

AUTHENTIC EVANGELIZATION
Sr. Clara Maria Malay, SCTJM

Evangelization has challenge but there are ways to prepare and avoid challenges. Many forces are against the bearers of Good News, the enemy and prince of this world does not want the light of Christ to shine, but God is on our side and we shall not be overcome. "The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it" (Jn 1:5). That is why the Lord warns us in the Gospels that we must be wise as serpents and innocent as doves (Mt 10:16). Precisely because the Lord seeks to unite, the enemy desires to destroy the unity and by causing division through our weakness of jealousy, competition, gossip, paranoia, vainglory etc. Fr. Baron warns that "this undermining of the enemy makes us spend our energies on ourselves and not on the work of the Lord as in the life of Saul and David" If we are stuck on ourselves we forget about the mission of God and the mission of the Church bringing God's love. When we know the mission and understand that we are all working together we can more easily overcome the challenge of division among ourselves. Rather we can encourage each other in the same mission of God because the mission is what matters, not my own vain glory.¹ This challenge can be overcome by unity in Christ, when we forget about ourselves and focus on the other and the mission at hand. This unity is a powerful witness and serves as an evangelize tool in itself.



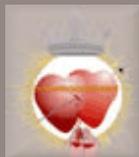
Furthermore when traveling to a new culture and land on mission there are many differences that can be challenging. But as Fr. Anaeto recommended in our class notes, education on the challenges of intercultural encounter is necessary. Preparing with education before the mission can help soften the transition. When speaking of evangelization challenges in our American culture, it has been said that an eclipse of God has taken place. Pope Benedict spoke on this eclipse of God, "Today we see a certain 'eclipse of God' taking place, a kind of amnesia which, albeit not an outright rejection of Christianity, is nonetheless a denial of the treasure of our faith, a denial that could lead to the loss of our deepest identity."² This 'eclipse' creates a large challenge in evangelization in much of the Western world today. Many prefer not to hear or speak of God; the topic of religion can be regarded as a taboo in society and avoided altogether. While realistically the message of Christ is the only thing that will bring peace, love and forgiveness to a society without hope. Therefore we must not give up hope and turn to our Lord for strength asking Him to arm us with His charity for one another. Even if the message of Christ is not always welcome the charity of Christ can be shared with all, which is planting seeds of God's love.

In short evangelization and mission work has its challenges as anything but the challenges can be used as a means of growth and to build character. Many can be prepared for properly and others that could never be expected but these can also be used for the kingdom, for with Christ nothing is wasted especially not suffering that when united to Christ can become a fountain of grace.

¹Fr. Robert Barron, "Would that Everyone Could be a Prophet," at wordonfire.org.

² Pope Benedict XVI, World Youth Day address to Consecrated Sisters, Madrid Spain, August 20, 2011

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