

The tools of the mission on a daily basis

Pilgrim friends,

Now that the principles of the mission are in place, it is



It is time, on this last day of pilgrimage, to give you **concrete tools and practical advice**, starting with the daily mission. For, even if the conversion of a soul is the work of God, it is important to be able to benefit from the great experience of the missionaries – starting with Saint Paul! – who have set up a whole pedagogy to talk about Christ.

Evangelization is addressed to **the whole of humanity**, because Christ died **for all men**. To evangelize is to go out of one's home, to meet people: "*Go, teach the nations!*" Evangelizing is like making a sea voyage: **the sailboat is ourselves**, and Jesus wants to reach entire spaces through us.

The Preparation of the Missionary

But before any trip, you have to take ownership of how the sailboat works. Is he well equipped for such an adventure? Here are some **functions to check**, and the **red lights** to be aware of.

Functions to check carefully:

1. Know the make and model of the sailboat well, that is: **know yourself well**. Everyone is different, and must be able to find the personal qualities that they can put at the service of the mission. Because we are not all called to the same types of missions!

2. Check the sails, to be propelled. Concretely, what propels us is prayer: **never to go on a mission before having prayed** beforehand. (*cf. Meditation 6*)

3. Check the bow of the boat. To cut through the waves, that is to say to address the subject of faith, it is better to have a rather fine profile! This profile is **the smile, the one that is animated by charity**. St. Ignatius of Loyola said:

" *Do you want to save a soul ? Start convincing her that you love her.*¹ If the posture and tone are smiling, then the hook can be made. " *Our joy is the surest way to proclaim Christ to the world* ," remarked Saint Mother Teresa². This joy and goodness often overcome many obstacles that hinder conversion: they are often more persuasive than long intellectual speeches.

4. Check the radio, that is: **our ability to listen**. It is essential , in order to talk to people, to take out our antennae to pick up where people are, to try to put ourselves on their level, to take them where they are, as Saint Francis de Sales did so well (*meditation 1*). For example, rather than directly affirming truths, ask questions: " *Who is Jesus to you ?* " *Do you know what this image means, or today's party ?*" and really take the time to listen to people.

5. Check the flag, that is: **what is the testimony I want to announce?** This is the core of faith, what is also called the " *kerygma* ": Jesus is God, he loves me, he died and rose again to save me, I can love him! And sometimes it is better to take out the flag not in theoretical and professorial form, but in personal form: how God **visited me** , what faith implies **for me**.

6. Check the waves that are forming **behind the boat** : in other words: how to leave a mark, a concrete trace, once the discussion is over? A few tips:

- if possible, try to conclude the discussion by praying with the person (we must overcome our human respect!);
- if possible, provide the person with clues to continue: give a picture, a medal, a sentence from the Bible, a booklet, a tract;
- Propose a later appointment: invite to an adoration, a conference, a vigil, a match, or to Mass!
- pray for the person after the discussion: the conversion of a soul is essentially the work of God!
- To do penance for the person: it is the cross that saves!

1. St. Ignatius of Loyola, quoted by Matyssek-Ricard, *Memento de pastorale*, Alsatia, Paris, 1942, p. 35

2. *Dieu est humour*, Éditions de l'Emmanuel, Paris, 2007, p. 157

After the check-up, the warning lights

Here are some orange lights to avoid in the mission:

1st seer. Beware of forcing. Our role is to propose and not to impose, to enlighten the intellect, in order to promote a free and profound conversion. "*If you want...*" Jesus says in the Gospel. And Saint Bernadette: "*I am not in charge of making you believe it, I am in charge of telling you.*" »

2nd seer. The danger of relativism. "*The important thing is to have values*"... or "*To each his own truth*"... No! No compromise in the proclamation of the Truth!

3rd seer. Let us avoid sterile debates or debates that are likely to get out of hand, on both political and religious issues, which remain secondary here. The burning questions are often the same: the Crusades, the Inquisition, the riches of the Vatican, abuses in the Church, sexual morality... On the contrary, our approach must go to the essential: Jesus Christ, the Church, grace... It is up to us to distinguish between two cases:

- ▶ 1st case: it's more of a cliché than a real question. In this case, bypass the subject: "*I am not a historian or a specialist in these subjects*", and refer to good books that deal with the issues in detail (for example the works of good historians such as Jean Sévillia).
- ▶ 2nd case: this is a real question for the person. In this case, to give an element of an answer, but not to let oneself be diverted from the core of faith. But in general, do not begin to evangelize with moral questions that can arise immediately, but rather with the great spiritual truths. This is not to "hide" the demands of Catholic morality, but to show that these demands flow from a higher principle, the love of God, and not from a narrow rigorism.

4th seer. Imposter syndrome. "*I'm not up to the task*"... So what? It is a good thing, Saint Paul said: "*What is foolish in the world is what God has chosen*" (1 Cor 1:27). Saint Peter betrayed Jesus, and he is the first pope, the instrument of the conversion of 3,000 people at Pentecost! If you dig a little deeper, you'll realize that what often blocks us is human respect, fear of ridicule, fear of confrontation. Let us ask the apostles for their boldness!

5th seer. The pride of bringing back to oneself the fruits of evangelization. To evangelize is to lead to a Person, not to our own little person. Like John the Baptist, we must step aside before Christ.

Continents to be evangelized

The family

It's different with the generation **above**, the generation **below**, or **at the same level**.

1. With the **generation above** (non-believing parents, for example), it will take patience to evoke faith. The sacraments of the family (baptism, first communion, etc.) are good opportunities: by making a beautiful booklet, by inviting the priest to lunch, we can initiate good conversations and get things across. A second possibility, if the discussion is difficult, is to write to your parents.

2. For **the little ones**, the mission consists above all in giving them a taste for God, through impregnation, through books, films, the choice of holidays and activities.

For prayer, nothing beats an example: a child who sees his father or mother praying for real learns contact with God. A priest said that his personal faith was strengthened when he saw his father on his knees: that for him this was the true proof of the existence of God:

" There's someone above Dad! »

When children become teenagers, be ready to welcome the questioning. Digging into the reasons to believe, giving leads, and directing to others who will be better placed: this is the importance of relays (scout leaders, good friendships) that will have a greater influence at certain periods of life.

3. Finally, with those **of the family** who are **of your generation**, it is delicate to evangelize without being seen as a lecturer. Jesus himself said: *" No prophet is well received in his own country "* (Lk 3:24). All that remains is to live your faith without complexes, to have a coherence of life, a witness of joy and goodness, and to say at least *" I will pray for you "* ... and do it!

School, the place of study

- For students **to teachers** : if faith is directly attacked, it may be necessary to open their mouths. But it is better to have a one-on-one than a confrontation in front of the others. And if we go at least with two people, it will give more weight.

- Then **among young people**, there is a responsibility: **the evangelization of young people by young people is irreplaceable**. Dare to wear a medal or a cross... Daring to offer a spiritual activity, chaplaincy, etc. Dare to talk about scouting, pilgrimage, retreat. Even if someone does not believe, we can say to him: "*I have entrusted to Jesus your examination or your difficulty during the pilgrimage to Chartres*"...

And above all, **to show his joy of believing**. Father Coiffet, who founded the children's chapters of the pele, said to the scouts: "*Our non-believing friends should ask us: 'But what is your secret ?' »*

The workplace

It is sometimes difficult to be a missionary in the workplace. A few tips though:

1. **Do my colleagues know that I am a Catholic?** This is the first thing to initiate. This can be done discreetly (an image on the phone or computer), in the form of a narrative ("*What did I do this weekend ? the pilgrimage to Chartres...*"), or by evoking personal and family events (baptism of the little one, my wedding in church, etc.). By doing this, we become the Catholic "reference", sometimes the only one in their entourage. Benedict XVI told us with an astonishing image:

" We Christians must be a living message; in many cases, we are even the only Gospel that people today still read. A pilgrim recounts that one day his patroness, who was in revolt against the Church, called him in the middle of the holidays to tell him that his mother had died. She says: "I'm calling you, because you're the only one who will know how to listen to me. »

2. It then forces us to have **a coherence of life** : if I spend my time **criticizing**, if I am dishonest and vulgar in my conversations, I will be a **counter-witness**.

3. Pray, every morning: "*Holy Spirit, give me the opportunity today to make Jesus known. »*

Depending on the special case

With **other Christians** (evangelists and Protestants), we must know how to use the points we have in common (Jesus is God, the Saviour, etc.), but we must know well the treasures that they lack: the Church, the Eucharistship, the motherhood of Mary, the companionship of the saints... In short, it requires a very good knowledge of one's own religion, and the religion of the other (and especially to study the Bible in more depth!)

With Islam: **don't** be afraid to be categorical. A Muslim will have more esteem for someone who is a little "inward" than for someone who is not sure of his convictions. Invite him to ask himself questions: what is your *relationship* with God? What does Islam (*submission*) mean? For us Catholics, the specificity of our faith lies in this personal *relationship*: God loves me. What does God *do* for you? Jesus, on the other hand, offered himself as a sacrifice to make reparation for our sins. He is not just a teacher, but a Savior.

With the atheist (*I don't think so*) or **the agnostic** (*we can't know*). Very often, one is not "just" an atheist: there is often a deeper reason, a wound, a bad experience with the Church, etc. It is important, at first, to let people speak in order to understand the person. This will make it easier to testify, in the second phase.

With relativism, one can have the impression that the testimony slips, like on the feathers of a duck: "*So much the better if it makes you happy, faith, I take a little from each religion.*" This is where **training in apologetics is very useful**, it brings not a subjective personal testimony, but historical and objective "facts", and therefore a real credibility to Christianity.

One last piece of advice: persevere, even if you don't see any fruit! Cardinal van Thuan, who has experienced persecution for so long, testifies: "*It often happens that what one has wished to do without being able to carry it out has been much more meritorious and pleasing to God than the successes one might have hoped for. Don't let the difficulty discourage you. Ask yourself: 'Is this my work or the Lord's? His action or mine?'*" »

" Do not be afraid, have the courage to live the Gospel and the audacity to proclaim it for this, I encourage you to have the right words. »

(Benedict XVI, 20 July 2007)

Quotes

The faithfulness of the baptized is a primary condition for the proclamation of the Gospel and for the mission of the Church in the world. In order to manifest its power of truth and radiance to men, the message of salvation must be authenticated by the witness of life of Christians. The witness of the Christian life and the works done in a supernatural spirit are powerful in drawing men to the faith and to God.

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Contemporary man believes witnesses more than masters, experience more than doctrine, life and facts than theories. The witness of the Christian life, the first form of mission, is also irreplaceable. The first form of witness is the very life of the missionary, of the Christian family and of the ecclesial community, which makes visible a new way of behaving. The missionary who, despite all his human limitations and imperfections, lives with simplicity following the example of Christ is a sign of God and of transcendent realities.

John Paul II, *Redemptoris missio*, 42

The Lord said, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16-15). The precept is formal: you have to go, go all over the world. The apostolate does not consist in recruiting adherents, but in transmitting good news, in passing on a happy message. There is no limit in time or space.

Dom Chautard, *The Soul of Every Apostolate*

The Christian is a sower of joy and that is why he does great things. Joy is one of the most irresistible powers in the world: it soothes, it disarms, it conquers, it carries away. The joyful soul is an apostle: it draws men to God by manifesting to men what the presence of God produces in it. That is why the Holy Spirit gives us this advice: never grieve, for joy in God is your strength. (Ne 8:10).

R.P. Bernardot, *From the Eucharist to the Trinity*, Editions Blanche de Peuterey