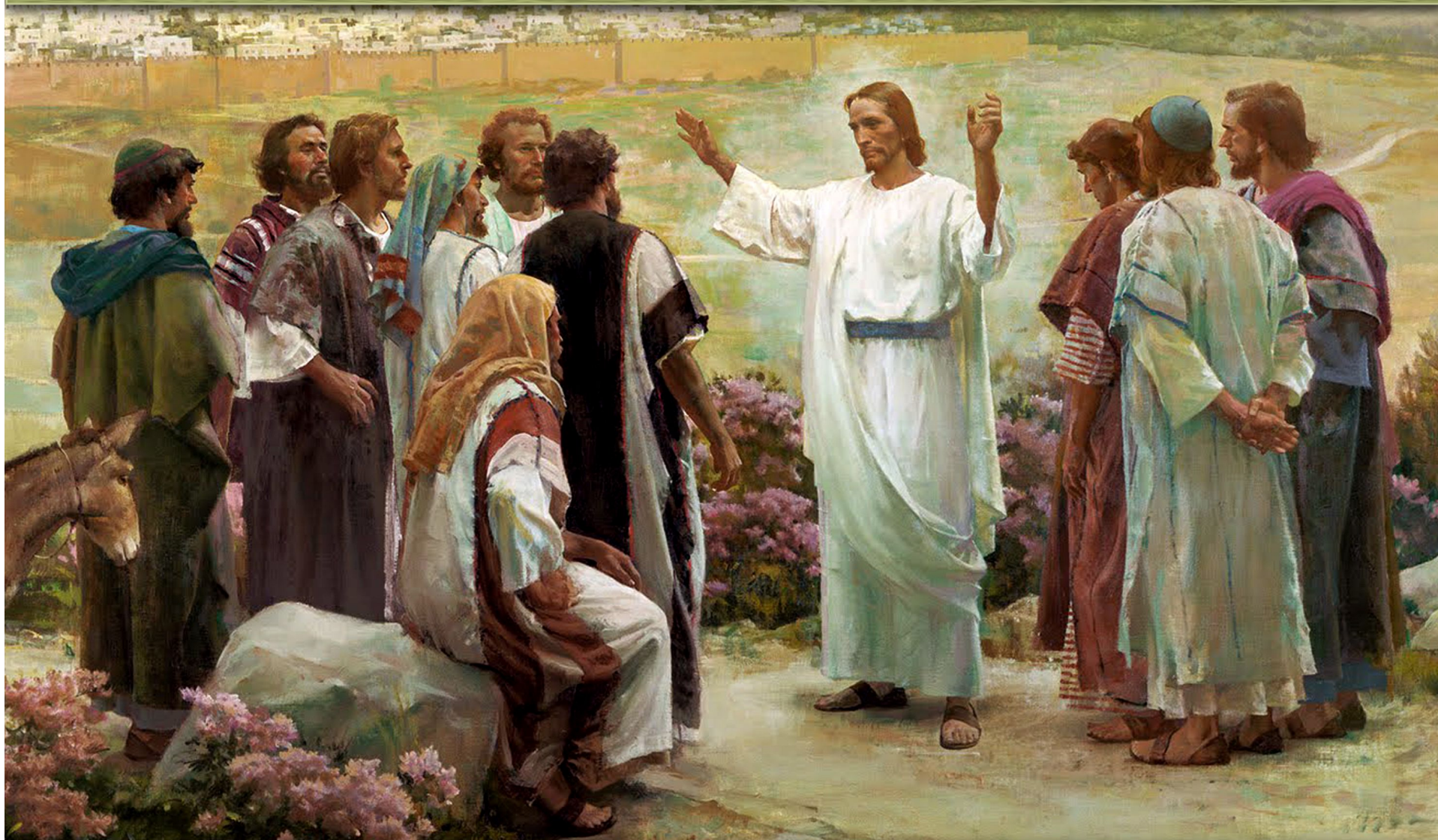


“Go into all the world and proclaim the Gospel to the whole creation”

*Reawakening all believers to take up with passion and perseverance
the mission Christ continually entrusts to his disciples.*



Fr. Roger J. Landry • American Bible Society Board Meeting • Giustiniano Hotel, Rome • November 1, 2018



Following Peter and Paul in Evangelizing

- In these last days, we have had a chance to ponder Peter and Paul as disciples and apostles, who were both evangelized evangelizers, who were transformed by Jesus and sought to bring to others that same gift, who shared the faith both by *kerygma* and *martyria*.
- It's an opportunity to ponder the extent to which we are similarly evangelized evangelizers, who having received the word of God respond as Peter, "We cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard"(Acts 4:20), or as Paul, "Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!" (1 Cor 9:16).



Evangelization and New Evangelization

- There's always a need for missionary work, the first proclamation of the Gospel to those who haven't heard the saving word of God. But now there's also a need for a re-evangelization or new evangelization including of vast scores of the baptized.
- “The groups among which the Church dwells are often radically changed, for one reason or other, so that an entirely new set of circumstances may arise” (Vatican II Decree *Ad Gentes*, 6).
- The effects of indifference, aggressive atheism, secularization, living *esti Deus non daretur*, as if God does not exist, with the effects of the attempted marginalization of Christian life. John Paul II: “This indifference to religion and the practice of religion devoid of true meaning in the face of life's very serious problems are not less worrying and upsetting when compared with declared atheism.”



Evangelization and New Evangelization

- Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger: “A large part of today’s humanity does not find the Gospel in the permanent evangelization of the Church: that is to say the convincing response to the question: How to live? This is why we are searching for, along with permanent and uninterrupted and never to be interrupted evangelization, a new evangelization, capable of being heard by that world that does not find access to ‘classic’ evangelization. Everyone needs the Gospel; the Gospel is destined to all and not only to a specific circle and this is why we are obliged to look for new ways of bringing the Gospel to all.”



Evangelization and New Evangelization

- Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger: “Cardinal Ratzinger: “At the beginning of His public life Jesus says: I have come to evangelize the poor (Lk 4:18); this means: I have the response to your fundamental question; I will show you the path of life, the path towards happiness – rather: I am that path.” He responds to the deepest poverty, which is the “tediousness of a life considered absurd and contradictory,” a life without joy that produces the inability to love, produces jealousy, avarice, and other destructive responses to the lack of meaning. “This is why we are in need of a new evangelization: if the art of living remains and unknown, nothing else works.”
- The New Evangelization aims to re-propose to those who have already in some sense accepted Jesus but now keep him at a distance how Jesus is the answer to the question of how they are called to live. We propose Christ as the Way, the Truth and the Life. Christ teaches us the art of living and the path to happiness. He calls us to follow him on that path.



Elements of Evangelization: Prayer

- “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him” (Jn 6:44).
- Jesus himself prayed before he called.
- Ratzinger: “All methods are empty without the foundation of prayer. The word of the announcement must always be drenched in an intense life of prayer.”
- Missionary spirituality is one of docility to and cooperation with the Holy Spirit. It’s essential characteristic is communion with Christ. It is most effective when it communicates Christ’s burning love for souls and gives a glimpse of his holiness. All of this is a fruit of communion with God through prayer.



Elements Evangelization: Witness

- John Paul II: “People today put more trust in witnesses than in teachers, in experience than in teaching, and in life and action than in theories. The witness of a Christian life is the first and irreplaceable form of mission.”
- This witness involves the very life of the evangelized evangelizer, of the Christian family, of the Christian community, which reveals a different way of living.
- Christian witness is salt, light, leaven: “Through this wordless witness these Christians stir up irresistible questions in the hearts of those who see how they live: Why are they like this? Why do they live in this way? What or who is it that inspires them? Why are they in our midst? Such a witness is already a silent proclamation of the Good News and a very powerful and effective one.” (Paul VI)
- It’s a witness of charity, of Good Samaritans who sacrifice for the poor, the weak, the suffering.
- It’s a witness of joy.



Elements Evangelization: Witness

- It must be a witness of joy because people can't easily receive the Gospel "from evangelizers who are dejected, discouraged, impatient or anxious, but [need] ministers of the Gospel whose lives glow with fervor, who have first received the joy of Christ, and who are willing to risk their lives so that the Kingdom may be proclaimed and the Church established in the midst of the world" (Paul VI).
- Jesus said, "These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full" (Jn 15:11).
- Our Christian joy comes from our encounter and friendship with Jesus and "drinks of his brimming heart" The joy flows from being infinitely loved (Pope Francis).



Elements of Evangelization: Friendship

- There is a need for a “fishing net” cast into the deep at Christ’s command capable of catching many at the same time.
- Often, however, fish are better caught with a rod, one on one, through friendship.
- The Lord used this with Nicodemus, Zacchaeus, the Samaritan woman, Simon the Pharisee, and others, and so did the apostles.



Elements of Evangelization: Preaching

- Need more than witness: “There is no true evangelization if the name, the teaching, the life, the promises, the kingdom and the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God are not proclaimed.” (Paul VI)
- “All forms of missionary activity are directed to this proclamation, which reveals and gives access to the mystery hidden for ages and made known in Christ.” (John Paul II)
- Kerygma, catechesis, theological reflection.
- Not a new message today, but one new in “methods, ardor and expression” (John Paul II).



Content of the Evangelizing Preaching: Jesus Christ

- To preach does not merely passing on words or doctrine but facilitating a true, personal and profound encounter and relationship with Jesus Christ.
- “The truth is that only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light. ... Christ, ...by the revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love, fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear.” (Vatican II’s *Gaudium et Spes*).
- Not just knowing “about” Jesus but a friendship. Not just “following him” but attaining union with him. Jesus’ work is to bring us into an intimate relationship with him and in him with the Father and the Holy Spirit.



Content of the Evangelizing Preaching: Conversion

- Personal contact with Jesus and with the life of a missionary is meant to lead the person to a conversion experience.
- The Gospel is transformative, radicalizing the life of people.
- Cardinal Ratzinger: “The fundamental content of the Old Testament is summarized in the message by John the Baptist: *metanoete* - Convert! There is no access to Jesus without the Baptist; there is no possibility of reaching Jesus without answering the call of the precursor. Jesus took up the message of John in the synthesis of His own preaching: ‘repent and believe.’ The Greek word for converting (*metanoete*) means: to rethink, to question one’s own and common way of living, to allow God to enter into the criteria of one’s life, to not merely judge according to the current opinions. Therefore, to convert means not to live as all the others live, not to do what all do, not to feel justified in dubious, ambiguous, evil actions just because others do the same. [It means to] begin to see one’s life through the eyes of God, thereby looking for the good, even if uncomfortable, not aiming at the judgment of the majority, of men, but on the justice of God. In other words, [to convert means] to look for a new style of life, a new life. All of this does not imply moralism, [for] reducing Christianity to morality loses sight of the essence of Christ’s message. [Converting means] rather receiving] the gift of a new friendship, the gift of communion with Jesus and thereby with God.”



Content of the Evangelizing Preaching: The Kingdom

- “At the heart of the new evangelization must be the kingdom of God, which is not a thing. *The Kingdom of God is God*. Kingdom of God means: God exists. God is alive. God is present and acts in the world, in our, in my, life. God is not a faraway ‘ultimate cause,’ God is not the ‘great architect’ of deism, who created the machine of the world and is no longer part of it. On the contrary: God is the most present and decisive reality in each and every act of my life, in each and every moment of history” (Ratzinger).
- To proclaim the kingdom of God is to introduce people into relations with the King, to teach how to pray, for prayer is faith in action.
- To proclaim the kingdom likewise means to introduce people into relations with the others whom Christ has called into the kingdom. We cannot separate the Kingdom from the Church.



Content of the Evangelizing Preaching: The Cross

- St. Paul in Athens tried to preach without mentioning the crucifixion. After he left and headed to Corinth, he “decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified” and “preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God” (1 Cor 1:23-24, 2:2).
- We cannot separate Christ from the Cross, from communion with the passion of Christ. We must help people to deny themselves, pick up their Cross and follow Christ.



Content of the Evangelizing Preaching: Justice, Judgment and Eternal Life

- Our choices in response to God's gifts matter. God want us to receive them and live by them, and become "rich in what matters to God." We must continuously "repent and believe," seeking to live more by faith and grace working through love.
- The injustices of the world are not the final word.
- Preaching eschatologically means helping people to live for God, to hope in his promises and in his fidelity to his covenant. It means helping people, loved by God, to love Him in their neighbor.



Content of the Evangelizing Preaching: Beauty

- All of these thoughts come from Cardinal Ratzinger/Benedict XVI:
- “The only really effective apologia for Christianity comes down to two arguments, namely the saints the Church has produced and the art that has grown in her womb.
- “Better witness is borne to the Lord by the splendor of holiness and art that have arisen in the community of believers than by clever excuses that apologetics has come up with to justify the dark sides which, sadly, are so frequent in the Church's human history.”
- “The true apology of Christian faith, the most convincing demonstration of its truth against every denial, are the saints, and the beauty that the faith has generated. Today, for faith to grow, we must lead ourselves and the persons we meet to encounter the saints and to enter into contact with the Beautiful.”



Content of the Evangelizing Preaching: Beauty

- Christians “must make their Church into a place where beauty—and hence truth—is at home. Without this the world will become the first circle of hell.”
- “The beauties created by faith... are simply, I would say, the living proof of faith. If I look at this beautiful cathedral—it is a living proclamation! It speaks to us itself, and on the basis of the cathedral’s beauty, we succeed in visibly proclaiming God, Christ and all his mysteries: Here they have acquired a form and look at us. All the great works of art, cathedrals ... are all a luminous sign of God and therefore truly a manifestation, an epiphany of God. And in Christianity it is precisely a matter of this epiphany: that God became a veiled Epiphany—he appears and is resplendent.”



Content of the Evangelizing Preaching: Beauty

- “We should always ensure that the [truth and beauty] are [kept]. When, in our time, we discuss the reasonableness of faith, we discuss precisely the fact that reason does not end where experimental discoveries end—it does not finish in positivism. We are ... for a reason that, precisely, is also open to the beautiful and does not have to set it aside as something quite different and unreasonable. Christian art is a rational art—let us think of Gothic art or of the great music—but it is the artistic expression of a greatly expanded reason, in which heart and reason encounter each other. This is the point. I believe that in a certain way this is proof of the truth of Christianity: Heart and reason encounter one another, beauty and truth converge, and the more that we ourselves succeed in living in the beauty of truth, the more that faith will be able to return to being creative in our time too, and to express itself in a convincing form of art.”



The Messenger, Missionary and Evangelized Evangelizer

- Pope Francis in his programmatic exhortation *The Joy of the Gospel* wrote about many of the characters of the one who shares the faith. Here is some of what he said:
 - He said that the one who shares the faith should be close, approachable, welcoming, warm, joyful, unpretentious, patient and ready for dialogue.
 - The messenger should be striving for holiness because the “greater or lesser holiness of the minister does impact his proclamation.”
 - The missionary should *enjoy* passing the faith on to others. To do so, like Jesus, he must “get beyond others’ weaknesses and failings to see what Jesus sees and loves in the ones to whom he is speaking.”
 - The evangelizer should strive truly to get to know those whom he addresses, where the desire for God is alive, where the person’s heart may be barren.



The Messenger, Missionary and Evangelized Evangelizer

- Pope Francis says the evangelizer also should be:
 - Humble – recognizing his own poverty and abandoning himself to Christ.
 - On fire – one can't warm others hearts unless our hearts have been penetrated by the Holy Spirit's "tongue of fire."
 - Positive – "Each word of Scripture is a gift before a demand." We should emphasize not what shouldn't be done but what we can do better. We should show the attractiveness of a life of wisdom and be "joyful messengers of challenging proposals, guardians of goodness and the beauty of a life of fidelity rather than experts in dire predictions and dour judges."



The Messenger, Missionary and Evangelized Evangelizer

- Pope Francis also speaks about the motivation of the modern missionary:
 - The primary reason for evangelizing is the love and salvation of Jesus that we have received, urging us to greater love of him. “What kind of love would not feel the need to speak of the beloved, to point him out, to make him known?”
 - Evangelization responds to that expectation. “We have a treasure of life and love that cannot deceive, and a message that cannot mislead or disappoint.” It ennobles us and is never out of date.
 - “We are convinced from personal experience that it is not the same thing to have known Jesus as not to have known him, not the same thing to walk with him as to walk blindly, not the same thing to hear his word as not to know it, and not the same thing to contemplate him, to worship him, to find our peace in him, as not to. ...We know well that with Jesus life becomes richer and that with him it is easier to find meaning in everything. This is why we evangelize.”



Summary of the Process of Evangelization: The Aparecida Document (2007)

- Prior to the papacy, the greatest pastoral achievement of Cardinal Bergoglio was as chairman of the fifth General Assembly of the Conference of Bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean who met in Aparecida Brazil in 2007 and produced an extraordinary document on evangelization referred to popularly “The Aparecida Document.”
- It was focused on the deeper evangelization of the continent of Latin America, but its central insights are applicable everywhere.
- It was geared toward forming “missionary disciples in communion.”



Summary of the Process of Evangelization: The Aparecida Document (2007)

- It said that there were five necessary aspects of the formation of missionary disciples in communion, that can serve as an effective summary of what we've described until now:
 - Encounter with Jesus Christ – Following and Befriending Jesus
 - Conversion – The initial response of those who, by the power of the Holy Spirit, seem to think and live as he does.
 - Discipleship – This is the maturation of a person in knowledge, love and following Jesus in a persevering way.
 - Communion – There can be no Christian life except in community, like we see in the early Christians
 - Mission – As we get to know and love the Lord, we feel within the need to share with others the same gift.



Learning from Jesus on the Road to Emmaus About the Art of Evangelization

- In 2013, after World Youth Day in Brazil, Pope Francis spoke to the bishops present about the new evangelization using the scene of Jesus' encounter with the disciples on the road to Emmaus as a paradigm.
- Like the two disciples leaving Jerusalem “scandalized by the failure of the Messiah in whom they had hoped and who now appeared utterly vanquished,” we have to “face the difficult mystery of those people who leave the Church, who, under the illusion of alternative ideas, now think that the Church – their Jerusalem – can no longer offer them anything meaningful and important.”



Learning from Jesus on the Road to Emmaus About the Art of Evangelization

- “It is a fact that nowadays there are many people like the two disciples of Emmaus; not only those looking for answers in the new religious groups that are sprouting up, but also those who already seem godless, both in theory and in practice.”
- “Faced with this situation, what are we to do? We need a Church unafraid of going forth into their night. We need a Church capable of meeting them on their way. We need a Church capable of entering into their conversation. We need a Church able to dialogue with those disciples who, having left Jerusalem behind, are wandering aimlessly, alone, with their own disappointment, disillusioned by a Christianity now considered barren, fruitless soil, incapable of generating meaning.”



Learning from Jesus on the Road to Emmaus About the Art of Evangelization

- “We need a Church capable of walking at people’s side, of doing more than simply listening to them; a Church that accompanies them on their journey; a Church able to make sense of the ‘night’ contained in the flight of so many of our brothers and sisters from Jerusalem; a Church that realizes that the *reasons why people leave also contain reasons why they can eventually return.*”
- But we need to know how to interpret, with courage, the larger picture. Jesus warmed the hearts of the disciples of Emmaus. ... Are we still a Church capable of warming hearts? A Church capable of leading people back to Jerusalem? Of bringing them home? Jerusalem is where our roots are: Scripture, catechesis, sacraments, community, friendship with the Lord, Mary and the apostles... Are we still able to speak of these roots in a way that will revive a sense of wonder at their beauty?”



Learning from Jesus on the Road to Emmaus About the Art of Evangelization

- “We need a Church capable of accompanying them on the road back to Jerusalem! ... We need a Church that kindles hearts and warms them. We need a Church capable of restoring citizenship to her many children who are journeying, as it were, in an exodus.”
- Pope Francis said to the youth of the Catholic world in Brazil: “Faith is a flame that grows stronger the more it is shared and passed on, so that everyone may know, love and confess Jesus Christ, the Lord of life and history (cf. Rom 10:9) Careful, though! Jesus did not say: ‘Go, if you would like to, if you have the time,’ but he said: ‘Go and make disciples of all nations.’ Sharing the experience of faith, bearing witness to the faith, proclaiming the Gospel: this is a command that the Lord entrusts to the whole Church, and that includes you; but it is a command that is born ... from the force of love, from the fact that Jesus first came into our midst and did not give us just a part of himself, but the whole of himself: he gave his life in order to save us and to show us the love and mercy of God. ... Do not be afraid to go and to bring Christ into every area of life, to the fringes of society, even to those who seem farthest away, most indifferent. The Lord seeks all, he wants everyone to feel the warmth of his mercy and his love.”



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Welcome!

I warmly welcome you to this website, put together at the insistence and with the assistance of friends.

During my diaconal ordination, Cardinal Edmund Szoka gave me the following instruction from the Ordination Rite as together we gripped the Book of the Gospels:

*"Receive the Gospel of Christ, whose herald you now are.
Believe what you read.
Teach what you believe.
Practice what you teach."*

Those words have never lost their resonance.

Since that day -- October 8, 1998 -- I have tried to live up to that commission to be a "herald of the Gospel," by striving to teach what the Church believes, to practice what I preach to others, and to spread with joy and enthusiasm the truth Christ has entrusted to His church -- in and out of season, in and out of the pulpit.

This website is a chronicle of those attempts.

It constitutes the "five loaves and two fish" (or even less!) that I have placed into the hands of the Lord as an attempt to feed a hungry crowd, confident that, if He wishes, He can multiply and supplement that meager offering to nourish many more (Jn 6:1-14).

In Christ,
Fr. Roger J. Landry

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