

St. Louis Church Inviting the Flock Home Whose Job Is It

One might think it is the work of the priests, deacons, and staff of the parish to evangelize. It is true that the priests, deacons, and *some* of the staff are the ones with the most theological education. This is their part to offer.

However, the parishioners have something to offer too. Parishioners are the ones who encounter the people we seek to evangelize. Parishioners can witness to their faith and invite the people they encounter to come to faith.

The Holy Spirit can and does work through anyone. For example, we hear in the Book of Ezra of how God used King Cyrus, *a pagan*, to rebuild the temple.

Whose Job Is It:

- 1) Pope, bishops, priests see EN 67-68
- 2) ***“Lay people, whose particular vocation places them in the midst of the world and in charge of the most varied temporal tasks,*** must for this very reason exercise a very special form of evangelization.

Their primary and immediate task is not to establish and develop the ecclesial community- this is the specific role of the pastors - but to put to use every Christian and evangelical possibility latent but already present and active in the affairs of the world. ***Their own field of evangelizing activity is the vast and complicated world of politics, society and economics, but also the world of culture, of the sciences and the arts, of international life, of the mass media.*** It also includes other realities which are open to evangelization, such as human love, the family, the education of children and adolescents, professional work, suffering” (Pope St. Paul VI, EN, 70).

- 3) “Evangelizing action of the family...domestic church...This means that there should be found in every Christian family the various aspects of the entire Church... The parents not only communicate the Gospel to their children, but from their children they can themselves receive the same Gospel as deeply lived by them. And such a family becomes the evangelizer of many other families, and of the neighborhood of which it forms part. Families resulting from a mixed marriage also have the duty of proclaiming Christ to the children in the fullness of the consequences of a common Baptism; they have moreover the difficult task of becoming builders of unity” (Pope St. Paul VI, EN, 71, cf. 78).
- 4) Romans 10:15 *“And how can people preach unless they are sent?”*
- 5) Evangelization does not require a college degree in theology for everyone. Evangelization begins with each person sharing what their faith means to them (encounter). We each have a part to play as *“fishers of men”* (Matthew 4:19, Mark 1:17).
- 6) Holy Spirit
 - a) “Techniques of evangelization are good, but even the most advanced ones could not replace the gentle action of the Spirit” (Pope St. Paul VI, EN, 75).

- b) “It must be said that the Holy Spirit is the principal agent of evangelization” (Pope St. Paul VI, EN, 75).
- c) “be said that He is the goal of evangelization” (Pope St. Paul VI, EN, 75).
- d) While we each might minister in a different way, we must remember, as Pope St. Paul VI writes, “The first is this: evangelization is for no one an individual and isolated act; it is one that is *deeply ecclesial*” (EN, 60, emphasis added).

The Importance of Unity in Our Work:

- 1) “The power of evangelization will find itself considerably diminished if those who proclaim the Gospel are divided among themselves in all sorts of ways” (Pope St. Paul VI, EN, 77)
- 2) “At this point we wish to emphasize the sign of unity among all Christians as the way and instrument of evangelization. The division among Christians is a serious reality which impedes the very work of Christ. The Second Vatican Council states clearly and emphatically that this division “damages the most holy cause of preaching the Gospel to all men, and it impedes many from embracing the faith” (Pope St. Paul VI, EN, 77)
- 3) “The Gospel entrusted to us is also the word of truth. A truth which liberates and which alone gives peace of heart is what people are looking for when we proclaim the Good News to them. The truth about God, about man and his mysterious destiny, about the world; the difficult truth that we seek in the Word of God and of which, we repeat, we are neither the masters nor the owners, but the depositaries, the heralds and the servants” (Pope St. Paul VI, EN, 78).