

St. Louis Church

Inviting the Flock Home

How Do We Measure Success in Evangelization?

We live in a world where many people are looking for success. Success in evangelization is not simply a matter of increasing the number of people at Mass. ***Our goal is to save souls*** by helping those who already attend Mass to grow in their personal relationship with Jesus and to lead those who do not come to develop such a relationship.

Here are several quotes from various sources that help us understand what we are trying to accomplish in our evangelization efforts.

- 1) “There is no true evangelization if the name, the teaching, the life, the promises, the kingdom and the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God are not proclaimed” (EN, 22).
- 2) “In fact the proclamation only reaches full development when it is listened to, accepted and assimilated, and when it arouses a genuine adherence in the one who has thus received it” (EN, 23).
- 3) “Finally, the person who has been evangelized goes on to evangelize others” (EN, 24)
- 4) “Evangelization will also always contain - as the foundation, center, and at the same time, summit of its dynamism - a clear proclamation that, in Jesus Christ, the Son of God made man, who died and rose from the dead, salvation is offered to all men, as a gift of God's grace and mercy” (EN, 27)”
- 5) “We must not ignore the fact that many, even generous Christians who are sensitive to the dramatic questions involved in the problem of liberation, in their wish to commit the Church to the liberation effort are frequently tempted to reduce her mission to the dimensions of a simply temporal project. They would reduce her aims to a man-centered goal; the salvation of which she is the messenger would be reduced to material well-being. Her activity, forgetful of all spiritual and religious preoccupation, would become initiatives of the political or social order. But if this were so, the Church would lose her fundamental meaning” (EN, 32).
- 6) See the story of Gamaliel in Acts 5:33-42. *“When they heard this, they became infuriated and wanted to put them to death. But a Pharisee in the Sanhedrin named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, respected by all the people, stood up, ordered the men to be put outside for a short time, and said to them, “Fellow Israelites, be careful what you are about to do to these men. Some time ago, Theudas appeared, claiming to be someone important, and about four hundred men joined him, but he was killed, and all those who were loyal to him were disbanded and came to nothing. After him came Judas the Galilean at the time of the census. He also drew people after him, but he too perished and all who were loyal to him were scattered. So now I tell you, have nothing to do with these men, and let them go. For if this endeavor or this activity is of human origin, it will destroy itself. But if it comes from God, you will not be able to destroy them; you may even find yourselves fighting against God.” They were persuaded by him. After recalling the apostles, they had them flogged, ordered them to stop speaking in the name of Jesus, and dismissed them. So they left the presence of the Sanhedrin, rejoicing that they had been found worthy to suffer dishonor for the*

sake of the name. And all day long, both at the temple and in their homes, they did not stop teaching and proclaiming the Messiah, Jesus.”

- 7) “Evangelization consists mostly of patience and disregard for the constraints of time” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 24).
- 8) “Apologetics is not about winning arguments, it is about sharing the truth, and again, it is about planting seeds” (John Martignoni, *Blue Collar Apologetics: How to Explain and Defend Catholic Teaching Using Common Sense, Simple Logic, and the Bible*. Irondale, AL: EWTN Publishing. 2021.).
- 9) “We’re no longer working for our own generation. We’re working for several generations down the line” (Carl Trueman, 162. Francis X. Maier, *True Confessions: Voices of Faith from a Life in the Church*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press. 2024).