

be by a process of multiplication. It now takes over 800 Catholics in this country to produce one convert — certainly, this is not the way to make the Church grow. We need to set up parish programs by which our people will be helped to do their part. In this, the priest must take the initiative. We need especially to help our people to overcome their timidity and reluctance in speaking about Catholicism. Classes on apologetics will instill confidence so that when a non-Catholic raises an objection to the Church that person will have the knowledge necessary to overcome misunderstandings.

Further, there is sufficient information published to guide those interested in evangelization at the parish, community, or diocesan level.

The priest as the representative of the hierarchy can provide the training primarily by forming small groups who talk over the problem, set goals and objectives, and assign tasks. They do not have to have any special abilities.

Inquiry forums must be set up, with qualified teachers able to answer questions from prospective candidates.

RCIA programs must primarily focus on Church teaching and the foundations for these beliefs.

Though a lay training program may seem difficult to fit into a priest's busy schedule, he will find it eminently worth the sacrifice. He will find the help mates he needs to carry on the work and at the same time help parishioners to grow. Constant experience shows that where Catholics are involved in trying to bring others to Christ, they themselves are drawn closer to Him. The Mass, prayer, and the sacraments — all mean much more to them when they are conscious of being co-workers with Christ.

The laity have a special part, which cannot be performed by the clergy. It is the work of parents, for example, to teach their children about God and train them in Christian morality; this cannot be left to the school or any other entity. It is the work of lay Catholics to manifest Christ to their family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, and in short, to everyone with whom they come into contact. They have a need and a right to responsible participation in order to fully develop as Christians. Religious instruction alone will not do it. Only responsible participation makes for maturity, and for lack of it many Catholics today are spiritually very immature. This explains the inability of so many to stand up to the evil influences around them.

The specific vocation of the clergy is pastoral; the laity are simply helpers in this area. The specific vocation of the laity in the Church's work is apostolic; this they have from God because they are laity, each at his own level. They also are Christ, sent to make Him known around the world. They should bring Him everywhere they go and to be ready to present Him to all they meet.

We should not expect a person to do the work of a priest without the necessary training. Nor should we expect a person to do the work of an evangelist without priestly support and guidance and instructions.

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Pamphlet 157

“I have no hands but yours.”

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There have been a number of apocryphal stories relating that towards the end of World War II, a squad of American soldiers came to a little town in England, France, or Germany (depending upon the narrator). In the village square, they found a statue of Christ lying battered and broken. Some men of the group put it together as best they could and set it back on the pedestal. However, they could not find the hands. Finally, one of them made a crudely lettered sign: “I have no hands but yours.”

In actuality, the true story is about a statue of Christ outside Christ the King Catholic Church in San Diego, California. The hands were broken off by vandals around 1980. Instead of repairing the hands, church leaders decided to put up a plaque at the base that states, “I have no hands but yours.” In Spanish, “No tengo mas manos que las tuyas.” The statue is still there.

Surely, they were thinking of the poem, *Christ has No Body*, penned in the sixteenth century, by St. Teresa of Avila.

Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do
good,

Yours are the hands, with which he blesses
all the world.

Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,

Yours are the eyes, you are his body.

Christ has no body now but yours,

No hands, no feet on earth but yours,

Yours are the eyes with which he looks
compassion on this world.

Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

When Our Lord, about to leave this earth, He commanded His disciples, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation" (Mk 16:15). He was telling each one of us that we must continue His work of bringing to humanity His message of God's Love. Where he made in known only in Palestine, now we must spread the Word throughout the entire world. We must be Christ to those around us, of helping them, in the words of Father Henri de Lubec, "To recognize the image of God in one another, so that they may identify themselves with one another and love one another."

Yet, today there is little zeal on the part of those who profess love of Christ to make Him known and loved by others. Secularism, not Christianity, has become the world's greatest movement. We have to deplore lukewarmness in perhaps the majority of the world's Christians. "I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of my mouth" (Rev. 3:15-16). In addition, there has been the wholesale defection of so many of Christ's favored poor from the Church.

Jean Danielou, in *The Salvation of the Nations*, suggests a reason. "Catholicism loses its hold on souls in the measure that it ceases to present as an urgent task, to be accomplished as

soon as possible, the unity of all men within a single religion."

Are we doing the job?

As we study the situation of the Church today, one inescapable fact stands out: we are not fulfilling Christ's command to convert the world. Our present conversion methods are entirely inadequate. We are actually falling far behind. Rather than attacking the issue, we are in a defensive posture, simply trying to hold on to those already in the sheepfold.

After nearly 2,000 years of Christianity, the total number of Catholics today is roughly about 17.18% of the world's population, roughly the same as it was in 1990.

The need to mobilize the Church exists in every country of the world. If we are to make inroads in the battle for Christ and against secularization we must apply the principle of putting hundreds and thousands of pairs of apostolic hands to work where only a few have worked before.

We must not rely on the efforts of so few priests to do the job. The Laity must be mobilized in an organized program of winning souls Christ and His Church. The world population grows because people have children, but the Catholic population will only grow as the result of one on one conversion.

Out of a U. S. population of approximately 3.3 billion, 50 million Americans do not profess any religious affiliation. Additionally, 25 million Americans, rarely, if ever attend church on any given weekend. Overall, 24% of Americans pay little or no attention to God.

Millions of lapsed Catholics, especially in the United States and other Western countries have joined other religious groups or become so

jaded and indifferent that they might be called nonbelievers. According to a 2008 Pew Forum report, about a third of people who are baptized Catholic as a child in the United States are leaving the fold when they grow up -- with about half becoming Protestant and the other half abandoning organized religion entirely.

"The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest" (Matt. 9 37-38).

Christ would not give us a task that would be progressively more difficult over the years. The fault must lie in either the motivation or methods, or both. Church leaders do not view evangelization as a priority or sufficiently train and encourage lay involvement. For the most part the laity do not take responsibility to learn the basics of the Faith, and leave the education of prospective converts to the priest. We need to enlist all the laity, not just a few specially trained people. How different it would be if the laity were actually tasked to learn and were taught the science of apologetics. They must be brought to the understanding that we all share the responsibility to evangelize, "Service of and witness to the Faith are necessary for salvation" (CCC §1816).

To be a successful sales person, one must be enthusiastic about the product you are selling. Why is it that Catholics lack enthusiasm? Contrast the current situation with the early years of the Church when a small handful of Jewish converts brought about the conversion, according to some historians, of 20% of the Roman Empire.

Carrying out the mandate of Christ is a mathematical impossibility if it is left to the clergy and religious, unless we act on the basis that the Church's growth, like that of population, must