifts of salvation and eternal life or do I just try to get by? Do my clothes and/or car tell everyone who I voted for/will vote for, my favorite sports teams, my favorite athletes (NASCAR vanity plates), what college I’m the proud alumni of, where my kids are going to college, what brand I smoke, where I vacation, where I work, my favorite beer, what bar I frequent, what branch of the service I was in or my kid is in, how proud I am of my Scout / honor roll student or my kid’s name, number and sports team but not who my Lord and my God is? (Note: a St. John’s Chargers bumper sticker is bad if accompanied by cutting another off in traffic, blaring a horn at someone who didn’t react fast enough to a green light or the display of the single digit sign of frustration).

God wants all people to be reconciled to Him. I have family members, friends, neighbors and co-workers who are living without God in their lives. What am I doing about it? It’s pretty clear what God wants me to do about it. Am I humble enough to let Him be the God in my life and do as He asks of me?

*Jack is involved in the parish as a Lector, Adult Faith Formation Catechist, festival worker, and Pastoral Council member. He is also involved in the Knights of Columbus. What he says comes from the human experience.*

# A MISSION CHURCH: A Week-by-Week Glossary of Titles

**Week 1 — Sept. 6, 2009**

*Overview of God First*

**Week 2 — Sept. 13, 2009**

*Entering into the Mission*

**Week 3 — Sept. 20, 2009**

*Humility Necessary for the Mission*

**Week 4 — Sept. 27, 2009**

*Confession & Conversion requirements for the Mission*

**Week 5 — Oct. 4, 2009**

*Liturgy: The Opening Rites*

**Week 6 — Oct. 11, 2009**

*Liturgy: Liturgy of the Word*

**Week 7 — Oct. 18, 2009**

*Liturgy: Profession of Faith and General Intercessions*

**Week 8 — Oct. 25, 2009**

*Liturgy: Preparation of Gifts / Offertory*

**Week 9 — Nov. 1, 2009**

*Intercession of Saints and Communion of Saints*

**Week 10 — Nov. 8**

*Liturgy: Eucharistic Prayers*

**Week 11 — Nov. 15, 2009**

*Liturgy: The Consecration*

**Week 12 — Nov. 22, 2009**

*Liturgy: Our Father thru Reception of the Eucharist*

**Week 13 — Nov. 29, 2009**

*Liturgy: Concluding Rites*

**Week 14 — Dec. 6, 2009**

*The Immaculate Conception of Mary,  
the Mother of God*

**Week 15 — Dec. 13, 2009**

*Statues, Images, and Idols*

**Week 16 — Dec. 20, 2009**

*The Celebration of the Christmas Season*

**Week 17 — Jan. 3, 2010**

*Why Infant Baptism?*

**Week 18 — Jan. 10, 2010**

*The Fullness of Baptismal Life*

**Week 19 — Jan. 17, 2010**

*Understanding the Church — Part I*

**Week 20 — Jan. 24, 2010**

*Understanding the Church — Part II*

**Week 21 — Jan. 31, 2010**

*The Clash of Sacrificial Sacrifice and  
Wealth and Happiness in this World.*

**Week 22 — Feb. 7, 2010**

*“Call No Man Father”*

**Week 23 — Feb. 14, 2010**

*Repeat of Feb. 7 (snow)*

**Week 24 — Feb. 21, 2010**

*The Sacrament of Reconciliation*

**Week 25 — Feb. 28, 2010**

*Is Abstinence a Church Law or a Call From God?*

**Week 26 — March 7, 2010**

*Why Confess to a Priest?*

**Week 27 — March 14, 2010**

*What I Say to You in the Darkness*

**Week 28 — March 21, 2010**

*Through Him, With Him, In Him is the Mission Church*

**Week 29 — March 28, 2010**

*WDJD (What DID Jesus Do?)*

**Week 30 — April 4, 2010**

*Resurrection Beliefs, Signs & Symbols*

**Week 31 — April 11, 2010**

*Where the Church is...There is Found It's Mission*

**Week 32 — April 18, 2010**

*Where the Church is...There is Found It's Mission  
(Part 2)*

**Week 33 — April 25, 2010**

*A Sign of Living Christ: Vocation*

**Week 34 — May 2, 2010**

*Baptized For Every Moment of Life*