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REFLECTIONS

MISSIONARY DISCIPLESHIP

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What is Catholic Evangelization?

Put simply, evangelization is sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ, who came to announce the Kingdom of God. This is the responsibility of every baptized person. To evangelize means to proclaim the great news that "... God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life." (Jn 3:16) Hence, evangelization is "the activity whereby the Church proclaims the gospel, so that faith may be aroused, may unfold, and may grow." (*Preparatory Document, Synod on Evangelization, USCCB, 1973*)

Evangelization is an ongoing process in the Christian community, which initiates people more deeply into the mystery of God's love (the kingdom), as this love is revealed most fully in Jesus' dying and rising. Catholic evangelization is holistic; it can be pictured as a large tree with three main branches coming from a single trunk. Consider the whole tree as evangelization. The sap coming through the trunk into the tree branches is the power coming from the Holy Spirit. The three main branches are the ministries of the Word (including catechesis) the ministry of Worship (including liturgy and prayer), and the ministry of Service (including social ministry).

A common form of evangelization happens through the power of good example in an **implicit** way. This occurs as we share kindness, forgiveness, and understanding in our families, with friends, and at work. Implicit evangelization also may include a parent's sacrifice, a neighbor's generosity, an employer's just business practices, or putting a crucifix or religious statues in the home. Such actions disclose God's presence through good example; so does listening attentively to someone's problems.



Evangelization assumes a more **explicit** form when the Word of God is proclaimed in an intentional way through catechesis, liturgy, and the Church's social ministries. In this regard, church leaders catechize, develop effective liturgies for children, and offer opportunities to connect the Church's social ministries with the lives of children, youth, and adults. Parents teach their children to pray. Digital and print materials provide excellent opportunities for explicit evangelization. It is imperative that parish leaders, parents, and teachers are well acquainted with their role as evangelizers. This enables them to better serve as Christ's representatives.

QUESTION

If asked how you evangelize as a Catholic, how would you answer considering what is in this reflection?