

DISCIPLES IN MISSION VALUE EVERYDAY LIFE



SOMETIMES, AFTER LENT BEGINS, WE DO NOT KEEP UP OUR LENTEN PRACTICES, OR THESE PRACTICES BECOME ROUTINE AND LOSE THEIR SHARPNESS. BUT ISN'T STAYING WITH THESE PRACTICES THE WAY WE GROW. HOW OUR DAILY LIFE SLOWLY CHANGES?

In Front of Our Noses

Jules Verne had us twenty thousand leagues under the sea and Orson Welles, in his famous radio broadcast in the late 1930s, had us invaded by creatures from Mars. A succession of movies and novels regularly shows strange beings emerging from beyond and beneath, whether it's Godzilla, E.T., Jaws, or Superman.

In the collective imagination, sometimes these extraterrestrial creatures shock and frighten us. Often, however, they are extremely benign, beaming beatifically upon us poor humans, who suffer in comparison with them. In fiction and in reality, we see people awaiting a visiting spacecraft or celestial apparition, either to bring wonders to our lowly Earth or, lacking that, to take up the lucky few to heavenly bliss.

What is curious about all this, and very telling, is how it diminishes our view of everyday life. It dismisses the experience and routine that we all cultivate as we try to make sense of our lives and respond to life's invitations.

The further we move from everyday life, however, the further we are from the world of evangelization. For God

sent Jesus as a human being into our everyday world, precisely to bring salvation to our daily lives.

The bishops comment on this in *Go and Make Disciples* when they say, "Yet there are familiar ways by which evangelization happens: by the way we live God's love in our daily life; by the love, example, and support people give each other; and by the ways parents pass faith on to their children...In daily life, family members evangelize each other, men and women their future spouses, and workers their fellow employees by the simple lives of faith they lead. Through the ordinary patterns of our Catholic life, the Holy Spirit brings about conversion and a new life in Christ" (pp. 5-6).

Look Around

A famous passage in the Book of Deuteronomy has Moses telling the Israelites that God's commandments are not inaccessible; they are right in front of their noses and can be carried out in their everyday lives. "This command which I enjoin on you today is not too mysterious and remote for

you. It is not up in the sky, that you should say, ‘Who will go up in the sky to get it for us and tell us of it, that we may carry it out?’ Nor is it across the sea, that you should say, ‘Who will cross the sea to get it for us and tell us of it, that we may carry it out?’ No, it is something very near to you, already in your mouths and in your hearts; you have only to carry it out” (Deuteronomy 30:11-14).

So it is with evangelization. We don’t need to travel far to see its impact, nor do we need to propagate unusual programs to sustain it. We don’t need to depend on the expert or the visitor for evangelization to take place.

Rather, evangelization is best placed in our everyday lives. How, after all, does the Gospel communicate itself? Isn’t it through parents sharing with and training their children? Or through friends talking with each other? Or through children being involved in church and religious formation? Or through husbands and wives placing the Gospel in the middle of their family life?

If we’re trying to find a place for evangelization to operate in our lives, we do not need to look for angelic visitations or international marketing schemes. We are invited to

look at our daily lives—our families, our friends, our co-workers, our neighborhoods, our urban, suburban, or rural environments.

Only Through Us

Here God would speak, and how else except through us? Here the Gospel would console, challenge, and transform, but how else except through our acceptance of the Gospel in our actual, everyday lives? Our experience with the catechumenal process shows us this: when people explore entering the Church, they talk about how they’ve found faith in their daily lives, through all their human contacts.

When the Gospel and our life of discipleship come to organize our everyday lives, then the reason why Jesus took on our flesh, walked our roads, and formed community with us will be fulfilled.

In a culture that often looks for magical answers from above or below, how great it would be if we could discover the answer God has placed under our noses, in our everyday lives: Jesus Christ, God’s revelation and our brother.

Reflection

Think of one person in your life whose witness and faith influenced you. Was it an obvious or overt experience, or was it a more subtle one? Give thanks for how God touched your life this way, and pray for this person.

Action

Can you identify one person who is part of your everyday life, whom you can touch through your faith? Think of how you might do this in a tactful, respectful, and perfectly natural way. If it seems appropriate, try doing it.

Prayer

FOR THE SPARKLE IN THE EYES OF LOVED ONES. FOR THE TOUCH OF A FRIENDLY HAND. FOR THE BREAD WE EAT. FOR THE PLENTIFUL STARS. FOR THE ROAR OF THE BREAKERS. FOR THE HOLY WORD YOU HAVE SPOKEN TO US. FOR THE CHANCE TO BE AND TO DO. WE THANK YOU, O LORD, OUR GOD. AMEN.

(FROM THE CHRISTOPHERS)