



**St. Mark Coptic Orthodox Church
Heliopolis, Cairo - Egypt**

The Harvest Is Plentiful

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**His Holiness Pope Tawdros the 2nd
Pope of Alexandria
& Patriarch of St. Mark's Diocese**

"Go Therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, [even] to the end of the age"

(Mat 28 : 19 - 20)

Introduction

I never thought of writing a book about Evangelism. I don't consider myself one of the missionaries. I didn't have enough chance to preach nonbelievers or evangelize peoples different from mine. But, at one point, I felt pushed to think of all the peoples who don't know anything about our Lord Jesus Christ. I felt motivated to start focusing on other nations who live thousands of miles away from Egypt and I got very much preoccupied thinking how to serve them and how to reach out to them through charity, compassion, development and preaching.

I suddenly re-discovered a very important fact, namely that Evangelism is indeed a Divine Commandment, which many other servants besides myself never focused upon. It is the will of God "who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1Ti 2 : 4). It is the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts.

Evangelism is a second leg upon which our church stands; the first being the pastoral care of its people.

It is really an amazing experience to work with God, through God, and for the will of God ... for the sake of the salvation of all.

This book is just an attempt to review some of the Biblical background of Evangelism. I hope it can serve as a guide to many servants as they start their journey on the road to evangelizing and/or devoting their lives to our Lord as missionaries.

It is definitely a dream for our beloved Coptic Orthodox Church to preach our Orthodox Faith to the whole world and to realize the wish of our Lord Jesus Christ **"that they all may be one, as You, Father, [are] in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me"** (John 17: 21).

Truly this world is huge. The harvest is indeed plenty, but the number of workers very little. That is why we need to pray as it is written: "therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest" (Luke 10 : 2).

At this point I have to mention that this was one of the dreams of our beloved the late *Pope Shenouda III* who encouraged my humble self as we embarked on this service. His Holiness the late Pope Shenouda III was very glad when I first presented to him the ideas and programs related to the service of Evangelism before his departure to Heaven and blessed every single one of them, encouraging us to keep expanding and praying for this very much needed service.

I should also acknowledge that *his Grace Anba Bahkomios* (may God prolong his life), who is a real father of Evangelism in the Coptic Church of our age, filled my heart and the hearts of many others, with the passion of Evangelism. Bishop

Bakhomious declared on many occasions that he wished he could have spent his whole life as a missionary in Africa.

We, the servants of St. Mark's Church in Heliopolis, are also greatly indebted to *His Grace Metropolitan Antonios Morkos* who opened for us the gates of service in many African countries. We are indeed blessed to be serving under his Grace's supervision and guidance.

My sincere gratitude goes to *the team of servants of Evangelism* with whom I'm serving. They are indeed blessed sons and daughters who have honestly and bravely given their lives to God and to His service.

Special gratitude goes to my dear daughter *Dr. Inas Barsoum* who made her precious touches in reviewing and rephrasing many parts of this book with her rich experience and her spirit of devotion.

Special gratitude also due to my dear daughter *Hala Garas* for the efforts she gave to make this book available between your hands now.

Last but certainly not least, we all realize and feel how much our dear Coptic Orthodox Church has been blessed with our new Patriarch, *his Holiness Pope Tawadros II*. His Holiness is indeed a great support to our Evangelism service. His Holiness blesses our service, empowers our servants with his advice and encourages us consistently in every step we take and every single new mission we embark upon.

May our Lord, the King of Peace, the King of Heaven and the Savior of all, bless this book and make use of its words to guide the way of many servants to look in their hearts to find their call, and to fulfill His wishes for their lives and that of the many peoples of the world who have not yet heard about Him.

Please pray for my humble self and all servants.

F. Daoud Lamei

1

What is Evangelism?

1- Evangelism is a Commandment :

Christ came to earth to preach His kingdom of Heaven. His first message to the people: **"From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand'"** (Mat 4 : 17).

In his first sermon in Galilee, our Lord declared his mission **"The Spirit of the LORD [is] upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to [the] poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to [the] captives And recovery of sight to [the] blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD"** (Lu 4 : 18 – 19).

So we may consider our Lord Jesus Christ himself as the first Evangelist and the best Evangelist in the New Testament.

Christ devoted a lot of time to His disciples teaching & mentoring and eventually commanded them to go out to evangelize ...

"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mar 16 : 15).

In His last prayer before His Crucifixion, He prayed ...

"As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world" (Joh17 : 18).

Simply put, Evangelism is a commandment in the New Testament; all Christians should practice evangelism; all of us are called upon to be His witnesses ...

1-What is Evangelism?

"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden" (Mat 5 : 14)

"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men"(Mat 5 : 13)

"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Act 1 : 8)

2- Evangelism is Love:

If you love all the people of the world as God does, you can't do anything else but be an Evangelist. Missionary work is an expression of love to human beings. It is the same love given by God to us and to all.

Love is the first fruit of the Holy Spirit:

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness" (Gal 5 : 22).

"The love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us" (Rom 5 : 5).

If we truly love our Neighbors as we love ourselves, we should care about their salvation. We can't leave them in the darkness of ignorance, away from our Lord Jesus Christ. We should do all we can to rescue them from the valley of the shadow of death.

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There is certainly a great need to prepare specific servants to be totally devoted to the service of Evangelism. But the idea is that anyone who loves God from all his heart and loves others will unintentionally preach His name.

Christian love is the great motive, content and goal of Evangelism. We preach non-believers because we love them. We preach them because we want to tell them how much our Lord God loves them. Finally, we preach them in order to give them a chance to enjoy the Love of our Lord ...

"Love suffers long [and] is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth" (1Co 13 : 4 – 6)

3- Evangelism is the Mission of the Church:

Let us review the work of the Church as it is stated in the Book of Acts:

"The Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved" (Act 2 : 47)

"Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word" (Act 8 : 4)

"Now when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them, and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles" (Act 14 : 27)

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Our church can be thought of as relying on two main legs:

1. Pastoral Care
2. Missionary Care

We all know the pastoral care of the church, care and encouragement for the whole congregation to come to the church to enjoy the Holy Sacraments, to help them to grow in spirit, trying to solve their problems. The Church cares for the poor & needy, teaching the word of God through Sunday school, youth meetings, and all its meetings and services.

But, the work of the Church should also include reaching out to the nonbelievers helping them to see the Truth. The Church should be working hard to deliver the calling of God to all people outside the faith to believe in Him. The Church has a mission of enlightenment to the whole world with the light of God and His salvation ...

"... and to make all see what [is] the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ"
(Eph 3 : 9)

Evangelism can, therefore, be compared to one of the two legs of the church; Pastoral Care is one leg and Evangelism is the other. The church cannot walk steadily if it relies on one leg only. Both legs work together, not competing but complementing one another.

1-What is Evangelism?

Our Lord, the Head of the church, said **"And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock [and] one shepherd"** (Joh 10 : 16). The Evangelistic church should work hard to bring the "other sheep" who are far away, while the pastoral service should keep working on caring about the "sheep" who already belong to it. The final goal, according to our Lord Jesus Christ, is that "there will be one flock" – whether those who are currently members of the Church or those who are far away and who need someone to bring them to **"the one Shepherd"**.

4- Evangelism is the Outcome of the New Life:

We were born again through the Sacrament of Baptism to be God's children. We were granted the Holy Spirit to enjoy the New Life – the life of Christ inside each one of us ...

"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the [life] which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal 2 : 20).

This New Life, which starts here and extends to the Eternal Life, is the Life of Freedom – freedom out of the prison of one's self (Ego). It is life that we live not for our own selves but for "others". This is the sign of being a Real Christian at heart ...

"Then He said to [them] all, If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (Luk 9 : 23).

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Accordingly, we can conclude that this New Life is all about Evangelism, because the work of Evangelism is totally for the sake of the people whom you are going to serve. There is not a single personal benefit out of this new life style.

I may even go as far as to assure you that the work of Evangelism often brings about a lot of trials, labor, hardships, challenges, cost and threats. It is indeed a life similar to that of our Lord's – the life of Christ's Sufferings and Crucifixion. But it is also that of His Victory and Resurrection for the sake of the whole world.

So if we claims that we wish to be living IN and FOR Christ, guided by His Holy Spirit, that necessarily means that we ought to be committed to living the life of an Evangelist, who carry the Good News along with us to anyone and everyone all the time, and everywhere.

5- Evangelism is the Greatest Mission:

Architects construct buildings for people to enjoy living in. Computer programmers develop programs allowing people to enjoy better communication and facilitate knowledge acquisition. Physicians do all what they can to save human lives and/or to help regain health. Legal attorneys or judges try to bring about justice. Artists try to bring about happiness and joy to people through their art.

On the other hand, an Evangelists' work is to ensure Eternal Life for those who accept the Word of God and who believe in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

1-What is Evangelism?

Evangelists don't just extend human beings' lives a few years on earth; rather, they guarantee unlimited numbers of years, or rather an Eternal number of years in Heaven.

Evangelists don't open the eyes of the blind to enjoy seeing things for some time; rather, they open the eyes of all to see Eternal Truth and enjoy the afterlife.

Evangelists don't solve the temporary earthly problems; (actually they may add some problems to those who start believing in Christ and follow His teachings); rather, they solve the most serious and complicated problems, i.e. eternal death, corruption, and Evil.

Evangelists don't sow on earth to see green farms and fruitful trees; rather, they sow the Word of God to get Fruits of Salvation in thousands and millions, and also Fruits of the Spirit: a better life full of Love, Joy, Peace and Eternal Life ... It looks, therefore, that it is much better to be an Evangelist rather than any other job that aims at making human life better.

True Story

"God's Plan for Church seeding"

One day, while the kids' camp was held on in our Church in a big city in Africa, a car broke down in front the Church. Our residents there came out to provide help. The owner of the car was a lady called "Joyce". They helped her repair her car and welcomed her into the church.

It turned out to be that Joyce knew nothing about the Coptic Church; so she began to ask a lot of questions like: "What is this place? What are these activities? Where are you from? What are you doing here?"

Our residents took care of her, started telling her all about the Orthodox faith, and gave her books to read. Joyce got so much interested in the Coptic Orthodox Church that she ended up being baptized by one of our fathers who came on a visit to our church.

"Mary Joyce" (this is her name after being baptized), now lives in a small village called "Oshieyeh" which is a small village on the ocean shore.

After being baptized, "Mary Joyce" acted like the Samaritan Woman. She wanted all the people in her village to know about the Orthodox faith and to be baptized. So she decided to open her house for our residents to gather the

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people of the village and to host a regular Bible study, teaching them about the Orthodox faith.

We need to mention that because of this woman, the servants there were able to start their first youth meeting, by her help. They had been trying for a long time but didn't succeed until this woman came and realized their dream by God's Grace.

Currently, there is a weekly meeting for youth and for kids. Many people are being baptized and we are now praying to purchase a piece of land in this village so that we have, by God's Grace, the first Coptic Orthodox Church in "Oshieyeh" in the near future.

So, because of a car which broke down, and because of our residents who were there and ready to offer help, God opened a door for "Oshieyeh" people to know Him and to be members of our Orthodox Church.

Our Lord has a great plan for His people everywhere.

Remember ...

Evangelism is ...

- 1- Evangelism is a commandment.
- 2- Evangelism is love.
- 3- Evangelism is the mission of the church.
- 4- Evangelism is the outcome of the new life.
- 5- Evangelism is the greatest mission.

Prayer

Dear Lord,

I don't deserve to be Your son ...

You gave me everything ...

You showed me Your way ...

I was born in Grace ...

I was given Your spirit freely ...

Your church is my home ...

Your angels are my guardians ...

You also promised me Your Eternal Life ...

You are waiting for me to share Your dream for the salvation of all ...

You promised to give me the power, the wisdom, and all what I may need in preaching Your love and Your word ...

But I feel too weak to start this service ... too little to carry this responsibility ... too ignorant to give Your knowledge to others ...

Please accept my weakness ... and help me to start living the life of a real missionary ... so that I can please Your heart with the salvation of my own self and that of others ...

Amen.

2

**Who is the
Evangelist?**

2- Who is the Evangelist?

Simply put, the Evangelist is the man of God, the son of God, the image of God & the friend of God.

The Evangelist is a "love figure"!

Because he is the "image of God", he has to be like God. And since "**God is love**" (1Jo 4 : 8), the Evangelist also speaks love, moves love, thinks love, feels love, and aims love. The Evangelist is "a figure full of love".

The Evangelist is a person who is full of God's Love. His love to God is enormous. He loves talking to God and listening to Him. He loves talking about God with anyone and everyone.

The Evangelist is a person who is able to see clearly the truth of the corrupt world as opposed to the Truth of the Heavenly Eternal Life that awaits those who are saved.

The Evangelist is a person who could clearly see the continuous conflict between Evil & Good as they continuously fight to pull people to their sides. The Evangelist is always on the side of Good

"For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to [give] the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ"
(2Co 4 : 6)

2- Who is the Evangelist?

The Evangelist is a person who always rejoices at the Good News. He is like a news broadcaster, but his source is God's News: always New, always Joyful and always full of Hope.

"as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and [yet] possessing all things" (2Co 6 : 10)

The Evangelist is a person who, in devotion to the mission, forgets everything personal, forgets all about friends, career, personal dreams, belongings – even forgets himself. The Evangelist forgets everything because his one and only concern is the salvation of people.

"If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple" (Luk 14 : 26).

The Evangelist is a person who is ready to do anything for anyone at any time just for the sake of getting others to know our Lord Jesus Christ – the Incarnated God and Savior – and to accept His Word and Salvation.

"... to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all [men,] that I might by all means save some" (1Co 9 : 22)

"For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake" (2Co 4 : 5)

2- Who is the Evangelist?

Let us simplify the definition of who the Evangelist is through examples given in the Holy Bible.

1- The Evangelist is a Fisherman:

"Then Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men" (Mar 1 : 17)

The Evangelist is a good fisherman who fishes for men using the net of the Bible, guiding them to the boat of the Church till he reaches with them to the shore of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Just like the fisherman should have patience, the Evangelist should be patient in fishing for men. The fisherman may need to work at night, so does the Evangelist. Sometimes, the fisherman may need to exert a lot of effort to keep his net tight (word of God) and to carry the fish to the boat (church) and then to the shore (Heaven); so does the Evangelist.

Being a good fisherman necessitates being skilled in team/group work in order to gain the best catch and to be ready sometimes for the high waves and the strong winds.

"So they signaled to [their] partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink" (Luk 5 : 7)

So does the Evangelist who should be able to work collaboratively with other servants in order to be blessed by our Lord in their service of fishing for men. Team and group work will also grant Evangelists more support in facing the many

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troubles/hardships (storms) that they may come across during their service

In order to ensure that you get a good catch, you should remember that Christ has to be with you in the boat. Remember that the first catch for St. Peter (Luke 5) was guided totally by Christ Himself.

It is said that there are different methods of fishing: those used in salty water could be different from those used in rivers or lakes; likewise, the good Evangelist should know how to use different ways to catch different people who belong to different cultures and backgrounds.

2- The Evangelist is a Sower:

Being Christ-like, the Evangelist should know how to sow lands. As stated in the parable of the sower (Math 13), seeds may be sown all over, but Evangelists should remember that not all lands are expected to bring about the same fruit/outcome.

Being a good farmer, the Evangelist should make the best use of the seeds (the Word of God) he has. Also, he should know how to water the land and follow up the plants. He should be able to notice who is receiving the word of God in a superficial way **"And as he sowed, some [seed] fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them"** (Mat 13 : 4). The Evangelist should be able to distinguish those who have rocks in their hearts and resist real change even if they respond joyfully at the beginning.

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The Evangelist should be able to recognize the ones who appear to be readily receiving the word of God and are willing to be transformed; yet, their enthusiasm may soon fade or die away because of their busy life/ worries/ desires/ lusts, like the land with the thorns.

Good farmers/Evangelists know how much patience endurance, and care should be given to the land (people) in order to see the fruits;

"But the ones [that] fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep [it] and bear fruit with patience" (Luk 8 : 15).

Finally, good farmers/Evangelists should also work as good reapers

"They went on and wept as they were carrying their seeds; but they shall surely come with exultation, carrying their sheaves" (Psa 125).

There is a huge farm to be sowed; the harvest is enormous but the workers (the harvesters) are few, we need always to ask God to send more workers to the harvest.

3- The Evangelist is a Healer:

Christ was, is and will always remain the Perfect Healer for the sick humanity. He came to heal all sicknesses but most importantly the disease of Corruption, Evil and Eternal death.

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"When Jesus heard [it,] He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call [the] righteous, but sinners, to repentance" (Mar 2 : 17).

So the Evangelist is like a physician who should learn how to diagnose sickness and how to treat all diseases. Like a skilled physician, the Evangelist should be able to cure spiritual illnesses and relieve people from their pains, like the Good Samaritan.

"So he went to [him] and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him" (Luk 10 : 34).

All people are sick because their human nature has become corrupt as a result of sin; no one – not any single human being – is spiritually healthy. All are sick! All are dead!

Those who laugh continuously ... those whose sole aim and concern is money ... those who continuously judge others... those who say we need nothing ... All those are in reality quite sick!

Physicians should be wise enough to convince their patients to take the adequate medicine that will cause them to be cured. Evangelists (like skilled physicians), should work as hard as they can to convince sick human beings to take the most appropriate medicine (the Word of God) for their sick souls. The Evangelist pharmacy always contains Love, Faith, Hope and Repentance. And the Perfect Remedy for all the diseases of the human spirit is "the Holy Sacraments".

2- Who is the Evangelist?

Evangelists don't necessarily talk; but they love, share and bear the burdens of others. Evangelists imitate the Great Physician – our Lord Jesus Christ – who tasted the death of human beings in order to give them His Eternal Life. That is why a true Evangelist is ready to give away everything, even his own life, for the sake of his mission of the salvation of souls **"Surely He has borne our grieves And carried our sorrows"** (Isa 53 : 4).

4- The Evangelist is a Soldier:

"You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2Ti 2 : 3)

"No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of [this] life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier" (2Ti 2 : 4)

The world is a big field of war where the devil aims at winning all souls to hell; while our Lord Jesus Christ's main aim is for all human beings to be saved and to gain Eternal Life **"... who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth"** (1 Tim 2 : 4).

Evangelists, are Christ's warriors – soldiers in His army, fighting His battle and are ready to die to realize His Holy Aim of the Salvation of All.

And since Evangelists are soldiers, they need to train to be more and more disciplined and committed. Soldiers obey orders whatever it costs them. Likewise, evangelists need to submit to the Word of God and the church teachings. Evangelists need to love everybody, even those who may be considered in one way

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or the other “enemies”. As soldiers in the Lord’s army, evangelists need to pray much more and to care a lot less for worldly concerns and desires.

Soldiers/Evangelists are courageous and fearless – ready to witness any time and everywhere, and are always ready to follow their Great Officer and Leader, our Lord Jesus Christ, all the way up to the Cross

"... casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled"
(2Co 10 : 5 - 6).

5- The Evangelist is a Teacher:

One of the commonest names given to our Lord during His service on earth is “The Good Teacher”. He was and will always remain to be **the Best Teacher** ever. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the One and Only Perfect Teacher because He is not only man; He is God.

During His life on earth, our Lord Jesus Christ served as a Teacher. He revealed the Truth. His teaching was not the usual kind of teaching because it was not just “words of men”

"And they were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (Mar 1 : 22)

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His followers/disciples – the first Evangelists – appear as mini teachers of Truth. We, as Evangelists, have one aim: namely, to let all people on Earth know the truth. This Truth is Christ Himself. The Truth is Christ's Salvation as a message proclaimed to all. We, as teachers, should deliver the message as accurately we received it ...

"You say [rightly] that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice" (Joh 18 : 37)

That's why our Lord ended His mission on Earth commanding His disciples ...

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Mat 28 : 19)

Good teachers should care, not only about the good students, but also about the lazy, the slow-minded, and the resistant ones. In our service, we care for all: the good and the bad. We give time, effort, care and understanding to all, in order to help people understand and live the Truth.

The Truth we proclaim is not only some information to be delivered; rather, it is a complete life to be lived. It is never a set of theoretical dogmas, but experiential facts. God is not an idea to be understood. He is a Real Being; Christ is a Person to be loved.

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Teachers should always put themselves forward as role models for their students. Being role models is a huge responsibility that evangelists need to be alert to. Simply put, no servant or evangelist can be a role model if he does not stick to the main Role Model for all humanity – our Lord Jesus Christ – following His example closely and making sure that they are struggling to reach and reflect His image to all. This cannot be realized unless through developing a close relationship with Him through His Word and the Holy Sacraments.

Teachers should master the material they are teaching very well. They should be in full control of the subject they are teaching and should be able to deliver it in the simplest and best way possible. Again, the role model here is our Lord Jesus Christ who used to explain things using parables from real life to the people. Actually, we find that our Lord uses images that are close to the culture and environment of the people He is talking to: images relating to farming while talking to peasants; images related to fishing while addressing fishermen, etc ... Teachers should be capable of encouraging their students to reach their best. Our Lord Jesus was encouraging the sinners finding something good in each of them: He praised the honesty of the Samaritan woman.

6- The Evangelist is Parent:

The Church is the elder mother who nurtures all her kids. Through her servants who have tender hearts like those of a mother and firm minds like those of a father, our Church offers her members the best "Family of God".

St. Paul, the great Evangelist and the role model (after our Lord Christ of course) of most of the Evangelists, described himself as a mother ...

"I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able [to receive it,] and even now you are still not able" (1Co 3 : 2)

And ...

"But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing [mother] cherishes her own children" (1Th 2 : 7)

and also as a father saying ...

"as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father [does] his own children" (1Th 2 : 11)

"For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet [you do] not [have] many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel" (1Co 4 : 15).

St. Paul compared the spiritual birth and growth of the new believers to the pains of labor ...

"My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you" (Gal 4 : 19)

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St. Peter used a similar analogy saying:

"... as newborn babies, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby" (1Pe 2 : 2)

So the true Evangelist should have a heart similar to that of his Lord – a heart of a “parent” – nursing his children in God: lovingly, patiently and honestly.

Anyone who is to be born in Christ will first need this fatherly guidance as a catechumen, till he reaches the gift of Baptism. He will then need guidance to grow in the Spirit and to be a good Christian. Later on he will need a different kind of guidance with the same spiritual parenthood in order to become a good servant or a good Evangelist and finally to become a real saint who lives every minute of his life realizing the will of God.

Good fathers & mothers never lose hope in their children. They endure lots of pain and suffering for their kids’ sake.

"And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls"
(2Co 12 : 15)

Evangelists should also keep praying incessantly for the people they are serving so that the Grace of our Lord leads them to Truth even if they appear to be stubborn and resistant.

7- The Evangelist is a Builder:

Building the Kingdom of Heaven begins with building the Church members. This starts by each member being accepted as a new believer and member in the body of Christ, and

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considered to be a stone in the big building of the Kingdom of God. This is why Evangelists are considered builders:

"According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it"
(1Co 3 : 10)

Good builders check the soil, create the design, develop a good team of builders and work hard in a very organized way to make of this design a reality.

Good Evangelists check the heart of everyone coming to the truth – not in a judgmental way – but in a wise, loving attitude to know where, when and how to put this person in the right position in the building.

Evangelists should foster love among all members of the church, from their early days being catechumens so that the building stays strong and lasts forever.

Evangelists should make sure that there is no other corner stone but Christ **"For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ"** (1Co 3 : 11). He is the Rock above whom all stones are put together by faith & love ...

"Coming to Him [as to] a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God [and] precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." (1Pe 2 : 4 - 5)

8- The Evangelist is an Ambassador:

According to worldly standards, it is a great honor to be an ambassador. An ambassador represents the president or king, his government, and his country in different places all over the world.

But the greatest honor is to be an ambassador for God himself – for the King of kings – first of all here on Earth representing His Kingdom of Heaven here and now, and later on having the honor of being with Him in His Kingdom ...

"Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore [you] on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God" (2Co 5 : 20)

Ambassadors usually speak the language of their original country but they should also speak the language of the country they serve at. Evangelists also should be fluent in the language of Heaven – the language of love, peace, joy and praising God. Moreover, they should also be able to speak the language of the here and now. They are not distanced from this world. They are caring, sharing and mingling with all good activities. Our Lord prayed to the Father, saying:

"I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one" (Joh 17:15)

Ambassadors are always strangers in the countries of their missions, acting like the people of their homeland and looking like their King in all behaviors and attitudes. Likewise, Evangelists who, in spite of the fact that they are living in this

2- Who is the Evangelist?

world, they always feel that they strangers to this world in their transcendental morals, spiritual goals, unconditional love and positive attitudes. Our Lord said it clearly:

"They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world" (Joh 17 : 16)

He actually said this twice in His last prayer before completing His mission; and accordingly He prayed ...

"As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world" (Joh 17 : 18)

If an Evangelist behaves in the same way like all others and talks like they do, he will no longer be capable of having a positive Christian influence on others, because he would have lost the power of revealing the Truth ...

"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men" (Mat 5 : 13)

As the salt should dissolve and disappear in the food in order to function, the Evangelist should live and dissolve in the community he is serving. However, he should be always on the alert never to lose the original and true Christ-like nature from which he gets their very special taste.

True story

"The Impact of a smile"

On her first mission, she was full of expectations that she will see miracles. She had read a lot and heard a lot. However, after three days in the mission away from Egypt, she saw none of what she had heard about. She also started facing some challenges with her group. None of them seemed to be committed to the plans they had worked on for a long time and the lessons they had prepared prior to the mission.

It was a conference for kids, and at noontime while the kids were having a break, she stood by herself feeling homesick, and asking herself: what brought me here? What is the real significance of my being here? Why am I doing what I'm doing? Is it right to be here in the first place?

At this very moment one of the kids approached her, and asked her, "what is your name?" She answered him.

He went on: "Is this your real name or a nick name?" She said "No, this is my nick name".

He asked, "So what is your real name?" And when she answered him he said "You know why this is your name?"

She asked "why?"

He said, "Your name has the same letters of (cheer), so it is meant to be to cheer people up".

2- Who is the Evangelist?

Here she smiled; and then he told her, "See you have a very beautiful smile".

At this moment, she got the message ... and learnt that a smile is more powerful than thousands of words ...

That was a turning point in her service.

Remember...

An Evangelist is ...

- 1- The Evangelist is a Fisherman.
- 2- The Evangelist is a Sower.
- 3- The Evangelist is a Healer.
- 4- The Evangelist is a Soldier.
- 5- The Evangelist is a Teacher.
- 6- The Evangelist is Parent.
- 7- The Evangelist is a Builder.
- 8- The Evangelist is an Ambassador.

Prayer

Dear Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,

Help me to change into Your likeness so that people may see YOU clearly in me ...

Teach me how to fish for Your beloved people, in the same way that You were preaching, healing, and loving all ...

Guide my steps, as a beginner in farming to sow all lands, and realize that the harvest is all Your Holy doing ...

Enlighten my mind to see the dark side or the defects in each one I serve, not with the eye of judgment, but with the eye of a gentle skilled physician looking for methods of healing ...

Strengthen my will to follow You as a serious soldier in Your Holy army always ready to fight Your battles and save Your sheep ...

Make me a good teacher like You who practice before preaching seeking Your Grace to become a role model of virtue and of sacrifice ...

Plant Your love deep inside my heart so I can see all people with a father's mind and care for them with a mother's heart ...

Hold my hand when I embark on re-building the broken souls of non-believers to become solid members of your Holy Body ...

2- Who is the Evangelist?

Help my eyes to be fixed ON YOU: so that I can see clearly what You want me to do, Where You want me to go, What you want me to say, and How You want me to Act ...

Grant me the Grace to See through Your Eyes, think through Your mind, and feel through Your Holy Heart.

Dear Good Lord: help me to be the true Evangelist that You want me to be.

Amen

3

The Orthodox Evangelist

Is there any difference in Evangelism between the different churches or denominations?!!

YES, Big difference ...

As Christians, we all preach the word of God and the belief in our Lord Jesus Christ as the Incarnated God, the only Savior, and the way to Eternal Life.

Yet, the way we preach and the targets we need to fulfill, are quite different.

For some churches, it is enough for a non-believer to admit and accept our Lord Jesus Christ as the Savior. They may not focus on or may not give a lot of importance to the necessity of repentance. Many denominations accept non-believers to join the Faith without having to receive Sacraments of Baptism or the Holy Myron.

Doctrines play a major role in our life as Orthodox Christians and our worship is totally different because of the great focus we give on the Holy Liturgy, the Sacraments, the Order of the Church, Fasting periods and the Holy Feasts. All this has a great effect on our Evangelism Message.

It is not we are overburdening people, and making the way seem almost impossible for them; it is simply following the teaching of our Lord that ...

"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide [is] the gate and broad [is] the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it" (Mat 7 : 13).

We are not “Rigid Radicals” as some choose to think of us. The word “Orthodox” does not mean “rigidity”. The word “orthodox” takes its meaning from the Greek words ‘ortho’, meaning ‘right’ and ‘doxa’ meaning ‘belief’. Hence the word “Orthodox” means correct belief or right thinking. It indicates the “straight way”, the “shortest way” and the “right and perfect way”.

We believe that “Orthodoxy” offers the “Right Way” to know God, the “Best Way” to Worship God, and the “Most Accurate and Pleasant Way” to Preach God. “Orthodoxy” is more than a Christian denomination. It is a way of life through which we practice our Christian Faith every moment of our existence, in preparation for our Eternal life with our Lord Jesus Christ.

According to the Orthodox teaching, the Evangelist practices daily repentance and cries out day and night: "My Lord Jesus Christ have mercy upon me, I'm a sinner".

Likewise, the Orthodox Evangelist invites people to the same life of repentance and to the same great name of salvation:

"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Act 4 : 12)

The Orthodox Evangelist is used to praying using the Holy Psalms where he finds in them power against the devil and against any evil thoughts.

The Orthodox Evangelist uses Our Lord's Prayer all the time:

"So He said to them, 'When you pray, say: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as [it is] in heaven ...'" (Luk 11 : 2)

This prayer includes a lot of the Orthodox Creed, as follows:

- ***"Your Kingdom come"*** ... "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" (Mat 3 : 2).
- ***"Your will be done"*** ... "who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1Ti 2 : 4).
- ***"on earth as it is in heaven"*** ... "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth" (Phi 2 : 10).

The Orthodox Evangelist enjoys the company and the intercessions of all the prophets, apostles, saints and martyrs. They are his family. As a member of the Body of Christ, the Orthodox Evangelist is always surrounded by this great cloud of Witnesses. He believes in their support and looks up to them to see Christ glorified in them.

The Orthodox Preacher can't preach without mentioning the story of the salvation – the Story of Love – starting as of the Creation reaching out to the Fall, the Incarnation, the Cross, the Resurrection, the gift of the Holy Spirit and finally to the continuous struggle to reach the Kingdom of Heaven through Repentance and partaking of the Holy Sacraments.

3- The Orthodox Evangelist

Furthermore, the Orthodox Evangelist can't preach without mentioning the work of the Holy Spirit through the seven Sacraments: Baptism, Holy Myron, Confession, Holy Eucharist, Priesthood, Matrimony and Unction of the sick.

The Orthodox Evangelist enjoys the blessed fact of being a member of the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, namely, the Church, in all spiritual practices and especially during the periods of Fasting.

The Orthodox Evangelist longs for the fasting times as they are spiritually charging, being full of beautiful rituals that raise the level of spirituality through shared prayers, distinct hymns and meditations.

The Orthodox Evangelist lives and re-lives our Lord's Salvation on a daily basis through the seven prayers of the Agpeya: with the early morning prayer (Prime prayer), he enjoys the true light of the Resurrection; with the 3rd hour, he enjoys the dwelling of the Holy Spirit, with the midday prayers (6th hour), he stands before the Cross to fortify his covenant, with the 9th hour he takes the power of the death of the Lord on the Cross, with the last hours of the day (the 11th & 12th), he remembers his last hours before the condemnation. Even during the night, he tries to pray the psalms and may stay alert to watch and wait for the Groom (our Lord Jesus) coming to his bride (the human soul/the church).

3- The Orthodox Evangelist

The Orthodox Evangelist uses the icons while preaching the incarnation, the redemption, the cross, or the second coming of Christ. He may also use the Coptic songs and hymns that are greatly significant for all the Orthodox doctrines.

The Orthodox Evangelist cannot see the Salvation without continuous repentance, and partaking of the Power of the Altar, i.e. the Body & Blood of Jesus Christ.

The Orthodox Evangelist enjoys the feasts of the Lord and also the feasts of St. Mary and all the Saints.

The Orthodox Evangelist lives partially in Heaven through the beautiful Rituals of the Orthodox Church, and partially on earth through his mission to struggle to save his own soul and to save others through leading them to the True Faith.

Yes ...

There is a big difference between the preaching and living the Orthodox faith and any other. We do not want to be offending others; and we are not aiming at taking Christians from their churches. We have indeed tasted the Kingdom of Heaven through our beautiful Church and, out of love to our entire fellow Christians, we want to share with them this Holy taste – to know Christ like we do and to live his life as our dear Church taught us to live it.

The Coptic Orthodox faith has two main components:

1. Coptic: meaning “Egyptian Christian”
2. Orthodox: related to the belief and creed of the original faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and in the role of the Church as the body of Christ.

We are not praising or being prejudiced for the Coptic history, language or the Coptic culture. But we are indeed proud to preach our Lord Jesus Christ through the heritage of over 2000 years of worshipping Him in our land, in our monasteries and in our churches in our beloved Egypt. We are indeed proud to preach our Lord Jesus through our Coptic Orthodox Faith which offered thousands of martyrs who readily gave up their lives to keep our Orthodox Faith and our Orthodox Creed safe and sound for us to inherit and to hand over to all.

However, it has to be clear that we are not trying to make people “Egyptians/Copts” in the national sense of the word; rather, we are aiming at making them saints according to His will, **"For this is the will of God, your sanctification"** (1Th 4 : 3). We experience this meaning of being sanctified in our Orthodox way which is the only way we believe in.

While the Orthodox Evangelist dreams of a day when the whole world gets to know our Dear Lord Jesus Christ and becomes a member of His Body through partaking of the Holy Sacraments, he also has the blessed dream of the day our Lord unites all Christians in One Faith, One Baptism, and One Body – through the real Christian love.

Characteristics of the Orthodox Preacher/Evangelist:

1- Discipleship:

"But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned [them,]" (2Ti 3 : 14)

Discipleship is the cornerstone in the process of developing an Orthodox servant. The true Orthodox Christian is well rooted in the faith through the following main sources:

The Holy Bible

The Orthodox Church (Holy tradition)

The teaching of the Early Fathers

The Lives of the Saints

Orthodox Discipleship is based on an understanding of the Holy Bible as it is taught by our Orthodox Church based on the interpretation of its Sainly Fathers as it has been accepted by the Ecumenical councils throughout history.

The Orthodox Disciple is one who has chosen the path of the early church as it has been established by our Lord Jesus Christ, continued by His Apostles, received by the Early Church Fathers and lived by all its Holy Saints to be delivered to each and every one of us.

"Thus says the Lord: Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; then you will find rest for your souls. But they said, 'We will not walk in it'" (Jeremiah 6:16)

The Orthodox Evangelist speaks with the spirit of the teaching of the Fathers extending from Athanasius, Cyril, Anthony the Great, Macarius, etc... who lived for the sake of their faith and who passed on their teachings to our forefathers. Guided by the Holy Spirit, these fathers' teachings serve as the pillars upon which our Orthodox faith have been standing firm and sound as opposed to many diversions and unorthodox teachings that do not necessarily confirm to the original teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Some preachers choose to preach and interpret the word of God depending on their own understanding refusing to refer back to the solid interpretations of church or the forefathers. They believe only in their own skills and understandings, claiming that they are guided by the Spirit of God.

But St. John asked us to be careful: "**Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world**" (1Jo 4 : 1)

And Before him our Lord Himself said: "**Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves**" (Mat 7 : 15)

We are a traditional church and we understand and live the word of God according to the precious tradition of our dear Church. We are proud of our heritage as we realize that we received the knowledge and teachings of our Christian life from the Early Church even before the New Testament was written or known.

2- A Church Person:

In our Orthodox faith, there is no salvation outside of the Church. We believe that **“If the Church is not your mother; our Lord can never be your father”**.

The Orthodox Evangelist preaches the belief in **One Holy Catholic Apostolic Unique Church:**

- **One Church:** Our Lord Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church which is His body composed of all the Saints: those who have departed to the victorious Church and those who are still struggling in the flesh on earth.
- **Holy Church:** where the Holy Spirit dwells and sanctifies her members through the Holy Sacraments.
- **Catholic (Universal) Church:** having the one Holy Mission of calling everyone to the One Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ giving birth to all believers through the womb of the Holy Sacrament of Baptism.
- **Apostolic Church:** Its roots and origin spring from the Apostles.
- **Unique Church:** no other denomination is like it in its true heritage to our Lord desiring that all come to be ONE in the sound orthodox faith.

"That they may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me" (John 17:21)

The Orthodox Evangelist's whole life is centered around the Holy Altar, with our Lord's True Body and Blood offered to all making us all one in Him.

3- Humble and obedient:

The orthodox servant is necessarily humble and obedient, following the teachings of the church and the guidance of his spiritual guide and father of confession. He adopts the sincere attitude of being nothing but a humble disciple listening, learning, inquiring and growing in spirit.

Because of this true – not affected – humility, he refers back easily to his father of confession to be guided by his prayers and advices. He is such a simple meek person who finds no difficulty in following the system and the order of the church. He believes that he is just a little member in a huge body, and the Holy Spirit can make use of him only if he stays in love and synergy with the stem and base of his faith, i.e. our Lord Jesus and the Church and all her other members.

He is the one who sees his weaknesses all the time and does all he can to cover up for the weaknesses of others. He considers the saints and the fathers of the church his role model and struggles all the time to try to follow their example

"Imitate me, just as I also [imitate] Christ" (1Co 11 : 1).

He is always living in repentance, struggling against his own weaknesses, realizing that he is here to carry on the will of God not his own. This humble obedient character is mandatory for any Orthodox Evangelist.

4- A Balanced Personality:

The Orthodox Evangelist has a sound mind, heart which results in sound behavior.

He is always busy with the renewal of his mind (Romans 12) in order to reach out to the mind of our Lord Christ through discipleship, meditation, guidance and worship. When the mind is renewed and filled with Holy Thoughts, this is reflected on the feelings and emotions, making his heart sound and stable, overflowing with holy emotions and holy activities and behavior.

The Orthodox Evangelist is a balanced person who neither leaves his intellect to lead him nor his heart to rule over him. His balanced spirituality and total guidance by the Holy Spirit grants him the grace to strike a balance between reason and emotions, making sure that he submits both to the will and guidance of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Orthodox Evangelist's spirituality is not emotional. It is marked by depth and sincerity, rather than superficial emotionalism. Emotionalism may lead a person to follow his own feelings and to be centered around his own personal will and desire, even if it appears to be spiritual. Spirituality, on the other hand, leads the person to repent and drives him to a state of calm silence, holy fear and hope and struggle for positive change.

"... rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God" (1 Pet 3:4)

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The Orthodox Evangelist is balanced in his relationships with all people. He cares for his family but never forgets his goal in life. He offers his love and service to people but never breaks his boundaries.

He is Christ-like

"He will not cry out, nor raise [His voice,] Nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed He will not break, And smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for truth" (Isa 42 : 2 – 3)

He believes very much in the grace of God, but never forgets how weak and sinful he is. God may do miracles through him, but he keeps seeing himself as unworthy servant.

"So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do'" (Luk 17 : 10)

Honesty and faithfulness are main traits of the Orthodox Evangelist which makes of him a true Light in a dark world full of noise, conflict and unnecessary bigotry and pride.

True Story

"The old ladies seeking for baptism"

It was an exploratory visit to a very poor country for two weeks, and we were accompanied by a priest, who consoled us with the Divine Liturgy prayer.

Then we set out to visit the nearby houses; we entered a very poor house (a hut), where two very old ladies lived along with a daughter of one of the two of them and her kids; they were living in very difficult conditions as a result of the wars.

We sat with them; and were surprised that once the two old women knew that the priest who accompanied us was an Orthodox priest, they were full of joy, and told him, "Please baptize us, because we have wished to partake of this secret for a long time, and we could not, because of the many wars and bad transportation".

One of them was almost 85 and the other 75. We set for them a divine liturgy; they attended on time; and each one of them sat individually with the priest, confessed her sins, then got baptized; and became ready to enjoy the heavenly Jerusalem.

Surprisingly, after this visit a lot political problems occurred in this country, and no one was able to go there again!!!

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It was as if this visit was done only for the sake of these two women; that their names are written in the book of life.

Remember...

The Main Characteristics of the Orthodox Evangelist:

- 1- Discipleship.
- 2- A Church Person.
- 3- Humble and Obedient.
- 4- A Balanced Personality.

Prayer

Dear Lord,

I beg you to fill my heart with your Holy Spirit, so I can be a light of your light in this dark world.

Teachings around me are full of defects, and it is not easy for me to know exactly the pure meaning of your declaration. So please guide me to be as straight orthodox, as exactly your wish, even if you make me a teacher one day.

Let me stay always as your disciple and let me see clearly your grace, hand in hand with my weaknesses.

God, I love you, please accept my service and purify you servant.

Amen.

4

The Challenges of Evangelism

Evangelism is the work of God. It is His mission to save all human beings. That is why there are obstacles and challenges that stand in the way of accomplishing this mission. However, everybody who serves this Holy Mission can easily realize and clearly see that no matter how hard the challenges are, eventually they all function as channels for the Grace of God to extend, and for the service to grow more and more.

Challenges of the service of Evangelism can be categorized as follows:

- 1- Challenges regarding the call.*
- 2- Challenges regarding continuity.*
- 3- Internal Challenges.*
- 4- External Challenges.*

1- Challenges regarding the call:

Christ is calling all Christians to share with Him in the building of His kingdom – to work with Him for the sake of the salvation of all mankind. But very few actually receive this call and follow Him the whole way.

"For many are called, but few [are] chosen" (Mat 22 : 14)

The reasons for this are varied:

- **The Challenge of fear ...**

The commonest challenge that makes many refrain from following the call of Evangelism is "fear": fear of the future, fear of the unknown, fear of loneliness, fear of failure, fear of dying

4- Challenges of Evangelism

during the mission, fear of persecution, fear of what will happen as one gets old, fear of losing friends and family, fear of poverty, fear of future regrets, etc... Fear is therefore a major challenge facing those who consider joining the service of Evangelism.

I can assure you that there is nothing that can make one stand firm facing such challenges except **Faith**.

"If your faith doesn't remain firm, then you will not remain secure" (Isa 7 : 9).

There is no warranty ... no human promises ... nothing but ***God's presence, God's promises and God's protection.***

Accepting the call for Evangelism is like throwing yourself in the air but knowing assuredly that you will be always embraced and protected by God.

Faith, as defined by St. Paul, is

"... the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb 11 : 1).

Faith is all about TRUST. Faith grants the trust that helps Evangelists leave everything and go forward to the unknown being totally sure that this is a holy call and a holy journey where he will be always accompanied by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

The call for Evangelism is similar to the old call that Abraham received from God:

"By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going" (Heb 11 : 8).

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The call for Evangelism is that which St. Peter received when he was called by Christ:

"Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Mat 4 : 19).

Immediately, St. Peter left the fish, the boat, the net, the fishermen, the village, all his past and present and went after Christ towards the unknown. But he wouldn't have done this had he not experienced the power of faith:

"But Simon answered and said to Him, "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net" (Luk 5 : 5)

St. Peter made the decision to obey Jesus and went into the deep sea putting his mind and his experience as a fisherman aside. He put the words and comments of the people aside. He decided to go by one main thing: Our Lord Jesus Christ's Word. Accordingly, the net he threw at the command of our Lord Jesus overflowed with the hugest catch of fish ever.

In order to follow Christ you need firm faith that allows you to get over all fears. You need absolute TRUST that HE will lead your life and will never abandon you. It is then that you will readily and joyfully follow His call.

- ***The Challenge of Relationships (People) ...***

One of the major obstacles in the way of Devotion to service, especially the service of Evangelism is "people".

One man came to the Lord saying **"Lord, let me first go and bury my father"** (Luk 9 : 59), "And another also said, "Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go [and] bid them farewell who are at my

4- Challenges of Evangelism

house" (Luk 9 : 61). But with both of them, Christ was sharp and decisive: **"No, No!!!"**

"Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God" (Luk 9 : 60).

Our mission is not to wait on death, but rather to conquer death. Our mission is to raise the dead out of their death of ignorance of the Truth, ignorance of Life and of the one way to Salvation and Eternal Joy .

Don't allow your relationships with people to hinder your relationship with God. Don't let the people's voices be higher than that of our Lord. Don't be preoccupied with pleasing people. Don't leave yourself to be always listening to the guilt feelings towards other people and ignore the call of the Almighty!

You need to realize the fact that the love of human beings is indeed no way to compare with God's love.

"For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ" (Gal 1 : 10).

The love of people may be possessive: they need you the way they like. They want you to be similar to all others, following the common usual way: the classic stereotype lifestyle of man living to eat, sleep, work, make money, make family and die. But the servant of our Lord Jesus is "DIFFERENT". He is different in everything he does even if it is leading a normal life of a normal human being. Still, he sticks out as different.

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All the more, those who are called upon to devote their lives totally to God are different in everything. For they have decided to “leave everything and follow our Lord”. They decided that their whole life will be HIS and no longer theirs. They made the decision and should work on themselves so that they do not allow anything or anyone to make them “look back”.

"But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luk 9 : 62)

Evangelists are called upon to love all people and in order to do this, they need to be weaned of the usual relations and to be mature in their love. Surely, they have to care for their families and responsibilities, but not at the expense of God's calling.

- **The Challenge of Money Matters ...**

Money-lovers can never be Evangelists:

"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon" (Mat 6 : 24)

Most people live to make money, to buy things, food, properties, jewelry, cars, etc... These people are mostly dominated by these material things and most of them live captivated by the things that they own or wish to own.

Evangelists, on the other hand, enjoy the glorious liberty of the children of God. They live for a better mission ... They live

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for the Kingdom of Heaven. Their slogan and aim in their service is to:

"... seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you ... Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day [is] its own trouble" (Mat 6 : 33- 34)

If you are called upon to work with God, you should get rid of the traditional attitudes of normal people. You will mostly find yourself going the opposite way to all others: money will be under your feet not inside your heart or dominating your head.

"And He said to them, "When I sent you without money bag, knapsack, and sandals, did you lack anything?" So they said, "Nothing" (Luk 22 : 35)

Evangelists always enjoy the hand of God covering all their needs and carrying them on the wings of the eagle ...

"But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew [their] strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint" (Isa 40 : 31)

Money is the god of this generation; if we worship money we can never do the will of our Lord.

2- Challenges regarding Continuity:

- **Challenge of Pride ...**

Evangelists usually begin their service humble, weak, ignorant and scared. But after God grants them success and/or achievements, pride may grow in their hearts. This is a very dangerous time in the life of any servant – the time when they lose track of their original humility and their realization that they are absolutely “nothing” without our Lord’s Grace and support. Losing the original humble feeling of being “unworthy, helpless, useless or valueless” is the first step in losing themselves. It is the time that they attribute their success to their own smartness, good planning, piousness, and forget that had it not been for the Hand of God they would have done absolutely nothing.

With these negative feelings, they lose the power, the passion and the motivation and they no longer enjoy the blessings of their service and they definitely lose the Grace of God.

Things can get much more serious and dangerous if they do not realize or recognize this attack of pride and concentrate on the Grace of God. Samson didn't know that the grace left him because he was not honest:

"And she said, "The Philistines [are] upon you, Samson!" So he awoke from his sleep, and said, "I will go out as before, at other times, and shake myself free!" But he did not know that the LORD had departed from him" (Jdg 16 : 20)

4- Challenges of Evangelism

They may even reach a more serious challenge, i.e. starting to think of the question of "who [is] greatest" (Mar 9 : 34). They may look around to seek words of appreciation and glorification or look around to condemn who is doing better or worse.

They may go on doing things not according to God's will, just to prove to themselves that they are "good and successful preachers". They seek numbers of followers. They lose the focus on Christ and heaven and ***they lose the call.***

That is exactly what happened with one of the bishops of the early church, who deserved to hear the harsh words:

"I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' -- and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked" (Rev 3 : 15 – 17).

- **Challenges of Love ...**

Servants who are called upon to become Evangelists start their service in great joy: thinking, praying and serving happily together. But this situation may not last long.

Misunderstanding or miscommunication arise among servants. Then they may start having ideas like (we are different characters, we can never serve together, his way is totally

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different from mine, they can't understand my point, they ignored me, why do they do this & that, etc ...)

At this point, the evangelist may see others as totally “wrong” and may see himself as always “right”. This situation may result in not being able to love those whom you loved before; you may feel abused, marginalized, persecuted or hurt. The bottom line of the whole story amounts to the fact that you are not able to love them anymore!

This situation leads to the loss of passion, of power and to many sins like judging others or nervousness and frustration, which are all negative attitudes and cause you to lose the Grace of working with our Lord, enjoying His company and feeling blessed by His support.

The Evangelist should always remember that without love there can be no service and no fruit ... If he is not able to communicate and build bridges of understanding with other servants, he has to revise his spiritual order and practice lots of humility and meekness. He should consult with their father of confession who may go as far as stop them from service for a while until they regain their true loving heart that is ready to “bear all”.

- **Challenges of Loneliness ...**

Feelings of loneliness, lack of motivation, passivity may arise after a few weeks, a few months, or a few years after accepting the call of devotion. This may increase as a result of negative thoughts of comparing yourself to colleagues,

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especially those having successful families or careers, doubting the original call, wondering whether it was God's voice or just your own desire or mind! One may even start wondering whether it was someone who pushed him to devoting his life to service or was it some sort of rashness in making the decision!!!

Feeling lonely may cause the Evangelist to disregard the service and give more of his time to unfruitful things like watching useless stuff, following politics, enjoying superficial talks and jokes, etc... Moreover, it may push him to fall in self-pity which may end up indulging in sin/lust.

Feeling lonely simply means that the evangelist lost the feeling of the Great Partner, our Lord Jesus Christ. He lost the blessing of the joy of working with Him, serving under His guidance and enjoying His love. He may reach the stage of continuously complaining of everything and seriously considering going back home and leaving the mission!!!

This is a time to increase prayers, spiritual order, readings, and consult with the father of confession.

The Evangelist should hold on to the Lord and ask His Grace to support him overcome this attack and be sure He will never forsake him.

- **Challenge of Deviations ...**

The call is strong, and the voice pushing; the start was great; the grace overwhelming; the success is manifest; people are coming to Christ; miraculously, the church is growing; but, some deviations may take place ...

- **Deviation in doctrine ...**

Some of the devoted servants may enjoy listening to non-orthodox sermons, and may take part in unorthodox services or meetings. They may have develop intimate relations with some people who are not rooted in the church. These may end up acquiring different tastes in worshiping. They may even start seeking different goals like “speaking tongues” and “performing miracles”. This may reach out to ignoring some of the orthodox rituals and church order like fasting, attending Holy Mass and partaking of the Holy Sacraments.

This is a serious challenge that needs careful follow up from all parties. That's why the following precautions are recommended:

- 1- It is better for any missionary not to stay more than 6 months away from their mother church to avoid such deviations at least for the first three years of the service.
- 2- It is recommended for any servant to be part of an orthodox team of missionaries; so they can support each other.
- 3- Finally, follow up of the leaders of the mother church and the care of the father of confession is essential.

- **Deviations in relationships ...**

A lot of people join the church through the Evangelist. They consider him their way to Christ; they love him and

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become very much attached to him. The Evangelist, in turn, becomes quite attached to them and spends a lot of time with them. However, this time may not necessarily be spent in discussing spiritual matters or in prayer. At this point, there is a good chance things may deteriorate into some sort of devious or impure relationship. But Evangelists should be careful to keep all their relationships pure ...

"Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort [him] as a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger as sisters, with all purity" (1 Ti 5 : 1 – 2)

Devious relationships may lead the evangelist to make wrong decisions. His evaluation of things and people may be based upon those relationships. He may not be able to face wrong doers because of his own impure heart.

Moreover, people may begin to notice these devious relationships and start making comments – not only about the servant but also about the whole mission. Such cases will bring about a lot of negative consequences not only to the person involved but also to the whole mission and maybe even to the service at large.

Relationships should always have our Lord Jesus Christ in their midst. If our Lord is the center of any relationship, no deviation will occur. Putting our Lord as the goal of any and all relationships will make them always sacred and pure. Putting all matters in prayer will keep relationships on the right track as they are submitted in His Holy Hands.

- **Deviations in goals or ways ...**

The main goal of the Evangelist should always be very clear: it is the Salvation of all human beings, the realization of the Will of God and gaining spiritual fruits.

One of the common deviations is that one may lose track and become interested in more materialistic objectives, for example, construction of buildings, farming land, gaining money, making business, building political relations, competing with other religions or denominations, etc.. In this case, the evangelist may even give himself the pretext that this is all for the sake of the mission, while the reality of the matter is that such matters became an end in themselves and not just means whereby the service could grow.

Sometimes, servants may adopt devious methods, accepting to lie or cheat, again claiming that it is all for a holy cause disregarding the Christian teaching: **"No lie was found in their mouths; they are blameless"** (Rev 14 : 5).

Evangelists should beware of this dangerous digression to the mission by continuously consulting with one another and checking themselves before this attitude develops in the mission. Going back to the main leaders of the service before starting any project is also one way of guarding against such deviations.

3- Internal Challenges:

Internal Challenges may either be the result of psychological disturbances or sinful temptations.

- **Psychological Disturbances ...**

It is good for all servants to bear in mind that they are indeed weak and even worthless without our Lord's Grace and support. However, if such feelings are too exaggerated they may become an obstacle to his service since it will cause him to suffer from what psychologists call "low self-esteem". This is a kind of psychological disorder that causes a person to lose heart thinking that he is nothing but a loser and a big failure. This causes the person to try to escape from duties and run away from responsibilities. This is a dangerous challenge for the evangelist.

These bad thoughts or what psychologists may call "negative thoughts" should be answered firmly with the words of God:

"And He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness' Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me; Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2Co 12 : 9 -10)

Striking a balance between feelings of humility and those of “low self-esteem” necessitates that the evangelist should be very well versed in the teachings of the Bible and our dear Church. While he should always give credit to any achievement to our Lord’s Grace he should be thanking our Lord continuously for using him for the Glory of His Holy name and for His service. He should always remember those lovely verses from St. Paul:

"God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence" (1Co 1 : 27)

- **Temptation of sin ...**

Temptations of sin may attack the servant in the form of bad thoughts or desires. To this challenge St. Paul proclaims:

"But I discipline my body and bring [it] into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified" (1Co 9 : 27).

Evangelists should remind themselves that the day they devoted their lives to the service, they have actually died with our Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross, so that Christ can live freely with His Holy Spirit inside them ...

"And those [who are] Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" (Gal 5 : 24).

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However, in spite of the fact that falling in sin is indeed grievous, yet the more dangerous issue is the feeling of giving up on oneself and falling in despair. This war is the toughest especially when a voice keeps on nagging the servant: "leave the service ... you are not qualified ... you are bringing upon yourself curses not blessings ... God can never work with someone like you ... all the other servants are better ... step down ... step away ... you are nothing but a trouble maker!!!".

This is indeed one of the toughest challenges that should be faced through placing a lot of HOPE in God's promises of mercy and forgiveness, encouragement from the father of confession, and sometimes through the support of honest intimate spiritual friends. It should also be faced by those encouraging verses from the Holy Bible:

"Do not rejoice over me, my enemy; When I fall, I will arise; When I sit in darkness, The LORD [will be] a light to me" (Mic 7 : 8)

"I, [even] I, [am] He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; And I will not remember your sins" (Isa 43 : 25)

"For a righteous [man] may fall seven times And rise again, But the wicked shall fall by calamity" (Pro 24 : 16)

4- External Challenges:

Tough problems may arise while preaching and serving different communities in different countries, ranging from cultural gaps and shocks, up to persecution and serious threats to the evangelist's life and the church.

You may have problems with the neighbors, with the local servants, with the leaders, with the mother church in Egypt, with expenses and funding, with law suits or with the antichrist teachings.

"For indeed, when we came to Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were troubled on every side. Outside [were] conflicts, inside [were] fears" (2Co 7 : 5)

In all of these problems, one can see God's Hand clearly through prayer, humility and through following our Lord's commandments.

"Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us" (Rom 8 : 37)

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? [Shall] tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?, As it is written: For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter" (Rom 8 : 35 - 36)

Let us focus on three major external challenges:

- A- Challenges with the locals.
- B- Challenges with funds.
- C- Challenges with the anti-Christ teachings.

A- Challenges with the locals ...

After a good start, servants may face problems with the local community related to their culture, background and principles.

In some countries people may consider that any service in church should be rewarded by money. They may not have the concept of voluntary work. Sometimes they may abuse the system to gain more money or cause problems to the servants if they are not well paid.

Such problems should be managed wisely with a strict and previously developed system of service for the locals and also through a proper choice of the staff.

Charity gifts may be given as a way of helping them in a development manner in order to avoid the idea of money-giving. Usually when money matters start taking over, locals may lose the goal and progress is hindered.

Another major challenge with the local servants is that some of them may go back to their original sinful habits or their old beliefs. That's why we should consider the advice: "**Do not lay hands on anyone hastily**" (1Ti 5 : 22).

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Locals need careful follow up from the evangelist to help them resist the different powers pulling them back.

B- Challenges with the funds ...

Although missionary service is totally guided by faith and hope, yet, sometimes issues of funding and maintaining the service, covering the expenses of the missions, the dedicated servants, the locals servants, the rent of the church or the service building ... etc. may form serious challenges.

This is an area of prayer and experiencing God's hand. However, this does not negate the fact that missionary teams should think of methods of fund-raising as they put together their plans for the country where they will start their service.

Planning well for the service is a key issue. The missionary team is always recommended to develop a thorough study of the area of their service. They may be able to come up with some business that could support their service. However, it is very important that this should not, as previously mentioned, take their full attention away from their main service and their primary goal: gaining souls to our Lord Jesus Christ. This business should be totally separate from the service.

We have a good example in St. Paul, the devoted missionary, who used to work in tent manufacturing to support his service.

C- Challenges with Anti-Christ teachings ...

In some areas while preaching you may find different cults or teachings that all work in a direction of Anti-Christ.

Although our servants should love all and serve everyone, yet they should always be wise in dealing with people of Anti-Christ, whether from other religions or Athenian or Jehovah witnesses or Mormons. These movements may start making approaches to our missions but their main aim is usually to attack our service. We should try hard not to have anything to do with them.

Sometimes these people may cause the servants many problems up to attacking them or trying to destroy their reputation.

In such cases, we need to pray for wisdom to manage those problems and to stand firm in proclaiming the Truth. In some cases, it may be recommended that our team of missionary leaves the area where this challenge exists and start their service in different areas looking for other open doors like we read about quite often in the Book of Acts.

True Story

"A pressing call"

She never thought of travelling abroad for service. She was invited to go on missions twice but escaped. But the third time she was sort of forced to travel to Africa mainly because she was kind of embarrassed to say no a third time. But after spending three weeks of service on conventions with almost 200 African youth and kids, she came back running to her father of confession (FOC), asking him to send her back to Africa!

Her (FOC) advised her to take some time and pray in order to make sure it was a true passion and calling. She spent a month praying. She couldn't resist travelling again. So, after the permission of her (FOC), she prayed together with her fellow servants and requested a one month unpaid leave from her work (as she had already used all her available holidays at work). To her amazement, she got the approval, and headed to an unforgettable month of service and experience with her Heavenly Father in Africa.

Coming back, her passion was still growing, and the same scenario was taking place. A month later, she asked for a three months' unpaid leave.

Everyone thought she was crazy; but she had the faith that if this was God's plan, it will become true, opposing all the logical opinions. Prayers were raised, and strangely enough the CEO of the company had the request signed.

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After spending three months of service in another country in Africa, she returned with a severe virus that kept her in bed for 2 more months. But God was already so clear, that her calling was to resign, and travel all the way to Africa ... to be God's tool ... to work in His fields that are already white for harvest.

Remember...

The Challenges of Evangelism are:

- 1- Challenges regarding the call.
 - The Challenge of fear.
 - The Challenges of Relationship (people)
 - The Challenge of Money Matters
- 2- Challenges regarding continuity.
 - Challenge of Pride.
 - Challenge of Love
 - Challenge of Loneliness
 - Challenge of Deviations
- 3- Internal Challenges.
 - Psychological Disturbances
 - Temptation of Sin
- 4- External Challenges.
 - Challenges with the locals
 - Challenges with the funds
 - Challenges with the Anti-Christ teachings

Prayer

Dear Lord,

I know I don't deserve to be your servant ...

I'm not well prepared to preach your word ...

I'm not good enough to show others your image ...

Yet, I wish you accept me with my weaknesses & foolishness ...

Please make use of my weakness the way you like ...

Help me to overcome all challenges to continue the way of serving you all my life ...

Help me to love others whatever they do ... to stick to your word whatever I feel ... to focus on your cross no matter how severe are the challenges I am facing ...

Help me to keep my hope in your promises whatever the failures ... and to trust you all the way till you call me finally to your Eternity ...

Lord! I love you forever.

Amen

5

Biblical Examples of Evangelism

"Jonah"

The Resistant Evangelist

Jonah was a prophet; he knew God more than anyone; he loved Him; he used to listen to His voice and obey Him; he was a man of prayer and pure life.

But there was a call to Jonah to preach as an Evangelist to people who are different from his, to travel to a different country to preach to the pagans, to those who worshiped idols, to those people who were always against his people ...

"Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me"

(Jon 1 : 1 – 2)

We don't know exactly why he refused the call at the beginning. Was he afraid? Was it strange to go to pagans? Did he dislike these people and prefer to condemn them only? Was he not sure of the call? Was he not ready for these people? Was the country very far away? Did he know that these people would attack his people and kill many of them one day?

All what we know is that this evangelist refused the call and ignored the voice of God. Moreover, he planned to escape from God

"But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare, and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD" (Jon 1 : 3)

Are we escaping from our mission? Are we ignoring the voice of God? Are we focusing on ourselves not caring whether other people are saved or not?

But the voices became louder: not only from inside (from God) but also from outside. Jonah started hearing the loud voice of the wind, the voice of the waves, the voice of the sailors ...

"So the captain came to him, and said to him, "What do you mean, sleeper? Arise, call on your God; perhaps your God will consider us, so that we may not perish" (Jon 1 : 6)

Are we listening to voices from inside and from outside? Are we focusing? Or are we sleeping heavily like Jonah in the boat?

The resistant Evangelist continued his rejection and refused to pray. Now even sailors spoke loudly: "you are guilty, no way out."

"Ok, I'm guilty! I don't want to go! I love my life as it is! I don't like these people! Why does He keep pushing me?"

But strangely enough his exact words of confession were like a sermon of Evangelism

"I [am] a Hebrew; and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry [land]" (Jon 1 : 9).

The sailors believed!!!

That simple ... yes, they believed!!!

They saw the heavy winds and the strong waves. They saw and heard this prophet proclaiming God, the Creator, the Almighty, the Great, and the Eternal!

They believed!!!

This evangelist didn't intend to preach; he planned to sleep, to escape, to run away from the sight of God (which is of course impossible), yet he caused those sailors to believe in his God through his confession and through the whole awesome situation.

The sailors said: "Now, tell us preacher; how can we save you and ourselves? How can we please your God? What should we do?!"

Jonah, the prophet/the Evangelist!

Why don't you tell them to pray to Him?!

Why don't you repent now and lead them in prayers?!

Why don't you change your way and go back to Nineveh?!

It is clear now, it is easy to answer!!!

But the resistant prophet insisted not to pray. He probably thought to himself: "I will not go, I'd rather die but I'm not going anywhere".

"Pick me up and throw me into the sea; then the sea will become calm for you. For I know that this great tempest [is] because of me" (Jon 1 : 12)

The kind sailors – now believers – wished to save him; he is their preacher; he is the one who showed them the truth; but no way; the winds and waves would never stop unless he changed his mind.

The kind sailors prayed; nobody taught them; but they prayed:

"Therefore they cried out to the LORD and said, "We pray, O LORD, please do not let us perish for this man's life, and do not charge us with innocent blood; for You, O LORD, have done as it pleased You" (Jon 1 : 14)

The winds, the waves, and all the forces of nature understood; but the prophet did not. They all became silent in a minute.

Then comes the time for the whale.

The resistant Evangelist in his depression chose to die; but the kind Lord chose otherwise. Jonah should live; he should accomplish his mission; his salvation is related to his mission; there is no other way.

God prepared a different ship to carry him to Nineveh. "My dear Jonah! you should go for their salvation and your rescue."

5- Biblical Examples of Evangelism

At last the prophet prayed; the Evangelist bowed down and confessed his resistance:

"I cried out to the Lord because of my affliction, and He answered me. Out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and you heard my voice" (Jon 2 : 2)

Jonah!

You need to pray and fast before the mission!

God will give you yet another chance but under very strange circumstances!

Your chance is retiring inside the whale for prayer and for fasting!!! How strange yet how amazingly and miraculously wonderful!!!

But you will surely do it!!!

At last Jonah accepted the call – not the direct or the biblical; not nature's, not the people's; but through the hard circumstances – the very tough, death-like circumstances!!!

The resistant Evangelist went to Nineveh which was very big city. Thousands were pagans; no one knew God; nothing to be said but:

"Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" (Jon 3 : 4).

Is this the message?!

Where is the message of faith or the message for repentance? Did he preach anything? Did he answer questions? Is there any way out? Is there any little chance of changing the sentence?

Who is your God?

Who are you?

What should we do?

Just wait for the destruction?!!!

Very little rays of light came up; not out of his words, but out of his story. This man lived inside a whale's belly for three whole days. He died and lived again. He came to us not in a ship but from inside the belly of a whale

"For as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so also the Son of Man will be to this generation" (Luk 11 : 30)

They believed in his God – The God who rules over the forces of nature – the God of life who rules over the forces of death – the God of mercy and wisdom.

They knew in their conscience what to do!!!

They repented!!!

Through their repentance, they gave all generations the perfect image of repentance even though they had no teacher. Their teacher was too lazy; he was still resistant; their teacher couldn't love them as much as it takes to accept the call to go over to them preaching them and giving them the Good News – the Cheerful News.

However, Evangelism is actually the work of God not that of Jonah or any other.

5- Biblical Examples of Evangelism

That is why the people of Nineveh believed and turned away from their evil ways. They worshiped, fasting and praying from the bottom of their hearts.

That is why they were saved.

Even then, we find that the resistant Evangelist is not happy with the result. He thought to himself as he spoke to God:

“My credibility is at stake; my word didn't pass as true; I said the city would be overthrown and it didn't!!!

“You, God, are Kind, You are Merciful, You are Patient, You are Forgiving; But I am not, and I don't want to be like you. These people are full of sin; they are worthy of perishing; they are just bad people; why did You ignore all their history of sin and corruption, and only considered their forty days of repentance? I want to die; let me die soon!!”

"But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he became angry. So he prayed to the Lord, and said, "Ah, Lord, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in loving kindness, One who relents from doing harm. Therefore now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live!" (Jonah 4:1 – 3)

But the Heavenly Father – the Almighty and the all-Loving Lord endured these angry feelings. Patiently and Lovingly He pitied Jonah when He saw him sitting in the strong heat of the sun; and He granted him a plant as a shelter.

But the second day He gave him the last lesson in this very significant story that could be addressed to each and every servant.

"But the LORD said, "You have had pity on the plant for which you have not labored, nor made it grow, which came up in a night and perished in a night. And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left -- and much livestock?" (Jon 4 : 10 – 11)

As if our Lord wanted to tell Jonah and all Evangelists and all the servants for that matter:

"You need to see people with My Eyes; if you loved the plant and got sad when it perished, you should realize that I love all human beings much more than any other creature. I excuse them because of their ignorance; you are able to see only "your" people ... But I can see ALL people ... if you insist on judging them, judge yourself first ... You were a sign for them ... the sailors were a good sign for you to repent ... but you didn't ... If you think they were very much in need to believe and repent, believe me you too are badly in need of repentance ... If you don't care that they are saved, I DO care very much for all my creation to repent and to be saved ... You were dismayed at the plant but my care and keenness on salvation goes to the most important of my creation ... to ALL human beings ..."

"Daniel"

The Silent Evangelist

Daniel, one of the prophets in the Old Testament, came after Jonah, Hoshea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and others; but his story was very different.

Daniel was taken as a captive in the Babylon's province, nearly 605 BC. He was a very honest pious young man; he committed himself to God; he refused to eat any food that was forbidden according to the law of Moses.

Daniel, along with his three friends, were the best in their study and their work in the palace. Daniel was continuously promoted till he became the second man after two of the greatest Kings of that time: King Nebuchadnezzar and King Darius.

Being a fair, honest, responsible, organized man of duty, no one could find any charge against him but those who were jealous of him and wished to harm him.

"So the governors and satraps sought to find [some] charge against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find no charge or fault, because he [was] faithful; nor was there any error or fault found in him" (Dan 6 : 4)

They plotted against Daniel and betrayed him to Darius after having his seal and signing a written order that no one is

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allowed to pray to any god other than the King. They did this knowing that Daniel and his friends always prayed to their God. So by force of this law, they would get rid of them since they had to be killed for not obeying the King.

When Daniel learned about that order, he understood the plot. He knew quite well the conspiracy behind it. He knew that he was the target, and that there was no way out.

With no hesitation, Daniel who was now an old man, insisted on praying in public. Nothing is to change; God is God; his worship is top priority – no fears ... no doubts.

"Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days" (Dan 6 : 10)

Daniel, why didn't you just close your window?!

You could have prayed at night when everyone was sleeping!

You could have prayed silently inside your heart with only God listening?!

You know they aimed at getting rid of you, and maybe your people after you?!!!

But Daniel seems to have been replying to all those queries saying:

"No way!"

I'm the man of God!

I know nobody but Him;

I love him more than my life and my position;

He is the Only God to be worshipped;

I can never deny Him by any means!!!"

As expected, Darius was cornered! He couldn't save his friend. He was quite saddened by this trap since he was about to kill his own loyal helper. But something very strange happened! The Bible tells us that:

"... the king spoke, saying to Daniel, "Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you!!" (Dan 6 : 16)

The King, who was not a believer, seems to have had some sort of faith in Daniel's God!!! The King seems to have gotten this inner faith from seeing Daniel being committed to his own God, not giving up on Him no matter what!!! Daniel's behavior was one way of preaching in its own right, to the extent that made the King sure that His God was definitely going to "deliver him"!!!

Daniel was thrown into the den of the lions where no human being can survive for a few minutes. It was the end! The sad end of a great honest man! Daniel was considered to have died before the eyes of all who witnessed this sorrowful scene.

But early the next morning – just like the dawn of the Holy Resurrection, King Darius, Daniel's friend, went over to the Lions' den and cried out:

"... Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?, Then Daniel said to the king, "O king, live forever!, My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you" (Dan 6 : 20 – 22)

Daniel was alive!!!

Daniel didn't die!!!

Daniel's God saved him from the lions!!!

Daniel's God is Real!!!

Daniel's God is the Only God ... the Almighty God ... the Only God capable of saving His people!!!

Daniel's God is The True God ...

Darius may be considered a good man – a good king – but definitely not God!!!

Daniel had no chance to go preaching to the countries of the region; he couldn't speak out to the people telling them: **"Oh, come and see that the LORD [is] good; Blessed [is] the man [who] trusts in Him!"** (Psa 34 : 8) But he could do better. He lived a holy life; he was honest with God and people; he was ready to die for the sake of his faith, and that is why he was "raised from the death" or rather saved from being eaten up by the Lions, by the Power of God.

The Silent Evangelist could make the entire world worship his beloved God

"Then King Darius wrote: To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you. I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom [men must] tremble and fear before the God of Daniel. For He [is] the living God, And steadfast forever; His kingdom [is the one] which shall not be destroyed, And His dominion [shall endure] to the end. He delivers and rescues, And He works signs and wonders In heaven and on earth, Who has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions" (Dan 6 : 25 – 27).

Daniel's life was a great sermon to all the nations of his time.

Daniel's prayer was the light that conquered the darkness of that era.

Daniel's love to God was the key that caused the people of that time to see the Truth and Love of his God.

The Silent Evangelist spoke louder than any outspoken prophet in the Old Testament.

"St. Philip"

The Evangelist & The Second Deacon

Philip was the second person ever to be ordained "deacon" after St. Stephen; he was chosen (Acts 6) to be one of the seven deacons to manage some problems in the early church related to widows, food, and culture.

St. Stephen was great. He was full of the Holy Spirit. He was full of faith and wisdom. St. Stephen was a great preacher and a man of miracles.

Philip came second to Stephen. No one recognized him at the beginning; he seemed to be like Stephen's follower.

Stephen was killed; he was the first martyr. A wave of persecution had taken place in the church; people were running away from oppression and aggression.

Philip had to leave like others; he lost his first model, Stephen; he lost his co-servant and inspirer; he had to go out of Judea. But now he was full of passion and he thought of continuing the mission of Stephen ...

"Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them" (Act 8 : 5).

St. Philip was gifted. People accepted the Good News through him. He actually baptized many of the Samaritans, even the famous Simon the sorcerer.

5- Biblical Examples of Evangelism

Philip, being a good disciple who was humble at heart, asked to be supervised by the church Apostles. So, St. Peter and St. John came to give blessings to his service, putting their hands on him. They laid their hands on all the baptized to give them the Holy Spirit (that was the old rite before using the Myron). Philip, the deacon, was very happy because his ministry was accepted and blessed by the church elders.

Simon the sorcerers was not good. Philip prematurely decided to baptize him but St. Peter could see deeply his dark heart. St. Philip listened and learned humbly the lesson.

Philip, the preacher, was condescending and obedient. He was always guided by the Holy Spirit and by the angels of God. He was taken all of a sudden out of his way for a serious quick mission to start a great church in Ethiopia.

"Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, "Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza" This is desert. So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship,. was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet." (Act 8 : 26 – 28).

The Holy Spirit guided him easily because of his pure, humble heart "Go near and overtake this chariot"; he asked a question: "Do you understand what you are reading? The man of Ethiopia replied: "How can I, unless someone guides me?"

5- Biblical Examples of Evangelism

Philip was a good preacher! He spoke to the people about our Lord Jesus Christ the Savior. He was granted the Grace to handle the prophecies that prove that Jesus is the Messiah who came to save the whole world from sin and eternal death. That is what happened in the instance of the eunuch who was so much convinced of Philip's teaching that he told him: **"See, [here is] water. What hinders me from being baptized?"** (Act 8 : 36). Then Philip replied: **"If you believe with all your heart, you may"** (Act 8 : 37). And he answered: **"I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God"** (Act 8 : 37). It was then that Philip agreed to grant this good man the Sacrament of Baptism, after having made sure that he was ready for it.

Having completed this service, Philip was guided by the Holy Spirit for another mission **"But Philip was found at Azotus. And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea"** (Act 8 : 40).

Many years later, this great deacon was granted a huge blessing having St. Paul come to his house. At this point we come to learn that Philip had four daughters who were granted the gift of prophesying:

"On the next [day] we who were Paul's companions departed and came to Caesarea, and entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was [one] of the seven, and stayed with him. Now this man had four virgin daughters who prophesied" (Act 21 : 8 – 9).

5- Biblical Examples of Evangelism

This is the story of a great Deacon, a great Preacher, a Disciple of the Church, a man guided by the Holy Spirit, a man full of humility who could easily submit himself to the Bishops of the Church; a man whose family members enjoyed serving the Church, its Saints and its Apostles at their own home and who were, accordingly, granted many gifts by the Holy Spirit.

"St. Paul"

The Chosen Evangelist

We cannot cover the life of St. Paul in one chapter, in one book or in a series of books. St. Paul is the Role Model of the Chosen Evangelist. Our Lord described St. Paul saying:

"... he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel" (Act 9 : 15)

St. Paul started off as an antichrist; he was an aggressive, eccentric Pharisee; he was a blasphemer and a church persecutor. But, as he mentioned later, what he did "... was out of a good conscience, in ignorance and non-belief."

He was touched by the Grace of God as he was granted the huge Blessing of seeing our Lord Jesus Christ (Act 9). Instantly, he found out the Truth: that the One that he persecuted and hated was the self-same One who loved him dearly ... it is He, Yahweh, Our Lord and Savior – Jesus Christ.

We all need to see Christ in order to be empowered in our missions. We may see Him in the Bible ... in the people ... in circumstances ... in trials ... in visions. But we need to see Him ... not just once, but we need to see Him frequently.

"I have set the LORD always before me; Because [He is] at my right hand I shall not be moved" (Psa 16 : 8)

St. Paul was called upon to carry the Word of God to the Jews. That was what he believed at the beginning. But later on, he found out that his mission was to take a different turn being asked to preach the Word to the non-Jews/the pagans/the gentiles although he wished to spend his whole life serving his own people (the Jews) as he said:

"For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh"(Rom 9:3)

"but he followed the revelation, he obeyed the order to go to the gentiles "And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me" (Act 22 : 18)

We need to listen carefully to find out where our Lord wishes us to serve and who the people we are called upon to serve. We need our ears to be wide open all the time to hear His call and to know His will. We need to keep repeating with St. Paul all the time:

"Lord! What is it that You want me to do?" (Acts 9:6)

We need to be always ready to do His will, no matter how different it may be from our own will or desire.

"... And he said unto me, "Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles" (Act 22 : 21)

St. Paul believed that Asia Minor will be his main area of service for many years, may be even for life. But he was prevented to proceed in this area by the Holy Spirit to and readily he readily changed direction:

"Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia. After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them" (Act 16 :6 –7)

"And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us" (Act 16 : 9)

As St. Paul obeyed the orders he got, we could see that this was the beginning of Evangelism in the whole of Europe starting from Greece, and Philippi (Macedonia). This wasn't St. Paul's plan; rather, it was God's plan.

St. Paul always focused on developing many disciples wherever he went. In so doing, he was establishing many churches and empowering them through these disciples. On the other hand, these disciples were well rooted in the correct Christian Faith and were therefore quite reliable as they followed his teaching in all aspects ...

"But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance" (2Ti 3 : 10)

In all the countries he served, he made it a point not to leave until he ordained local priests. After so doing, he could move out but with the promise to come back and follow up on them ...

"So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed" (Act 14 : 23)

5- Biblical Examples of Evangelism

St. Paul followed up on his extended service everywhere not only by means of his frequent visits but also through the letters he sent to these churches. His follow up was not restricted to those churches he established, but it was extended to reach out to all Christians of all ages. Through the Epistles of St. Paul, we are granted the grace to know all the basics of Evangelism and of the teachings of Christianity in its purest form.

The Roman letter explains the story of the salvation; the Corinthian letters tell us how to resolve problems; the letters to Galatians focus on the Grace and Promise of the New Covenant; the letters to Colossians and Ephesians illustrate how Christ's life is seen through the Church; the letter to the Philippians embodies the great Joy and the incredible Peace that our Lord grants His children and His servants even while they are being persecuted; the letter to the Hebrews is highly Evangelistic as it is addressed to the Jews proving that Jesus Christ is the Messiah; the letters to Thessalonians are also Evangelistic, encouraging them to stand strong as they face persecution, and to keep their firm hope in the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

St. Paul's letters to his disciples are full of advice that did not only serve his disciples and help in guiding them, but they are still the main source of inspiration and help for all who serve in the Church whether this service is Evangelistic or Pastoral.

Although St. Paul had a deep and personal relationship with our Lord, he was extremely humble as we see him

5- Biblical Examples of Evangelism

constantly referring to his communication and consultation with the church apostles:

"And I went up by revelation, and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain" (Gal 2 : 2)

He was always keen on honestly following the tradition of the Church obeying all the rules, and standing firmly against all the heresies that faced the Church at that time:

"And as they went through the cities, they delivered to them the decrees to keep, which were determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem" (Act 16 : 4).

In spite of the fact that St. Paul was a very strong leader, yet he was also a humble, meek person who loved his children as a Church father

"Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears" (Act 20 : 31)

"Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with indignation?" (2Co 11 : 29).

St. Paul suffered for the sake of his mission more than anyone ever did; he stated those sufferings giving us a road map of some of the challenges that Evangelists should be prepared to face, as follows:

"Are they ministers of Christ? I speak as a fool I [am] more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons

more frequently, in deaths often. From the Jews five times I received forty [stripes] minus one .Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep.‘ [in] journeys often, [in] perils of waters, [in] perils of robbers, [in] perils of [my own] countrymen, [in] perils of the Gentiles, [in] perils in the city, [in] perils in the wilderness, [in] perils in the sea, [in] perils among false brethren, in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches" (2 Co 11 : 23 – 28).

St. Paul has therefore set the standards for the Evangelist. It is true that anyone who thinks he could embark on this service should study these passages extensively and pray hard so that our Lord unravels for him whether he is meant for this service or not.

"We give no offense in anything, that our ministry may not be blamed. But in all [things] we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses. in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings, by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left‘ by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and [yet] true. as unknown, and [yet] well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and [yet] not killed. as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many

5- Biblical Examples of Evangelism

rich; as having nothing, and [yet] possessing all things" (2Co 6 : 3 – 10).

St. Paul also made it clear that, in order to win a disbeliever to Christ, the Evangelist should:

- do anything and everything within his capabilities.
- go out of his way as much as he could.
- and use all possible methods in the most flexible manner.

He states it as such:

"... to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those [who are] under the law, as under the law, that I might win those [who are] under the law" (1Co 9 : 20).

St. Paul is the Evangelist who could happily state during his last days on earth and right before he went to Heaven:

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing" (2Ti 4 : 7 - 8)

True Story

"The Lord is my Shepherd"

One day the servants climbed a high mountain which was so far that they all got muscle strains. they had some drugs with them, including muscle relaxant medication.

They took the medication, but after 10 minutes strange symptoms started to appear on the legs of one of the servants: swelling and redness, great fatigue and drowsiness. He could barely open his eyes and felt overall inactivity. Since the nearest hospital was a limited possibility (about 4 hours away) they decided to put cold compresses, and this servant went into deep sleep.

After three hours of sleep, this servant woke up in **very well indeed!!**. No redness! No drowsiness! No swelling!

When they reached their destination, they met the doctor and told him what had happened. He was totally surprised and said: "That is a downright miracle!!!"

He explained saying that what happened to the servant was some sort of allergy that sometimes results from muscle relaxant medication's components. When such complications occur, the patient should immediately take a cortisone injection because this inflammation starts happening in all parts of the body. It usually hits all the organs of the body too which would lead to death!!!

But the Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

Prayer

Dear Lord ...

You are the Light of the world; and most of the world is in deep darkness ...

Grant Your light to shine into my heart, through the Grace of Your Holy Spirit, that Your light may graciously overcome my darkness ...

Allow Your Holy Light to shine strongly in my weakness and darkness so that others may be able to see Your Light and desire to be saved from the darkness of not knowing You ...

Dear Lord Jesus!

Please help me to be Your servant, Your man and Your witness like Paul and Daniel ...

Help me to Speak and Show Your truth to all the people who don't really know You ... whether through my life or by the words that You give me to witness to You ...

Forgive me for the years that I lost not serving You as I should or witnessing for Your Holy Name as I should ...

Forgive me for having been busy like many others with the day-to-day worries and earthly matters ...

Forgive me for my weakness in not following Your commandment or sticking to Your will ...

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Forgive me for the many chances that I failed to show others Your Holy Way ...

Forgive me for not being a holy vessel for Your Spirit ...

Grant me, dear Lord, the Power, Patience, Wisdom, Grace, and above all Your enormous Love that allow me, through Your Grace, to save as many souls as You wish ...

Amen

6

Spiritual Development of an Evangelist

6- Spiritual Development of an Evangelist

"Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving, meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak. Walk in wisdom toward those [who are] outside, redeeming the time. [Let] your speech always [be] with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one" (Col 4 : 2 – 6)

In this passage from his letter to the Colossians, St. Paul, the preacher, is asking for everybody's prayer so that God may open the door for His Holy Word.

But for the whole Christian congregation, all what is needed is that they keep their integrity as good wise Christians doing merciful acts, being always ready to answer all who ask them about their faith defending it strongly, wisely and meekly.

In order to be a good Evangelist you need to undergo continuous spiritual development, growth and maturity.

In this chapter we will specify some of the stages that an Evangelist should go through along his spiritual development towards full maturity. However, it should be noted that this development is an open-ended process, i.e. the evangelist should never think that he has reached full maturity and accordingly stop struggling for further growth. Contrarily, spiritual development is a continuous and transcendental process that aims at reaching out to the full image of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

6- Spiritual Development of an Evangelist

- 1- Be good.
- 2- Be merciful.
- 3- Be ready to answer.
- 4- Be a Wise Evangelist.

Level 1 – Be Good

Be a good Christian, it is the first and most important first step on the road to Evangelism.

Many Christians may think they can't preach, but they need to know that their lives could, and actually should, speak the Truth. Being good, honest, humble, happy, loving, serving, pure, and self-controlled will let others seek the Truth inside you.

All people seek money, lust, pride and all worldly pleasures, but Christians should turn the other way round away from these things. Christians should seek the virtues of their Heavenly Kingdom even while on earth.

"But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness"
(1Ti 6 : 11)

Good Christians may suffer just because they are good:

"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Mat 5 : 10)

But they should continue being the light of their world, witnessing for the Truth even if it has to be silently

6- Spiritual Development of an Evangelist

"... that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world"
(Phi 2 : 15)

Level 2- Be merciful

Christians are loving human beings. They are, and always should, work on maintaining being God-like or, as the Bible puts it, "Godly". And since God is love, they should reflect His Love to all around them: they should devote their whole life in spreading Love, preaching Love and sharing the Love of our Lord with all.

Christians are Evangelists like the good Samaritan who got out of his way to serve others, and place all his capabilities for the sake of those who need help.

Christians love to see Christ in all the needy people ...

"... for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in. I [was] naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me" (Mat 25 : 35 - 36)

By doing this they preach love, and they preach the Kingdom of Love, i.e. the Kingdom of Heaven.

"... how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him" (Act 10 : 38)

6- Spiritual Development of an Evangelist

This is the second level of Evangelism; it is still silent preaching, not only by being good, but also by the positive actions of love and mercy

"But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust" (Mat 5 : 44 - 45)

Level 3- Be ready to answer

"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always [be] ready to [give] a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed" (1Pe 3 : 15 - 16)

"Let your speech always [be] with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one" (Col 4 : 6)

We should all be ready to defend our faith.

If we live a Christ-like life and if we reflect Christ's love in all we do, most probably people will either keep wondering in their minds or will actually come asking you directly: why? How? What for? What if?

We need to be prepared to answer those people. We need to be prepared by knowing all about the common

6- Spiritual Development of an Evangelist

questions, researching how to best answer them using the simplest but most satisfying responses that may guide the one who poses them towards our Lord Jesus.

Living among different cultures may provoke different questions that need adequate convincing answers, so we need to be ready.

Sometimes the wise Evangelist may intentionally speak out or show some of the rituals of his belief in order to trigger non-believers to ask him about it, and he would then have an opportunity to speak about his belief and his worship. However, he has to be careful to do this in great humility seeking God's Grace and Wisdom.

For example, he may intentionally say that he is fasting without eating or drinking in order for others to ask about this and he would have a golden opportunity to witness for our creed and the significance of fasting in the Christian faith. However, he should be careful not to be doing this as a way of fishing for compliment or a way of showing off.

Level 4- Be A wise Evangelist

Being an Evangelist is indeed a full-time mission based upon a heart full of the desire to preach the word of God all the time and using all sorts of methods for that purpose.

"Preach the word! Be ready in season [and] out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching" (2Ti 4 : 2)

6- Spiritual Development of an Evangelist

No one can live as an Evangelist unless he passes through the previous three levels: being a good Christian and a role model, being a good loving and serving character to all people and being ready to answer questions related to the Christian Faith.

The life of an Evangelist is the greatest call for which one may be rewarded as **promised**:

"Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, And those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever" (Dan 12 : 3)

To Be an Evangelist is to know how to approach each one in a wise way and to reach each heart and every mind in the best way possible

"The fruit of the righteous [is a] tree of life, And he who wins souls [is] wise" (Pro 11 : 30).

A wise Evangelist should not:

- Indulge himself in the private life of others thinking that this is one way to proclaim the message of God.
- Behave in a spontaneous manner without studying whether this behavior is acceptable or not within the culture he is serving.
- Ask people to believe and leave their old life, before they show their passion to change.
- Give promises that he may not be able to fulfill.

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- Criticize the habits or mock the way of living/behaving of the different people he is serving.
- Indulge in too much talk about himself or his team thinking that this will make people trust him or Christ.
- Give much money or gifts while preaching specially during the early phase of the mission. People may wait only for the gifts ignoring the main aim of the mission, i.e. receiving the greatest gift of all – the word of God.
- Reveal secrets of those who confide in him and come seeking his advice or guidance.
- Take part in any wicked or weird actions performed in the tribe thinking that this is a way of making them feel he is one of them; these people may consider that he has adopted their beliefs.

True Story

"Challenges and Channels"

At 6:00 am, the servant took the bus heading from African country to another. God had called for service at our Coptic Orthodox Church in those two beloved countries to help build a strong foundation for the congregation to grow and enjoy worshipping and glorifying God.

At the borders, he was faced a problem with his visa which kept him under interrogation for over a couple of hours. Eventually, it was decided that he won't be able to enter the first country and his passport was stamped "***subject has to be sent back to his own country!***"

At that point he was so confused, why would God send him all the way then close the door like this?! But he decided to leave everything in God's hands, as he was sure God had a plan, yet still unrevealed.

At 9:00 am, as he was standing there in the middle of nowhere, he tried to find any kind of transportation to take him back to the first country. He remembered that, 4 hours ago, he took the phone number of a bus driver who tried but couldn't help him. He dialed the number and, to his great surprise, the driver told him that the bus was strangely held back for 4 hours at the borders, and was just set free that very minute! He collected his passport and luggage, and ran quickly to catch the bus thanking God for that transport.

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Getting on this wrecked bus, he found over 80 people stacked up along with their luggage. He hardly found a place to sit. Still confused, he kept asking God what was the reason for all that!

As the bus started to move, and it is the case always for any Christian country, the microphone was on, and a prayer was said for Christ to protect the bus and passengers, and bless them on their way.

After prayer, the man asked the passengers something in their language, the country's local language, to which they replied vigorously with refusal. When the servant asked what was wrong, he was told that the guy requested for someone to come up and **preach** to the other passengers; but that everyone declined.

So that servant of God started to ask if its ok for anyone to preach in the bus; and he got a confirmation on that. He then asked if it was welcomed for him to preach the people, and the whole bus was extremely excited at his offer. Standing there in front of them, he started to realize that God wanted to use him to deliver a message to each one of the 80 passengers on this bus!

He started by thanking God for this opportunity, and telling the people the whole story of what brought him to this place after 7 hours of suffering. God spoke through this mouth whether during the sermon or through the discussions with the many passengers about their relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ and that continued along the 7-hours trip.

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In addition, God planned that he had flyers talking about "Repentance and God's Love" that were exactly the quantity needed for the total number of passengers. He also had on him some books that dealt with topics directly related to some passengers' challenges in life and of course he gave them those books to read at their leisure!

Let's all pray that everyone that was on this bus would have received a special message and blessing, that would draw him closer to God.

Remember...

The Spiritual Development are:

- Level 1... Be Good.
- Level 2... Be merciful.
- Level 3... Be ready to answer.
- Level 4... Be a wise Evangelist.

Prayer

Dear Lord

You know that I am unworthy of serving You ... but I come to You with a heart full of passion for Your service ...

You know that I am worthless and incapable ... but I trust that Your Grace will help me grow and develop to become worthy of Your Holy service ...

Help me get closer to You ... coz it is only then that I will be able to learn what it is to be “a good Christian” and “a merciful Servant” ...

Dear Lord Jesus Christ ...

Help me learn what it means to know Your Truth ...

Teach me how to be ready to answer anyone who asks for the reason of my absolute hope in You ... in and of myself, I will never be able to do this ...

But it is only Your Grace that can grant me this Holy desire of speaking Your word and preaching it to the whole world ...

Dear Lord ... You are the All-Wise ... You are the source of all Wisdom.

I come to You with my incapability and lack of potential ... but I am sure that You will work with and in my weakness and that You will grant me the wisdom to evangelize Your Holy Truth to whoever You wish me to ...

Amen

7

Evangelism's Approaches

There are many approaches for the service of Evangelism. Actually, any kind of dialogue may pave the way to deliver the message of salvation. However, there are some common approaches that the Evangelist may resort to. But the general rule is that all approaches should start with a simple, patient, wise attitude that has at its core the specific goal of bringing the person with whom you are talking to the True Christian Faith and Repentance.

Here are but a few of those approaches:

1- Nature and Creation:

“How beautiful is this ...

mountain/scene/flower/tree/landscape/desert land?!!!”

This statement could be the starting point of a conversation about the Creator ... about God.

This approach is very much accepted by the people who love nature, especially the simple ones, like most of the African people, for example. It may also be used with people who belong to the western culture. However, in this case the Evangelist has to be prepared that the dialogue may take a different turn. For example, you may be led to a discussion of the theory of evolution versus creation.

The person you are speaking to may respond in any of the following ways: “I think the one who designed this beauty is great ... I believe in God ... Who is this God?... I believe in many

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gods! ... I believe in nature but I don't think there is any need to believe in a 'creator'!!!".

These are possible answers which will take you in different types of arguments or discussions. First, the evangelist needs to be well prepared for these arguments. St. Peter tells us:

"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear" (1 Peter 3:15).

This is why it is important for every Evangelist to be very well informed and to read as much as possible in the discipline of Christian Apologetics as a way of empowering themselves with arguments they can use in defending their faith.

The Evangelist has to do his part and have firm faith that, with the power of prayer, God will give wisdom, grace, and acceptance. Such conversations may result in having the chance to give this person a Bible, or a flyer, or even a contact (email) in order to pursue the discussion and maybe develop some sort of friendship.

2- Love:

Everyone loves to speak about their relationships: grand-fathers and grand-mothers enjoy telling stories about their kids and grandkids.

- It seems that you love him so much.
- Certainly I do, I adore him.
- I see love as the most precious and pleasant feeling in this life.

When such dialogues take place, the Evangelist may think it appropriate to take the lead to speak about the source of love (God), or the best expression of love (the Cross), or the difference between human love (the conditional type) and the unconditional love of God – the Eternal Unlimited Love.

Love is a favorite topic to speak about with most of the people. But you should be careful since the conversation may deviate from the pure love to discussing material love, or sexual love, or other forms which will take you away from your goal.

3- Suffering:

Most people are under some sort of suffering. Any kind of people you meet must have gone through some state of suffering. They may have passed through tough painful experiences that they can never forget. They may have at least experienced sharing other people's pain and suffering.

You are faced with statements like:

“This is really tough!”

“I can't imagine how this person can carry such a heavy burden!”

No matter what similar expressions of pain you are faced with, your response should be first sympathetic to the human feelings being expressed; second, you are invited to pray that our Lord grants you the Grace to proclaim your firm faith that such pain and suffering are bearable only with our Lord Jesus Christ carrying them with us ...

"Come to Me, all [you] who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Mat 11 : 28)

You can share a true story that happened to you or to others that you know personally. You may be able to explain how the worst experiences/pains/sufferings could be overcome only by prayer.

You may also point out the nature of this life on earth which is always full of pains; there should be another free life; a life of rest, and joy, with no tears or corruption or death.

Non-believers who suffer can be of two types: either they are badly in need of support and of hope during their pain and suffering or those who are bitter and cannot accept whatever pain they are going through.

The approach to each is quite different; and, as an evangelist, you have to first pray a lot that our Lord guides you to the most appropriate approach you can use with this person. Second, you have to be able to find out which type of person you are dealing with. However, it should be noted that your attitude should be very empathetic, i.e. sympathizing with their

pains and sufferings and at the same time showing true understanding of where they come from.

Dealing with the person who needs support requires that you emphasize how our Lord is the greatest Supporter ever in times of pain and suffering ... and that He would never ever let down anyone who calls on Him for support. You may resort to personal experiences of people you actually know. You should also be ready to reply to the argument of: if God is so good why does He allow suffering in the first place?! This takes us to the second kind of non-believers.

The second type of non-believers are those who are full of bitterness that they are made to suffer in the first place. They feel life is being unjust to them and that they are just too “unlucky” to be put in this unfortunate situation. Those people would be also very resentful to the idea of “a Good God” because their argument would probably be that: “if God does exist then He is unjust and unfair or even ‘harsh’ allowing His creatures to suffer all that much!!!”

You, as an Evangelist, have to be ready with the argument that our Christian Faith provides the most adequate, appropriate and reasonable reply in defense of “our dear Lord and God”. Our Christian Faith tells us that God’s original plan was for humanity to live in absolute Joy with no pain or suffering, but that Man had to have Full Freedom to “CHOOSE” ... That is why God gave Man the option to either live in ultimate Joy or to choose suffering and pain ... It was unfortunate that Man chose the second option (refer to the Prodigal son story).

However, our Lord is such an absolutely LOVING God that He wouldn't leave us to live to endure this pain for ever ... that is why He was incarnated and came as the Son of God who granted us Salvation through His own life, Death and Resurrection.

You should highlight that it is through NONE but our Christian Faith that we are sure of our LORD's GREAT LOVE and absolute KINDNESS. This love is made clear in the fact that God Almighty chose to send His only begotten Son to be incarnated in order to go through all what man does. Our Lord Jesus Christ's life on earth showed us clearly that He is not distant from the way we, humans, feel. He has gone through a lot of the pains that human beings go through. He was not only tortured and nailed to the Cross. He suffered being plotted against, insulted and accused of working with the devil. He was let down by His utmost close people, His own Apostles and Disciples and was betrayed by one of them. Eventually, our Lord Jesus Christ chose to partake of our own human sufferings and pains up until the worst human experience ever, i.e. death, only to grant us the Eternal Victory of the Resurrection and Everlasting Life with Him.

It is very important to highlight the Victory of our Lord over all evil powers, starting from the miracles He performed along the three years of His service on Earth, conquering illness, all diseases, raising the dead and ordering the storms and winds to STOP, reaching out to His greatest Victory in the Resurrection.

"For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved" (Joh 3 : 17)

You should also mention that our Lord listens to the prayers of all who suffer and sympathizes with all who is in pain. He may perform miracles healing the sick or solving the most serious problems. But the greatest miracle of all is granting His incredible Peace and Joy to all the hearts who call on Him and ask for His support even if they are in the worst of pains.

You may then challenge the person you are talking with to give it a try and see how things will develop. Be sure our Lord will handle the rest for the Glory of His Holy Name.

4- Corruption (sin):

"This Government/Company is corrupt; everything is corrupt!!"

This statement could be an opportunity of a good start to declare the truth of the Bible (no one is good or perfect), **"They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one"** (Rom 3 : 12).

You can now start telling the story of the Bible; God created man without corruption; but man with his free will broke the commandment of love, and that is why he has to keep struggling against corruption in order to achieve salvation.

Man can't save himself, can't do right by himself; he needs help from a perfect powerful righteous One – this is the loving God, Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

While evangelizing, we may not resort to the words of the Bible in every dialogue. Some people may not accept the Biblical revelations easily; but as the dialogue proceeds, it is recommended that we reach the level of proclaiming the Good News through verses like:

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (Joh 3 : 16)

"Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live" (Joh 11 : 25)

You may think it appropriate to discuss how the life of sin (or any kind of perversion) has proved to lack any kind of permanent joy or pleasure. You may wish to resort to the fact that the Western most developed countries are now going back to realize the importance of the value of "Family ties" versus "single parents" and so on ... You may even mention the diseases related to many perversions that, according to our Christian faith, are not acceptable, i.e. "sin".

You may wish to explain the notion of "sin" as the act of "being separated from the most loving and most caring person that anyone can ever think of, i.e. God". And how being close to God is experiencing a state of Joy that nothing and no one can ever take away from you.

This is why the Evangelist should be someone who has experienced this unique relationship with our Lord to be able to speak about it in a convincing way to those who have never heard of it. It is similar to someone who has been to an amazingly lovely place and keeps talking about it to others wishing they would also have the pleasure of going there and enjoying it; or tasting a lovely dish that you would want everybody to have the chance to taste it.

5- Morals:

People may disagree about the idea of morals; but everybody uses words like (good, bad, right, wrong). This could be a good starting point of evangelizing.

You may start by asking the question: “how could people see things as right or wrong? How could they decide what is it that is right and what is it that is wrong?”

It looks like there is some sort of a built-in program in all human hearts that allows them to recognize the difference between what is right and what is wrong.

This could be a key for delivering the message of “the good God who created man in accordance to His own image”. That's why most people tend to be good. Even those who are not good and who lead a loose life of sin and lust, still seem to see one way or the other that they are not on the “right track”.

You may then be able to develop the argument towards speaking about the fact that we, as Christians, have been blessed to know “the perfect standard example of Absolutely Good Morals” in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ who lived in accordance to those morals some 2000 years ago on earth. That is simply due to the fact that He was not “a mere man”; but also He is God Incarnate – that is why He is so Perfect and is the best example of Perfect Morals in practice.

People are always looking for a perfect role model to follow; they don't need lessons in morals, but they need to see a perfect life to live like; and that is very much true of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

6- Afterlife:

People may complain of being old, or having unfulfilled dreams, or fearing the end of their lives, etc ...

This is a very good chance to open the subject and to evangelize your message of the Christian Faith. The most important question that needs to be put is the following:

What if this is not the only life?

We all wish and cry out for another life or ask for a longer life, a different life, or even an eternal life. This seems to be the desire of all hearts all over the world.

Now, we are privileged to have the absolutely Good News: we, Christians, do not only believe in another life, a better and an eternal life; but we also have proof that it does

exist. Our proof comes from the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who died on the Cross, was buried, but rose from the death, was seen and touched by His disciples and ascended to Heaven – to the Eternal Life where He came from. His promise for all who believe in Him is to follow Him where He is – to live ever after an Eternal Life of Peace and Joy.

“Don't you wish to see those who departed?!”

“Don't you wish to live a different life; a life with no worries, no hurts, and no death!!”

“Here is the good news ... here is the promise of God:

"From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mat 4 : 17)

At this point you have to be careful because some people may believe you are talking about the re-incarnation, which is another life on this earth upgraded or downgraded. But this is just a false dream and a man-made idea.

The true God is the only One who owns Eternity. He revealed Himself and showed us the way to Eternal Life.

"for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom 14 : 17)

Remember that there are two main goals in any preaching program:

First: to know the real and true God and to believe in Him.

Second: to develop a personal relationship with Him praying to Him, asking His constant forgiveness, company and support.

We are not preaching good morals, or a better quality of life on earth, or being good human beings. We are preaching the Word of God which will make us His sons and daughters: super men and women, not in physical power, but in charity, purity and righteousness.

True Story

"He Does it All"

The tribes live in the foothills of the mountains, planting the mountains, their agriculture depending mainly on the rainfalls, and they eat what they plant.

At the foothills of the mountains where they live, they built churches for themselves using very simple wicker, the seats made from the branches of the trees.

What touches the heart is that we always found corn and other crops in front of the altar; and when we wondered what this altar corn and crops were, we discovered it was from the harvest of their plantations!!

Our Lord guided us that we should begin a pre-servant's course targeting a group of servants from every tribe.

Indeed, an intensive course was done for a period of ten days, and Sunday school curriculum was distributed to them.

We then visited all the churches on the tops of mountains to encourage them to start using the Sunday School curriculum and to make sure they regularly had Sunday School for all kids.

These lovely people used to walk a very long distance in to obtain water but before we headed back, our loving Lord miraculously set the drilling of groundwater wells close to them. This happened after our Lord arranged for us to meet someone

7- Evangelism's Approaches

from the Workers' Rights Organization, who helped us in accomplishing this task.

The miracle was really made much clearer since that it was our last visit to this region. Guess why? Only three days after our return, war started completely blocking all the roads that led to the Mountains. Since then no one was able go to them, neither are they able to come.

But our loving Lord had prepared for them good servants supported with a solid Sunday school curriculum and a nearby water well – the absence of which may have resulted in their perishing due to lack of water. But everything was rightly planned by our Kind Loving Lord.

Remember...

Evangelism's Approaches are:

- 1- Nature & Creation.
- 2- Love.
- 3- Suffering.
- 4- Corruption (sin).
- 5- Morals.
- 6- Afterlife.

Prayer

Dear Lord Christ

Everything around me speaks of you ...

All days and all places are proclaiming your existence, love and care ...

But most people are blind and deaf ...

They can't see the Truth in You ...

They can't hear your Voice that is all around ...

Please Dear Good Lord ...

Help me to show others Your way ... to help others see You and hear Your voice ...

Put Your Hands through me on their eyes, ears, minds and hearts ... so that everything may change ... and so that they come to know You ... to hear Your Holy Voice ... to see Your Glory in all around us ... so that they may live in Your Joy on earth and also awaiting the promise of an Eternal Life in Your Holy Company ...

Dear God, have mercy upon me and all the sinners of this world ...

Amen.

8

Evangelistic Stories from the Bible

In this chapter we will discuss the evangelical side of two of the main stories that are recorded in the Bible: the Prodigal Son, a story related by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself; and the incident that took place when our Lord met with the Samaritan woman.

A-The Prodigal Son

The story of the prodigal son is a good example of preaching the Christian message for nonbelievers in a simple yet very effective way.

Our Lord Jesus Christ used to simplify the truth in parables:

"But without a parable He did not speak to them. And when they were alone, He explained all things to His disciples" (Mar 4 : 34)

Deep spiritual messages and truths were put in the form of practical stories/examples in order for the simple people to be able to grasp those Truths.

In the same way, Evangelists should be ready with examples from the Bible or from real life to be able to reach out to non-believers, whether they are sophisticated or simple-minded people, with the message of Truth and the Good News.

The story of the prodigal son can simplify many important points in the missionary service, for both young kids and older

people, for sophisticated minds and simple people, for all types of people all over the world and at all times.

Here are some of the Truths/Messages that are made clear through this great story:

The Truth of God's Nature:

The story of the Prodigal son presents the image/truth of God's lovely nature being the Kind Father who accepts all hurts from His beloved children choosing to give them absolute freedom even if their will contradicts His.

The story presents a younger son breaking His Father's heart choosing to take his share of his father's wealth, leaving the house to live his life away from his father the way he likes.

We are also presented with an elder son who, though doesn't leave his father, yet refuses the merciful and forgiving nature of His father towards the repentance of the younger brother. This elder son also refuses to forgive his own brother, accusing his father of being unjust and unfair.

Although the two sons behave in a cruel way towards their father, ***we are faced with the firm position of this kind-hearted father who keeps loving them both waiting for them to come back with His arms and heart wide open.*** We are told that He doesn't even request an apology or regret ... ***The only thing that makes Him full of joy is the return of His own children to His bosom.*** All He longs for is to be able to express His great love to them and to see them happy and enjoying his fatherhood.

This Loving Father is the perfect Role Model of how a great Father is expected to be like. He is full of wisdom, kindness, forgiveness, patience and mercy. This loving father is an excellent representation of the Image of our Dear God.

Sin and Corruption

The story of the Prodigal Son also simplifies the idea of sin and corruption. It illustrates how sin is man-made. It is the result of a wrong choice; it is the abuse of man of the Free Will that God gave him.

The story shows that the Father wouldn't oblige his son to stay with him. He wouldn't accept that His son stays with him against his own "free will". That is why He decided that the relationship between them should be built on "free choice" rather than obligatory commitment.

The son decided to live far away from his father. That is why there had to be the choice of either "near to the father" or "far from Him". The father didn't wish his son to have "no choice" except to live with him. He gave His son all reasons that would make him wish to stick around. So the elder was wise enough not to leave this great life where he is enjoying his father's riches, wealth, love and all other blessings. But the younger one made a different decision.

In order for "free will" to be exercised, there had to be "two options" to choose out of: either life with the Father or away from Him. But it turned out to be eventually a choice

between a joyful life (with the Father), or a miserable one (away from the Father in the company of pigs).

Likewise, God created man in the best state and didn't wish for him to live away from him. But in order for man to be a "Free Human Being" and in order for him to "exercise" this free will, God put the "forbidden tree" in the Kingdom of Heaven and made it clear that this is the "only forbidden fruit" out of the whole Kingdom.

God made it clear that the outcome of eating from this tree is "death". But man still made the wrong decision and "ate from the forbidden tree", separating himself from His Creator, just like the prodigal son did.

Even then, as a Loving Kind-hearted Father, God prepared for Man the plan of salvation in order to fix what he had "stupidly" done to himself, causing his own "Godly" nature to be corrupt and for death to conquer him after he had sinned.

Evil is never God's plan or His choice; God is ALL GOOD. And His main concern is to put right what man continuously makes wrong through his faulty decisions.

But God wouldn't ever impose anything on man, just like the father in the story didn't try to persuade his son to stay against his will. Man has to ask for God's support and intervention in order for Him to do so. Man has to willingly surrender his will and life to God.

Repentance and Forgiveness

The story goes that the prodigal son suffered tremendously after he had lost all he took from his father on his pleasures which didn't last long. He lived a miserable life and ended up eating with the pigs.

"And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything" (Luk 15:16)

He then thought to himself that he should try to go back to his father asking his forgiveness and asking him to allow him to stay at his home even if it is with the servants. But the big surprise was the way his father received him with his arms wide open welcoming him back in great love and absolute forgiveness.

"But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him" (Luk 15 : 20)

The father didn't only make this absolutely warm personal welcome. He even called on everyone to join him in celebrating the return of his prodigal son. He made a great banquet and offered the best sacrifice in celebration.

That is a very close image to our Lord's reaction to the return of any sinner. God is full of joy. He opens His arms wide for any lost soul who returns to Him. He is waiting impatiently for all of us to repent and to come back to His bosom to enjoy His blessed Holy company and to live in Peace and Joy with Him.

He celebrates our return with the great banquet of the Holy Liturgy where we all partake of the Holy Eucharist – of eating His body and drinking His blood to be all united in Him. He is waiting impatiently for all sinners to give them again their lost glory and their “Godly” nature that we lost by our own free through making the “wrong” choices. He is waiting with His arms wide open to give all sinners the good life they had lost by indulging in sin and by separating from Him.

The story of the “Prodigal Son” is one of the best ever to explain how Our Father in Heaven is always ready to accept sinners. There is always a chance for everyone to come home, to enjoy the fatherhood of God and to live a joyful righteous life away from “the swine's pods”.

Unexpectedly, some of the very far away people may come home running hungry for salvation and forgiveness, while some of the actual members of the house may lose their place, because they are not able to love others.

Forgiveness and Redemption in the story are realized when the father runs to his younger son, falls on his neck, and kisses him. At that very moment all the prodigal son's sins are forgiven, and all the debts deleted by the father who most willingly gives him lots of gifts and celebrates his return joyously.

"But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive

again; he was lost and is found.’ And they began to be merry"

(Luk 15: 22 – 24)

The gifts that the repented son receives from His Father are the following:

- **The “best robe”**: a symbol of the new life, receiving the gift of baptism to enjoy the renewed life that has been granted to those who believe in the Son of God through His Redemption and Holy Salvation .
- **The “ring”**: stands for the right to inherit; the gift of the Holy Spirit (Myron) as a proof of inheritance.
- **The “sandals”**: are a sign of the glory of the son who is no longer a mere slave.
- Finally, the offering of **the “fatted calf”** and the celebration stands for partaking of the Holy Eucharist after mass prayers while all believers are full of joy.

Partaking of the Joy of the Father

The story goes that the elder son who didn’t actually leave his father’s house was not happy at the extremely warm welcome that the Father gave the younger one upon his return. Our Lord Jesus tells us that the elder son refused to join the celebration:

"But he was angry and would not go in" (Luke 15:28)

He didn’t spare any effort in outspokenly blaming his father for that great forgiveness and extravagant celebration, claiming:

"Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. 30 But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him" (Luk 15 : 29 - 30)

The elder son too broke his father's heart for his lack of "love to his brother". The elder son also separated himself from his father. He may not have done so physically, but he definitely lacked the loving, merciful nature of his father. He chose to replace love for hatred, mercy for grudge, and sacrifice for selfishness.

That is why the Father's heart ached when He heard those harsh words from His elder son. He reprimanded him for his lack of love for his brother and tried to remind him of the great truth that he has to join him in this celebration, trying to make him see things with His loving, forgiving and merciful eyes.

"It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found" (Luk 15 : 32)

The elder son is also a sinner. He represents those believers who are full of self-righteousness and who look down upon sinners. But, through the story of the prodigal son, our Lord Jesus Christ delivered the message clear and loud to these too. Both went astray: one willingly gave up the love of God (the father), the other assuredly gave up the love of man (his brother). Both willingly gave up the "Godly" nature that their

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Father had granted them and therefore both could not enjoy their Father's company (Heaven).

God (our Father) is always calling and waiting for all His children to come back home. He doesn't even wait for them to arrive to where He is. Rather, He reacts as soon as any sinner decides to make the move ...

"But when he (the repenting son) was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him" (Luk 15 : 20)



B- The Samaritan woman

One of the longest dialogues in the New Testament is the one between our Lord Jesus Christ and the Samaritan woman (John 4). This dialogue is rich with messages that evangelists can use to reveal the truth about God and about His great desire that all people gain Salvation.

"For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Tim 2 : 3 – 4)

Here are some facts about the story and their significance to the Evangelism service:

- Our Lord Jesus went out of His way to find this woman. He traveled a long way, walked many miles, got thirsty, and was tired. He did all that for the sake of this one woman – for the sake of this “sinner”.
- Our Lord Jesus Christ meant to have a quiet and personal time with this woman; so He asked His disciples to go on an errand of buying food. He respected the privacy of the situation knowing that she would probably feel more comfortable to speak out her secrets with Him alone and not in the presence of many people.
- Our Lord took the initiative of starting the dialogue. He chose to initiate the conversation through expressing a need on His part for this woman to help Him, namely, that He needed her

to give Him to drink. That was a very smart way of encouraging this person to speak with Him.

- On the other hand, from the point of view of the Samaritan woman, it was extremely surprising that a “Jewish man” would speak to her in the first place. It was even more astonishing considering He was known as a “teacher” (or some sort of a rabbi). She wondered how He would act in a condescending manner and ask “a Samaritan woman” for a drink of water. Our Lord’s humble way broke the ice with her and made it easier to have a conversation with her.
- Our Lord Jesus Christ did all He could to win this “sinning soul”. From the beginning of their conversation, it was quite obvious that our Lord was intent on enduring everything for the sake of this lost soul. He accepted her negative and even aggressive attitude. He kept the conversation flow going with great respect, decency and warmth to the extent that this lady expressed her amazement, saying ...

"How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans" (Joh 4 : 9)

- Our Lord Jesus Christ then got to the core of the matter, as He spoke to her about a different “Living Water” that none but Him can provide. It is then that He could attract her attention to ask about the nature of this water and the way to get it. Our Lord made use of the woman’s physical need to guide her to the way of spiritual repentance.

- Our Lord then asked her to bring her husband and come back so that He provides them with that water. He asked about her husband to give her the chance to open up the dark chambers of her “sinning soul”. It is important to note that the attitude of our Lord was always positive, speaking with a smile and using very gentle words.
- The Samaritan Woman was honest. She wouldn’t tell a lie about her “husband” so she replied that she didn’t have one.
- Our Lord Jesus Christ straightaway took hold of this great opportunity and praised her great honesty:

"You have well said, I have no husband for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly" (Joh 4 : 18)

- Our Lord teaches us to try to see the best in every human being we meet even if he is a non-believer or a sinner. He wishes us to be tolerant and gentle with all and shows us that this is the way we will be able to gain many souls to Him.
- Through this story, Our Lord assures us that there is always something good in every person and that no matter how much of a sinner a person is, he still retains something of the original image of our Lord according to whom we have been created.
- In His wisdom and gentleness, our Lord was able to achieve a very important step in the relationship with this poor sinner: He managed to lead her to love Him and to trust Him. At this point she stopped being negative or aggressive and was ready

to accept whatever He tells her. One of the saints said: "no one could be saved by you until he loves you".

- We then see that our Lord didn't focus much on the details of this lady's dark past. On the contrary, he moved straight forward with her to the level of spiritual worship. He even simplified all the duties that she needed to do to achieve salvation saying:

"But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. "God [is] Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (Joh 4 : 23 – 24)

His main goal throughout the dialogue was to show this woman how much God loves her and is waiting impatiently for her and any other sinner to ask His forgiveness.

- We notice that our Lord didn't reveal the whole truth to the Samaritan Woman rapidly. Rather, He took her step by step in order for her to digest the deep meaning of this marvelous new life: the Holy Spirit, the Living Water, and His deep and true love. He wasn't in a hurry to find her become dedicated as if He wishes us to realize that in order for any human being to grasp the Truth of our Lord's Love as totally different from anything he ever experienced before, he needs to be given enough time and space to do so.

- Another variable in this lovely incident is the attitude of the disciples who, at least at the beginning, hadn't welcomed the idea that our Lord was having a conversation with a "Samaritan"! In contrast to this negative attitude we are told that our Lord was really very happy and satisfied. He was no longer hungry or thirsty ...

"Therefore the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought Him [anything] to eat?". Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work."Do you not say, 'There are still four months and [then] comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!"

(Joh 4 : 33 – 35)

- We then get the great consolation as an outcome of this lovely incident and dialogue: the Samaritan woman became a great Preacher – she became an Evangelist. Before she met and accepted our Lord as Savior, she was ignorant, wicked, rejected and un-respected by her people. But after she talked to Him, loved Him, trusted Him and accepted Him to rule over her life, she got the wisdom and grace to bring to Him all the Samaritan people. She couldn't restrain herself from preaching to everybody the Good News that she now knew very well:

"Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" (Joh 4 : 29)

- However, we have to note that although the Samaritan woman had this great role in bringing the Samaritan people to

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meet our Lord and spend time with Him, yet she was nothing more than a mediator. They were able to believe in our Lord only when they saw Him and heard His Holy Teachings. Then they said ...

"Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard [Him] and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world" (Joh 4 : 42)



True Story

"Jesus is here"

After the meeting and prayer, people started leaving towards a dark place, and the servants were getting ready to leave to the place they were staying in.

But one of the servants found an urge inside herself to ask one of the mothers about a closed room; saying, "What's in this room?". The mother answered, "There is a sick child in that room". The servant asked her, "What kind of illness?". The mother replied, "She fell down in a coal stove, so her legs, her hands, and parts of her body got burned". The servant was shocked, and asked, "What did you do to her?" The mother said, "We put her in that room; and provided her with food and drinks, to eat and drink, and nothing more". The servant asked, "Did you take her to a doctor or to a hospital?"

The answer came shocking: She was not!!!

The servants entered the room to see the burned girl. While using their torches for lighting, they found a little girl with many parts of her body totally burned. They immediately took her to the hospital and asked the doctors to take care of her. Thank God the doctors could operate on her several plastic surgeries until she became much better.

When the other servants asked this servant what motivated her to ask for about that dark room, she answered that something inside her was just pushing her to that room,

Our Lord Jesus Christ was urging us to open this door ... to see this little girl ... He was probably saying "Here ... I'm here ... come visit me".

Prayer

Dear Lord,

I know that I will never be able to speak about You unless You give me the Grace to do so ...

So I am asking You imploringly to grant me the Wisdom to speak to all who don't know You in the best way ...

I wish I can bring all the people to see you as the Samaritan woman did ...

I need to enjoy your forgiveness, your care, your smile, your talk, and your kindness so I can preach Your Holy Name to everyone ...

I know I don't deserve to be your messenger but you accepted her ... so please accept me and send me to tell everyone how much You are Great in Your Mercy, Love and Care to all Human Beings ...

Amen

9

Leadership & Management in Evangelism

Development projects are one way of opening doors for the proclamation of the good news. However, such projects need good management. That is why managerial skills are needed in the missionary ...

Church management (sometimes called church Administration) is a large and important branch of church ministry. It is a gift of the Holy Spirit and it is quite essential for the growth, and expansion of any church, especially the missionary church.

The Evangelist should be both a good “leader” and a good “manager” in order to be able to lead the people to God with diligence as a good Shepherd, and to manage the church properly as a good steward.

"... he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness" (Rom 12 : 8)

For a successful and fruitful missionary work, the following elements are crucial in church leadership and service management.

1- Clear Vision, Mission and Goals:

The Evangelist should have a clear vision (i.e. spiritual dream for the church and the congregation, which should have one common issue: the salvation of all, church seeding, preparation of servants for preaching, and managing the growing church).

The clear vision should be fractioned into priorities and should be verbalized in the form of a specific mission, i.e. a road map to realize the vision. The missionary team should work together on this vision and mission and should share it with any new member who joins the mission such as: co-servants, and disciples.

The mission should be translated into concrete steps or “Goals”. Each goal should formulate one step forward towards achieving the mission.

2- Team Building:

The proper orthodox evangelism is always a matter of a good team work. Even if a gifted servant succeeds to bring non-believers to the Christian faith, he would never be able to do the necessary following-up for them. Newcomers need to be planted into the orthodox church congregation, and all the community of the church should not only be ready to accept them but they should assume responsibility to help them to grow in faith, love, and hope.

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To make a good team the Evangelist Leader should spend enough time with the local servants with whom he will serve. He should allow them to share the missionary vision and should involve them in carrying it out through both spiritual practice, like Bible study, prayers and partaking of the Sacraments, and through practical activities that have been agreed upon.

The Evangelist Leader should work hard on keeping the spirit of the team among all the servants in his missionary, whether local or from the mother church. Team spirit can never be maintained without the Christian perfect meaning of love. The Evangelist Leader has to pray a lot and work hard on developing a spirit of mutual respect, temper-control, active listening, negotiation skills, discrete outspokenness, tolerance and acceptance of “other’s” varied opinions, continuous prayers for one another, true humility, and sharing all aspects of the service.

One of the major defects that may negatively affect the service is the lack of clear job description of each team member. Members should know exactly what to do and what not to do, who is assigned to each task, and to whom each of them is accountable.

3- Planning:

A good Evangelist Leader/Manager should be skilled and well trained in planning. However, a servant’s planning skills are not just intellectual. The servant’s planning should be guided by

9- Leadership & Management in Evangelism

the Holy Spirit through continuous prayer, humility, and submission to the church fathers.

Planning for the mission should take enough time through researching many aspects like ...

- Other missionary churches, their activities, and their success.
- Availability of resources including human resources (local servants, church building, relations, ... etc)
- Priorities in different places, types of activities, and target age groups.
- Frequency of activities and interactions.
- Referral system and accountability.

Planning should answer the questions of: who? (Which servants); is doing what? (Type of service); when? (Time span needed) where? How?(The way of applying the service/project); how much? (The expenses needed); for how long? (Duration of the service/project); and to whom should he refer?

4- Establishing Systems and respecting them:

A successful manager should follow rules and regulations and should help others to follow them as well. When our Lord Jesus Christ sent his disciples on a mission He put for them the rules and regulations of the mission (Mat 10), (Mar 6), (Luk 9 & 10) in the form of Do's & Don'ts. Here are a few examples ...

Dos ...

- Go to villages of Israel.
- Preach saying that the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.
- Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers.
- Raise the dead, cast out demons.
- Stay in one house in each village.
- Shake off the dust of any resistant town.

Don'ts ...

- Neither go to Samaria nor to the pagans.
- Don't take any money for your services (your service should be given freely).
- Don't take money, silver, gold, sandals, clothes with you (don't care for your needs).
- Don't be busy with anyone on the way.

5- Ministry follow up and Accountability:

**"And the apostles, when they had returned, told Him all that they had done. Then he took them and went aside privately into a deserted place belonging to the city called Bethsaida"
(Luk 9 : 10)**

"Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name", and He said to

them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven" (Luk 10 : 17– 18)

A very important aspect of a successful project of Evangelism is the follow up and the reporting, the evaluation, and documentation of the experience in order to make good use of it for future similar missions.

Evaluation and assessment is of great benefit to the service because it brings about the weaknesses and challenges as well as the achievements and successes. Evaluation is crucial for future planning and could be of great use for other missions too.

6- Delegation of Authority:

For a dynamic service and a dynamic missionary church, the main leader of the missionary (the Father responsible for the service) should be able to delegate authority to the suitable servants, just like our Lord did when he gave part of His authority to His disciples.

It is important here to highlight and to remember that we are talking about delegating "authority" and not responsibility. This is why it is very important that the leader is able to choose the right person in the right place, in order to guarantee that the delegated person is going to succeed in carrying out the task as planned.

However, the Evangelism leader should be careful not to overburden particular servants with too many tasks since he

could see that they are efficient, while he ignores other servants. Delegation should be fully implemented and not just theoretically, i.e. full authority should be given to the delegated servant.

7- Smart Targets:

Missionary Targets or Goals should be S.M.A.R.T:

- S** Specific
- M** Measurable
- A** Achievable
- R** Realistic
- T** Time bound

However, this scientific way of thinking should be governed by a spiritual perspective. It is important to note that our Lord followed the same method while giving His disciples certain missions or errands. This is very clear in the miracle of the five loaves of bread and the two fish with which He fed the five thousand men ...

"... For there about five thousand men. Then he said to His disciples "Make them sit down in groups of fifty" (Luk 9 : 14)

- **Specific:** To make all people sit in groups.
- **Measurable:** How many? groups of 50 or 100.
- **Achievable:** with 12 apostles they can do it.
- **Realistic:** needed for distributing food

True story

""The Holy Spirit leads"

On a mission in Africa, God organized an unplanned visit to a high school where the servants were scheduled to spend an hour talking to 300 African youth about any topic they choose. Being confused what topic they shall discuss; they were sort of guided to discuss the idea of "Success".

They had a real good discussion with the youth and the Spirit of God was really felt in the place with all the Africans praising and worshipping.

When the principal of the school came up to conclude the discussion, to their astonishment, he announced that the results of the school were deteriorating. Students had started to leave the school, and the staff was getting quite desperate. He mentioned that the discussion about Success that we had was really uplifting for everyone and he felt that it was a message from our Lord that they should have faith in Christ that they will all unite their efforts: students, teachers, and staff, to get back on track to a better situation ... Our visit was obviously planned by God to reinstall Hope in the hearts of all involved in this school, whether administrative staff, teachers or students.

Remember...

A Good Leader/Manager Evangelist should have:

- 1- Clear Vision, mission and goals.
- 2- Team Building.
- 3- Planning.
- 4- Establishing Systems and respect them.
- 5- Accountability at all levels.
- 6- Delegation of authority.
- 7- Smart Targets.

10

**Class of
Catechumens**

A “**catechumen**” is a Greek word (Greek: κατηχούμενος) that indicates the person who is preparing for baptism in the Church. In the ancient Church, the catechumenate, or time during which one is a catechumen, often lasted for as much as three years and included not only participation in the divine services, but also “catechesis”, i.e. formal instruction from a teacher, often the bishop or appointed catechist.

As the Church eventually became a majority religion of the lands in which it existed, the catechumenate as an institution gradually died out in many places, as most Christians were baptized shortly after birth. However, as Orthodoxy moved into the West, Africa and Far East and begun gaining converts to the faith, the catechumenate has been significantly rejuvenated.

Since the time of St. Cyril of Jerusalem and St. John Chrysostom, it has been the tradition that catechetical instruction typically lasts three years. Before going through any plan for catechumen, it should be made sure that the person who will be part of this order has an elder “mentor”. This could be an Orthodox Priest or at least a mature servant. This system guarantees that the new believer is given the chance to learn all about our Lord Jesus Christ and the teachings of Christian Faith, repent and be sure of his position wishing to accept the Grace of Baptism and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Currently, the catechumen is expected to stay under close supervision for a period of three months up to one year. However, this period could be prolonged to last for more than one year according to the new believer's commitment, understanding, repentance, transformation, and personal relationship with God.

The reason why this order is important is that the immature baptized member, may go through temptations & doubts soon after getting the gift of the Sacraments; whereas those who stay in this catechumen program for a sufficient period of time usually tend to be solid servants and a lot of them become Evangelists after their celebration as members of the church through receiving the Sacraments of Baptism, Myron, and Communion.

The catechumenate program may include a number of curricula, for example Bible reading, the Church history and the catechumen Lent Program.

Lent Program:

The program of the 7 weeks readings in the lent up to the start of the Holy week of Baskha were a sort of a final program for catechumens before baptism. These catechumens usually got baptized on the 6th Sunday (born blind) in order to celebrate the Resurrection with the whole church during Easter after having lived with our Lord Jesus Christ's sufferings during the Holy week.

Outline of the Lent Program:

- 1- Preparation Sunday** ... How to practice prayer, fasting & giving.
- 2- Treasure Sunday** ... To focus on heaven & God, not on Earth or money.
- 3- Temptation Sunday** ... How to conquer all temptations; eye, flesh, and pride by the word of God.
- 4- Prodigal Son Sunday** ... The mercy of God the father, and the importance of the going back home (continuous repentance).
- 5- The Samaritan Woman Sunday** ... The new life with living water, through the gifts of the Holy Spirit.
- 6- Sunday of the Paralyzed** ... Spiritual struggle to walk steadily in the way of God.
- 7- Sunday of the Born Blind** ... Sacrament of Baptism, and all the blessings of the Enlightened, New Life.
- 8- Palm Sunday** ... the fellowship in the people of God crying out Hosanna (save us); to live their life after baptism always in a state of sanctification and through enjoying the power of our Lord's Resurrection.

All through these weeks, we can see clearly the church focusing on the faith, explaining and simplifying in many ways the doctrines of the Trinity, Redemption, the Divine Nature of Christ, the Power of the Holy Spirit, gaining Eternal Life through Christ, and the Orthodox Sacramental Church.

It is also to be noted that all the readings of the Bible during these days, we can see clearly the focus on repentance, the coming back to God the Creator & our Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior, and the importance and blessings of quitting sinful life through receiving the Grace of the Holy Spirit.

We can also see the focus on the New Life given to those who receive the Holy Sacraments: as we could see in the Samaritan, the paralyzed, and born blind the stories of which highlight the importance of the water & the spirit (living water), and its role in renewing life.

Generally speaking, any catechumenate program should include the following:

- 1- The new believer should study one of the Synoptic Gospels (Mathew, Mark, or Luke) with simple explanations.
- 2- He should study the Gospel of St. John to clarify the belief in The Holy Trinity and the Divine Nature of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 3- He should have a good idea about the rites and prayers of the Orthodox church: the psalms (Agpeya), the incense, the liturgy (mass), the Baptism, and Myron.
- 4- He should study & memorize the Lord's Prayer (Our Father who art in Heaven....), and also the creed.
- 5- His God-father in Baptism should guide him concerning any bad relations or habits and towards the commitment to Christian discipline.

10- Class of Catechumens

- 6- The new believer should start to attend either specific meetings for Catechumens, or one of the Bible studies in one of the Orthodox churches.
- 7- The new believer should attend mass at least once a week, to be able to follow the prayers and get the taste of the Liturgy, but of course without partaking of the Sacrament of the Eucharist before getting baptized.
- 8- It is recommended that the new believer is encouraged to read some simple books that include briefing about the Christian doctrines, the Christian life, the Sacraments of the Orthodox Church and its order.
- 9- The differences between the Christian view and other worldviews concerning many aspects of life should be explained: things like homosexuality, unnatural relations, abortion, wars, etc...
- 10- The basic principles of the Church towards the following should be emphasized:
 - The Holy marriage (having only one wife.)
 - The body as a temple for the Holy Spirit should be kept purified and sacred.
 - The life commitment to Christ, and the readiness to suffer for the new life.
 - The submission to the church order, and the authenticity of the Bible.

The Catechumen Prayer:

Always recited by the priest during the prayers of the sanctification of the water of the Sacrament of Baptism and also silently during the mass of the catechumens.

- We pray for the catechumens of our people so that Christ our Lord may make them worthy of the Holy Baptism and forgive us our sins.
- Dear Lord, confirm their faith in you.
- Uproot all traces of idolatry from their hearts.
- Establish in their hearts Your law, Your fear, Your commandments, Your truth, and Your Holy precepts.
- Grant that they know the permanence of the preaching they have received, In due course.
- Let them be worthy of the baptism of the new birth for the remission of their sins.
- Prepare them to be a sanctuary for Your Holy Spirit through the grace and mercy of Your Only –Begotten Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, to Whom is due all glory, honor, and power, together with You and the Holy Spirit, the Life-Giver, who is One in Essence with You, now and always and forever and ever.

Amen

Prayer for the New Believer (from the prayers of the liturgy of the Sacrament of Baptism):

- O Master, Lord Jesus Christ who subdued the heavens and descended to the earth; Whose words destroy the rocks more than the swords, for Whom the water trembled and receded, save this child who comes to be catechized. Make known to him (her) the way he (she) should go. Teach him (her) by the grace of your divine Holy Spirit so that he (she) may receive the incorruptible gift that is Your Spirit.
- Grant him (her) the remission of his (her) sin,
- Graciously bestow upon him (her) the awareness of his (her) salvation from mortal sin.
- Make him (her) worthy of the Holy baptism which is for the new birth.
- May s/he receive the unblemished gift of the washing of regeneration by Your Holy Spirit.
- Give him (her) pure insight into the firm understanding so that they will glorify You, O God.
- For Yours are the kingdom, the power, and the glory, together with Your Good Father and the Holy Spirit forever and ever.

Amen.

True Story

"The Poisonous Scorpion"

In the year 2012, before the first medical convoy arrived to one African country, the doctor responsible for arranging the convoys arrived, together with a biomedical engineering servant, to arrange for the convoy.

At that time the electricity used to go off a lot in the house. One night after they had a power cut and everybody in the house was asleep. At that time the servant was praying his spiritual law, and doing the mitanyat. He was wearing light clothes because of the high temperature; after he finished praying, he went to bed.

Suddenly, his colleague in the house called out for him to go to him. On his way to go to his colleague the engineer stood still and couldn't move because he saw a poisonous scorpion on the floor; the surprise was that the scorpion was in the same place he was doing the mitanyat, he was doing them right over it! And it didn't pinch him or touch him with any harm.

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