

Spreading Holy Fire: letter to evangelizers-in-training

My dear friends: You've probably heard that YOU are called to evangelize. So, now what?

Evangelization is about sharing your faith with others. To share faith, you need to be able to articulate what you believe. Can you explain why you believe in God?

Stop right now, take a pencil and paper, and try to write, in 25 words or less, why you believe in God.

How did you do? Can you explain why you are a Catholic? "Because I was raised Catholic" is not really enough. If you don't understand your faith, how will you share it with others?

Many of us are afraid to talk about God. We might be asked difficult questions. But for you, for evangelizers-in-training, there are ways of talking about God that are non-threatening, enjoyable and that

will help you grow in your faith and abilities as an evangelizer. Easiest, perhaps, is to share your faith with those you love.

We believe in God, in large part, because of what is written in the Bible. The Old Testament is a collection of stories that tell how the Israelites believed God acted in their lives. The New Testament memorializes how Jesus acted in the lives of those he encountered, and how those people then tried to live all that he taught.

But God has not stopped acting during the last 2,000 years. Sometimes it seems, however, that we have stopped telling the stories of how he acts in our lives.

Some of us feel funny saying that God acts in our lives. Somehow, we think we are not important enough for God to notice, and that he only talks to saints and mystics!

I'm not a saint, and I don't even know what a mystic is. People would think I'm pretentious (or crazy) to claim that God acts in my life or even that I know God.

Hey, isn't that the basis of the TV show "Joan of Arcadia?" The thought that God would talk to an average, teenage girl on a daily basis is outrageous! Well, isn't it?

But remember, God chose a teenage girl to do the most important work that would ever be given to a human. He chose the son of a Hebrew slave to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. The Bible tells us that he chooses to do his greatest work with the simplest of tools.

More important, the Bible makes it clear that he loves each of us—despite our faults. Despite how insignificant we think we are, God wants to be part of our lives. Let's not be ashamed or afraid to share the

stories. Telling your loved ones why you believe in God is great practice for an evangelizer-in-training. If you haven't to them, talk to them today or write a letter explaining how you understand God acts in your life. I'll bet they'll cherish that letter, if not today, someday. Someday, it may help them know God. That is the work of an evangelizer.

As St. Paul wrote from Ephesus in about 56 AD at the end of his first letter to the fledgling church he had established in Corinth four years earlier: "My love to a of you in Christ Jesus," (1 Cor 16:24). Thanks for reading. Linda Weaver

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