

Pray More Healing Retreat 2020 - Transcript

The Good News-ization, Part I

Dominick Albano

A few summers ago, my uncle passed away. It was in July and it was not the end of a long life, you know, expected and something we were ready for. It was unexpected and tragic and sad. I was, you know, the one who got the call from a police officer letting us know that he had passed and I had to be there with my aunt when she asked me why? And if you've ever been in a moment like that, you know, there's no words, there's no safe passage around that storm. You can only live through it. And it wasn't easy.

My uncle was a beloved guy. He was a salesman by like profession but also like, it was like in his very nature, right? He loved people and he loved being with people and talking to people and he built great relationships with people and the community really felt his loss. And I remember in the week after he passed, you know, dozens of people were reaching out at my aunt's house, all my uncles, you know, family from out of state came in and within a couple days you had, you know, like literally dozens of people living, you know, staying at their home and around the family and around my aunt.

And I'll never forget this one day. We're all, you know, at the house and we're sitting around the table and we heard a lawn mower fire up out outside the house. And we're all kind of like, what's going on? We looked outside and this neighborhood kid, he was a college kid who was home for the summer. My uncle had formed a little bit of a relationship with him. When he was in high school, he was the local high school quarterback and my uncle had played college football. So just, you know, my uncle would talk to him as he was like out walking the dogs, you know, my uncle be out walking the dogs, you see the kid and talk to him and just tell him how much they were supporting him and rooting for him and talking about football. And this kid heard what had happened. And, you know, he didn't have any great words or special ability. But he knew that the lawn needed to be mowed and he got his lawnmower and he walked down the street and he mowed my aunt's yard. And my aunt would tell you, you know, in that moment was, you know, she had said to me later it was in that moment that she knew that God was going to take care of her that it was going to be okay.

My name is Dominic Albano and I want to talk to you in this talk about evangelization. Now evangelization for us Catholics, where we kind of can be a little squeamish around that word, right? It's like evangelization. Isn't that like a Protestant thing? I don't think as Catholics we're supposed to be worried about that, right? Or maybe it conjures to mind ideas of, you know, some guy in like a street corner on his like soap box with a megaphone. And he's like yelling at people as they're passing by on the street. You know, the thing with evangelization as Catholics we make it into this big thing, right? Like it's so big and we're so little, right? And it's, I don't have enough information. I don't know how to answer all the right questions. And, you know, maybe if I had like a theology degree but like I'm just like Joe Schmoe Catholic, like I can't evangelize it again, it's so big. And I'm so little and we make it into this big and complicated thing, right?

So as Catholics, like we need to take the idea of evangelization and make it into something small and making it something simple and accessible. And to realize that God calls everyone of us to

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evangelize. God calls every single one of us to live lives that evangelize. So let's just take a step back. Let's start off by taking a step back and just talk real simply about what evangelization is, okay? Evangelization literally translated means sharing good news, okay? It's literally like good news-ization. And of course that's the title of this talk, is good news-ization, right? This idea that we need to live lives that share the good news of the gospel with the world around us.

Now again we make this into a complicated thing but it's really not that complicated, the truth is we all evangelize every single day. You, right now, you're watching this. You evangelize every single day, why? Because we as humans we love to share good news, right? It's just built into our DNA. We love sharing good news, right? Social media is built on the idea of sharing good news, right? We love, you know, telling people about birth announcements and new jobs that we got and getting into school or some big accomplishment, our grandkids winning the big game. Like, we love sharing good news so much. People will take pictures, like people actually do this. They will take pictures of their dinner plate out at a restaurant just to share with the world how great that dinner was, right?

The question is not, do you share good news? The question is, what good news do you share, right? Because some people they evangelize for restaurants. There's literally some people evangelize for their dinner plan. Some people evangelize for the kids' sports teams. Some people evangelize for professional sports teams. Some people evangelize for their own lives and the accomplishments they have and the work promotions they get. And none of that stuff is necessarily bad, right? That's not what I'm saying but God is calling us to live lives that share good news of Jesus Christ. Let's share the good news of the gospel, that there is more to life that God has created you for happiness and fulfillment and for a purpose, right? And so we as Catholics, we have to take this idea of sharing good news and figure out how we can share good news in our every day lives, okay?

And so the first thing I want to talk about is when people look at your life, what is the good news that they see? Like quite simply, how do you live? How would people describe you as a person? Don't think about the theology, you know, don't think about, you know, the great actions that you take. You know, that you're, I'm not mother Teresa. I can't do this. I mean, literally when people look at you, what do they see? I'm talking about your neighbors, your friends, your coworkers, you know, the other parents at your kid's school, right? What do they see when they look at you? What words would they use to describe you and to describe the life you're living?

You know, one of the other things about our social media world and the world that we live in, people also have a platform where they love to complain or they love to argue or they love to debate, you know, and those kind of words, right? Those kinds of actions, right? Lead to words, that maybe what would they say? "Oh, that person they're full of themselves or that person they think they know everything. Or that person, you know, he isn't kind, or she's kind of mean or judgmental." You know, what are the words that people would describe the way you live your life?

And let me pose three words for you that are ultimately attractive. Like three words, that if you can live a life where people would describe you in these three ways. Your life by its very nature will share good news, okay? The first is joy. God calls us to live lives of joy, right? Lives that

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show that there is something deeper going on that we have to share with the rest of the world. There's something that we have that the rest of the world wishes they had. And his book called to be Holy.

Cardinal Dolan and at the time he, this was way back before he was cardinal. He recounts the story of encountering these nuns who were in St. Louis. And they had a ministry where they would serve as hospice nurses essentially to people who were dying of cancer. And it didn't matter who they were. It didn't matter what their background was. They would just take care of sick and dying people, people who were dying of cancer. And he tells the story of this one atheist, this man who is mean and nasty to the sisters and on his death bed he was talking to Cardinal Dolan and he said he wanted to become Catholic. He wanted to convert to Catholicism. And the cardinal asked him why. And he said, as mean as I am and as disgusting as I am, as they're taking care of me and my sickness, these sisters live lives of joy. And I don't know what it is that they have but I know I want that. These sisters evangelize this man on his deathbed, this atheist who had denied God his whole life. These sisters evangelize him simply by living lives of complete joy. -A joy that radiated into a way that this man couldn't understand.

Okay, so the first, you know, live a life of joy. What about your life shows other people that joy that you are living with? Okay, the second word that we'd love for people to describe us, that if you live in a way that other people would describe you this way, you will naturally share the good news of the gospel is generosity. You'll never read about a saint who wasn't generous. You'll never hear of someone who is sharing the good news and evangelizing through the way they live their life without hearing them described as generous. You know, God has given each and every single one of us many blessings. And it's easy to get caught up in all the things that we don't have. And the world wants us to be caught up and money and power and possessions and fortune and fame and wealth and all this other stuff that focuses on what we don't have.

But the life that the gospel proposes, the life that Jesus invites us to, is a life of generosity, a life that gives. And that's not just financially generous. That's not just being generous with our money. It's being generous with our time and with our attention. The ways that we can give to other people, being generous with our kind words, being generous with simple actions, being generous with our advice, being generous with the ways that we can bless other people, right? So the second way that we can live a life that shares the good news just simply by the daily interaction of your life is by seeking out moments and opportunities to be generous with your time, your energy and your attention.

So the first, you know, if you live a life of joy, right? People will be ultimately attracted. If you live a life that is generous, people will be ultimately attracted to that. They will say, I don't know what it is that you have but I know I want it too. And the third and it's especially important in the world that we're living in today is peace. If you can live a life that exudes peace, right? If you look at the saints, you look at the people in your life who have that quality of, I don't know what they have but I know that I want it. You will find people who live peace, right?

Living A Life Of Prayer

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Joy, generosity and peace. Jesus wishes these things in our lives, right? He wants to bless us in these ways. He wants us to live lives that are joyful. He wants us to live lives that are generous. And he wants us to live lives with an abundance of peace. People who are not reactionary, right? That's what it means to be peaceful is to not be reactionary, to understand that God has got this, right? That in all situations God has a purpose. That in all situations and all moments God's taken care of things. That God is watching out for us. That in God's economy we are taken care of. That no matter what the devil can throw at you, no matter what the world proposes to you, that you can get through it and that God will carry you through it. That's what it means to live a life of peace. All of these things come from prayer, joy, generosity and peace. There is one source to that and that is living a life of prayer.

And nothing can hold you back from that. It doesn't matter what situation is going on. It doesn't matter if there's a pandemic. It doesn't matter if you have a theology degree. It doesn't matter if you know the answer to every question out there. It doesn't matter if you don't have any money, it doesn't matter, you know, how you look. It doesn't matter if you're an eloquent speaker, right? Prayer is open to every single one of us as Catholics. Just like that young man who walked over to my aunt's house and he didn't have answers. He wasn't the holiest guy. He didn't have the best he could offer. He had a lawn mower. That's what he had. That was the great gift that God had given him. That was the great ability that he had the ability to mow a lawn. But if that kid can walk in during the most horrific of circumstances that most people are going to feel, he can share the good news, right? He can make someone think that God is going to take care of them. That God is going to get them through this horrific situation they're facing. If God can do that through just a kid in his lawn mower, then what can God do through you?

If you are willing to live a life of prayer, and through that prayer, find joy and generosity and peace to live in a way that when people say, you know, whatever your name is. Like, how would you describe Joe? How would you describe Ann or Mary, right? Whatever your name is, how would people describe you? Like if you can live a life where people say, "Oh, that person they're really joyful," or "that person they're really generous," or "that person just really seems like they live a really peaceful life." Like that anyone can look at someone like that whether it's a neighbor, it's a coworker, it's a family member, a friend. They'll look at you and they'll say, "I don't know what that person has. I don't know where that joy comes from. I don't know where that general generosity comes from. I don't know where that peace comes from but I know I want it too."

And our next talk we're going to talk about a couple of rules to live by that help us share the good news, right? That help us to become really intentional around. Not just having this quality about us that shares good news with the people around us but how we can actually take action as well to live the good news that we have heard and we have received to live in a way that shares that good news with the people around us.

So again, good news, it's something we all do. The question is not, do you share good news? The question is what good news do you share?