

“Love, Pray, Go, Teach.”

by Father John Catoir

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The four words of Jesus: "love, pray, go, and teach" capture His entire message. Most Catholics are good at loving and praying, but not so many realize that "going and teaching" can be done by striving to set a good example.

The Second Vatican Council decided to emphasize the importance of the laity in spreading the Gospel. For centuries the bulk of the work of evangelization was delegated to a few missionary priests and sisters. When the Council Fathers invited the People of God, to become missionaries wherever they happen to be: at work, at school, or anywhere in the world, it was revolutionary. The laity had always been taught to be passive spectators, not only at Mass but in carrying out the mission of the Church. They were taught to send money to support the missions, but were never invited to take on the responsibility of making Jesus known and loved by personal witnessing.

Keep these words of St. Francis of Assisi in mind, "some of the best sermons are preached without using words." Everyone teaches best by example.

No one is asking you to travel to pagan countries. It's more a matter of changing how you think about the way you share the gift of faith.

Father James Keller founded the Christophers on this very principle in 1945. He was a missionary priest who taught lay men and women to become missionaries by getting into positions of influence, and speaking up for Christian values. He used the media to reach mass audiences urging people to work together to help make this a better world. He encouraged good people of all faiths to unite in order to overcome evil with good.

His ministry back in the 1940's and 1950's helped lay the groundwork for the Council, which empowered the laity in the 1960's to bloom where they're planted. Think in terms of being another Christ wherever you go. Here's an example of how you can do that.

Choose one of the corporal works of mercy, like: "Visit the Sick." There are sick people in your family, and in the local hospitals. In this year of Mercy wouldn't be a blessing if you decided to reach out to the sick? Not only those you know but anyone who has been recommended to you for prayer. Start visiting one sick person a week.

Put on the will to bear the discomfort. You may feel a bit awkward at first. Be as cheerful as you can be. If you can't visit in person, use the phone.

Remember that you are a carrier of Christ's love. Don't worry about what you'll say, the Holy Spirit will guide you. Just be there and listen. Don't give advice, unless you're asked. Your main goal is to bring them the hidden presence of Jesus, living in you.

Anytime you consciously bring the love of Christ to another you are acting as an Apostle. At the end of each Mass we say:

"In Him, and with Him and through Him"- that should be your mantra.

You are never alone. You are a saint-in-training. "Rejoice always and be glad."