

Saints *Alive!*

Issue
19

The Quarterly Newsletter of Emmaus Journey

Transmitting the Faith

By Rich Cleveland

“...transmitting the faith is a personal encounter with Christ, which is done by means of Sacred Scripture and Church’s living Tradition, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.”

In the last issue of *SaintsAlive!* I wrote about *Verbum Domini*’s contention “that all authentic and living Christian spirituality is based on the word of God proclaimed, accepted, celebrated and meditated upon in the Church.”¹ In this issue we would like to expand our discussion to the logical next step—that our evangelization efforts are being helped or hindered to the degree that Catholic laypeople are familiar with and can readily use sacred Scripture.

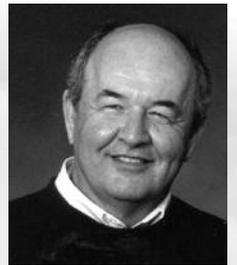
This thought was stimulated by passages from the *Lineamenta for the 2012 Synod on the New Evangelization* which is one of the preparatory documents for the Synod which will convene in the Autumn of 2012. It points out that “**Transmitting the faith essentially means to transmit the Scriptures**, primarily the Gospel, which gives a person the opportunity of knowing Jesus, the Lord.”²...Since the celebration of the Second Vatican Council the Catholic Church has rediscovered that **transmitting the faith is a personal encounter with Christ, which is done by means of Sacred Scripture and Church’s living Tradition, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.**”³ [emphasis added] We see that both our ability to have a relationship of personal encounter with Christ and our ability to invite others into a similar personal encounter of faith hinges on a familiarity with sacred Scripture and Church’s living Tradition.

For instance, I grew up with little knowledge of Christ or of Scripture, consequently I found myself in the military at age twenty without having experienced a personal encounter with Christ, or knowing what to do to find answers to the void I felt within. Fortunately before I left home after graduation from high school a friend gave me a rosary and taught me to say the Apostles Creed and the three basic prayers used reciting it, though I knew little about what they meant. At my request my mother purchased

and sent me a Bible. So each night, starting with Genesis 1:1, I began reading three chapters of Scripture a day and reciting a basic rosary—usually falling asleep before I finished the latter. Several months later I had finally reached the New Testament Gospels in my reading. A transformation began taking place in my heart—evidenced by my enthusiastically underlining about a third of what I was reading each day. Psalms 19:7 became a reality for me, “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. The testimony of the Lord is sure making wise the simple.” I found that sacred Scripture both led me to faith, and brought me into a personal encounter with Jesus the Christ.

Obviously each person’s experience is different, but I think one thing the *Lineamenta* points out that is normative, is that sacred Scripture plays a major role in a person’s coming to faith, and in keeping one’s faith aflame. We should not make the mistake of interpreting the phrase “personal encounter” to mean spiritual individualism but rather to understand that it is normative for the Holy Spirit not only to use Scripture to guide us into a relationship with Christ, but also to guide us into a relationship with the Church faith community. This is the normative environment where nourishment and growth can be provided through the Word, companionship provided within the family of God, and service encouraged in the many tasks of evangelization. Thus sacred Scripture is *essential* for inner depth and for outward mission.

We are fortunate that the Sunday masses have so much emphasis on Scripture both through the readings and in the liturgy, but I wonder how much of the Scripture heard during Sunday mass is retained by people



Rich Cleveland

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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.



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

From the Heart

By Henry Abeyta

Greetings, I am Henry Abeyta, the new Director of Emmaus Journey, having succeeded the founder Rich Cleveland in January of this year. Along with my wife Darlene, we have been involved with Emmaus Journey since its inception in the mid-1990s. We are amazed and humbled by all that God has done over the years. We have personally seen Catholics experience conversion to Christ, become formed in Christ, and mobilized in ministry for Christ. We have been privileged to see this happening within parishes throughout the US and around the world.

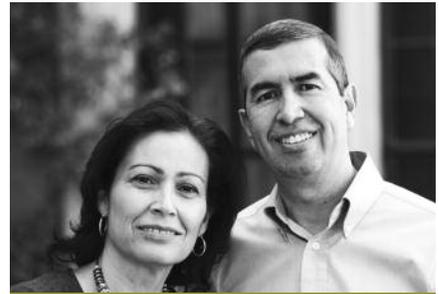
In keeping with the theme of this issue of *SaintsAlive!*, my heart resonates with concern for Catholic laity's involvement transmitting the Gospel and forming people in faith through sacred Scripture. In the *Lineamenta*, a topic that is at the top of the Church's agenda is "The Urgency of a New Evangelization."⁵ Consequently, I would like to share a recent experience that took place in 2011. I had the privilege of visiting the Emmaus Journey ministry in Indonesia and the story of how God's hand prospered this work is remarkable and worthy of elaboration. Ten years ago a former missionary from Southeast Asia gave a visitor the newly developed *Emmaus Journey Series* bible studies to pass on to his Indonesian friend, Stanislaus Prasetyo, who was active in Santa Monika parish, in Jakarta.

In May 2001 the first group was formed after being approved by Pastor Yan Sunjata OSC. At first they studied using the English materials but seeing the value of the studies they immediately translated them into Indonesian and established a "program" for training and facilitation. By 2011 ten "generations," over 1300 people, have completed the series. Today more than three hundred people continue in small-groups as the model has expanded to other Catholic parishes in Indonesia. The remarkable thing about this course is the enthusiasm it generates for daily Scripture reading and other spiritual disciplines. We heard and observed stories of profound life-change as sacred Scripture came alive to them, and as individuals were empowered by the Holy Spirit to live as disciples of Jesus.

We see similar expressions of this basic model serving parishes across the USA most notably in the Small Christian Communities movement. In Albuquerque, NM Holy Rosary Catholic Community has a parish goal to initiate more Scripture study opportunities for its parishioners. As a follow-up, parish adults were invited during this past Lenten season to participate in a small-group bible study called *The Seven Last Words of Christ*. The enthusiasm was terrific and the two groups that were formed were consistently at their capacity. After Easter some participants desired to continue on into another Emmaus Journey study. What the small-group format and this type of bible study offers is an opportunity each week for people to do some discovery work directly involved with Scripture, and some reflecting work that enables each participant to express what they are learning. All of this takes place in the context of a small-group community where friendships are made and deepened, which is always motivational.

In our quest to see New Evangelization take place we must remember that the key ingredient still needs to be an encounter with Christ through the Scriptures. In the words of *Verbum Domini*; "This nourishment enlightens the mind, strengthens the will and fires the hearts of men and women with the love of God."⁶

(Henry Abeyta became Director of Emmaus Journey in January 2012. He and Darlene are the parents of two sons, one of whom is married and has given the Abeytas their first grandson. Henry retired from Sandia National Laboratories where he worked for 30 years and in the latter part of his career received significant experience in the international arena. He and Darlene are long-time members of Holy Rosary Parish.)



Darlene and Henry Abeyta

⁵ The *Lineamenta* for the 2012 Synod on the New Evangelization, Introduction (1)

⁶ *Verbum Domini* (The Word of the Lord), A Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, by Pope Benedict XVI, Section 45

It's Not Too Late To Register!

*You to, go into
my vineyard.*

—Matthew 20:4

Witness
to His *Love*

He who abides in me and I in him bears much fruit,
for apart from me you can do nothing" (Jn 15:5).

Event Speakers



Bishop Michael J. Sheridan is the current Bishop of the Diocese of Colorado Springs. Serves in various roles for the USCCB and is chairman of the Episcopal Advisory Board of the Catholic Radio Association. He is a well-respected teacher of the faith, and has taught high school, college, and graduate level theology.



Rich Cleveland has been involved in evangelization ministry for many years and is the founder of Emmaus Journey. He has published several Scripture-based Catholic Small Group Studies. He has served in several leadership positions at Holy Apostles Parish in Colorado Springs, Colorado.



Henry J. Abeyta is the Director of Emmaus Journey Ministry. He and his wife have focused their personal ministry at Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Catholic Community through the Marriage Enrichment Program and small group bible studies. He also serves on the Boards of Prison Fellowship and The Navigators.



Sherri Anne Weddell created the first charism discernment process for Catholics and co-founded the Catherine of Siena Institute, a ministry of the Western Dominican Province. Sherry has developed formation resources that are used around the world and helps lead an international team on five continents.

Witness
to His *Love*
The Role of Laity in Ministry
August 23–26, 2012
at Glen Eyrie Conference Center



Father Dominic Rossi is a Norbertine priest and member of Daylesford Abbey. He founded Bethesda Project, a ministry to the homeless of Philadelphia. He has also served with Parishes throughout the U.S. where he has given special attention to ministry for Hispanic immigrants, youth and adult evangelization and renewal.



Dr. Paul Young has been involved in Christian Ministry for most of his adult life and, as staff with Emmaus Journey, helped develop the Emmaus Journey Men's Ministry. He teaches at several local Catholic Parishes in Santa Rosa, California. He is an enthusiastic teacher of the Holy Scriptures.



Tammy Evevard Tammy Evevard has been featured on several television programs including CNN & EWTN. Tammy has presented on both regional & national stages speaking on the power of God in our lives, Scripture, leadership training, and women's issues. She is the author of the newly released book *Becoming*.

Affecting Change Through Effective Leaders

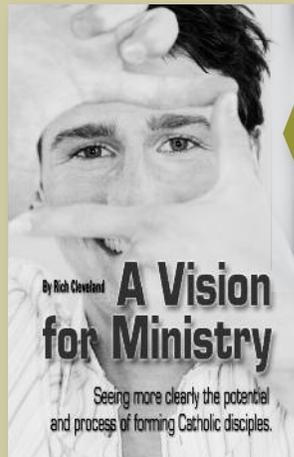
The key to having a motivating and effective Scripture based small-group formation program is to have leaders who know what they are doing and why they are doing it. Often when a good beginning, based on good materials slowly dies out, it is because the leaders have lost sight of the purpose (or perhaps never really understood it) and failed to model the results intended. The following two resources help train leaders to understand the objective and process for laity's ministry to others, and provide some important practical insights on how to lead well.

*"Whatever model is used, adult faith formation should always actively challenge participants to get involved with their own faith journey—passive listening is never enough; the goal is always conversion."*⁷

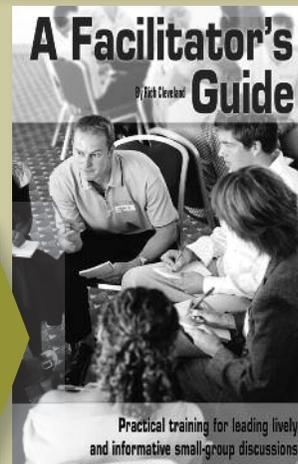
*"Small communities are powerful vehicles for adult faith formation, providing opportunities for learning, prayer, mutual support, and the shared experience of Christian living and service to Church and society."*⁸

⁷ *Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us, A Pastoral Plan for Adult Formation in the United States*, by USCCB, 81

⁸ *Ibid* 106



A Vision for Ministry: Seeing more clearly the potential and process of forming Catholic disciples, is a training resource designed to help leaders and leadership teams rethink their vision and direction.



A Facilitator's Guide: Practical training for leading lively and informative small-group discussions is a helpful tool to enable small-group facilitators to effectively lead small-groups. Life is tough, but leading a small-group doesn't have to be.

Transmitting the Faith *continued from front page*

twenty-four hours after mass. The Scriptures can be absorbed simply by hearing but the retention factor is rather low if all we do is hear what is spoken. Reading the Bible, Scripture study and memorization of key portions are helpful methods people often overlook, even though the retention factor increases dramatically as meditation and discussion is used to help us process them. Often when you talk with someone about sacred Scripture the response is, "I tried reading the Bible but it didn't make any sense to me," or "I kept falling asleep." Since the Bible is neither a senseless nor boring book it is imperative that along with emphasizing the importance of knowing sacred Scripture that we also provide practical methods and stimulating environments for Catholics to discover that Scripture is "alive and powerful and sharper than a two edged sword." When retention of Scripture happens on a large scale we will see "new-evangelization" take place first within our own parishes, and then within the public arena, evangelizing those who have not heard of Christ—for faith is contagious and sacred Scripture empowers us to tell others the reason for the hope that sustains us.

Imagine what would happen if a parish or a diocese could get the majority of their members to simply read the Lectionary readings every day and ask themselves, "What's one thought I can take with me and pray about today?" Imagine what would happen if in our various meetings and encounters

our small-talk included statements like, "What was the thought you got from the Gospel Readings today?" Do you think that after a year of this type of focus that biblical literacy would be raised? Do you think that people might continue the habit of reflecting on the Lectionary readings the coming year, or that there would be a greater contagion to our faith? Surely, if God's Scripture is "alive and powerful" the answer is "Yes!"

This coming year has been proclaimed the "Year of Faith". Sacred Scripture affirms that "faith comes from hearing" the word of God, and as the *Lineamenta* points out "...it must be admitted that most Christians, in effect do not have personal contact with Scriptures; and those who do, have many theological and methodological uncertainties in communicating their content."⁴ The response seems obvious. Let us focus on reinvigorating Catholics' direct involvement with Scripture reading, meditation, and personal application. In so doing we will not only enhance laity's involvement in evangelization, but also address discipleship issues of the heart that will renew their faith.

¹ *Verbum Domini (The Word of the Lord)*, A Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation by Pope Benedict XVI, (121)

² *The Lineamenta for the 2012 Synod on the New Evangelization*, Introduction (2)

³ *The Lineamenta for the 2012 Synod on the New Evangelization*, Chapter 2 (13)

⁴ *The Lineamenta for the 2012 Synod on the New Evangelization*, Chapter 3 (19)