



Pastor's Column

St. Peter Catholic Church

May 6, 2018, Sixth Sunday of Easter

Parochial Year for Evangelization: May Tip of the Month

Our Parochial Year for Evangelization continues. Last month, April's tip of the month for evangelization was: establishing a common interest with those whom we accompany on their journeys.

May's tip of the month is: inspiring their interest in us and in our Catholic Christian faith. Having established common interests with others, we now accompany them through those interests, draw them into sharing our interests in return, the ultimate of course being our relationship with Christ.

We pray that the Holy Spirit will touch both the heart of the other as well as our own lips that we may speak His word, be alert for opportunities to share a spiritual experience with them, and inspire some curiosity for the Catholic Christian faith. We might begin this by asking a leading question, as it were, with regard to *their* journey of faith, or perhaps by eliciting discussion on spiritual matters by using news headlines, for example, as an opener.

(Using news headlines, incidentally, should not be too difficult for us, given how frequently Pope Francis seems to make the headlines these days and how popular he is!)

Using elements of pop culture is another way of leading the discussion with others towards spiritual matters; for example, one's interest in movies that perhaps we share can lead us to ask if they have seen the new movie about the Apostle St. Paul. One's interest in travel that perhaps we share can lead us to talking about a recent pilgrimage we took. Finding any opening in the mundane matters of common friendly conversation to guide that conversation toward spiritual matters is not actually an overly-complicated art or science; rather, if we ourselves genuinely have a great interest in what we believe as Christians, then discussing spiritual matters is really just an exercise in discussing the interests that we have, as we would discuss *any* of our personal interests with family and friends.

Our saint of the month for May engaged in this simple yet effective tactic amazingly well: St. Isidore the Farmer, whose Memorial is May 15. His personal interest in his faith was not so much a matter of ongoing verbal discourse as it was a matter of how he lived his life. He was a simple farmer who worked for a wealthy landowner, plowing the fields and communing with God all the while. When some of his fellow farmers complained that he spent too much time in the church, it was readily demonstrated that he did his work just as well – frequently even better – than any of his fellows, despite their complaints, and he would then explain to them (through their shared common interest in agriculture) that it was precisely his constant communion with God, inside and outside of church, that empowered him to work so hard and so well.

So revered for his simple, humble holiness that he was canonized at the same canonization Mass in the year 1622 as St. Teresa of Avila, St. Ignatius of Loyola, St. Francis Xavier, and St. Philip Neri, a truly distinguished company of fellow saints indeed!

May it be that his holy example will inspire all of us likewise to use our shared common interests with others to inspire them to share with us our interest in the Catholic Christian faith.

~Fr. Lewis