

Salt, Light and Leaven:

The Vocation and Mission of the Laity in the Church and the World



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Laity at the Beginning of the Church in Korea

- In the late 1700s, some educated Korean laypeople traveling in China found some texts from Jesuit priests who were martyred missionaries in China.
- These Korean lay people started reading the Scriptures and the catechetical books and, searching for the truth, found that the Truth had a name. They baptized each other and tried to live the faith as best they could.
- When finally missionaries were smuggled in later, they found that there were already 4,000 Catholics present. These Catholics already knew how to behave so well that they were willing to suffer for the faith, to pick up their cross daily and even die on it.
- There were six ferocious anti-Christian persecution waves but none of those pogroms had the purpose that the Korean authorities wanted: to intimidate those who remained out of the practice of the faith. They continued to persevere.

The Beginnings of the Church in Korea

- In 2014 Pope Francis went to Korea to beatify 123 of the great martyrs of Korea. There he wanted to help not only Korean Christians today but Catholics everywhere to ponder their example and profit from it in imitation.
- Korean Catholics, he said, are “heirs to an impressive tradition that began, and largely grew, through the fidelity, perseverance and work of generations of lay persons.”
- “In God’s mysterious providence, the Christian faith was not brought to the shores of Korea through missionaries; rather, it entered through the hearts and minds of the Korean people themselves... It also bore fruit in communities inspired by the early Church, in which the believers were truly one in mind and heart, regardless of traditional social differences, and held all things in common (cf. Acts 4:32).



The Beginnings of the Church in Korea

- “Soon after the first seeds of faith were planted in this land, ... the Christian community had to choose between following Jesus or the world. They had heard the Lord’s warning that the world would hate them because of him (*Jn 17:14*); they knew the cost of discipleship. For many, this meant persecution, and later flight to the mountains, where they formed Catholic villages. They were willing to make great sacrifices and let themselves be stripped of whatever kept them from Christ – possessions and land, prestige and honor – for they knew that Christ alone was their true treasure.”
- Pope Francis put forward these lay founders and first generations of the Church in Korea lay people as heroic examples for the Church everywhere about how to live for Christ and die for him so that we might live forever with him.





The Laity in the Preservation of the Faith in Japan

- Perhaps no local Church — even the early Church in Rome — has suffered as much as Japanese Christians, who just two generations after Saint Francis Xavier brought the Gospel to their shores, underwent a ferocious 42-year bloodbath, massacring almost all priests, religious and catechists.
- Many of the Christians who weren't martyred had apostatized, abjuring the faith lest they suffer the martyrs' fate.
- The government had no fear of the thousands of Christian orphans they had made as well as the perhaps few Christian adults they had missed. They believed the Christian faith would die without teachers to pass it on, not to mention without Churches, bishops, priests, and sacraments. Christianity had been wiped out, they thought, just as they had intended.
- For two centuries, from 1639-1854, Japan was closed to all foreign influence. The few missionaries who succeeded in smuggling themselves into the country were quickly arrested and executed.



The Preservation of the Faith in Japan

- In 1854, for economic reasons, Japan once again opened its borders to allow foreign businessmen to enter. The Christian traders arriving in Japanese port cities pressured the Japanese government to allow them to have tiny Churches to minister to their needs.
- The government acquiesced, but the Churches would be only for foreigners; they reminded the Japanese citizens that Christianity was still illegal and punishable by death.
- In 1865, something happened that I think is one of the most moving scenes in the history of the Church.
- It involved the story of Fr. Bernard Petitjean, a French priest in the Society of Foreign Missions, who came to Nagasaki to serve the foreign businessmen.
- After celebrating a private Mass on March 17, 1865, about a month after consecrating the Church, Fr. Petitjean went to the Church door where he was met by a group of Japanese on the steps.



The Preservation of the Faith in Japan

- I'll let Cardinal Timothy Dolan take it from here (from a rector's conference he gave to the North American College published in his book *Priests for the Third Millennium*):
- Fr. Petitjean discovered a group of people who “gathered every Sunday to pray the Apostles’ Creed, Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Acts of Faith, Hope, Charity and Contrition, and recite the ten commandments and eight beatitudes. Shocked, he asked the people where this custom came from, only to be told by the Japanese that, sometime in the distant past, men whom they called ‘fathers’ had taught those words to the people, and, anticipating their martyrdom, instructed them to memorize those formulas and gather every Sunday to recite them together. The ‘fathers’ had also assured them that, one day, other ‘fathers’ would return to teach them more about Jesus and his way.
- “Ecstatic, the new missionaries blurted out, ‘We are those fathers,’ only to be met by a stony, suspicious silence.
- “The village leader came forward. ‘It has been passed down, too, that, when men come back claiming to be those ‘fathers,’ we must ask them four questions to be sure they are from the true Church.’ A bit nervous, the newly arrived priests responded, ‘Go ahead. Ask us the questions.’”



The Preservation of the Faith in Japan

- “The village leader asked: ‘When you enter your Churches, what do you do?’ The Jesuits replied by demonstrating a genuflection, which was met by excited gasps from the crowd.
- “‘Second, does your Lord have a Mother?’ ‘Yes,’ assured the priests, ‘and her name is Mary,’ whereupon more electricity spread through the people.
- “‘Where does the earthly leader of your Church live?’ continued the village elder. ‘In Rome,’ answered the missionaries, as the crowd neared unrestrained joy.
- “‘Finally,’ anxiously inquired the chieftain, ‘do your ‘fathers’ have wives?’ And, as the priests smiled and responded, ‘No,’ the villagers broke into a tumult, hoisted the missionaries on their shoulders and led them into the little church for they and their ancestors had not seen a priest for two-and-a-half centuries.”



The Preservation of the Faith in Japan

- So great was the trust in God and in his Church by those who were being killed in the 1600s that they prepared the people for the time when Catholic priests would return to Japan, and their simple instructions were passed down by the *kakure Kiristan*, the clandestine Christians, for a dozen generations.
- They had the foresight to know that Protestant missionaries might be the first to arrive, and so they taught their children four “marks” of the Church to distinguish between Catholics and Protestants: belief in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, the importance of Mary, the papacy and the priesthood. Word quickly spread among the hidden Christians of Japan that their long advent for Christ to return to their country in the Eucharist was over.
- Within a month, on Good Friday, fifteen thousand Christians emerged from the villages and presented themselves before the priests in Nagasaki.
- Many of them would die for the faith again before Christianity was decriminalized in the 1880s. But they had kept the faith alive and strong.

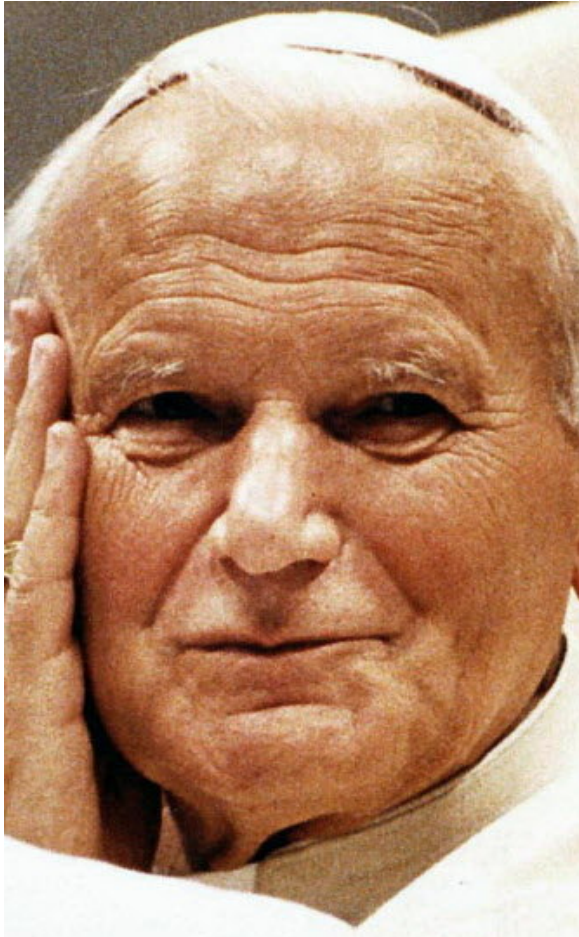


The Role of the Laity in Living and Transmitting the Faith

- The examples of the Korean and Japanese laity show the incredible power of the faithful in preserving and transmitting the faith. In every age, the Church needs lay people with similar faith, courage, virtue and perseverance.
- At Jesus' Ascension he took off the training wheels of our faith, because he trusted in his followers enough to pass it on.
- He had prepared not just the 12 apostles but the 72 to preach the Good News. It's a task not just for the apostles, but all of the members of the Church.
- The Holy Spirit came down on Pentecost not merely on the Apostles but on Mary and the other members of the Church present.
- "I handed on to you as of first importance what I also received" (1 Cor 15:3).
- The greatest in Jesus' kingdom are those who put Jesus' words into practice and teaches others to do the same (Mt 5:19).

Salt, Light and Leaven

- Saint John Paul II, in his 1988 exhortation on the vocation and mission of lay people in the Church and in the world, called in Latin *Christifideles Laici* (the Christian Lay Faithful), said:
- “The images taken from the Gospel of salt, light and leaven, although indiscriminately applicable to all Jesus' disciples, are specifically applied to the lay faithful.
- “They are particularly meaningful images because they speak not only of the *deep involvement and the full participation of the lay faithful in the affairs of the earth, the world and the human community*, but also and above all, they tell of the *radical newness and unique character of an involvement and participation which has as its purpose the spreading of the Gospel that brings salvation.*”



John Paul II




Christifideles
Laici

APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION
VOCAATION AND MISSION OF THE LAY FAITHFUL

Salt of the Earth


- Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount: “You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned? It is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot” (Mt 5:13).
- Salt of the *earth*. There’s a universal mission.
- Three purposes of salt:
 - To preserve food from corruption
 - To start a fire
 - To give flavor to the food we consume.
- We have to ensure that our salt doesn’t go flat.





Light of the World

- Jesus said: “You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house. Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father” ” (Mt 5:14-16).
- Light of the *world*. Again, a universal mission.
- That light is, first, Jesus, “light from light.”
 - Isaiah wrote about the work of the Messiah: “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light” (Is 9:1).
 - Simeon at the Presentation called Jesus the “light of Revelation to the Gentiles” (Lk 2:32).
 - Jesus said about himself: “I am the Light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life” (Jn 8:12)



Light of the World

- There are two fundamental purposes of light.
 - To illumine
 - To warm
- Our Christian vocation and mission is to reflect the light and radiate the warmth of Jesus.
- “The just man is a light in the darkness for the upright” (Ps 112:4)
- So many are living in darkness: the darkness of grief, of physical pain, of broken hearts, of depression, of ignorance and of sin.
- Jesus points out, however, that it’s possible for light to be hidden “under a bushel basket” and fail to illumine or warm.



Leaven

- Jesus said: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed with three measures of wheat flour until the whole batch was leavened” (Mt 13:33).
- A little bit of leaven lifts up the whole dough.
 - One Christian on a street, or in a work place, or in a family, or in a parish is meant to have a dramatic, transformative impact.
 - The introduction of the leaven causes a transformation in the dough; and the coming of someone living the kingdom is meant to cause a transformation in the life of those around him or her.



Leaven

St. Paul VI wrote in *Evangelii Nuntiandi*:

“Above all the Gospel must be proclaimed by witness. Take a Christian or a handful of Christians who, in the midst of their own community, show their capacity for understanding and acceptance, their sharing of life and destiny with other people, their solidarity with the efforts of all for whatever is noble and good. ... They radiate in an altogether simple and unaffected way their faith in values that go beyond current values, and their hope in something that is not seen and that one would not dare to imagine.

“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. ...

“Other questions will arise, deeper and more demanding ones, questions evoked by this witness which involves presence, sharing, solidarity, and which is an essential element, and generally the first one, in evangelization.”



Leaven

- The leaven works unseen. It doesn't call attention to itself.
- Much of the most important work of Christians happens by example, by encouraging words when a person needs it, but cheerfulness, by the transformative power of good friendship.
- But Jesus warns us elsewhere there's another type of leaven at work.
- "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees" (Mt 16:6,11).
- "Guard against the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod" (Mk 8:15)
- Just like good leaven can leaven the dough, so one bad apple can spoil the whole bushel.

Salt, Light and Leaven

- Lay people are called to live out their vocations as salt, light and leaven.
- To return to St. John Paul II:
 - “They are particularly meaningful images because they speak not only of:
 - the deep involvement and the full participation of the lay faithful in the affairs of the earth, the world and the human community,
 - but also and above all, they tell of the radical newness and unique character of an involvement and participation that has as its purpose the spreading of the Gospel that brings salvation.”





Theology of Lay Collaboration

- John Paul II gave us a rich theology of the laity in *Christifideles Laici*. It helps us to understand better how to be salt, light and leaven.
- He used two Biblical parables:
 - The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard” (Mt 20:1-16)
 - The Parable of the Vine and the Branches (Jn 15:1-8).
- The first shows the need for *responsible collaboration*.
- The second shows the need for *communion*.



The Workers in the Vineyard

- “The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out at dawn to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with them for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard.
- “Going out about nine o’clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and he said to them, ‘You too go into my vineyard, and I will give you what is just.’ So they went off.
- “He went out again around noon, and around three o’clock, and did likewise.
- “Going out about five o’clock, he found others standing around, and said to them, ‘Why do you stand here idle all day?’ They answered, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You too go into my vineyard.’



The Workers in the Vineyard

- “You too go” – The call is personally addressed to everyone
- “Why do you stand here idle?” – [This points to] the *lay faithful's* hearkening to the call of Christ the Lord to work in his vineyard, to take an active, conscientious and responsible part in the mission of the Church ... A new state of affairs today both in the Church and in social, economic, political and cultural life, calls with a particular urgency for the action of the lay faithful. ... *It is not permissible for anyone to remain idle.*
- “The world whose economic, social, political and cultural affairs pose problems and grave difficulties. ... *This... is the vineyard; this is the field in which the faithful are called to fulfill their mission.*
- “What is the *actual state of affairs* of the ‘earth’ and the ‘world,’ for which Christians ought to be ‘salt’ and ‘light?’”



The Workers in the Vineyard

- “The variety of situations and problems that exist in our world is indeed great and rapidly changing....
- “The Gospel records that the weeds and the good grain grew together in the farmer's field. The same is true in history, where in everyday life there often exist contradictions in the exercise of human freedom, where there is found, side by side and at times closely intertwined, evil and good, injustice and justice, anguish and hope.”
- It lists several areas of the present day situation of the world:
 - Conflict and peace. We're called to be peacemakers.
 - Secularism, religious indifference, atheism, people abandoning religious practice, de-Christianization. The need for religion, witness and apologetics.
 - Violations of human dignity, where people are not recognized as God's image. Slavery. The right to life, housing, work, family, responsible parenthood, participation in public and political life, freedom of conscience and practice of religion, abuse, lack of education. The need for an authentic humanism, an adequate anthropology, that treats others as subjects not objects.



The Vine and the Branches

- Jesus said, “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. He takes away every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and every one that does he prunes so that it bears more fruit. You are already pruned because of the word that I spoke to you.
- “Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me.
- “I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing. ...
- “If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you.
- “By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.”



The Vine and the Branches

- John Paul II: “The lay faithful are seen not simply as laborers who work in the vineyard, but as themselves being a part of the vineyard.”
- “Only from *inside the Church's mystery of communion* is the ‘identity’ of the lay faithful made known, and their fundamental dignity revealed. Only within the context of this dignity can their vocation and mission in the Church and in the world be defined.”
- The mission of the lay faithful “has as its purpose to lead a person to a knowledge of the *radical newness of the Christian life that comes from Baptism*, the sacrament of faith, so that this knowledge can help that person *live the responsibilities which arise from that vocation received from God.*”



The Vine and the Branches

- Through Baptism, the lay faithful participate in the threefold mission of Christ as Priest, Prophet and King.
 - **Priest** – United with Jesus and to his sacrifice, they are able to make the offering of themselves and their daily activities (cf. Rom 12:1-2).
 - **Prophet** – They have the responsibility to receive and proclaim the Gospel in word and deed, witnessing together with the Holy Spirit. They let the newness and power of the Gospel shine in their family and social life and to express it patiently and courageously among the contradictions of the present age.
 - **King** – They share in Christ the King's kingdom and are called to spread it. They engage in spiritual combat to fight against the domain of sin and give themselves in loving service, justice and charity, seeking to restore creation to its original value.



The Secular Character of the Lay Vocation and Mission

- The priestly, prophetic and kingly dimensions of Christian life are lived by the laity with a “secular character [that] is properly and particularly that of the lay faithful” (Vat II).
- The Church lives in the world, even if she is not of the world. Her mission involves the renewal of the temporal order.
- The lay faithful "live in the world ... in every one of the secular professions and occupations, ... in the ordinary circumstances of family and social life, from which the very fabric of their existence is woven.”
- They are persons who live an ordinary life in the world: they study, they work, they form relationships as friends, professionals, members of society, cultures, etc.



The Secular Character of the Lay Vocation and Mission

- Their secular condition is not simply an external and environmental framework, but a reality *destined to find in Jesus Christ the fullness of its meaning.*
- By his incarnation, Jesus sanctified human ties, especially family ones, from which social relationships arise.
- He chose to lead the life of an ordinary craftsman of his own time and place.
- The "world" thus becomes the place and the means for the lay faithful to fulfill their Christian vocation, because the world itself is destined to glorify God the Father in Christ.
- This is a proper and special divine vocation directed to the lay faithful.



The Secular Character of the Lay Vocation and Mission

- Lay people are not called to abandon the position that they have in the world.
 - Baptism does not take them from the world at all.
 - St. Paul: "So, brethren, in whatever state each was called, there let him remain with God" (1 Cor 7:24).
- The lay faithful, rather, for John Paul II, "are *called* by God so that they, *led by the spirit of the Gospel*, might contribute to the sanctification of the world, as from within like leaven, by fulfilling their own particular duties. Thus, especially in this way of life, resplendent in faith, hope and charity they manifest Christ to others."
- "Thus for the lay faithful, to be present and active in the world is not only an anthropological and sociological reality, but in a specific way, *a theological and ecclesiological reality as well*."
- "In their situation in the world, God manifests his plan and communicates to them their particular vocation of *seeking the Kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God*."



The Secular Character of the Lay Vocation and Mission

- John Paul II: “The lay faithful's *position in the Church*, then, comes to be fundamentally defined by their *newness in Christian life (vine and branches)* and is distinguished by their *secular character*.”
- The *secular character* refers to their *participation in the work of creation*, to free it from the influence of sin and sanctify themselves in it as salt, light and leaven.
- St. Paul VI: The laity's “own field of evangelizing activity is the vast and complicated world of politics, society and economics, as well as the world of culture, of the sciences and the arts, of international life, of the mass media. It also includes ... human love, the family, the education of children and adolescents, professional work, and suffering.
- “The more Gospel-inspired lay people there are engaged in these realities, clearly involved in them, competent to promote them and conscious that they must exercise to the full their Christian powers which are often repressed and buried, the more these realities will be at the service of the Kingdom of God and therefore at the service of salvation in Jesus Christ, without in any way losing or sacrificing their human content but rather pointing to a transcendent dimension that is often disregarded.”



The Secular Character of the Lay Vocation and Mission

- The opposite of secularity is clericalism.
- The temptation for lay people is sometimes to focus too much on the inside of the Church rather than on being salt of the *earth* and light of the *world*.
- Pope Francis has spoken out many times about the problems with an “inward looking Church, which doesn’t look sufficiently to Christ and doesn’t reflect him, his light and his love to those walking in darkness, [and which] quickly succumbs to what he called the worst evil of all, a ‘spiritual worldliness ... living in itself, of itself, for itself.’”
- In a 2011 interview, the future Pope said, “We priests tend to clericalize the laity. We do not realize it, but it is as if we infect them with our own disease. And the laity – not all, but many – ask us on their knees to clericalize them, because it is more comfortable to be an altar server than the protagonist of a lay path. We cannot fall into that trap – it is a sinful complicity.”

The Vocation to Holiness



- St. John Paul II: “We come to a full sense of the dignity of the lay faithful if we consider *the prime and fundamental vocation* that the Father assigns to each of them in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit: *the vocation to holiness*, that is, the *perfection of charity*. Holiness is the greatest testimony of the dignity conferred on a disciple of Christ.
- “It is possible to say that this call to holiness is precisely the basic charge entrusted to all the sons and daughters of the Church. This charge is not a simple moral exhortation, but an *undeniable requirement arising from the mystery of the Church: she is the choice vine*, whose branches live and grow with the same holy and life-giving energies that come from Christ; she is the Mystical Body, whose members share in the same life of holiness of the Head who is Christ; she is the Beloved Spouse of the Lord Jesus, who delivered himself up for her sanctification (cf. *Eph 5:25 ff.*).

The Vocation to Holiness

- “The vocation of the lay faithful to holiness implies that life according to the Spirit *expresses itself in a particular way in their involvement in temporal affairs and in their participation in earthly activities.*
- “Neither family concerns nor other secular affairs should be excluded from their religious program of life.
- “The vocation to holiness is *intimately connected to mission* and to the responsibility entrusted to the lay faithful in the Church and in the world.
- “*Holiness, then, must be called a fundamental presupposition and an irreplaceable condition for everyone* in fulfilling the mission of salvation within the Church. The Church's holiness is the hidden source and the infallible measure of the works of the apostolate and of the missionary effort.”



The Vocation to Holiness



- St. John Paul II in *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (2001):
 - “I have no hesitation in saying that all pastoral initiatives must be set in relation to *holiness*.”
 - “It is necessary to rediscover the full practical significance of ... the ‘universal call to holiness,’ not just to embellish ecclesiology with a kind of spiritual veneer, but to make the call to holiness an intrinsic and essential aspect of [the] teaching on the Church.”
 - “The gift in turn becomes a task, which must shape the whole of Christian life: ‘This is the will of God, your sanctification’ (1 Th 4:3). It is a duty that concerns not only certain Christians: “All the Christian faithful, of whatever state or rank, are called to the fullness of the Christian life and to the perfection of charity.”
 - “To place pastoral planning under the heading of holiness is a choice filled with consequences....

The Vocation to Holiness

- “It implies the conviction that ... it would be a contradiction to settle for a life of mediocrity, marked by a minimalist ethic and a shallow religiosity.”
- “To ask catechumens: ‘Do you wish to receive Baptism?’ means at the same time to ask them: ‘Do you wish to become holy?’ It means to set before them the radical nature of the Sermon on the Mount: ‘Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect’ (Mt 5:48).”
- “This ideal of perfection must not be misunderstood as if it involved some kind of extraordinary existence, possible only for a few ‘uncommon heroes’ of holiness. The ways of holiness are many, according to the vocation of each individual.”



The Vocation to Holiness



- “I thank the Lord that in these years he has enabled me to beatify and canonize a large number of Christians, and among them many lay people who attained holiness in the most ordinary circumstances of life.”
- “The time has come to re-propose wholeheartedly to everyone this *high standard of ordinary Christian living*: the whole life of the Christian community and of Christian families must lead in this direction.”
- “It is also clear however that the paths to holiness are personal and call for a genuine *“training in holiness”*, adapted to people's needs. This training must integrate the resources offered to everyone with both the traditional forms of individual and group assistance, as well as the more recent forms of support offered in associations and movements recognized by the Church.”

The Need for Formation

- In preparation for the priesthood, seminaries focus on human formation, spiritual formation, apostolic formation and doctrinal formation. The equivalent is needed in the formation of lay people.
- The Church needs to offer this formation and lay people need to be encouraged to receive it. Spiritual and doctrinal formation (especially Catholic Social Teaching) are particularly important, but specific training in sharing the faith, as well as help with basic human issues are likewise key.
- Formation is geared toward real unity of life, avoiding the the temptation to separate faith and life, and to bring their faith into their family, work and society.





Training as Prophets

- Evangelization
 - The Mission of the 72, not just the 12.
 - Many aren't going to meet Christ through priests and religious because they're not coming to Church, but lay people will meet them at work, at school, in the neighborhoods.
 - Need a coordinated effort.
 - Evangelization doesn't mean "hearing about" Jesus but entering into communion with him.
 - One of the problems today is many have been catechized but not evangelized.
 - Evangelization must be done with joy, because we're passing on a treasure.



Training as Prophets

- Catholic Schools
 - Greatest opportunity we have to form.
 - They need a lot of involvement.
 - In most places in the US, they do not have the financial support of the State and so it requires greater sacrifices from Catholics.
 - Need to ensure they share the *faith* so that Catholics are encouraged to become saints and non-Catholics served to see the best of Catholicism.
 - Catholic values aren't enough. We need to transmit Jesus, prayer, the saints, the sacraments because Christianity is not an ethical system but a love life, a communion with God and others.
- We could say the same things for Catholic universities.

A close-up photograph of a woman with light brown hair, wearing a white sweater, holding a baby. The woman is looking down at the baby with a gentle expression. The baby has light skin and blue eyes, looking directly at the camera. The background is softly blurred, suggesting an indoor setting with natural light.


Training as Prophets

- Families
 - Lay people evangelize those within the family
 - Families evangelizing other families.
 - There is the need for work in marriage preparation, and in caring for young couples, buttressing them through challenges and hardships.
 - The lay faithful have the duty to make families aware of their identity as the primary social nucleus, and its basic role in society, so that it might itself become always a more *active and responsible place* for proper growth and proper participation in social life.
 - In such a way the family can and must require from all, beginning with public authority, the respect for those rights that in saving the family, will save society itself.



Training as Prophets

- Medicine, Scientific Research and Bioethics
 - Form to be Good Samaritans, to care for the sick and suffering, especially the elderly.
 - To respect the right to life and freedom of conscience.
 - Motivated by love and not simply by economics
- Economic fields
 - Placing the person in the center.
 - Fostering decent jobs, hard work and co-responsibility.
 - Helping the unemployed.
 - New forms of entrepreneurship.
 - Technology exchange and sharing.
 - Financing and micro-financing.
- Social and Cultural Fields
 - Evangelizing culture, specially youth
 - Good movies, good books, health, wholesome things to do.



Training in the Common Priesthood

- Prayer
 - Taking a more active role.
 - Teaching others to pray.
 - Praying for and with others.
- Living a sacramental life.
 - Living the consequences of baptism. Cooperating with the Holy Spirit received in Confirmation.
 - Receiving the Holy Eucharist.
 - Confession regularly.
 - Living out the Sacrament of Matrimony or Holy Orders.
 - Offering up one's work, one's hardship. Plan of Life book is a means to try to help people lead how to achieve this unity of life.
 - Helping others to give their *logike latreia* (Rom 12:1)

Training in the Common Priesthood

- Obviously clergy have the leading role in celebrating the sacraments, but the role of the laity is key.
 - Bringing people to be baptized, preparing them, helping them to live their promises as parents, sponsors, RCIA.
 - Helping people live by the Holy Spirit.
 - Showing a true Eucharistic hunger. Inviting people to come.
 - Bringing friends to Confession. Helping them to prepare.
 - Creating a marriage friendly culture and strong marriages.
 - Having future priests. Showing them the priority of loving God with all we have.
 - Care for the dying. Making sure they call a priest and are prepared.





Training in Self-Mastery and Shepherding

- Personal Life
 - Learning how to enter fully into Christ's kingdom and helping others to do so.
 - Living a truly ordered life with self-mastery, a gift of the Holy Spirit.
 - Fighting against the three-fold concupiscence.

- Family Life
 - For parents, seeing yourself as stewards of Christ with regard to your family.
 - Helping them into the kingdom more fully.
 - True responsibility and reverence.
 - Seeking true co-responsibility through freedom and participation.



Training in Self-Mastery and Shepherding

- Charity
 - *Diakonia* of early Church. Can't remain spontaneous.
 - We take care of others, like Good Shepherds, after wounded or lost sheep.

- Political Arena
 - Seek the common good.
 - Bring the values of God's kingdom into public discourse as active citizens.
 - Promote the dignity of the person in all of the ways it is threatened. Respect the right to life. Abortion, Euthanasia. Care for the poor, for migrants, for the marginalized and persecuted. Defend the family.
 - Adequate anthropology.
 - Religious freedom and freedom of conscience.
 - Vote consistent with the faith and help others to learn to do so.

Prayer to Our Lady



O Most Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Christ and Mother of the Church, with joy and wonder we seek to make our own your Magnificat, joining you in your hymn of thankfulness and love. With you we give thanks to God, "whose mercy is from generation to generation," for the exalted vocation and the many forms of mission entrusted to the lay faithful.

God has called each of them by name to live his own communion of love and holiness and to be one in the great family of God's children. He has sent them forth to shine with the light of Christ and to communicate the fire of the Spirit in every part of society through their life inspired by the gospel.

O Virgin of the Magnificat, fill their hearts with a gratitude and enthusiasm for this vocation and mission. With humility and magnanimity you were the "handmaid of the Lord"; give us your unreserved willingness for service to God and the salvation of the world. Open our hearts to the great anticipation of the Kingdom of God and of the proclamation of the Gospel to the whole of creation. Your mother's heart is ever mindful of the many dangers and evils which threaten to overpower men and women in our time.

Prayer to Our Lady



At the same time your heart also takes notice of the many initiatives undertaken for good, the great yearning for values, and the progress achieved in bringing forth the abundant fruits of salvation.

Virgin full of courage, may your spiritual strength and trust in God inspire us, so that we might know how to overcome all the obstacles that we encounter in accomplishing our mission. Teach us to treat the affairs of the world with a real sense of Christian responsibility and a joyful hope of the coming of God's Kingdom, and of a "new heaven and a new earth."

You who were gathered in prayer with the Apostles in the Cenacle, awaiting the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost, implore his renewed outpouring on all the faithful, men and women alike, so that they might more fully respond to their vocation and mission, as branches engrafted to the true vine, called to bear much fruit for the life of the world.

O Virgin Mother, guide and sustain us so that we might always live as true sons and daughters of the Church of your Son. Enable us to do our part in helping to establish on earth the civilization of truth and love, as God wills it, for his glory. Amen

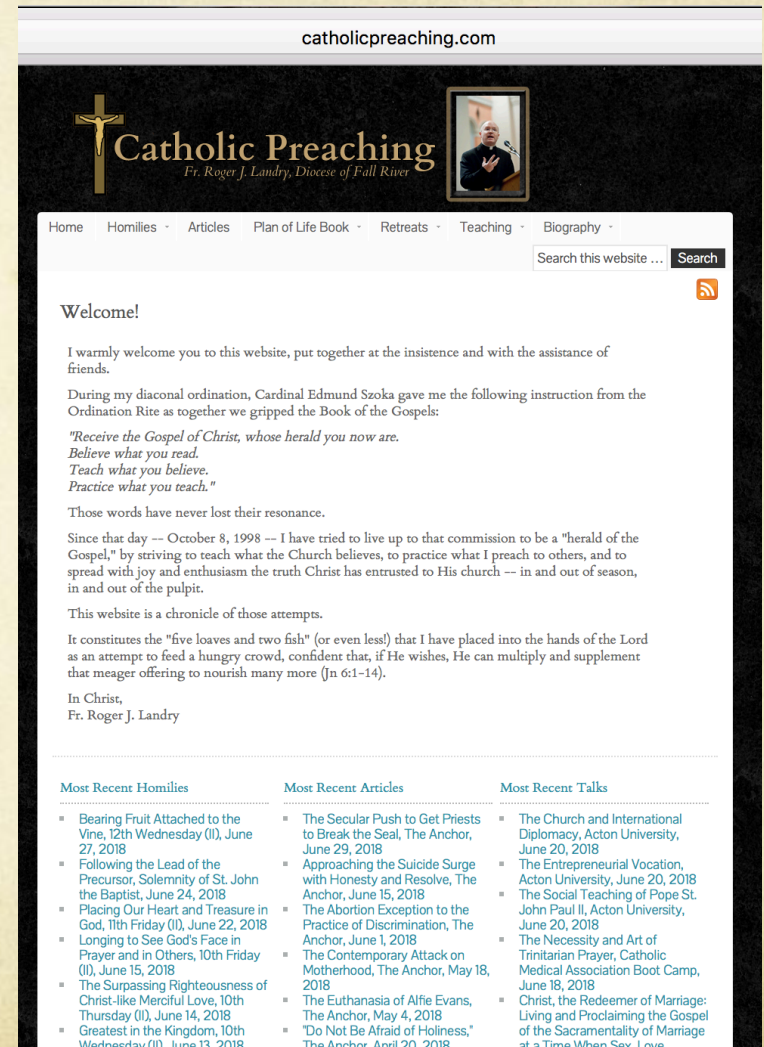
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The screenshot shows the homepage of the website [catholicpreaching.com](http://www.catholicpreaching.com). The header features the site's name and a navigation menu with links for Home, Homilies, Articles, Plan of Life Book, Retreats, Teaching, and Biography. A search bar is located in the top right corner. The main content area begins with a "Welcome!" message from Fr. Roger J. Landry, followed by a paragraph of text and a quote from Cardinal Edmund Szoka. Below this, there are three columns of "Most Recent" content: Homilies, Articles, and Talks, each with a list of recent posts and their dates.

catholicpreaching.com

Catholic Preaching
Fr. Roger J. Landry, Diocese of Fall River

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Search this website ... Search

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

Most Recent Homilies

- Bearing Fruit Attached to the Vine, 12th Wednesday (II), June 27, 2018
- Following the Lead of the Precursor, Solemnity of St. John the Baptist, June 24, 2018
- Placing Our Heart and Treasure in God, 11th Friday (II), June 22, 2018
- Longing to See God's Face in Prayer and in Others, 10th Friday (II), June 15, 2018
- The Surpassing Righteousness of Christ-like Merciful Love, 10th Thursday (II), June 14, 2018
- Greatest in the Kingdom, 10th Wednesday (II), June 13, 2018

Most Recent Articles

- The Secular Push to Get Priests to Break the Seal, The Anchor, June 29, 2018
- Approaching the Suicide Surge with Honesty and Resolve, The Anchor, June 15, 2018
- The Abortion Exception to the Practice of Discrimination, The Anchor, June 1, 2018
- The Contemporary Attack on Motherhood, The Anchor, May 18, 2018
- The Euthanasia of Alfie Evans, The Anchor, May 4, 2018
- "Do Not Be Afraid of Holiness," The Anchor, April 20, 2018

Most Recent Talks

- The Church and International Diplomacy, Acton University, June 20, 2018
- The Entrepreneurial Vocation, Acton University, June 20, 2018
- The Social Teaching of Pope St. John Paul II, Acton University, June 20, 2018
- The Necessity and Art of Trinitarian Prayer, Catholic Medical Association Boot Camp, June 18, 2018
- Christ, the Redeemer of Marriage: Living and Proclaiming the Gospel of the Sacramentality of Marriage at a Time When Sex Love,

Salt, Light and Leaven:

The Vocation and Mission of the Laity in the Church and the World



Questions and Comments