

How are you 'gifted to evangelize'?

By Linda Weaver

We each have different gifts to be used for some benefit to build up the kingdom of God. Have you discerned what your gift is and how God wants you to use it? Some are lucky. They have great voices, they love to sing, and the music ministry is a natural fit. It is not always obvious to the rest of us, however. I'm a lawyer. Doing pro bono legal work would seem to be an obvious "fit" for me, and I have done that. Yet, for me, being a lawyer was simply the means to an end. It was never my passion.

In about 1982, I was a stay-at-home mom with three small children. I did volunteer work which included baking bread for the local nursing home. I remember pulling out of the driveway of the nursing home one day, thinking, "That was good bread. I bet they enjoyed it. BUT, God has invested a lot of time in my education." (By then, I had a BA in education and a master's in Spanish literature.) I thought to myself, "I bet God intended me to do something that would feed a lot more people."

As I drove down the road, my blonde logic kicked in. I thought, "How can I feed more people?" Answer: "I have to get into a position where people will listen to me." "Who do people listen to?" Answer: "They listen to doctors and lawyers." I thought, "I don't have enough biology to be a doctor; I'll be a lawyer!" Honest to God. That was how and why I decided to become a lawyer—in five minutes about 20 years ago. I signed up for the LSAT and went to law school. Now, here I am writing to you about evangelization, which I truly believe is the key to all of the world's problems, including hunger. So being a lawyer was just the means to an end. Evangelization is my passion.

My passion for evangelization is also, in part, the result of my life experiences. For years, I sat in the

last pew during Mass. I felt as if no one cared if I was there. That was a misperception. When I realized this, I decided to help make my parish more open and friendly so that all would feel welcome and wanted. This is important to me. I am able to use my writing, speaking and other skills learned as a lawyer

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(along with my baking skills—the best tool in my arsenal) for evangelization.

What is important to you? How would you

improve someone's life, your parish, your community or the world? Do you question why you have a certain skill but aren't using it? How might life have prepared you to relate to certain people? Find your passion and apply your skills. Allow God to lead you where HE wants YOU to be. Consider volunteering to work in evangelization. It is, after all, the essential mission of the church. If your parish has an evangelization team, join it. If not, talk to your pastor about starting one. "To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit." (1 Cor 12:4-8) You have been gifted to be an evangelizer. You may just not realize it yet!

The archdiocese has two training sessions for Parish Evangelization Teams planned for June 2007. See www.goingforth.org for more information or call the Office for Evangelization at (312) 751-5353.

Weaver is a member of the Evangelization Committee of the Archdiocese of Chicago and a member of Holy Name Cathedral Parish.

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