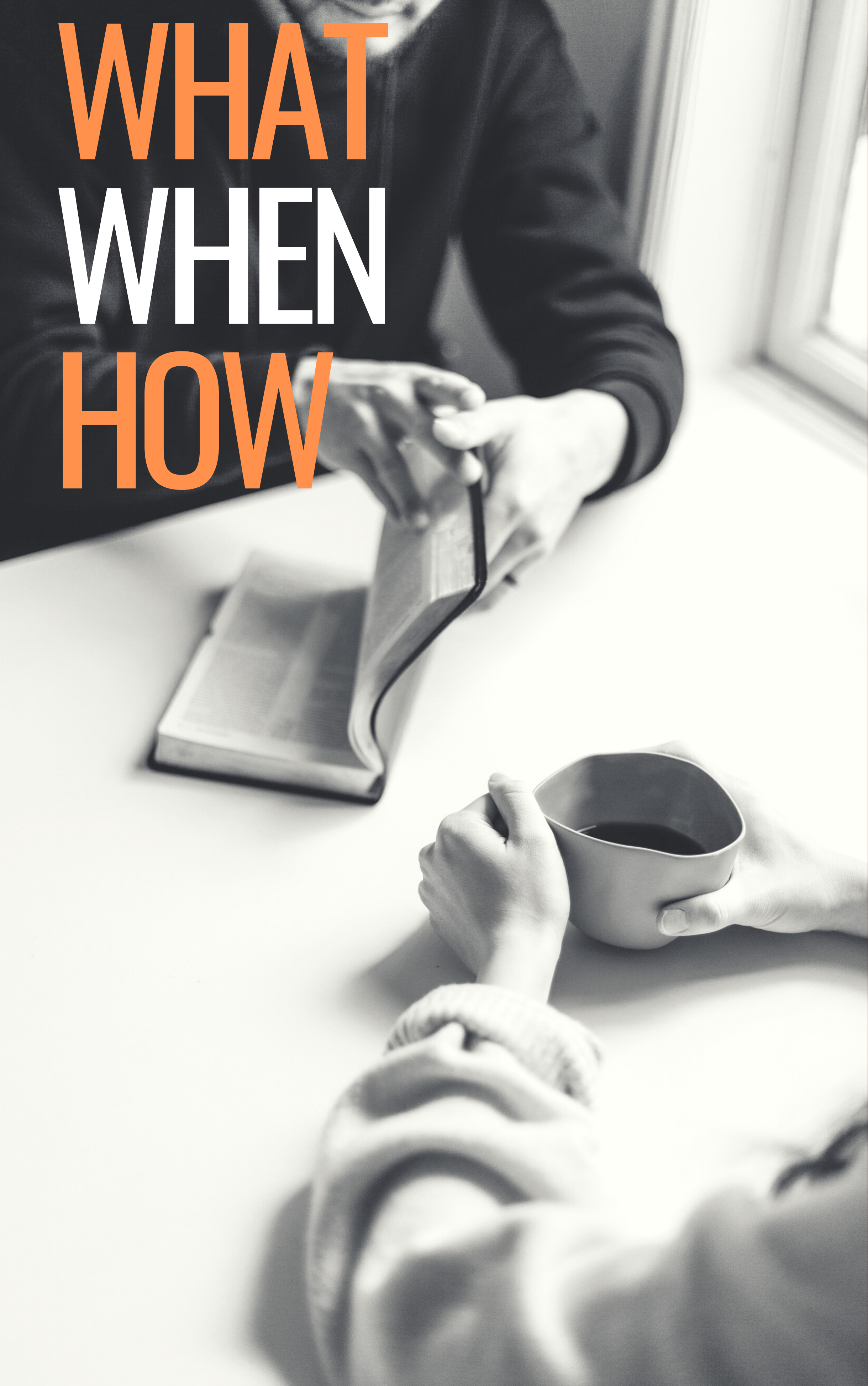


WHY

WHAT

WHEN

HOW



O F E V A N G E L I S A T I O N

CONTENTS

2

WHEN LOVE IS THE REASON
TO EVANGELISE

4

WHAT IS EVANGELISATION?

6

THE RIGHT TIME TO
EVANGELISE

8

HOW TO EVANGELISE?
GO FISH-ING!

WHEN LOVE IS THE REASON TO EVANGELISE

Cassilda Koh

Whenever the topic of personal evangelisation is brought up, chances are many Catholics would rather shy away. “I don’t know what to say,” “I’m not eloquent,” and “I’m not worthy to tell others about Jesus” are some common reasons given to explain why evangelisation is not their cup of tea.

Recently, a member of my family experienced a whole array of health issues. Just when we thought we had one issue under control, another would crop up with no warning. The weeks became marked by appointments with the GP, mind-numbingly long visits to the polyclinic and even an anxiety-ridden rush to the A&E.

A friend caught wind of our predicament and immediately recommended my family member to see her physician. She helped fix the appointment, met us at the clinic, and even stayed throughout the visit. Thankfully we found the answers we needed through this physician.

I went home that night and shared with another friend about my experience with this doctor. Interestingly, she told that she had been in pain and had not been able to get any help. As I listened to her, I found myself enthusiastically encouraging her with much passion and gusto to procrastinate no further. Convinced, she went to see this physician the next day.

Truth be told, on looking back, I was slightly embarrassed by my own lack of inhibition when announcing this “treasure” I had found. This did not seem like me. Of all the careers in this world, marketing and sales would be the death of me. So what had emboldened me to respond in this way?



In a single word: Love.

Love was what I felt from my friend who knew my distress and did everything in her power to get the help I needed. Love was what I wanted to convey when my friend told me she needed help. When love takes centre stage and becomes the motivation of what we do, we find ourselves taking risks and becoming bold. That is perhaps why scriptures tells us that perfect love drives out fear (1 John 4:18).

In the same way, what if we remember that good ole love is actually at the heart of evangelisation? Perhaps the act of telling others about the good news of Jesus Christ becomes less of a hairy affair or something to drag our feet on.

LOVE FOR GOD

The apostle Paul, sometimes termed the greatest evangelist, told the church in Corinth that it was the love of Christ that fuelled his passion to tell others about Christ (2 Cor 5:14). Coming face-to-face with God's love on the road to Damascus, St Paul became convinced that this saving love is available and must be made known to all.

When we have savoured the all embracing love of Jesus and experienced the joy of new life in him, we cannot help ourselves from pointing others to Jesus and wanting to make him known. We want to tell others about Jesus because like the Psalmist, we too have tasted and seen that the Lord is good (Ps 34:8), and we become utterly convinced there is no greater treasure apart from knowing Christ.

LOVE FOR NEIGHBOUR

At the same time, genuine Christian love cannot simply be limited to our relationship with God. It is also about our love for people. Mission, as Pope Francis describes in *Evangelii Gaudium* (EG 268), is at once a passion for Jesus and a passion for his people. Jesus loved everyone till his dying breath, even those who refused to accept his love. In union with Jesus, we seek what he seeks and we love what he loves (EG 267).

To love is to desire the best for the other. Because we are convinced that a life with Christ is not the same as a life without, we desire that others too will experience the saving power of a friendship with Jesus, even if at that moment they do not recognise their deepest yearnings can only be met in God.

My counselling lecturer in college once said something that has stuck with me – never doubt in the sufficiency of the good news of Jesus for any challenge and circumstance. Ours is a message that cannot disappoint even in the hardest of times and the deepest of sorrows.

JESUS IS OUR GREATEST PHYSICIAN

In this current climate of a global pandemic, where fear, anxiety and despair are ever more present, our greatest act of love and service as a believer is to share with others the good news of hope in Jesus Christ. How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns." (Isaiah 52:7). We are Jesus' hands and feet, and his mouthpiece to the world. Empowered by God's love, now is the time to cast aside all fear and boldly proclaim to all who would listen, the healing love of Jesus Christ, the greatest physician of all.

**THERE
IS NO
GREATER
TREASURE
APART
FROM
KNOWING
CHRIST.**



What is evangelisation?

WHY EVANGELISATION MATTERS TO GOD AND US

Leonard Koh

Evangelisation is admittedly an uncomfortable topic with us Catholics. The word often conjures up memories of our over-zealous Christian friends or perky strangers with bibles on the bus asking ‘are you saved?’ It is something we hear about in church that we are suppose to do but often struggle to find the courage, the confidence or even the motivation to do so. In this article we want to take look at what evangelisation is, how it matters to God and why it should matter to us.

WHAT IS EVANGELISATION?

The word ‘evangelisation’ comes from a greek root *euangelizesthai* that simply means ‘to bring good news.’ This Good News is the message that Jesus has come into the world and by his work on the cross has set us free from sin that separates us from God. Through Jesus we can now have access to a loving relationship with our Heavenly Father both in this life and forever in the next.

Sharing this Good News is not the same as convincing someone that our catholic worldview, our set of convictions and perspectives are right. Rather, the gospel is the gateway by which a person’s worldview is changed. The gospel of God’s unconditional love has the power to change a person’s heart first. It is out of this transformed heart that changes in emotions, behaviours and perspectives follow. Evangelisation is faithfully

sharing the gospel with the people that God has brought into our lives, and trusting God to change hearts.

JOIN THE SEARCH

Once while preaching in a city, Jesus found himself drawing a crowd of irreligious and disreputable people. This roused the chagrin of the religious leaders who complained among themselves about how could Jesus who claimed to be from God possibly associate himself with these sinners. Aware of their grumblings, Jesus told the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin and the prodigal son. In all three parables, his message was the same. Just as every lost item mattered greatly to the one who lost them, every single person matters to God. And like the tenacious woman, shepherd and father in the stories, God too will stop at nothing to search out every single person until they are found and back home.

Thus, evangelisation is about joining God in His all-out search for lost humanity. Like in the TV shows when someone goes missing, we are part of God’s search party sent out into the world. Holding the torchlight of the gospel, we spread out so as to cover every ground in society, calling out for the lost, the messed-up and the broken to come home. Evangelisation should matter to us because people matter to God. And if God matters to us, then what is foremost on God’s heart will also be foremost on ours.

BECOMING FISHERS OF MEN

God's masterplan to search out every lost person has always been to recruit those who have been first found by Him to join in on the mission. So it should not come as a surprise that at the very onset when Jesus called his disciples, he set the agenda of discipleship as becoming 'fishers of men.'

The first followers of Jesus were probably scratching their heads as to what Jesus meant when he told them that "from now on you will catch men." But follow him they did and by the end of the gospel, that was exactly what Peter, James, Andrew and John had become. They took the message Jesus preached and learn how to share it with others within their spheres of influence and according to their own personalities and giftings. Those who heard the message of Jesus from them soon came to their realisation that to follow Jesus also meant becoming a 'fisher of men' themselves. Subsequently they too learnt how to share the good news they have heard to a whole new generation of people in different places, who themselves learnt that to follow was to fish. Fast forward two thousand years later on a tiny island

of Singapore, we hear the good news of Jesus because others have understood that to follow Jesus was join him in His mission to 'seek and save the lost' (Luke 19:10).

In an address to the members of the parish evangelisation cell system in 2019, Pope Francis reminds us, "If we have encountered Christ in our lives, then we cannot keep him only for ourselves. It is crucial that we share this experience with others as well; this is the main road of evangelisation."

THE CALL TO EVANGELISATION

Have we heard the call of Jesus to follow him as a disciple? If we have, then we have also heard the call to become a fisher of men, a participant in God's universal search-party. All of us must do our part to keep our eyes open constantly to whom we can reach out and share the Good News of God's love with. Like the one in the search party who finds the missing person sitting in the dark, and calling out excitedly to the rest, 'I've found him!,' there is no adventure greater and no joy sweeter than being used by God 'to seek and save the lost.'

*"To follow Jesus means to become
a 'Fisher of Men' yourself."*



THE RIGHT TIME TO *Evangelise*

In the past 2 articles, we shared that love (for God, and for His people) is the reason we evangelise, and that evangelisation is joining God's search party and becoming fishers of men. Now comes the question of "when?" When is the right time to evangelise? When do we know that it is the **opportunity for evangelisation**?



Sheila Fong

In a simple way, there is never a right time to evangelise. Neither is there a wrong time. One could say that every time is the time for evangelisation. However, different times call for different ways of evangelisation.

EVANGELISATION AT ALL TIMES

Evangelisation is the proclamation of the Gospel through: 1. living the life of a Baptised and 2. sharing it. It is the action in response to the Love of God, and the preaching to tell others about that Love. These two cannot be done independent of each other, however they may be done at different times.

“

Make every effort to present yourself before God as a proven worker who has no need to be ashamed, but who keeps the message of truth on the straight path.

”

2 Timothy 2:15

Evangelisation in this context will be someone living his life in God's Truth. Someone striving to be holy and to do good. Someone extending love to another, living in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ by healing the sick, giving to the poor, dying to oneself... So when should we do these? **All the time.** Whether someone is there witnessing in person or not, we are asked to be a Christian, to be the light of Christ, every single moment of our lives.

Some years back, I pondered upon the commandment 'love thy neighbour', and I asked my Spiritual Director how can I love someone that I dislike? In my understanding of love then, I couldn't fathom how that was possible. Then came a question to me - If I were to see this person I dislike falling, will I extend help to that person? My answer was simple - yes. In that moment, I realised what it meant to love someone beyond my feelings of like or dislike. I came to a deeper understanding of what evangelisation meant; that in every moment of my life, I seek to love - God, myself and others. In that way, evangelisation should consciously be happening all the time.

PRUDENCE IN EVANGELISATION

When we notice the good someone is doing, we may think to ourselves or tell others about his or her good deeds. "Oh what a nice guy!" Sometimes when someone else thanks us for something, we humbly respond with a "no worries!" or "my pleasure!" So how do our good acts point toward God who is Love? Evangelisation in action is the living of life in response to God's Love, but if we don't tell others that our goodness comes from that Love, we will just be a 'nice guy'. So proclamation of the Gospel should always include speaking about the Gospel... but with prudence.

The aim of evangelisation is not to chalk up the number of people I manage to convert to Catholicism in my life time. (Although our joyful Christian lives should attract people to our faith.) As Pope Francis said in an interview:

“

In evangelisation, the protagonist is God; in proselytism, it is I.

”

When we speak about the the Love of God to someone else (whether Catholic or not), we have to practice prudence - what is my intention? If it is for love for this person (and for God!), is this the right moment? There may be times when it is not the most prudent to quote a Bible verse, but instead allow the Holy Spirit to speak words of comfort or encouragement through you.

In my years as a parish youth coordinator, there were many times I could sense the anguish, hurt, or anger weighing in the heart of an individual. In that precious vulnerable moment when he or she shares with me, I am challenged to know the right way to honour that sharing. When a young person was faced with a sudden death of a loved one, and the anger and sorrow filled her heart, the prudent path was for me to be silent and to hold that space. In that situation, preaching would not have been the best response, but being with her was.

Evangelisation through preaching must be done, but it should be done with discernment and at opportune times.

TIMELESS EVANGELISATION

The Good News is eternal. It is forever new. Every time we turn back to the source of Love, every time we bring that Joy to someone else, it is new. (Evangelii Gaudium 11) So when should we share that Good News? With every breath we take. To live in His light all the time, and to speak about His Love in every opportunity He gives.

SO WHEN SHOULD WE SHARE THAT GOOD NEWS?

WITH EVERY BREATH WE TAKE.





HOW TO EVANGELISE? GO FISH-ING!

Daphne Leong

We often hear our Catholics bemoan that while they are aware of the need to evangelise, there is little clarity on how to go about it. In our previous 3 instalment of this four-part series, we have examined the why, what and when of evangelisation. In this concluding article, we want to look at the 'hows' of sharing one's faith with others.

Generally there are two aspects to evangelisation – witnessing with our lives and proclaiming the Good News.

WITNESSING WITH OUR LIVES

We want the people in our lives to hear the Good News that they are loved and saved by God. Witnessing to this divine offer means living the kind of life that gives others a glimpse into what a relationship with this amazing God looks like.

God's deepest desire is for us to be in perfect union with Him. If we lean into this as our truest purpose and final destination, we would live our lives marching to the beat of a different drum. It affects the way we work, play, make decisions and relate to others- all because our orientation is to do all things pleasing to God. When others see how joyful and loving we are despite life's challenges, they will be curious and are attracted to find out more.

PROCLAIMING THE GOOD NEWS

While it is important to live our faith in an open and consistent manner to the people around us, we must also look out for opportunities to proclaim the Good News in ways our friends can understand and act upon. St. Paul reminds us in Romans 10:14, "How can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone telling them?"

To proclaim the Good News is to speak about the message of Jesus Christ, God who became man in order to reach out and heal us of our sins and brokenness. It is passing on Jesus' message to others that we were made to dwell in God's kingdom and to teach them how to live the Christian life when they are ready to make a decision to follow Christ.

TO PROCLAIM
THE GOOD
NEWS IS TO
SPEAK ABOUT
THE MESSAGE
OF JESUS
CHRIST,
GOD WHO
BECAME MAN
IN ORDER TO
REACH OUT
AND HEAL US
OF OUR SINS
AND
BROKENNESS.

HOW CAN WE WITNESS AND PROCLAIM EFFECTIVELY?

In the gospels, Jesus promised to make his disciples ‘fishers of men.’ As we live out our calling as evangelisers, we would like to propose the acronym F.I.S.H as a simple 4-step way to lead others to faith.

➔ Be a FRIEND to others



When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Give me something to drink.” (Jn 4:7)

Befriending others allow us to truly listen to their joys and pains in life. If we are genuine, it may lead to an open door for us to share about the way our faith in Jesus influences the way we deal with our own joys and challenges. This gives them an opportunity to consider an alternative way of navigating through life.

➔ INITIATE meaningful conversations

He said to them, “What are all these things that you are discussing as you walk along?” (Lk 24:17)



Initiate conversations that lead people to think about the world through the eyes of faith. A good conversation is two-sided and informal; the key to a good conversation is asking good questions. Example of questions that open the door to further spiritual conversations might be along the lines of:
What do you believe about God? Do you ever think about why you do that? How do you find the strength to love your parents/spouse/kids?

Be a good listener and never marginalise their views. Remember that spiritual conversations can lead to spiritual conversions.



SHARE the Good News at every opportunity



Simply proclaim the Lord Christ holy in your hearts, and always have your answer ready for people who ask you the reason for the hope that you have. (1 Pet 3:15)

We share this because of how much God has loved us and we want to love God by loving others. However, we want to be prudent in how we do our sharing. We speak from the position of our own experience and our beliefs, allowing our listeners to ask questions and to decide for themselves.



HELP the other person on the journey



Remember always to welcome strangers, for by doing this, some people have entertained angels without knowing it.’ (Heb 13:2)

After sharing the Good News with others, help them take the next small step. This might mean offering to take them to church, inviting them to your Christian community or helping them sign up for RCIA. If they decide they are not ready to take the next step as yet, continue to journey with them and look for more opportunities to invite them to faith.



Our lives are shaped and informed by our Christian faith and values. It is our mission to live a life that reflects the light of Christ to others. Start by taking an interest in the lives of others, learn to listen, care and serve others especially those who are marginalised.

Then learn to pray for them, entrusting them to God. Remain open and be led by the Holy Spirit. You will live a life of evangelisation - witnessing and proclaiming Jesus to others!

GO, THEREFORE,
MAKE DISCIPLES OF
ALL THE NATIONS;
BAPTISE THEM IN
THE NAME OF THE
FATHER AND OF THE
SON AND OF THE
HOLY SPIRIT, AND
TEACH THEM TO
OBSERVE ALL THE
COMMANDS I GAVE
YOU. AND KNOW
THAT I AM WITH YOU
ALWAYS; YES, TO
THE END OF TIME.

MATTHEW 28: 19-20

