

staff.

The ideal situation, considering today's priest shortage, would be to assign a parish administrator who would be responsible for the day-to-day operation of the parish, freeing the priest/pastor to evangelize, provide catechesis, and administer the sacraments. It is imperative that the parish administrator be a person of exceptional spiritual and personal integrity and has the desire to serve. The purpose is to remove the administrative burdens from the priests, not usurp his authority. It must be understood that they are to facilitate, not direct, the community and the priest. Too often, pastoral administrators let their egos get in the way of service. In some communities there have been complaints of parish administrators delivering homilies, providing heretical catechesis, and making pastoral decisions that are not within their purview. Proper training and a detailed job description will help to prevent difficulties and confrontations. The bottom line is that the pastor must not abdicate his responsibilities or neglect his role as supervisor/pastor. Next to the priest, the pastoral administrator is the most important person in the chain of command. It is crucial that the right person be chosen for the position.

Effective Delegation

Effective delegation is not just assigning work; it also includes motivating individuals by giving them increased responsibility, challenge, and control over their actions. There are two assumptions of effective delegation. A) The clearer the idea a person has of what has to be accomplished, the greater the chances of accomplishing the goal. B) The greater the sense of achievement a person has in accomplishing a task, the greater the motivation to accomplish it. Effective delegation involves five steps:

1. The basic task must be identified and explained to the person who is delegated to carry out the task.
2. The delegate must accept the assignment.
3. The leader and the delegate must agree on the specific objectives that are to be accomplished to get the task completed by some specific date.
4. The leader and the delegate agree on a work plan as well as on plans for the measurement of progress and results. These objectives and time lines should be written to prevent confusion and in order to be able to measure the level of accomplishment.

5. The delegate is given the challenge and responsibility for achieving the goals, although the leader remains accountable for the results.

When developing a plan of action the delegate should answer as many of the following questions as possible:

1. What personal drawbacks, such as knowledge, will have to be overcome in order to reach the goal?
2. What obstacles or interference from outside will have to be overcome?
3. What help may be available from others?
4. What will be the action steps to achieving the goal?

These elements of achievement thinking will help provide the challenge and responsibility for the accomplishment of the goals.

Once the parish house is in order and functioning properly, evangelization of the unchurched can logically follow. The laity, in many cases, without diocesan leadership, is accomplishing much today. Imagine what could be accomplished with enthusiastic clergy support, proper delegation and the power of the Holy Spirit. This country could be set on fire for Christ.

The Evangelization Station

Hudson, Florida, USA

E-mail: evangelization@earthlink.net

www.evangelizationstation.com

Pamphlet 367

Where Have All the Evangelists Gone, Long Time Passing?

Victor R. Claveau, MJ

Where have all the evangelists gone, long time passing?
Where have all the evangelists gone? Long time ago.

"Religious, too, in their own times, are called to bear witness to a similar, deep, personal experience of Christ and also to share the Faith, hope, love and joy which that experience goes on inspiring" (*Essential Elements in the Church's teaching on religious life as applied to works of the apostolate*, 33).

There was once a time in our Church when the winning of souls for Jesus was the primary purpose of the clergy. The fire of the Holy Spirit burned deep in the hearts of Sts. Peter and Paul and the men who followed in their footsteps. Down through the centuries, entire peoples were brought into the fold of the Church by the sacrifices of men who took their vocation as priests most seriously, and in doing so were welcomed as faithful disciples into the kingdom of heaven. Millions upon millions of men and women found consolation and meaning through surrender to Jesus. "Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (*Matt. 11:29*).

Today, we live in a society that, while not totally amoral, has surrendered to moral apathy. Atheistic materialism is not only condoned by the political leadership but is broadcast on network television, screened in Hollywood movies and is created on Madison Avenue. The majority of our current political leadership, duly elected by the will of the American people, have supported and defended the wanton destruction of over fifty million innocent victims on the altar of abortion. U.S. foreign aid to third-world countries is usually predicated on the sterilization of the populace. Deviant sexuality is flaunted in gay-pride parades and pornography is sold openly. The state and federal prison populations are overflowing and the criminal justice system is overloaded. Abortion, usury, divorce, drug abuse, child abuse, gang-warfare, drive-by

shootings, murder, theft, white-collar crime, racial and religious hatred, euthanasia, etc., are all indications of the failure of the Protestant gospel — the “reformed” gospel that presupposes everyone will go to heaven, no matter what choices he or she makes, as long as a verbal declaration of allegiance to Christ has been made; the gospel that Christians can make individual evil choices yet retain a proper moral orientation.

“For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own likings, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander into myths. As for you, always be steady, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry” (2 *Tim.* 4:4-5).

Through the Power of the Holy Spirit, the Catholic Church must regain the evangelistic fervor, which once permeated the Church and in doing so, effect positive change in American society. In order to do this, we must restructure our pastoral priorities. Many of our clergy are so bogged down in administrivia that they don’t have time to fulfill their primary obligation to evangelize by teaching, preaching, and administering the sacraments. There are answers and solutions to these challenges and it all boils down to proper management. It is time to establish a hierarchy of duties that will allow our clergy to do what they were ordained to do. Anything that interferes or prevents a priest from evangelization must be either set aside or delegated to the laity.

Usually seminarians are full of zeal and energy and can’t wait for their ordination. Sometimes there’s a decided difference between what was imagined prior to ordination and the actual day-to-day activities of a parish or order priest. The realities of the priesthood can set in after a few years of being bogged down with administrative duties. Many priests are over burdened, and some lose heart, spending years just going through the motions, because they don’t know what else to do. Still others do not trust the laity, which leads either to micromanagement or doing most everything themselves. There is a better way!

Regardless of the circumstances, one must never forget that a priest’s primary obligation is to serve the priesthood of all the faithful by building up and guiding the Church in the name of Christ, who is the head of the Body (CCC §1547).

Over the years, I have spoken to a number of priests about evangelization and have heard many different excuses as to why they couldn’t or wouldn’t get involved:

“I don’t have the time; I am so involved in administration that most days I don’t even have time for lunch.”

“Where am I going to find room for more people, the church is already filled to capacity.”

“We are a poor parish and there is no money for evangelization.”

“The laity doesn’t really care; I can’t even get people to help out around the church.”

“There aren’t enough hours in my day now, and you want me to evangelize. Get real!”

“The bishop is not interested in evangelization.” Etc., etc, etc.

In 1974, I was fortunate to meet a wonderful priest who had been recently ordained. His was a late vocation as he was in his mid-forties. Perhaps his success as a pastor was partially due to his experience in the world, prior to ordination. It wasn’t long before his bishop recognized his enthusiasm for the priesthood, his managerial skills, his love of the laity, and his zeal for souls. After a few years, he was given the responsibility of shepherding three parishes in different cities, each ten to twelve miles apart, at the same time.

Father is diabetic and although beset with a number of serious physical problems, he maintained a full schedule. He sometimes found it difficult to find a temporary replacement, when he went on holiday, because the younger priests found his schedule most tiresome. He served these communities admirably until his retirement at 70 years of age in 2002.

When he spoke of “his people” he beamed with pride. The first time I visited him, years ago, he showed me around the grounds of one of the beautiful churches describing everything and telling me of the many families who pitched in to keep everything so attractive. One family took care of the flowerbeds, another the playground, another the church library, others the religious goods store, and still others the interior of the church.

Father is one of the best delegators I’ve ever met. I don’t mean that in any negative sense. He has a gift for getting others involved and guides their actions with fatherly concern. One of the parishes needed a new hall,

which at the time cost over \$200,000. Rather than struggling with the debt themselves, all the parishes pitched in and the money was raised by community activities including bicycle camping trips to the surrounding areas. They even built the new hall themselves.

One might wonder how this one man was able to meet the needs of so many people for so long. It all boiled down to setting proper priorities. He understood that his primary mission was one of service to God and God’s people. Anything that stood in the way of that service had to be either eliminated or delegated to the laity. He first established three parish councils and outlined their responsibilities. A key to being a good pastor is in knowing the congregation. Little by little, he was able to identify the most qualified individuals and instructed them as to their tasks. Once he was certain that each person understood the requirements of the job, he empowered them to serve. He kept his finger on the pulse of the community by regular meetings and never abdicated his authority.

The congregations understood that if they wanted a priest who would be there for them when they needed him, they would have to do their part. He celebrated Mass, administered the sacraments and met their spiritual needs. He was there for them whenever they needed him and they were there for him. It was a wonderful partnership.

All involved at the parish, community, or diocesan level must have the same end in mind. Signposts or milestones must be established along the way in order to keep everyone involved going in the same direction and focused on the goals. This takes strong dynamic leadership, teamwork, and most of all communication at all levels and at all times. The chances of failure diminish in proportion to one’s preparation for the task.

The primary responsibilities of bishops are evangelization and catechesis. The priesthood was established by Christ for one purpose – to win souls. Anything that hinders the achievement of this objective must be put aside. When we enter into eternal life it is not inconceivable that Jesus will ask, “How many souls did you bring with you?”

One of the first items of business is for the clergy to eliminate or delegate to the laity any and all responsibilities that do not focus on the goals of providing proper catechesis, administering the sacraments and evangelization. This may even necessitate restructuring the parish and hiring additional