

The Parish Visitor



“Evangelization will never be possible
without the action of the
Holy Spirit.” – Pope Paul VI

COME, HOLY SPIRIT

The Parish Visitor

The Parish Visitors of Mary Immaculate are always “On the Move.” We take to heart the missionary mandate to go out to all the world and tell the Good News.

This issue of The Parish Visitor is an invitation for each of our readers to “Start spreading the news.” Long before Frank Sinatra crooned those lyrics, Jesus commissioned His disciples – and all of us – to spread the *Good News* – the Gospel – to the ends of the earth. Pope St. Paul VI reminded us that it is the very nature of the Church to be missionary. Lest we think that “the Church” refers solely to the priests and religious, we were reminded by the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council that, as baptized members of the Mystical Body, “We are the Church.”



“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and behold I am with you always until the end of the age.” Mt. 28:19,20

Editor: Sr. Mary Josita, PVM

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P.O. Box 658, Monroe, NY 10949 • Phone: (845) 783-2251
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On the Move

By Mother Maria Catherine, PVM



In his Gospel, Saint Matthew records for us the final words of Jesus to the Eleven: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me; you, therefore, must go out, making disciples of all nations, and baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all the commandments which I have given you. And behold I am with you all through the days that are coming, until the consummation of the world.” (Mt. 28:16-20) *Jerusalem Bible Translation*

Before leaving them, Jesus gave the apostles their “marching orders”! They were not to settle in one place and spend their days remembering the “good old days” when He was physically with them. They were to go out and tell the whole world His message; and in the telling of the message make disciples whose unity with them would be confirmed by “baptism in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.”

In essence, Jesus was commissioning the apostles to be evangelists and catechists: men who would preach the Good News and teach the meaning of that Good News! Now, you might ask, “What IS this ‘Good News’?” It is a simple message, but profound.

God sent His Son to tell the world of His great love. This Son, the Second Person of the Trinity, was Incarnate of the Virgin Mary and became one of us. He taught everything He heard from the Father; He suffered, died, was buried, and rose again on the third day. The rupture caused by the sin of our first parents in the Garden of Eden was undone by the humility and obedience of the Second Adam in the Garden of Gethsemane.

The Apostles preached the entire message – the Kerygma – wherever they went! It was this message that brought people to faith:

to know that God was with them in Jesus Christ, that He gave His life for them to reveal the love of the Father! How could one not love this God Incarnate?

At the heart of the message – of the Kerygma – is not a set of rules and regulations, but a Person: the Person of Jesus Christ! It has been said that people do not give up their lives for a rule or regulation – people willingly lay down their lives for a person! The martyrs gave their lives for the Person of Jesus Christ, because of their love for Him! They learned to love Him because they learned of and believed in His love for them!

Pope Saint Paul VI, one of my heroes, in speaking of evangelization, said: “The Twelve and the first generation of Christians understood well the lesson of this text (Mt. 28:16-20) and other



The Sermon On the Mount by Carl Bloch, c. 1877

similar ones; they made them into a program of action. Even persecution, by scattering the apostles, helped to spread the Word and to establish the Church in ever more distant regions. The admission of Paul to the rank of the apostles and his charism as the preacher to the pagans (the non-Jews) of Jesus' Coming underlined this universality still more." *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (Evangelization in the Modern World 49)

To reveal Jesus Christ and His Gospel to those who do not know them has been, ever since the morning of Pentecost, the fundamental program which the Church has taken on as received from her Founder. The whole of the New Testament, and in a special way the Acts of the Apostles, bears witness to a privileged and in a sense exemplary moment of this missionary effort which will subsequently leave its mark on the whole history of the Church. (EN 51)

Pope Saint Paul VI is telling us that, in our day, the call to evangelize has not lessened. Rather, it is more important than ever that the Church continues to be on the move to draw Her brothers and sisters to Jesus Christ and His saving word of truth!

There is no doubt that the effort to proclaim the Gospel to the people of today, who are buoyed up by hope but at the same time often oppressed by fear and distress, is a service rendered to the Christian community and also to the whole of humanity. (EN 1)

Pope Paul VI wrote this Encyclical in 1975 and I believe we can see even more so in our day the urgency of proclaiming the Gospel to the people of our own time!

The charism given to Mother Mary Teresa by God is nothing less than that of evangelization and catechesis. Her call was, like the Apostles, to be “on the move” – going out to bring the love of Jesus to those who either had forgotten that love or had never heard of that saving love and mercy. Her charism, so needed in our day and age, is, in the words of Jesus: “Let the children come to me and do not hinder them.”

Mother Mary Teresa told her Sisters: “The mission of a friendly Visitor, imbued with the spirit of Christ and His Apostles, is therefore a much needed and wonderfully effective apostolate.

And such a mission is the special privilege of the Parish Visitors of Mary Immaculate." (*Parish Visitor Missionary*, p. 2)

By going out as missionary evangelists and catechists, the Parish Visitor Sisters are called to introduce those they meet to the Person of Jesus Christ through the proclamation of the Kerygma. They are called to tell of His saving love and mercy and draw all hearts to Him by the witness of their lives of love and compassion. They are to be "friend" to those they meet and speak to each person "heart to heart" – just as Jesus would do!

Mother Mary Teresa reminded the Sisters: "The Parish Visitors speak to the people, face to face and heart to heart. Their method being the conversational one, is easily acceptable and it is through the happy process of human intercourse that they will make the people understand that Our Lord remembers them, and that He loves them and would be willing to die again for their souls." (*PVM*, pp. 6-7)

In our visits to the homes, and in our parish apostolates, the Parish Visitors are constantly teaching the Kerygma: either informally or directly in faith formation classes both for youth, young adults and adults as well as through Christian Initiation Classes for children or adults, or in catechizing through the religion classes taught in the Catholic school setting.



Catechesis is instruction in the faith – in the teachings of Jesus – which occurs through actual teaching.

Pope Saint John Paul the Great (another hero), in his Apostolic Exhortation, *Catechesi Tradendae*, (On Catechesis In our Time) has said:

"The primary and essential object of catechesis is, to use an expression dear to St. Paul and also to contemporary theology, 'the mystery of Christ.' Catechizing is in

a way to lead a person to study this mystery in all its dimensions: 'to make all men see what is the plan of the mystery... comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth ...know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge...(and be filled) with all the fullness of God.' (Eph. 3:9, 18, 19) It is therefore to reveal in the Person of Christ the whole of God's eternal design reaching fulfillment in that Person. It is to seek to understand the meaning of Christ's actions and words and of the signs worked by Him, for they simultaneously hide and reveal His mystery." (*CT*, #5)

Evangelization and catechesis go hand in hand. They are like two sides of one coin – you can't have one without the other!

Writing to the Church in America, following his visit to the American continent and as a reflection following the Special Synod on America, Pope Saint John Paul the Great said:

"The new evangelization in which the whole continent is engaged means that faith cannot be taken for granted but must be explicitly proposed in all its breadth and richness. This is the principal objective of catechesis, which, by its very nature, is an essential aspect of the new evangelization." *Ecclesia in America* (The Church in America) *EA*, 69

So, what has all of this to do with each of you who reads our magazine? It has everything to do with you, as well as with Parish Visitors of Mary Immaculate, and with our bishops, priests, deacons!

Every baptized Catholic has been called, and equipped, through the grace of the Sacrament of Baptism, to be evangelizing catechists – missionary disciples of the Lord – who are sent to tell everyone they meet of the love of God made manifest in the Person of Jesus Christ, through His saving life, Passion, death, and Resurrection!

Pope Saint Paul VI, in the previously mentioned document, has said:

"All Christians are called to this witness, and in this way, they can be real evangelizers." (*EN* 21)

"But who then has the mission of evangelizing?

“...the whole Church is missionary, and the work of evangelization is a basic duty of the People of God.” (Decree on the Church’s Missionary Activity *Ad Gentes*, 35: AAS 58 1966), p. 983.) (EN 59)

Each one of you, our readers, is called to be the Presence of Jesus in the world. You are called to proclaim to all you meet the saving love and mercy of Christ, Son of the Father, Son of Mary, Who came into this world to show us the face of the Father through His life of preaching and healing, through His saving Passion, Death and Resurrection.

Lest you think this is difficult, remember the words of Mother Mary Teresa! You are called to do this “face to face” and “heart to heart”! You are called to radiate the love of Jesus. And THAT can be done simply by a smile, or by lending a helping hand in the supermarket, by listening to a co-worker and encouraging persons in hope and trust in God.

Pope St. Paul VI said: “One cannot fail to stress the evangelizing action of the family in the evangelizing apostolate of the laity.”

“In a family which is conscious of this mission, all the members evangelize and are evangelized. 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.” (EN 71)

You might be asking yourselves: “But how can I do this? It seems such a daunting task!”

Mother Mary Teresa constantly reminded her daughters that the spiritual life comes first. Might I suggest that you take to heart her words: “The spiritual life is *first all the time*.” (PVM, p. 194)

It is only our life of prayer that opens us up to the graces that Jesus desires to give us, through the Holy Spirit, to be His witnesses to the ends of the earth – well, at least to the persons He puts in our way!

Pope Saint Paul VI has called Mary, the Mother of Jesus, the “Star of Evangelization” and Pope Saint John Paul the Great has called her “Star of the New Evangelization”. Pope Saint John Paul the Great, in the closing prayer of his exhortation, prays: “Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of America, pray for us!”

What better way to pray to Jesus through Mary than the Rosary. In the promulgation of the *Mysteries of Light*, the 5 new decades of the Rosary, Pope Saint John Paul the Great designated the Third Mystery: “*Jesus preaches the Kingdom and calls to conversion*.”

When Parish Visitors of Mary Immaculate pray this decade of the Rosary, their intention is: “the conversion of hearts through evangelization and catechesis”!

Jesus preached in order to draw persons to the Father through Himself. And when they came to believe in Him, through the conversion of their hearts, He catechized them – He taught them more deeply what it meant to be His followers. Jesus evangelized and catechized!

My dear friends, the Church in America is in desperate need of persons to radiate the Face of Christ: the love of Jesus! The Church in America, indeed all in America need to know of the love poured out from the Sacred Heart of Jesus on the Cross for each one! The world needs YOUR witness to Jesus and the truth He came to proclaim!

If you have not yet done so, won’t you begin to exercise your baptismal call to “go out into the whole world and preach the Good News” by the way you live, by the way you speak to your neighbor, by the way you reach out to those marginalized from the living of their faith?

Won’t you begin by praying the Rosary, and asking Our Blessed Mother to lead you to Her Son and the ways in which He wishes to use the gifts He has given you to proclaim His Holy Name to all the world?

I would like to end with the prayer of Pope Saint John Paul the Great, at the end of his Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in America* (The Church in America):

*We thank you, Lord Jesus,
because the Gospel of the Father’s love,*

*with which you came to save the world,
has been proclaimed far and wide in America
as a gift of the Holy Spirit
that fills us with gladness.*

*We thank you for the gift of your Life,
which you have given us by loving us to the end:
your Life makes us children of God,
brothers and sisters to each other.
Increase, O Lord, our faith, and our love for you,
present in all the tabernacles of the continent.*

*Grant us to be faithful witnesses
to your Resurrection
for the younger generation of Americans,
so that, in knowing you, they may follow you
and find in you their peace and joy.
Only then will they know that they
are brothers and sisters
of all God's children scattered
throughout the world.*

*You who, in becoming man,
chose to belong to a human family,
teach families the virtues which filled with light
the family home of Nazareth.*

*May families always be united,
as you and the Father are one,
and may they be living witnesses
to love, justice and solidarity;
make them schools of respect,
forgiveness and mutual help,
so that the world may believe;
help them to be the source of vocations
to the priesthood and the consecrated life,
and all the other forms
of firm Christian commitment.*

*Protect your Church and the Successor of Peter,
to whom you, Good Shepherd, have entrusted
the task of feeding your flock.*

*Grant that the Church in America may flourish
and grow richer in the fruits of holiness.*

*Teach us to love your Mother, Mary,
as you loved her.
Give us strength to proclaim
your word with courage
in the work of the new evangelization,
so that the world may know new hope.
Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of America,
pray for us!*



The First Missionary Disciple

By Sister Mary Eileen, PVMI



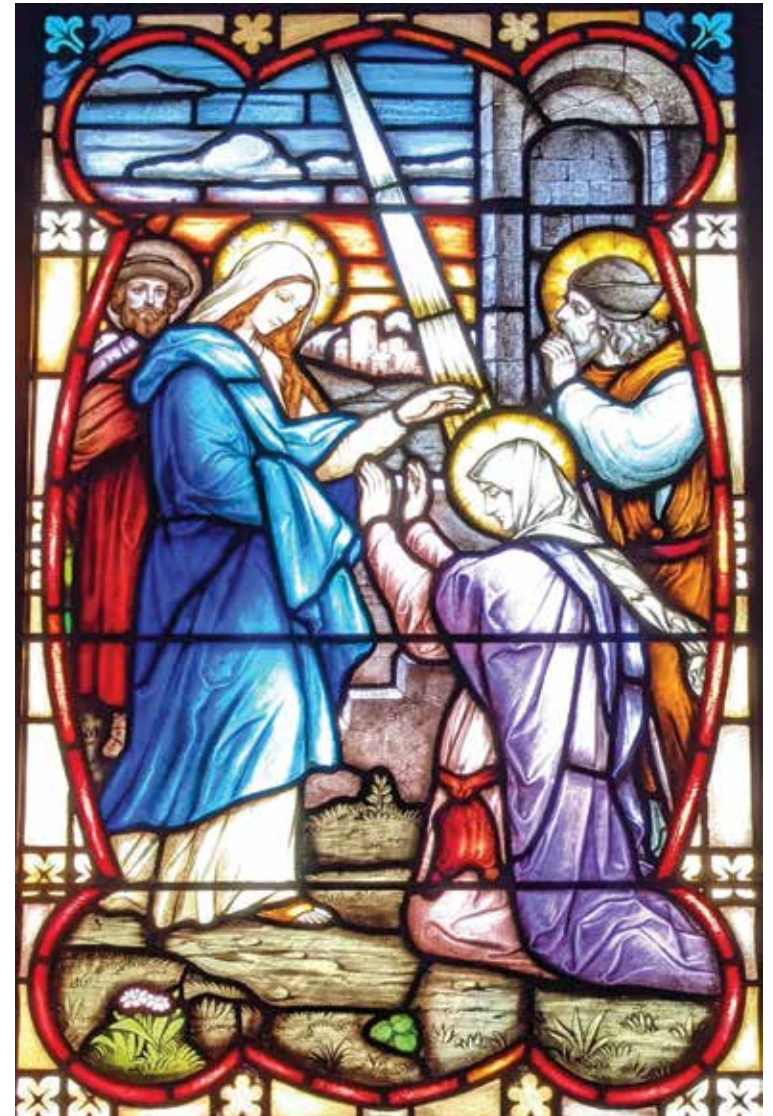
Our Blessed Mother's visit to her cousin Elizabeth has deep meaning for the Parish Visitors of Mary Immaculate. Our Foundress, Mother Mary Teresa Tallon, picked this second Joyful Mystery of the Rosary as a particular model of what we are called to do. Just as Mary, carrying Jesus within her, brought Him to Elizabeth and the baby she was carrying (John the Baptist) so we are called to bring Jesus, whom we carry spiritually within us, to all those we meet. Although our Sisters dedicate their entire lives exclusively to this call, I think it's exhilarating to realize that each baptized Christian is called, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to allow Jesus to live ever more fully within, so as to bring Him to those we encounter. It's the call of a missionary disciple, and Our Blessed Mother was the first.

What can we learn from the way Mary was a missionary disciple in the Gospel account of the Visitation?

First of all, she *believed*. She *trusted* what God revealed to her when she was alone with Him, in this case through an angel. And she *acted upon* what He spoke, as she went *in haste* to visit Elizabeth. We too have our alone time with God in prayer when He reveals Himself and His Will. We learn to discern His voice through the inspirations that bring us peace. Then we must act on them, even when feelings later arise that tempt us to the contrary or to doubt the inspiration itself. We are always sent somehow, somewhere, to someone. God's grace always moves us outward, toward the other in love. God never says, "Experience my love and then keep it to yourself." Mary went *in haste*...without hesitation, calculation, fear of difficulties, or even self-doubt.

God had called and sent her. That was enough. His grace would be sufficient.

What awaited her in the encounter? Joy! Even John, the unborn baby leapt with joy! There is immense joy in carrying Jesus within and allowing others to encounter Him through us. There is nothing in this world quite like it. *"My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Savior..." Lk 1:46*



Mother Mary Teresa's Thoughts on the Missionary Vocation



The missionary vocation of the Parish Visitors of Mary Immaculate is similar to that of Our Lord. As the Good Shepherd, Jesus, came to save souls, and as His method of saving them was by visitation and travel, so does the Parish Visitor go out to seek the stray and the lost ones.

Jesus did not remain at home and wait for the wanderers to come to Him, but He went out daily to seek them. He spoke of them as of His own, "My sheep that was lost." And he always held to His claim, and clearly explained that the stray one was His, even though it was lost – but never lost beyond redemption... The Good Shepherd sought and found His sheep, and taking it



The Young Christ as the Good Shepherd
by Bartolomé Esteban Murillo,
c. 1637 – 1687

on His shoulders, brought it home to the fold (cf. Lk 15:3-7). That scene portrays the beautiful vocation of the Parish Visitor who, first of all, must have a heart in close sympathy with the Good Shepherd, and then follow His manner of dealing with souls...

First, there is the grace of fortitude or courage...The Parish Visitor must have fortitude and a certain daring born of grace. Then she must also have the spirit of contemplation; that is, she

must be one who has a certain clearness of vision in regard to God. God is everything to her heart; for Him she lives, for Him she works, and for Him she dies. This union with God will give her great peace of soul that nothing can disturb...She loves souls because the soul is valuable for the reason that it resembles God and is made to His image...

The visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary to her cousin Elizabeth (cf. Lk 1:39-56) has a special significance for the Parish Visitors of Mary Immaculate. Her journey was one of sacrifice, but she made it gladly because of the motive that inspired her. The motive was the love of her neighbor for God's dear sake... To her it was enough that God willed something from her, and she went gladly and wholeheartedly to do it...This visitation is a model for every Parish Visitors of Mary Immaculate...

She has to be very careful, because, although she is only a messenger carrying a message, it is a very sacred message, and she must take care not to spoil it...whether it be to a person like St. Elizabeth or to the socially least of the least. When the Lord said, "the least" He meant those whom the world calls least; the world calls the least the "riff-raff" of mankind...Our Lord said, "Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren you did it to me" (Mt. 25:40). It is quite a dignity to serve the very least for God's sake.



Jesus seems to regard the least as equal to Himself... Let us go out, then, in that spirit of humility and true thankfulness of soul...The best blessings to the Church came down from heaven through Mary on that very day, because she brought Christ Himself...



Artwork on pages 16, 17 by Sr. Mary Jean Dorcy, OP

Gide us the bread in the wheat,
 Lady, gider of bread...
 Mary, Mother of God,
 we are the poor soil,
 and the dry dust,
 we are hard with a cold frost.
 Be warmth to the world;
 be the thaw, warm the cold frost.
 Be the thaw that melts, that the tender shoots
 of Christ piercing the hard heart
 flounder to Spring in us.

Caryll Houselander

Sister Eileen Marie



By Sister Carole Marie, PVMI,
Sister Maria Arlene, PVMI
and Sister Mary Emmadoña, PVMI

Sister Carole Marie

I was the General Superior when Father Benedict Groeschel, CFR called and asked us to consider two Sisters who had been in Maryknoll for a good number of years but now felt drawn to our contemplative-missionary vocation. On my first meeting with the Sisters, it was plain to me that they would be well suited to live ardently as Parish Visitors of Mary Immaculate. One of those Sisters was Sister Eileen Marie Laird.

Sister Eileen Marie, born in Butte, Montana on October 10, 2025, was one of five children. Thinking of that beautiful land, it would be easy to develop the contemplative spirit which grew and lasted to the day of her birth into eternal life on February 10, 2024.

As a Maryknoll Sister she had spent many years as a teacher in the Philippines, so it was by God's Providence that as a Parish Visitor, Sister was assigned to open our Philippine mission in Manila along with Sister Maria Arlene. During the two years Sister Eileen Marie was there much was accomplished among our beloved Filipino people.

We were blessed to have Sister Eileen Marie live among us at Marycrest where she served as my secretary, and later as General Secretary and notary. But her greatest "service" was her loving

disposition toward each Sister and her family members. The time she spent in prayer and spiritual reading animated her joyful participation in recreation, whether in conversation, or Scrabble, or a pinochle card game.

Sister Maria Arlene

When the Community was seriously thinking of opening a mission in the Philippines, I would gently tease Sister Eileen Marie that she should go there with me. She was 80 years old and not in robust health, so I was surprised when I learned that Sister Mary Gemma, General Superior then, announced that we were going together. That tells you of the generous spirit and missionary zeal Sister Eileen Marie had.

Sister Eileen Marie was the "perfect" co-missionary, thanks to her gentle spirit, sharpness in communication, organization skills and love for Mother Foundress. Sister Eileen Marie kept track of all kinds of correspondence to make sure that our Community complied to all legal requirements in the establishment of our mission. She even managed, in a limited way, to help with the Legion of Mary in our parish.

Thank you, Sister Eileen Marie, for being a true Parish Visitor of Mary Immaculate! You leave us with so many examples to emulate.

Sister Mary Emmadoña

Sister Eileen Marie was such a gentle person, and easy to talk with. She listened to you attentively and empathized with all your concerns. Sister confessed that she prayed the rosary for my vocation every day when she invited me to a Holy Hour for Vocations. It was at the Holy Hour that I was sure God was calling me to be a Sister.

During my discernment with the Parish Visitors, I spent a lot of time with Sister Eileen Marie. She was very honest and happy to share with me her own vocation story, her missions and even her crosses. I saw in her a woman ripe with wisdom and full of spiritual insights. She often shared about Mother Foundress and that got me interested in reading her works, too.

I was struck that an 80-year-old Sister was just beginning a new mission and that she was giving her 100% in everything she had to do, in and out of the convent. It amazed me to see her walking back and forth, with her back brace, on the second floor of the convent, in the middle of the day with temperatures reaching 100 degrees Fahrenheit, praying the Rosary! How edifying that was, knowing that somehow, one of her intentions pertained to my vocation.

Throughout the years, Sister kept encouraging me in my vocation. I was blessed to spend some time with her whenever I was a Marycrest. It was always a joy to just sit and chat with Sister. I know for certain that Sister Eileen Marie backed me up with her prayers and that is why I am now a Parish Visitor of Mary Immaculate.

Thank you, Sister Eileen Marie! Until we meet again!



*Sr. Mylene Rosemarie, Sr. Susan Marie, Sr. Maria Leah
with Sr. Eileen Marie*

OUR VISITATION APOSTOLATE

By Sister Dolores Marie, PVMI

"A miracle! I've had so many troubles, and I've been praying for someone to help me, and here you are, at my door!" Meg quickly invited me in and proceeded to pour out her heart to me. Mostly she just needed someone to listen to her and to let her know that God still loved her.

We have so many beautiful stories of parish visitation. Not everything happens like the incident above, but every story, every soul, is special. "Make every soul count!" was an often-repeated motto of our Foundress.



Jesus knocks on the doors of hearts (Rev 3:20). He seeks out the straying sheep. He makes the first move; He doesn't just sit back and wait for them to come to His door.

That's what Parish Visitors do. We visit families, seeking out the straying, helping to bring them home to Jesus. We never know who will be behind the next door, and what their story will be. This is the new evangelization, not actually new but dating from the Good Shepherd.

Children are the heartbreakers. So often the children are spiritually, emotionally, and sometimes even physically neglected. They need us! They need to learn about God's love for them and to love Him in return. We find so many of these children. Religious instruction of children and youth is also an important part of our apostolate.

What might people say when they open the door?

Sure, some will say, "I'm not interested," and quickly close the door, but others will say things like:

"I guess God hasn't forgotten me, after all. You're here."

"Sister, I haven't prayed for so long. I think I've forgotten how."

"I said I'd never darken the door of the church again, but if God is so interested in me to send someone to my door, maybe I'd better think about it."

"Come in, Sister. I'm new in the area, and I was wondering how to have my children instructed for First Communion."



"I'm Catholic and I'm not very religious myself, but I want my children to grow up the right way and to learn about God."

"I don't know if I can still call myself a Catholic. I haven't been to Church in so many years."

"Do you really think God still loves me, after all I've done?"

It's exciting to visit families, for Jesus and with Jesus! Here are some excerpts from an article by one of our Sisters in first profession, Sister Debra Marie:



"Sister, I don't think I can knock on a stranger's door and enter into a conversation about our faith...." But, by two months after that statement, I had knocked on nearly 200 doors and entered into many meaningful conversations, and I joyfully shared with my Sisters how eager I was to go out again. What changed my perspective? The power of the Holy Spirit! By nature, I'm rather shy. At first, I accompanied an experienced Sister on visitation, and I began to see more clearly the need for this ministry; I began to want to go out to do this. I quickly learned that the Holy Spirit would lead me to those He wanted me to visit and that He would give me the words to say."

Of course, we're trained for this apostolate and don't begin until we've observed experienced Sisters and are ready. Our life of prayer gives power to our words, and our life of community strengthens us.

This applies, too, to our catechetical apostolate and youth ministry. Without the power of prayer, our words would be "noisy gongs and clanging cymbals," as St. Paul says. Mass and our daily Hour of Adoration are especially powerful!

SOME FAQs ABOUT VISITATION

Aren't you afraid?

Parish Visitors have been doing this for over 100 years in all kinds of neighborhoods, without incident. We are taught how to be prudent and careful, but being prudent is different from being afraid of visitation. We take the first step and go forth!

People know where the Church is. Is it all that important to seek them out?

We've heard of Jesus and the lost sheep. What if you lost something important to you? What if you lost your cell phone, for example? You wouldn't say, "It's OK, somebody will find it and bring it back to me." That's rather chancy, isn't it? You'd retrace your steps, thinking where you last used it, search your pockets, your purse, the shrubbery along the sidewalk, every place you can think of. A soul is so much more important than that, isn't it?

Aren't you invading people's privacy?

No, we are gentle and non-threatening, never pushy. If people don't want to open the door, that's up to them. When they open it, they choose to speak with us.

Jesus is with us.

**We are His
instruments in
speaking with the
people.**

**What a beautiful
apostolate!**



Some thoughts from our Evangelization Manual, "God Still Makes Housecalls."

Who am I as an evangelizer?

We begin by reflecting on what God says about who you are. Then, we will look at how your knowledge of what God believes about you can become our belief, too. Finally, we will complete our considerations by showing how faith in God's answer to the question, "Who am I as an evangelizer?", effects every moment of your life, and ultimately calls others to the love of Jesus through you...

The sooner we absorb the fact that God Himself, *the only Evangelizer*, lives in us, speaks and acts through us, the sooner we will "make disciples of all nations" (Mt. 28:19). The sooner we let God act through our actions, the sooner we will honor what Jesus told His disciples when He lived in Palestine, "As the Father has sent Me, so I am sending you" (Jn. 20:21). These are Jesus' words not only to His disciples then but also to His disciples now – you and me!

Jesus came in human flesh to reveal to us God the Father, and the Father's desires for us. I, in my human flesh, am meant to reveal God and His desires to others. God's desire for me is this: to yield everything to God, returning to God love for love.

Every love relationship demands yielding, surrendering. Our complete surrender to the will of God shows in all we do, privately and publicly. Through our living witness to Jesus, God draws others to Himself. Thus, Jesus is made visible or invisible by what I do and say. The question is simple, "Do people see Jesus in me or don't they?"

...Just as the Holy Spirit came to live in the Apostles, so He has come to live in each of us at Baptism and Confirmation, to fill us with that burning love which destroys our selfishness. With an unleashed power, the Holy Spirit sends us out to tell of Jesus' love – if only we yield to Him with all our heart.

"I shall give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I shall remove the heart of stone from your bodies



and give you a heart of flesh instead" (Ez. 36:26). These are God's words as recorded by Ezechiel in the Old Testament, foretelling what happens as the Holy Spirit comes to dwell within us.



So, it was God Himself who gave us the human heart as a symbol of love. In fact, our whole life can be seen as a school of love. And that life of love begins within the family first, and then within the parish and workplace. This is the plan of God for all humanity.

Our responses to every occasion, ones of joy or sorrow, temptation, or lack of temptation, are meant to be lessons in learning to love. And there is never learning, nor is there ever loving without pain and suffering. Depending on our response, our relationship with God and with others grows or withers. Jesus left us this commandment, "Just as I have loved you, you must also love one another" (Jm. 13:34).

Surely this is a hard saying for us, but it is the one you as an evangelizer must keep in the forefront of your heart and mind. It happens to be the hard saying that does the work, using our will to do God's will. "Thy will be done!" (Mt. 6:10). This is the best witness to those you wish to evangelize. This is what tells them in their hearts: "He says it, and he does it."



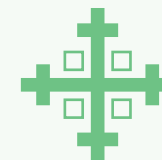
But along with that "hard saying" God also give us, in the first letter of St. Peter, courage, and nobility: "You are a royal priesthood...a people set apart to sing the praises of God who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light" (1 Pt. 2:9).

As a member of that royal priesthood each of us is called to sing the praises of God to others!

...As you prepare to out and sing the praises of God to others, remember that it is God who is the Evangelizer. It is the Holy Spirit within you who is giving you the voice and the music to sing with great courage, joy, and peace.



Pray for Us – We Pray for You



April 2 Sr. Mary Julianna Roche, 1967
4 Sr. Mary Sophia Le Riche, 1975
4 Sr. Mary Marcian Brennan, 1997
4 Sr. Mary Altrude Burkhart, 1990
4 Sr. Mary Gertrude Keating, 1941
6 Sr. Mary Cecilia Long, 1981
11 Sr. Mary Clare Dolan, 1932
12 Sr. Mary Eugenia Keaveny, 1970
13 Sr. Mary Angela Martin, 1946
13 Sr. Mary Frances Cervone, 2016
24 Sr. Mary Philomena Hammond, 1936
30 Sr. Mary Adelaide Nienhaus, 1996

May 3 Sr. Frances Walter, 2003
3 Sr. Mary Alphonsus Eisenmenger, 1985
3 Sr. Mary Imelda Lorrain, 1945
4 Sr. Mary Patrice McFadden, 1986
5 Sr. Mary Alicia Tompkins, 1997
14 Sr. Mary Fidelis DeGroodt, 1979
15 Sr. Marianna Clotilde Del Signore, 2000
16 Sr. Josephine Marie Kittel, 2001
19 Sr. Mary Eudes Broeniman, 1942
21 Sr. Anne McQuaid, 1999
30 Sr. Dolores Augustine, 2022
31 Sr. Mary Monica Decker, 1980

June 2 Sr. Maria Veronica Tivador, 1996
3 Sr. Mary Ellen King, 1973
4 Sr. Mary Agatha Wheeler, 1953
5 Sr. Mary Celine Jakiel, 2002
8 Sr. Mary Clara Black, 1972
10 Sr. Mary Florian Lenherr, 1988
11 Sr. Mary Denise Jacobi, 1977
11 Sr. Mary Dorothea Castner, 2001
24 Sr. Mary Paula McJennett, 1977

Sharing our Faith

By Sister Mary Josita, PVMI

In a book by Frank Sheed entitled *Christ in Eclipse* the first chapter of which is “How Real is Christ to Us?” we find this reflection:

“A really frightening test of how much value we attach to Him (Christ) lies in how we feel about friends who never seem to give Him a thought. Do we feel it as unbearable that they should not have the gifts of light and nourishment that He has given us? If not, we should ask ourselves how much those same gifts do actually mean to ourselves?

If we are not longing to make Him known, then He may well be no more than a picture on the wall of our minds to which we give a respectful bow when we happen to notice it. If there were a famine and people lacked bread, we should work hard to relieve it. But if they lack the Bread of Life and it causes not the faintest stirring in us even of care much less of desire to aid their destitution – we have to ask ourselves what that tells us about ourselves. How much does their starvation matter to us? Do we even think about it as starvation? Even if we felt like helping, how competent should we be to instruct anyone about Christ Himself or any of His teachings?

Sometimes we are reluctant to share our faith because we feel we lack the competency to do so. Bishop Robert Barron, in an article that appeared in the April 2023 issue of *Denver Catholic*, suggests four ways we can help ourselves gain the confidence we may lack. First “deepen your knowledge of the Catholic Tradition.” He mentions everything from reading great conversion stories, like those of St. Augustine and Thomas Merton’s *Seven Story Mountain*, to reflection on works of art by Caravaggio, Michelangelo, and Bernini. Of primary importance, is a prayerful reading of Sacred Scripture.

Second, the Bishop suggests that you simply “invite someone you know to come back to Church.” While it may be uncomfortable to initiate these kinds of conversations, recall the quote from Frank Sheed.



Third, “Let the language of the faith be naturally on your lips.” In today’s cultural climate, we may feel we have to restrict ourselves to neutral topics of conversation. But Bishop Barron cautions that “we should never acquiesce to social conventions that require a privatization of our religion.”

Our faith is not only a part of our private lives, but must be “all-pervasive, invading every dimension of our lives, both public and private, both personal and professional.” He challenges us to allow our “Catholic convictions” to be a ready part of our conversations, and to perhaps put a religious picture, crucifix, or a Bible quote as a screensaver in our workspace.

Finally, The Bishop says not to be afraid to pray in public. When you are in a restaurant, making the Sign of the Cross and offering a brief Grace before meals can be a means of witnessing and sharing your faith.

In Pope Paul VI’s *Evangelii Nuntiandi* Evangelization in the Modern World (EN 76), he says, “Either tacitly or aloud – but always forcefully – we are being asked: Do you really believe what you are proclaiming? Do you live what you believe? Do you really preach what you live? The witness of life has become more than ever and an essential condition for real effectiveness in preaching. Precisely because of this we are, to a certain extent, responsible for the progress of the Gospel we proclaim.”

These are challenging words, to be sure, but if we are going to be faithful, authentic followers of Christ, they are words we must take to heart.

In Pope Francis’ Apostolic Exhortation *On Confidence in the Merciful love of God* we read:

“In an age of indifference and self-absorption, Therese inspires us to be missionary disciples, captivated by the attractiveness of Jesus and the Gospel.”



Artwork by Pam McAssey

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