

SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME YEAR A

THEME: A CALL TO EVANGELIZATION

The liturgy of the word for today's mass is centered on evangelization. What is evangelization? And how do we evangelize? Evangelization simply means having Jesus and being able to give him to others. Evangelization is not conceptual; it is not about ideas. It involves concrete action; accepting Jesus and bringing people to him.

We evangelize by introducing people to Jesus as John the Baptist did in our Gospel passage. "Behold the lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world." John did not study theology in order to do this. He did not need college degrees to do it. All that is needed is the willingness to introduce people to Jesus.

We have two main aspects of evangelization. We need to evangelize within the church and outside the church. We need to evangelize within the church through our responsible stewardship of time, talent and treasure. Each time we invite fellow parishioner to prayer, bible studies, and to other church programs, we are building up the body of Christ. Each time we invite people to volunteer or join our respective parish ministries like choir, altar server, Faith formation, Charismatic, Knights etc., we are restoring and building up the church.

Evangelization also involves outreach. We need to look outward to invite people to Jesus. In the first reading of this mass, God addressed us through the lips of prophet Isaiah saying: "It is too little for you to be my servant, I will make you a light to the nations; that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth. Jesus himself commanded us to go out to the whole world and proclaim the Good News. This can be done by inviting friends, neighbors and acquaintances to the morning masses and weekend liturgies. Such occasion can engender conversions. Evangelization can also be done by utilizing the media. Do you watch EWTN programs? If there are any favorite programs you are excited about, then, recommend it to your friends and neighbors. You may not know the impact you would be making in their lives.

Many times, some of us feel that they cannot evangelize, because they are not adequately prepared for it. Some worry that they cannot cite a passage of the Bible. Please, that is not what it takes to evangelize. As I said earlier, the qualification you need to have in order to evangelize is having Jesus and being willing to give him to others. That is what John the Baptist did in our Gospel reading. He pointed Jesus to his disciples saying; "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world." This is exactly what Jesus expects from us. Tell people how excited you are about your faith in Christ, about your parish family, and invite them to come and see.

My brothers and sisters in Christ, evangelization is about promoting the kingdom of God. We cannot give up on those who are yet to believe. We must reach out to the ends of the earth that God's salvation may reach everywhere. We are the servants of the Lord. By virtue of our

baptism, he has anointed and consecrated us and set us apart for his divine purpose, for missionary activity, and for evangelization. It is the boldness that many feel they do not have. Perhaps ask one person at a time and keep on asking, you do not have to ask every person you meet; start with those close to you, one step at a time. God has given us his Spirit of boldness to do this effectively: The Holy Spirit we received at baptism is not a spirit of timidity but a spirit of power and love and self-control (2Tim. 1:7).

As we continue with this mass, let us pray that God will give us the grace to evangelize the people around us with authentic faith and exemplary life.