

The Good News-ization, Part II

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Hey everyone and welcome to part two of our talk, Good News-ization. The idea that we as Catholics should be sharing the good news of the gospel through the way that we live our lives and the way that we present ourselves to the people around us. For us Catholics, just to recap, kind of what we covered in talk one, you know, when we hear the word evangelization, we tend to get a little intimidated.

Evangelization is this idea that it's so big and I'm so little and you need all the right answers and if you're going to evangelize, you need a theology degree and you need to have this deep understanding of apologetics and I don't know enough and I don't know the right answers, and I'm not an eloquent speaker and et cetera, et cetera, et cetera right? And we turn evangelization into this thing that seems so complicated and so big that there's no possible way that someone like you or someone like me could actually share the good news of the gospel with the people in our lives.

But really, when we simplify down, we know that evangelization just means sharing good news. It's good news-ization, that's what it is. And we are already wired to share good news. The idea of social media is built on the human impulse to share good news. When something good happens, the first thing you want to do is share that good news with other people, you want to tell other people, you want to post about it on Facebook, you want to tell someone, you know, about the new job you get or when your kid's born or even people go to the restaurant, they take pictures of their food which I still think is like the weirdest thing but people do it because when we have some good news to share, we want to share it with the world.

So the question is not do you evangelize? The question is, what do you evangelize? Or put another way, the question is not do you share good news? The question is, what good news do you share? And in talk one, we talked about how the idea, the foundational principle of evangelization, the foundation is really built on the idea, how do you live your life and what kind of good news do you share just through the way that you live?

We talked about joy and generosity and peace. Write these three virtues if you will or these three gifts of the Holy Spirit, the fruits of the Holy Spirit, these three

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markers that something is going on in your life that is good news and something good to share. That when people look at you and if they see, well, that's a person of joy or that's a person of generosity or that's a person of peace. Or all of three, right? They're going to look at you and they're going to say, "I don't know what that person's got but I know that I want some of it." "I know I want, whatever it is that they've got." And so when we simplify the idea of sharing the good news, we simplify the idea of evangelization, we realize that it's not something that requires advanced degrees, it's not something that requires, you know, deep knowledge, it just requires you living the faith authentically.

And so now in this talk, what we're going to talk about is really how we can go one step further, right? We have this idea of a natural evangelization that we can relate to the world, we can share good news through the way that we relate to the world, right? That we can live a certain way that is ultimately attractive to other people. But we can also be active evangelists, we can look for opportunities to share the good news with the people in our lives. Our friends, our neighbors, our co-workers, even our family, right? Our children and our siblings are people that we can actively look for opportunities to share the good news with.

So we're going to talk through some principles or some ideas of actively sharing the good news with the people in our life. So it's really built on one idea, okay, I call this it's the most important question in the history of evangelization. It's 100% of the time, when you move to that place where you want to actively evangelize, you think alright, I want to share the good news with the people in my life in an active way. Not just through, you know, living in a way that's attractive but in a way that actually intentionally shares the good news. This is where you have to start, okay? It's the most important question in the history of evangelization, you're ready for it?

Where does it hurt? All right, four words, I'm going to repeat it, it's that important. Where does it hurt? This is the most singular important question in the history of evangelization. And in fact, the spread of Christianity, the foundation of our church and the way that its spread throughout the world was through the Catholic Church reaching into people's lives, looking at the world around us and asking this question, where does it hurt? Every single day the Catholic Church, it feeds more people, it clothes more people, it gives shelter to more people, it takes care of more sick people, it educates more people, it visits more imprisoned people than any other organization or institution or government on the planet could ever hope to do, right?

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Throughout the history of the church, you look at universal healthcare, the Catholic Church was the first organization, right? Secular, religious, anything that said, oh, we're going to take care of the sick and the dying, right? The Catholic Church was the first, you know, organization, secular, religious, whatever ministry, church, whatever, we were the first ones to say, you deserve an education regardless of whether or not you're rich or what your status is, right? We were the first organization that said, people matter and we're going to take care of people. And so the church, and that ultimately helps spread the gospel to the ends of the earth. Right? Our church, our schools and our hospitals and our ministries, that's what all missionary aspects of the church were always built on was us going and stepping in and saying, where does it hurt?

Now, how does this apply to your individual life? Because I'm sure you're thinking like well, yeah, that sounds nice but I'm not going to start like a hospital in my basement, right? Or I'm not going to start like a school. Okay, yeah, most of us are not going to do that, right? But when you look at the people in your life, you look at those friends or neighbors or your co-workers or your children, this is the question you have to start with, right? This is where you need to start is asking this question, where does it hurt?

So practical example to show you how it applies, right? Let's say in your neighborhood, you got a couple that that lives down the street. Okay? A couple houses down, you know they're like newlyweds, they've only been married a year so they're in their first house, you know they're pregnant with their first kid, you know, let's say they've been married about a year and they have the baby, awesome. You know you see the balloons that they tied to the mailbox, and that's great.

And you decide, I'm going to go down and I'm going to go ring the doorbell, I really want to share the good news with them. So you go down and you knock on the door and they answer and you congratulations on your kid, it's a girl, that's wonderful, it's beautiful, what's her name? You're getting all the info and you're thinking, okay, here it comes, I'm building myself up for this moment where I'm going to actively share the good news and you say awesome, you know, I just want to let you know, super excited by the way that you've had your first kid, I just want you to know we have this retreat coming up at our parish, it's not this weekend, it's two weekends from now and it's a three night overnight retreat, it's, you know, for married couples and I really think if you came on this retreat it just would have a transformative impact in your life. You guys would actually love it. I really think you should go there.

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Of course you don't do that, right? Because what if, I mean, maybe like the dad is like, wait a minute, a couple nights of actual real sleep like I'm in, you know, whatever I'll do it. No. This is what we as Catholics, we get the blinders on and we think like the only thing we can do is invite someone to Mass or invite someone to retreat or invite someone to Bible study but in that moment, that is not good news to that couple, right? That new couple down the street, what's good news to them? The good news is, hey, congratulations. I've made you a lasagna, you get to eat dinner tonight and you don't have to worry about cooking it or saying like, hey, I know you've got a lot going on right now, you must be tired, I'm going to mow your yard this weekend and you don't have to worry about, no, no, I want to, I'm going to mow your yard just want you to know just how much we support you guys and we love that you're a young family.

That's good news to this couple, right? What's real good news? Is that an invitation to a retreat? No, it's not right. Like they're not sleeping, their whole lives have been turned upside down, being invited to something where they feel this obligation and the sense of going out, you know, they have to say no and of course they're not sleeping and they got the new kid, like of course they can't do that. That invitation is not good news to them. Right? What is good news is food and, and help around the house and that sort of thing, right?

Another example. You know, you got a coworker at work, who, you know, let's say you've been at the office a long time, you really know what it takes to succeed and you know, you got this young buck that's a couple cubicles down you know he's really struggling, right? You can step in and what's good news to him? "Hey, I want you to come join my prayer group at church." or "hey, I'd really love to take you under my wing and I'd love to help show you the ropes and help you with this project or help you get through this because I've been there and I want to help you succeed." What is that person going to hear and hear oh, that's really good news?

You know, with your own children, right? Your own children. I know so many couples right that their biggest, you know, fear or source of anxiety maybe is the best way to put, worry is just that their children aren't sharing the faith and they want to know, they ask me like, what can I do to spread the faith to my kids or to get them to return to the faith that I raised them in? And you know, one of the things I always like to suggest is, well, how often do you say, "hey, I want you to drop the kids off, you know, once a month at our house, we're going to babysit them overnight just so you and your husband or you and your wife can go out and have a great date night and just be the two of you," right? One of those two things is very good news. You give them that opportunity, I promise you any couple with

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kids are going to say that's the best news they can hear is grandma and grandpa are going to take the kids overnight, right?

And why does this work? You might be you might be hearing this and saying, "okay, okay, I get that, like, I get that, like, you go to a couple that's just had a kid and you invite them to retreat and that's probably more of a stressful invitation than good news but how does things like lasagna and helping people at work and babysitting and mowing people's lawns, like how does that actually spread the gospel? How does that actually share the good news?"

So let me explain to you how this how this breaks down. All right, See, what's going to happen is if you look at the people in your life and you look for these opportunities to intentionally share good news with them, through asking that question, right? Where does it hurt? You look at the people in your life, you ask this question, you say, all right, how can I help there? How can I help there? And you step in and you make a difference. It's going to lead to what I call "the golden moment of evangelization." All right, "the golden moment of evangelization" is this, The golden moment is this, it's when that person or that couple or your kid or your coworker, your neighbor, whoever it is, they eventually come back to you and they say, and it might not be these words but it's going to be some version of these words. They're going to say something along the lines of, "why? Why do you do what you do? Why are you helping me like this? Why are you taking care of me?"

And now you're not the one going to them and wanting to share the gospel, they're coming to you and asking you to share the gospel. Do you see? This golden moment happens where they come and they ask some version of the question, why? And you get this beautiful moment where you get to say, you know, I really want to love you. I'm Christian, my faith is really important to me, I'm Catholic, actually and Jesus taught that we should love our neighbors as ourselves and so as just a part of my faith, it's really important to me to be the kind of person who loves others as best as they can. And if you ever, you know, would want to grab coffee or something and talk a little bit more about the faith, I'd love to get to share it with you.

Right that moment, that moment, is where real evangelization starts to happen. That moment is where real conversion starts to happen. And I bring up this word conversion because the truth is, this realistic approach, this is how evangelization really happens. Right? And it's not often talked about but the truth is, when you look at the lives of people who've gone through a conversion, they've gone through some life altering event, they'll show you this long trail of breadcrumbs, right? I

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met this person, we became friends, you know, we would meet up for basketball every Wednesday and we formed a great friendship and pretty soon we were just like grabbing a beer after basketball on Wednesday nights and then I was going through a tough time and he really gave me some great advice and, you know, I really started to admire him after that, you know, our Wednesday nights turned into less about basketball and more about our time just together afterwards and we grew in friendship and I really trusted him and eventually I really needed help with something and he told me, you know, he told me about prayer and how prayer is important to him.

You see, these are how those conversations, right? When you actually talk to people who've gone through a life changing conversion, those are the stories that they tell, right? It is very rarely, it is very rarely, that it's this out of the blue, out of nowhere, knocked off their horse, they go on a retreat for no reason, you know, totally not, you know, with no background, no understanding of why and their lives change. That's just not typically the way it happens. The reason this is hard is because that's the way we want it to happen, right? Because sharing the good news, evangelization, good news-ization, it requires a couple things from us that are really, really hard.

First, trusting in God's time. Now, this is like a cliché, like God's time, I trust in God's time, all things are going to be good in God's time. But really we're in their mind saying like, yeah, it's all about God's time as long as God gets on my schedule, right? That's the way we as Catholics, we sometimes tend to act. Like yeah, I totally trust God's time absolutely as long as his time is 100% aligned with my time, then yeah, it's totally going to be fine. Right?

I see this and people who, you know, I've had real conversations with a gentleman once who, he came to one of my talks and he had this profound conversion, he was telling me he had gone on a retreat at this profound conversion just a couple of weeks before he came to this parish mission and he said, I'm 65 years old, I wish I'd had my faith my whole life but I didn't, I came into the faith really late and I really want to share it with my kids and I had a conversation with my son about it and of course he's an adult now but I just couldn't seem to get through to him and what went through my mind was like, do you realize that it took 65 years for God to get you to that moment? For God to do what he did in your life, He spent 65 years to get you there. It's not ridiculous that God might need more than a six minute conversation with your kid or a six hour conversation, right? Or maybe even six years.

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See, God's time is not our time and we tend to want things to happen right away. We tend to want things to happen instantaneously. We want to see results, right? That's what we get focused on and fixed it on, we want to see results but God's time is not our time and the second piece of this, is God's ways are not our ways. See, we like to make plans. So I got this person, I'm going to invite them to this retreat, and they're going to come and they're going to have this life changing experience and I'm going to be there and maybe I'm even giving a talk on the retreat or I'm the small group leader on the retreat, and I'm going to invite them and they're going to come and they're my neighbor and pretty soon, we're going to have like a little Catholic commune in our whole cul-de-sac because I'm going to be converting everybody. Or like young people will do this with the, especially, you know, well, young people like to do this with the people they date. You know, they're like a 23 year old they're like, Oh, I know, I'm going to start dating this person and then I'm going to start sharing the faith of them and I'm like going to convert them through dating them, right?

And we just get messed up with this kind of stuff. We start making these plans in our head because we want instant results and we want these powerful moments of change and conversion in people's lives and it's good. That's not inherently bad, right? It is good that we want to see people's lives changed. 100% that is a good thing. But we have to be humble enough to understand that God's time is not our time and God's ways are not our ways. And if we try to make God get on our schedule and we try to make God work according to our plans, that's 100% grade A premium pride. That's all that that is. That's all that that is. It's not holiness. It's not piety. It's not a desire for good. It is 100% pride when we want things to happen according to our plans, we want things to happen according to our time and not God's plans and not God's time, when we don't want to be satisfied with loving people in little ways and sharing the good news through asking the question, where does it hurt? That 100% is just pride.

What this all comes down to, what it all boils down to is one thing, evangelization, that's our job, 100% that's your job. Your job, my job, it is 100% our job to share the good news. That's it, like that's our job. But conversion, the actual changing of hearts, that's God's job. That's not your job, it's not my job. Conversion, the changing of hearts is not your job and it is not my job, it's God's job. It's the Holy Spirit's job. Is Jesus's job but it's not our job. And we get those two things really confused, right? Sharing good news, 100% our job, Conversion, 100% not our job. That's the work of the Holy Spirit.

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And we have to be comfortable having a small role to play. We have to be comfortable being used by God in whatever way he sees fit that's according to His plan. And if you need evidence of this, if you need evidence to this, I go back to the story that I lead with from talk one. The story that I lead with talk one where an 18 year old boy, college student, saw that his neighbor down the street had died tragically and he thought, where does it hurt? And he saw the one way he could like step in and help and he just got his lawn mower and mowed the yard. And God used that moment, right, God used that moment for a profound change of heart, right? In that moment, when my aunt says, I knew God was going to take care of me, that is a change of heart. That happened because an 18 year old boy grabbed his lawn mower and mowed a lawn.

If you don't think that God can use you in simple ways and through simple moments, by looking at the people around you and asking this question, where does it hurt? If you don't think God can use you that way, it's just 100% pride. And if you're not going to be satisfied with God using you that way, I hate to say it but it's 100% pride. It just is, because that's the way the good news is shared, that's the way evangelization really works is through intentional small acts of kindness and love and generosity in the people around you.

Evangelization, that's your job, but conversion, that's God's job. The most important question in the history of evangelization is, where does it hurt? Where does it hurt? You know if good news, if evangelization is sharing good news, what's the best news that someone can hear when they're hurting? Really think about this for a second. What is the absolute best news someone can hear when they're hurting? *I'm here to help.* That's it. That is the heart of evangelization. You are hurting, I'm here to help. And it will lead to that golden moment where they ask why. They wanna know why. And why? Why do we step in when people are hurting? Because that is the gospel. That 100% like that, the gospel is people are hurting, I come in to help. I give my life to help. I mean, you can boil it down in very simple terms in that way. And so we live this gospel, we share the good news, we participate in God's mission by asking this question, where does it hurt and stepping in and saying, I'm here to help.

There was this guy, his name was Brian. He's from Texas and I met Brian, He brought me down to speak at his parish and he was like, you know, Texas ranch hand kind of guy, Brian, he was awesome. And incredible story. Him and his wife, they were Catholic their whole lives but their faith wasn't important. I mean, basically their faith was showing up to Mass on Sunday, that was it. For 20 years, they went to the same parish, went to same Mass, at the same time, they sat in the

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same Pew, they never met anybody, they never got involved, they never prayed, they never did anything, they never go to retreat, never did nothing, right? All they did was show up for that one Mass, same parish, same time, same pew, et cetera. In and out, that was their entire faith life.

And then one weekend, this couple really screwed things up for them. See, there's this couple that always sat in front of them. 20 years always sat in front of them, same pew, same time, sat right in front of a Brian and his wife. And one Sunday, this couple really screwed things up. They turn around during the sign of peace and they introduced themselves. They say "Hi, my name is Tom," and they introduce themselves. And this guy Tom introduced himself and Brian is driving home and he's like, well, this guy ruined everything. Now we know, you know, Brian's talking to his wife he's like, well, now we know this couple, we got to be expected to say hi to them, I got to remember their names, like, we might as well change parish now. Like everything's ruined, you know. He didn't really think that but you know, you can kind of imagine he's in this place.

And so okay, well, now they're going back to the same parish, same Mass, every Sunday, same time, same pew, and hey Tom, how's it going? Yeah, they're introducing themselves. And then a couple years go by and they would just talk and then Tom really screwed things up again. One Sunday he turns around to Brian and he hands out a CD. "He says, hey, Brian. I listened to this Catholic talk in a CD and I thought it was really powerful and I think you should listen to it. I think you'd really like it." Tom leaves Mass and he's saying, he's like, "oh my gosh! this guy, what is he thinking? He's ruining everything." Now we got the CD, throws in the back of his truck, he's all upset, ignored for the whole week and it gets to Saturday evening, he's driving home and he thinks, "Oh no, we got to go to Mass tomorrow morning and Tom is going to ask about the CD and now I got to listen to this CD."

So he's like, you know, grabs the CD, he pops into his truck into the CD player and he said, "I'll listen to it for five minutes and that way I can tell Tom I listened to it and I'll just tell him that wasn't really for me." So he, you know, pops it in, five minutes, gets to driveway to his house, sits in his driveway for 45 minutes just listening to the rest of this talk on CD. And he goes to Mass the next morning and said Tom, that talk changed my life. I want to live differently now because of hearing that.

And pretty soon, Brian is going with Tom to retreats and he's praying with Tom and they're starting a Bible study at their parish and they're getting involved with

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their parish and pretty soon, Brian's meeting with his pastor at the parish to talk about how they can continue to share the good news and spread the word at their parish and Brian's got this idea, he' like, "hey, you know, what if we just got like, you know, a great Catholic talk on CD, and we get a great bunch of great Catholic books and we just put them in the back of the parish and we just told people, they were there and they were free and people could just take them and hopefully, you know, it have an impact on them." The pastor was like, "hey, that's a phenomenal idea. I love that idea, you know, but the thing is, we can't afford that, we don't have the money for that."

So Brian goes back to Tom and they get this group of guys that they had started this Bible study with and they decide, you know what? We're going to pay for it. We're going to out of our own pocket, we're going to pay for this. And pretty soon they start bringing in speakers too. So now they've got CDs in the back of their parish, they got books, great Catholic books in the back of their parish and great Catholic talks on CD in the back of their parish and they're bringing in Catholic speakers and they're making announcements at Mass, hey, we got a new shipment of books in, make sure you grab. Anyone, any family, you know, one per family, they're totally free, it's our gift to you, please take one.

Over the course of five years, he brings in over 10 Catholic speakers into the parish just to give different missions in different times and they distribute, this group of 10 guys, they distribute more than 10,000 Catholic books and Catholic talks on CD throughout their parish. And I'm hearing this, I'm hearing this story from Brian, I was one of the speakers he brought in and I'm just like blown away, right? Like Brian, you are like the poster child for sharing the good news. You are the poster child, you're the all-star for what it means to evangelize. This is incredible, like, look at what you've done. Look at all the good work you've done. Look at the thousands of lives potentially that you've touched through your ministry at your parish. Look at where you started and look at where you are now. Like, this is incredible.

And he's "Dominick, Dominick, Dominick, like, it's not me, it's not me." And I said "what do you mean it's not you? You know, I understand humility and I know the Holy Spirit's doing the work here but like, you've done a lot of incredible work. Like, look at the leadership you've taken" And he says, "Dominick, it was not me. It was all of this; all of this only happened because one guy turned around at Mass on a Sunday and introduced himself to the couple that always sat behind him." One small, simple act that it was two years later, rather it was years later one Sunday they introduced themselves, years later, he hands him a CD and five years after

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that you see the way that, that one moment, that one simple act of kindness, of just an introduction, of just a simple gift, you've seen the monumental impact those kind of moments can have.

You see evangelization it always has this trail of breadcrumbs that we very rarely see. It always has these little moments that we very rarely see. And it always has these moments that are brought on by simple people who just care about loving the people around them well. You know, we as Catholics, we get so caught up and I don't have the right words, I don't have the theology degree, I don't have all the answers to all the questions, I don't know, my Bible enough, I don't know the apologetics like, I don't have a platform, I don't have enough followers, you know, like, I'm just going to leave the evangelization to Bishop Barron and I'm just going to leave the evangelization to, you know, the speakers and to the writers and all those people but the truth is, the truth is the people like me, you know, the people that write the books and they have the followers and all that stuff, our work is actually far less important compared to your work. Going out into the world and asking this question, where does it hurt? And answering through the way you live your life, through showing your friends and your neighbors and your children and your coworkers, I am here to help.

Sharing the good news of the gospel is actually not that complicated. It's real complicated if you want to convert hearts. It's really complicated if you've got it in your mind that you want to do God's job. I can't help you do God's job, all right? Like, let's get real clear on that. If you want to do God's job, I don't know who's given that talk but it ain't this one. But if you want to do your job, if you want to share the good news, if you want to do some good news-ization, be the kind of person that other people look at and they say, that person is really joyful. That person's really generous. Or that person really has a lot of peace. I don't know what they have, but I wish I had it too. Be the kind of person who looks for small moments and simple ways to say, I'm here to help so that the people around them eventually say, why? Why do you live the way you live? Why do the way that you do? Because when that moment happens, when that moment happens, you'll have done your job and the Holy Spirit will step in and God will start truly changing hearts.

Thank you all so much for being a part of these two talks. It's been a real pleasure, I hope that you go out and you share the good news in simple ways with people around you. I love you, please pray for me, know that I'm praying for you and God bless.