

Saints *Alive!*

A Periodic Newsletter of Emmaus Journey

Issue
22

Mobilization: Enabling Catholics to be Active in Christ's Mission

By Rich Cleveland

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Sometimes it is easier to define a concept with a picture than it is with many words, consequently I will begin this explanation of mobilization by recalling a mental-picture Pope John Paul II shared, which I believe illustrates the effect of mobilization. “The eyes of faith behold a wonderful scene: that of a countless number of lay people, both women and men, **busy at work in their daily life and activity**, oftentimes far from view and quite unclaimed by the world, unknown to the world's great personages but nonetheless looked upon by the Father, **untiring laborers who work** in the Lord's vineyard. Confident and steadfast through the power of God's grace, **these are the humble yet great builders** of the Kingdom of God in history.”¹ (emphasis added)

Mobilization then, is the spiritual activity of enabling fellow Christians to become active participants in the Kingdom of God, while living out their vocation amidst the many relationships of life. The differentiating ingredient here is that they are bi-vocational, with the other significant work of their life being *intentionally* employed in the great mission of Jesus to take the good news of reconciliation to the world. Catholics live next door to almost everyone, and sadly many unknowingly are the missing link in world evangelization. The busy parish pastors cannot go to all who reside in the city, or even within the parishes where they pastor, however the often uninvolved and non-mobilized members of these parishes can, if they will simply take the responsibility to reach out to the people they naturally encounter in their work, recreation, and living environments.

These very ordinary people are the ones who have been entrusted with the task of taking the Gospel to the world, as all the recent

Popes have advocated and as these two quotes illustrate; “... the lay faithful are given the ability and responsibility to accept the Gospel in faith and to proclaim it in word and deed ...,”² and “It is the duty incumbent on her [we the members of the Church] by command of the Lord Jesus, so that people can believe and be saved.”³ So, the great enigma of mobilization is simply how to equip and motivate Catholic lay people to embrace this task, hold it close to their heart, and begin acting upon it through their witness and by their proclamation of the Good News as they encounter people within their everyday life.

Of first importance in mobilization is to pray. “When he [Jesus] saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.’” (Matthew 9:36–38) The conversion, formation, and mobilization of others is a great work in which we have been invited to participate, but it involves a deep spiritual work that takes place within the heart of each person, and which can only be done by the Holy Spirit. Jesus indicates we can participate by praying. Do we believe that prayer moves people? Do we pray like it? Do we pray for specific individuals to be called forth to labor in the harvest?

Of second importance is the transformation of the mind about which we wrote in the previous *Saints Alive!* article. In order for people to get on their heart the mission which is on Jesus' heart it involves their spending time with Jesus through meditation on sacred Scripture and in prayer. Similarly, the history of what the Holy Spirit has been communicating to the Church since Pentecost, about Jesus'

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From the Heart

By Henry Abeyta

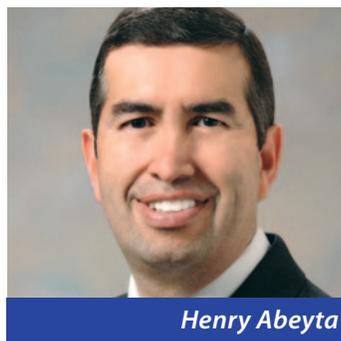
In past issues of *Saints Alive!*, we have focused on the topics of “conversion” and “transformation.” Now we turn to the third “pillar” of on-going life change as a Christian, that of turning to the mission that God has entrusted to us as we participate in seeing the kingdom of God move forward.

The word “mobilization” suggests the assembly of resources for movement or action toward an established goal. In this case we refer to our own participation along with a community of believers, each responding with a “yes” to God’s call to live intentionally according to his purpose. I am excited when I consider that God has given us this calling that involves all that gives true meaning to life, that which engages us in the propagation of truth, and that which brings mercy and peace to our lives and to the world through the empowering of the Holy Spirit. When at the end of Mass we are challenged as a group to “Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord” or “Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life” we as a Church are called to action with an emphatic “Go”, and are entrusted with responsibility to participate in the work of Jesus.

In this issue we sample the actions and resources that enable us as we leave the doors of the Church building energized and empowered to enter our world proclaiming the Gospel message. We go with the task of growing in the wisdom and knowledge of God — being equipped, engaged in our training, joining in the Sacraments, enabled by immersing ourselves in Sacred Scripture daily. Not a mere collection or assembly of tasks and activities but the necessities to establishing and growing in our relationship with the person of Jesus. This relationship is the nexus for our new life as Christians and our ongoing transformation.

We go with a commitment to journey with others as a community in the task of the gospel being proclaimed everywhere. We go with intention of telling our personal story of conversion and transformation and the ability to share our life experience with those we encounter. Talking with a friend recently of the richness of Catholic teaching, we marveled at our access to and the vast depth of this “deposit of faith.” Yet this great treasure is obscured and apparently not relevant to many. What role do I play in communicating and making accessible this treasure? How will I engage with family, friends, co-workers, and those that I encounter everywhere to work with God to make these vast truths accessible to today’s world? Bending our will from all the things that encumber and distract us toward listening to God’s voice and taking active steps in communion with others.

In this issue we introduce Alysia Hernandez who in her own life has taken on the mission to which God has called us. With a small group of young adults, she has ventured twice to Poland on mission to proclaim Christ to Polish children in response to the prayers of Saint John Paul II for his country. I pray that we would consider what action we are called to now and that we would “go” to mobilize the gospel moving forward!



Henry Abeyta

Emmaus Journey

MISSION:

Emmaus Journey is a lay Catholic evangelization and discipleship ministry which partners with parishes, small groups and individuals to facilitate a personal encounter with and conversion to Christ, thereby forming missionary disciples actively living for Jesus.

VISION:

By encountering Christ through scripture, discipleship and community—individuals experience: 1) conversion to Christ; 2) transformation in Christ; and 3) mobilization for Christ, where they are actively involved in sharing their faith with others and living out their faith in the greater community. Thus achieving Goal One of the USCCB’s initiative on evangelization, “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
A Ministry of Catholic Evangelization & Discipleship

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Henry Abeyta became Director of Emmaus Journey in January 2012. With its establishment as a tax exempt 501c(3) organization in 2014, Henry has served as its President. He and Darlene are the proud parents of two married sons and proud grandparents of three grandsons. 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 Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish.

Saints: The Extraordinary Lives of Ordinary People

Saint (Mother) Teresa

“God still loves the world and He sends you and me to be His love and His compassion to the poor.”

— Saint (Mother) Teresa

Observing Mother Teresa’s life, we realize that a highly dedicated life both attracts others and gives them the impetus to get involved. At the age of twelve, the future Mother Teresa felt a strong call to serve God. She felt called to be a missionary and to spread the love of Christ. At the age of eighteen she left her parental home in Skopje, Albania to join the Sisters of Loreto, an Irish community of nuns located in Dublin, Ireland with missions in India and she was assigned to teach at St. Mary’s High School in Calcutta, India.

Mother Teresa was a person of profound prayer and deep love and her twenty years in Loreto community were filled with profound happiness. She was noted for her charity, unselfishness and courage, her capacity for hard work and a natural talent for organization.

She started each day in communion with Jesus in the Eucharist and then went out, rosary in her hand, to find and serve Him in *“the unwanted, the unloved, the uncared for.”*

Mother Teresa had no funds and depended on Divine Providence to provide the items necessary to carry out her mission. One of her first projects was to establish an open-air school for slum children where she was joined by voluntary helpers and received the financial support necessary to continue her mission. Out of this grew a band of sisters, former students and others who were committed to serving the poor.

On 7 October 1950 the new congregation of the Missionaries of Charity was officially established in the Archdiocese of Calcutta. Today the order comprises Active and Contemplative branches of Sisters and Brothers in many countries. By 2015 there were 5,150 sisters serving in 139 countries; 340 brothers serving in 21 countries; and, 35 priests serving in 5 countries.

The whole of Mother Teresa’s life and labor bore witness to the joy of loving, the greatness and dignity of every human person, the value of little things done faithfully and with love, and the surpassing worth of friendship with God. Summarizing her life she said:

“By blood, I am Albanian. By citizenship, an Indian. By faith, I am a Catholic nun. As to my calling, I belong to the world. As to my heart, I belong entirely to the Heart of Jesus.”

— Saint (Mother) Teresa

Sources: 1. <http://www.mohterteresa.org/biography.html>
2. <https://info.franciscanmedia.org/mother-teresa>
3. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mother_Teresa



Alysia Hernandez: Conversion of the Heart

Acts 9: 3–9 tells the story of Paul’s conversion. He was traveling to Damascus when all of a sudden, a light from the sky confronts him about his actions. After this incident, he spends a lifetime serving the Lord, in a profound way as he works to convert the hardened hearts that were once like his own. If we dive deep into our own lives, many of us will find our own conversion story. Mine was not as obvious as Paul’s.

While I had several profound encounters with Christ throughout my life. The most profound conversion moment happened in the most unexpected places — Poland. I have been blessed to go on two separate Poland mission trips. Emmaus Journey each year sends a group of young adults to lead a summer camp in Poland. It is a ten-day bible camp based on Vacation-Bible school where we teach about God and teach English.

One of the most profound moments was on the second mission trip. Because I had gone before, I thought that I knew exactly what to expect. Instead, the trip was full of challenges from the start. Each time we felt defeated, God would show up in a small victory. My favorite blessing happened on the last day of camp. The whole time, the teenaged group was not into camp at all. So, the last day of camp we decided to do something different. We shared testimonies and just prayed over every one of the kids. This was such a powerful moment. The entire room was silent. Every teenagers’ face was covered in tears. The Holy Spirit was truly alive in that room. The Holy Spirit worked through us in the most unlikely places to impact those kids’ lives.

Returning to Paul’s conversion story. What really struck me about this moment in Paul’s life was that he got up and continued his walk in a totally changed way. In my life, God has often told me to get up and go, and the times that I actually went changed my life. In saying yes, I allowed the Holy Spirit to work in me. Like Paul, we all must go out into the community and share our conversion moments with others. I don’t know where I am going or what is in store for me, but I do know that my conversion has led me to listen to God’s gentle prompting, and to be open to his will even when it pushes me out of my comfort zone. My life has changed because He has taught me to live my life as an intentional walk with Christ, and I know he will show me the way!



Emmaus Journey 2019 Poland Mission Trip

The Need: In 2010 the Archdiocese of Swidnicka, Poland and Emmaus Journey agreed to partner to send young adult missionaries from the USA to work with Oaza Catholic summer camp participants beginning with the Diocese and expanding to Dioceses from throughout Poland.

History: Emmaus Journey provided teams of young adults for six mission trips over the past seven years.

Objectives:

- Develop leadership capacity among U.S. young adults as they return with a new/renewed faith through an encounter with Jesus through their service
- Serve Polish youth by providing a faith formation program with our Oaza camp partners
- As the Polish kids return home, encourage their families to engage with follow-up programs offered through the Church and Diocese to further their faith formation and proclamation of the gospel message
- Establish cadres of young people countering the secularization of Europe through their active faith
- Provide English speaking young adults that help the Polish kids further their English-speaking skills and provide a new in-person model of U.S. young adults seriously committed to their faith.



How you can help: Consider providing a financial donation that will be used to match group fundraising and for **missioners in most need.**

By check: Checks should be made to Emmaus Journey, and sent to 1311 Tijeras Ave NW, Albuquerque, NM 87102.

Website: www.emmausjourney.org

Emmaus Journey is a 501(c)3 nonprofit serving nationally in Catholic evangelization and discipleship ministry.

Mobilization: Enabling Catholics to be Active in Christ's Mission continued from front page

heart for evangelization, is often expressed in the writings of Church history. Consequently, we can better understand what is on Christ's heart by becoming familiar with how Christ through the Holy Spirit has impacted some of the saints and leaders of the Church regarding this specific task. For instance, I was first gripped with the mission of evangelization and discipleship when I heard it expressed by another person. Over the years as I have read and meditated on some of the writings of the Church's *great personages* my heart has been gripped, and my mind enlightened as I thought with them about these important truths. It changed me! In our desire to mobilize others we must not neglect exposing people to the Church's thinking, nor overlook engaging them in ongoing dialog about these concepts. It will change them too. The two resources footnoted below, along with Pope John Paul II's *Mission of the Redeemer* (Redemptoris Missio), would be valuable writings to consider using in the task of mobilization.

Of third importance we need to equip Catholic laity with simple but effective tools that they can use to invite people into spiritual discussions, enable them to explain the simple message of the Good News, and provide them with ideas how they can keep the conversation going as their friends complete their journey to Christ and his Church. This, and all of the above suggestions will do wonders to deepen a Catholic's resolve to become involved in the task. Additionally, this input will help remove the fear and apprehension people have about engaging non-Christians in discussions regarding Christ and his Church. It is almost unfair for us to challenge Catholics to embrace the above responsibilities without also equipping them for the task.

Pope John Paul II mentions several concepts which he believes ought to be *fostered* within parishes, one of which is small groups; "... where the faithful can communicate the Word of God and express it in service and love to one another; these communities are true expressions of ecclesial communion and centers of evangelization, in communion with their pastors."⁴ He rightly sees these communities, when functioning well, as both a place of growth and formation, and as a place of evangelization and outreach. My experience is that Catholic lay people can more easily be mobilized when they receive small-group training, direction, and affirmation.

Of course, the above processes take considerable time to accomplish, should involve ongoing discipleship training for both the leaders and participants, and will require *intentional* focus by the pastor and the parish. This vision for mobilizing Catholics to participate in the mission of Christ and his Church is an *intentional* focus that should never go away, because the secular world will always be present, and hopefully our parishes will constantly be growing and infused with new members who must also be mobilized.

Rich Cleveland is the founder of Emmaus Journey and was its first Director. He and his wife continue to serve Emmaus Journey, and live in Colorado Springs, Colo.

1. *The Lay Members of Christ's Faithful People* (Christifideles Laici), A Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of John Paul II, paragraph 17
2. *Ibid*, paragraph 14
3. *On Evangelization In the Modern World* (Evangelii Nuntiandi), A Apostolic Exhortation of Paul VI, paragraph 5
4. *Ibid*, (Christifideles Laici), paragraph 26