

“Spiritual Journalism and Evangelization”

by Father John Catoir, JCL

Part 1. Spiritual Journalism

Spiritual Journalism is a vocation. Our faith governs our thinking. The Nicene creed shapes our inner life. "I believe in God, the father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only begotten Son, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified died and was buried. On the third day he rose again...etc."

We are associated with a profession that presents Catholic news to the public through print and electronic media. Catholic Journalists are idealists. They perform a public service for the Church by reporting events that take place in and around the Catholic community. Wittingly or unwittingly they take a vow poverty.

Catholic journalism uses the belief-system of the Catholic Church in the daily work of reporting the news accurately. The news that takes place in and around the Diocese consists of many activities: those of the local bishop like ordinations, confirmations, graduations, and also the whereabouts of retreats and days of recollection, etc. Reporting on these events is a service which brings our people together, and builds community. The Mystical Body of Christ is thereby made visible, giving witness to the power of God's graces in our daily lives. This is a great contribution to the Church and the life of faith.

All Journalism is about reporting the truth. There is no room in the profession for fake news or factual mistakes; to err is human.

Journalists are fastidious about getting names, dates and places straight. It's mundane work; nevertheless, in the larger context of faith, it is something quite heroic. Ordinary people do not engage in promoting the Deposit of Faith in such a demonstrative way. Spiritual Journalism is a vocation which builds up a treasury of merit in heaven, no matter how lowly your position might be in the entire operation.

Part 2. Prayer

Prayer is the gift of your life to God. His Church requires a spiritual strength that can only be supplied by a serious and effective prayer life. Granted all prayer is serious, but not all prayer is effective in supplying energy and inspiration. Since prayer is such a personal matter we can all benefit by sharing our experiences with one another. You have your way of praying, and I have mine. Nobody can say that their way is better than another's. With that said, I'd to share how I developed a prayer-life that works for me.

As a priest for over 57 years, after hearing many confessions and having given many retreats and days of recollection, I learned a few things about the difficulties most people have with their prayer life. I've also done a lot of reading. The spiritual masters have taught me that the simpler you make it, the better off you'll be. My favorite author on this topic is Abbot John

Chapman, (1865 -1933) an English Benedictine who was a prominent scripture scholar. He taught me about the meaning of pure prayer.

"Pure prayer is in the will to give yourself to God; the purity of your prayer is not in the fancy words you use, or in the intensity of your emotions. In fact, he insists you should never force feelings of any kind, because pure prayer is in the will to give yourself to God.

The will has only one function. The wills say yes or no. It follows therefore that pure prayer, for the busy journalist, can be found by simply saying "yes". Chapman said, "the best way to pray was to give yourself to God often. Implying : "Yes, I give myself to you O Lord, be my strength and my joy as I carry on in your name." You are at your best when you are offering yourself to God silently. You don't have to be a perfect person. You only need to say yes to God in your heart of hearts.

Part 3. Evangelization.

When you live, and breathe and have your being in God, you have attained a beautiful predisposition to holiness, a holiness that this world cannot give. Evangelization is the desire to make Jesus known and loved. That desire will be automatic once you value deeply the joy and wonder of living in His light.

Besides as a working member of the Catholic press you are already in a profession that is deeply involved in evangelization.

For me, there are so many new possibilities in the use of social media today it boggles my mind. This Christmas on my Twitter page, I started a simple prayer crusade based on the theme: Say a prayer each day to keep Christ in Christmas. It began in November and by Christmas day we had over 2 million responses. Reaching that vast an audience in so short a time is mind-boggling. The wonders and possibilities of the age in which we live are awesome. We have the tools at our fingertips to go far beyond the limits of our imagination.

In conclusion I'd like to say that there is greatness in you. You have a power that only God can give. Once you say yes to The Lord, He will do the rest. Jesus will fill you with all the inspiration you can handle. Actual graces will flow into your mind and enable you to use the media in ways that will help people all over the world. Open a Twitter account and start being your own publisher. You will build up a treasury of merit in heaven and give immense joy at the same time.

Thanks for listening and God bless you."

940 words (approx..)