

Saints *Alive!*

Issue
17

The Quarterly Newsletter of Emmaus Journey

It's Contagious!!

By Rich Cleveland

If one is not passionately in love with Jesus, chances are pretty good that love for Christ won't rub off and infect another.

The world has probably learned more about contagious diseases in the last year due to H1N1 than we have in the previous decade. Part of the good news is that there probably is more hand-washing going on than ever before, but the bad news is that there are a lot more germ-laden elbows as people have learned to sneeze into their arm instead of into their hand. The main element of contagion is that it spreads rapidly and easily from one person to another. Interestingly it is a term Pope Benedict XVI used to explain the mission which is set before us as Christ followers: "The Church's mission is to spread hope 'contagiously' among all peoples. This is why Christ calls, justifies, sanctifies and sends his disciples to proclaim the Kingdom of God, so that all nations may become the People of God. ... *Proclamation of the Gospel must be for us, as it was for the Apostle Paul, a primary and unavoidable duty.*"

For many of us who labor in evangelization we would not normally describe the results of our efforts as spreading the faith rapidly and easily, yet this contagious spread is seen both in the Gospel accounts of Jesus' ministry and in the Acts of the Apostles. In Jesus' case the crowds thronged him in response to his miracle working power and his words of hope for "no man ever spoke like this man," (John 7:46). Sadly, they also dissipated rapidly when the throngs came to realize the cost of discipleship. But then after the crucifixion, resurrection and ascension of Jesus, and the descent of the Holy Spirit we again see the contagion of the Gospel. The message of hope is spread so rapidly and easily from one person to another that the Church was described as having "turned the world upside down," (Acts 17:6). So perhaps we should think more deeply

about how hope can once again spread "contagiously" among all peoples.

One thing is clear, if you don't have the disease you don't have to worry about being contagious. If one is not passionately in love with Jesus, chances are pretty good that love for Christ won't rub off and infect another. Have you ever thought about the many conversations you have had with neighbors, even strangers? We quite easily talk about the weather, politics, sports and other issues but for some reason often feel uncomfortable talking about our relationship with and love for the Savior. Perhaps this is a case of comparing apples to oranges, but the point is that unless we are developing and maintaining a deep and abiding relationship with Jesus he will not naturally be in our thoughts or on our lips when we are with others.

Second, if we don't cough, sneeze, or touch another person the likelihood of their catching what we have is slim. Spiritually we "touch" people by the life we live, and "cough" and "sneeze" on them by the proclamation of our lips. If hope is contagious, what is the kind of life that infects others? Is it our countenance, a contagious grin, a pleasant word, a concern expressed and shared, a kindness shown, or a gracious gift given to help another? This we know, that to be contagious, the way we live our faith must evoke and awaken hope within the other person. The statement that "the unexamined life is not worth living," is appropriate here—we must ask ourselves, "How can our manner of life more faithfully exude the message of hope to the world?" Living a virtuous life, living a compassionate life and living a life involved with those around us provides a contagious touch that not only leads to conversion but also reproduces another infected and contagious believer.

continued on back page

Inside this Issue

- Mother Josephine Bakhita—A Light In An Evil World
- Dan Burke—He Caught It
- Emmaus Journey's a Vision of Hope Conference

Emmaus Journey Mission Statement

Emmaus Journey is a Catholic evangelization and discipleship ministry that is conducted primarily in and through Catholic parishes. Emmaus Journey has embraced Goal 1 of *Go and Make Disciples: A Plan and Strategy for Catholic Evangelization in the United States*, produced by The National Conference of Catholic Bishops, "To bring about in all Catholics such an enthusiasm for their faith that, in living their faith in Jesus, they freely share it with others."

Emmaus Journey's goals are:

- To help enable non-practicing Catholics, occasional Catholics, and nominal Catholics experience conversion to Christ, transformation in Christ, and mobilization for Christ as Catholic disciples.
- To encourage Catholics to embrace Jesus' call to advance the Gospel and his Kingdom by becoming laborers who live and disciple others from among the nonreligious.
- To help mature and gifted Catholics discover a particular call to participate more fully in the task of evangelization.
- To indirectly serve Catholic parishes' evangelization efforts through small-group materials, evangelization and discipleship resources, seminars, ministry events, and messages that move them forward in their efforts to make Christ known, and to nurture mature Catholic disciples who can help others experience conversion, transformation, and mobilization for Christ.



Saints Alive! is published by Emmaus Journey, a national Catholic evangelization and discipleship ministry of The Navigators. Copyright © 2010 Emmaus Journey. Please feel free to get in touch with us:

Emmaus Journey
P.O. Box 63587
Colorado Springs,
CO 80962-3587
(719) 599-0448
info@emmausjourney.org
www.emmausjourney.org

Multiple copies of *Saints Alive!* are available upon request.

From the Heart By Rich Cleveland

Jesus knew the solution to the need for world evangelization. He did not offer the latest program or book, instead his solution was to mobilize *disciples*; "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men," (Matthew 4:19). Disciples are the need of the hour. But what does a disciple look like? What is it we are trying to reproduce?

I would suggest that the following illustration depicts the kind of person we are trying to form as a disciple, and simultaneously suggest that this illustration is consistent with "Goal 1" of *Go and Make Disciples*: "To bring about in all Catholics such an enthusiasm for their faith that, in living their faith in Jesus they freely share it with others." The following seven objectives from "Goal 1" pretty clearly flesh out the intent of this illustration depicting the essentials aspects of a disciple's life.

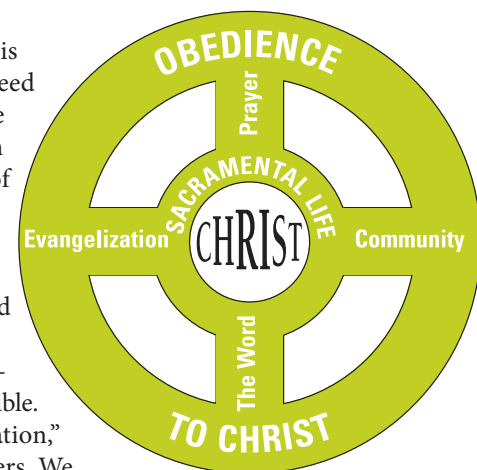
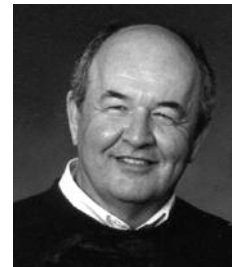
- To foster an experience of conversion and renewal in the heart of every believer ...
- To foster an appreciation of God's word in the lives of all Catholics.
- To foster an appreciation of the presence of Christ in the Eucharist and all the sacraments ...
- To foster an even deeper sense of prayer among our Catholic people.
- To foster a renewed understanding of the faith among Catholics.
- To foster a sense of discipleship among Catholic adults ...
- To foster active and personal religious experience through participation in small-group and other communal experiences ...

Christ, the *Logos* of God, represented by the hub in this illustration, is the motivating source and the power we need to live a life pleasing to him. In addition, as Catholics, we also understand and believe that the Holy Spirit, through the Sacraments, draws us ever more deeply into the life of Christ through his Body the Church. That is what the second inner ring represents.

The vertical spokes represent the Word of God and prayer, which are critically important in the sacramental and liturgical life of a community and in the spiritual life of the individual. It is through "The Word" and "Prayer" that communication and relationship with the Father are made possible.

The horizontal spokes, "Community" and "Evangelization," represent our relationship with believers and non-believers. We should be part of a parish community where we can worship and where we can serve others and become formed as Christ's followers. One of the ways that we are mandated to serve him is through a life of evangelization. Evangelization is our primary task and a mandate from Christ which we are to fulfill as we go forth into the world to bring about conversion to all, and in all spheres of society.

Should not adult formation primarily be directed toward producing people who respond to Christ's reign in their life through wholehearted obedience to his expressed will? Though obedience does involve information and knowledge, it is primarily concerned with how a person responds to that information and knowledge. Jesus was concerned that people be *formed* as disciples and not simply informed; "He who has my commandments and *keeps them*, he it is who loves me..." (Jn 14:21), "Every one then who hears these words of mine *and does them* will be like a wise man who built his house upon the rock" (Mt. 7:24). A life obedient to Christ will become *salt and light* that contagiously affects others with the Good News. These objectives from *Go and Make Disciples* and this illustration should stimulate us to rethink the focus of our formation.



⁷ *Go And Make Disciples*, produced by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, pages 13.

⁸ *Ibid*, pages 13-16.

Saints: The Extraordinary Lives of Ordinary People

Mother Josephine Bakhita

If anyone had a justifiable reason to not live or communicate a life of hope it was Mother Josephine Bakhita, yet she was a beacon of light in an evil world and possessed a contagious faith.

As a young Sudanese girl of nine she was kidnapped, taken from her family and brutalized physically and morally many times over by a system of slavery that passed her from one evil owner to another. One owner beat her every day until she bled and she bore 144 scars as a result of these beatings.

Eventually she “was bought by an Italian Consul, Callisto Legnani. For the first time since the day she was kidnapped, she realized with pleasant surprise, that no one used

the lash when giving her orders; instead, she was treated in a loving and cordial way.” After working for the Legnani family she was then temporarily entrusted to the Canossian Sisters in Venice when the family had to travel on business.

Bakhita came to know God and was baptized into the Catholic faith in 1890 as a catechumenate in the Institute of St. Magdalene of Canossa where she was given the name Josephine. “She was often seen kissing the baptismal font and saying: ‘Here, I became a daughter of God!’” She experienced great joy and gratitude as she grew in her faith. Having become of age, and in Italy free to make her own choices, when her previous owners came for her she made known her decision to serve God by becoming a nun. She was consecrated in 1896 in Verona, Italy as a member of the Congregation of Canossian Sisters. People “esteemed her for her inalterable sweet nature, her exquisite goodness and her deep desire to make the Lord known.” In spite of having experienced great evil, Christ brought hope.

Pope Benedict XVI summarizes her life: “Besides her work in the sacristy and in the porter’s lodge at the convent, she made several journeys around Italy in order to promote missions: the liberation that she had received through her encounter with the God of Jesus Christ, she felt she had to extend, it had to be handed on to others, to the greatest possible number of people. The hope born in her which had ‘redeemed’ her she could not keep to herself, this hope had to reach many, to reach everyone.”

Mother Josephine Bakhita exemplifies what it means to be a *contagious* Christian. We can learn from her life and ask God to give us a similar joy and appreciation for being a son or daughter of God.



Dan Burke—He Caught It

Dan Burke’s first exposure to Catholicism was through his abusive step-father. He remembers his home being destroyed end-to-end in a drunken rage and forensic photographs of his mother after one brutal encounter. One would not be surprised to hear of his antipathy toward Catholicism. However, his life changed when he became exposed to two contagious Christians.

“I encountered a co-worker at a pizza restaurant who was unusually kind. Upon inquiry about his motivations, he calmed my concerns and let me know that he was a Christian. Christ had lifted him out of drug addiction into a life of grace and it was obvious. Though I did not follow through on his invitations to attend bible study and church, he illumined a path that I have energetically trekked now for some twenty years.”

Several years of Dan’s journey were within a fundamentalist denomination where he became a Christian. It was strong on teaching the Bible, but short on love for Catholics. “The anti-catholic bent of this environment fit well with the grooves of my emotional scars from my step-father. Though I carried much of the pain and weight of sin into my faith, my encounter with Christ was real and life-changing.”

Dan later encountered another contagious Christian at work, a Catholic woman that he hassled regularly, “In my mind she was not a Christian and thus a target for evangelism. Worse yet, she was a wolf among the sheep (we worked together in a prominent evangelical ministry).

After a year of patient replies to my persistent prodding, she announced that she was leaving. At her going away party she asked five of her coworkers to sit on high bar-stool like chairs prominently placed at the front of the department meeting area. She then, one by one, recounted how each person had positively impacted her life, gently removed their shoes and socks, and then washed their feet. I was one of the five. I was shocked and ashamed. It was clear to me that day which one of us had a more substantive Christian life and relationship with Christ.”

This encounter, along with studying Church History, and the lives of the Church Fathers eventually led Dan into the Anglican Church and then home to the Catholic Church in July 2005. “Aside from my first submission to Christ, it was, and still is, the best decision I ever made in my life.” Today, Dan is himself a contagious Catholic.



⁵ Information and quotes come the Office of Papal Liturgical Celebrations web pages.

⁶ *Saved in Hope—Spe Salvi*, by Pope Benedict XVI, pages 12-13.

You can learn more about Dan’s life and ministry at www.RCSpiritualDirection.com/blog.

EMMAUS JOURNEY'S
a Vision of Hope
CONFERENCE

EVANGELIZATION AND FORMATION—AN IMPERATIVE FOR THE NEW DECADE

OCTOBER 29–31, 2010
AT GLEN EYRIE CONFERENCE CENTER, COLORADO SPRINGS

"We must ask explicitly: Is the Christian faith for us today a life-changing and life-sustaining hope?"

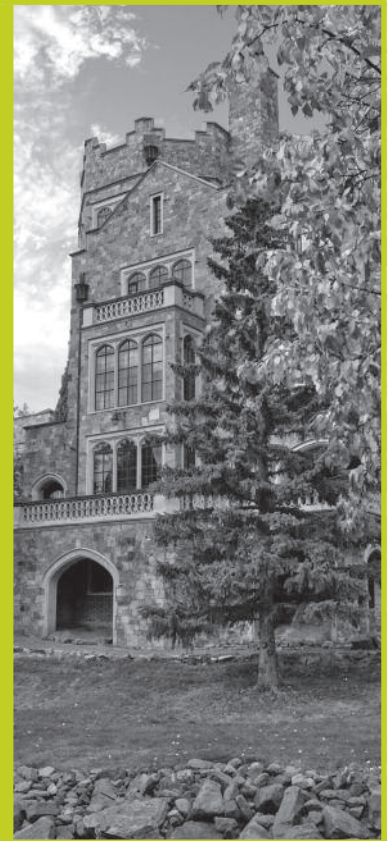
—Pope Benedict XVI in *Saved by Hope (Spe Salvi)*

The Church's mission is to spread hope "contagiously" among all peoples. As a new decade begins, Catholic adults who have heard the Church's call to take this mission seriously will come together for inspiration, tools, and fellowship.

At "A Vision of Hope" you will receive insightful messages, practical workshops, and motivating fellowship focused on Catholic Evangelization & Discipleship Formation. Speakers include: **Fr. Mike Fones, O.P., Michael Timmis, Teresa Tomeo, Mike Kane**, and closing Mass with **Bishop Michael Sheridan**.

Join us at a retreat center like no other, with a castle, 800 acres of glorious space, a waterfall hike, fantastic meals, and time to be alone with God.

www.emmausjourney.org



It's Contagious!! *continued from front page*

If we are infected with the hope of salvation it is incumbent upon us, as it was upon the first disciples, to proclaim the Gospel; "for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard," (Acts 4:20). I am thankful for the many people who advance the Gospel through their prayers. "Converts were and still are, acquired through the prayers and sacrifices of unknown faithful. Christ won souls, not by the power of marvelous speeches, but rather by the power of his constant prayer. He preached by day, but by night he prayed." But now more than ever the Church needs ordinary women and men to proclaim the Gospel with their lips—sneeze forth, if you will, the hope of salvation. This does not require our becoming a preacher but simply becoming a friend who willingly talks about Christ and the hope of salvation. It does not require a theological degree but rather the simple understanding of the Gospel message. One need not be a persuasive salesman but simply a ready listener, who like Jesus is willing to engage people in reasoned discussion of the Scripture; "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the scriptures?" (Luke 24:32).

Here is the reality, as Catholics we could initiate a spiritual pandemic of hope. The truth is that Catholics are next door to everyone in the Western world, and we are also

spread profusely in the non-Western world. The degree to which we allow ourselves to become infected with the love of Christ, the degree to which we focus our prayers on the salvation of others, and the degree to which we engage those around us with evidence and words of the Gospel, is the degree to which the hope of salvation will become a contagious force in the world.

Pope Benedict XVI describes the Incarnation "not as a philosophical idea but a historical event, which in its very uniqueness and truth is the point at which God breaks into history and the place at which we come into contact with him." Just as John explains in his Gospel "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us," (John 1:14). Jesus is still ready to break into people's history and to come into contact with them with a message of hope, and he still chooses to do so through his Body, whom we are. Let us ask the Holy Spirit to make us highly infectious with Jesus, Lord, and Christ.

¹ *Message of His Holiness Benedict XVI for the 83rd World Mission Sunday 2009.*

² *Apology* by Plato.

³ Don Didimo Mantiero from the book *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith* by Pope Benedict XVI, page 172.

⁴ *Ibid*, page 109.