

# THE LORD'S DYNAMIC

*Talk Handout*

## **I. Evangelization: A Challenge for the Catholic Church**

### **A. Definition of Evangelization**

“[Evangelization] is a proclamation of the Good News done in such a way as to elicit an affirmative response to the Word so that the power of the Holy Spirit goes to work.”

### **B. The state of evangelism in the Catholic Church**

- We have wonderful documents on evangelization but we don't do it.
- The official teaching on evangelization hasn't been received by the wider Church.

### **C. ‘The cart before the horse’: Evangelization is the beginning**

- If we are going to get anywhere, we have to begin.

## **II. How it works: The Lord's Dynamic**

### **A. Evangelization employs God's own dynamic.**

“A proclamation of the Good News of Christ proclaimed to the world and the Church, in such a way as to elicit, to draw forward an affirmative response from the hearer, so that the Holy Spirit can take over and transform the person who is hearing it to say ‘yes’ to Christ. It is something that you and I start and that God finishes. It is the power of God going to work and doing what God does best: capturing a human heart for Himself, causing someone to fall in love with Him, which is what He wants. That's what evangelization is.”

### **B. The Lord's Dynamic is a three-step process:**

- 1) *Proclamation of the Word* - what we do.
- 2) *The response of the hearer* - what the hearer does.
- 3) *The work of God* - which transforms and changes.

### **C. “Faith comes through hearing...” (Rom 10:17)**

- Evangelization requires an explicitly spoken word; it is not just ‘good example’.
- The word can be proclaimed in any number of settings (Church, various groups, one-on-one).
- Evangelization is not catechizing, this approach puts the “cart before the horse.”

### III. My Experience

#### A. Faith of *Culture*

“My faith emerged from my culture. I would describe my childhood faith as a cultural faith - I did all the Catholic things. I was predisposed, as we all were, to believe the things that credible people taught me, and my parents were credible people, and my pastor and my teachers were. They were good to us.”

#### B. Faith of *Conviction*

“At age 16, I began to question what was taught by these credible people. I was blessed enough to go to a Catholic high school taught by the Oblate Fathers, and a Catholic college. All of the questions I was asking, the answers were supplied and they made sense. Authors that they referred us to were credible people, and I believed. I became a very, very convicted Catholic. I believed I could answer any question or objection to Catholic practice. I became well-read. My faith moved from *culture* to *conviction*.”

#### C. **Convicted, but unable to convince**

“After 3 years in parish ministry I got a call from the Bishop saying, ‘We’re starting a high school. I want you to teach there.’ The task was to bring these young people in the classroom to the point where I’d got to when I was their age. They came out of the culture. I thought, now I’d bring them from the culture to the conviction that I was brought to. All I’d have to do was explain the convictions the same way they were explained to me, and they will become their convictions. And we’ll all march out of here in 5 years as convicted Catholics. It didn’t work! It was an unmitigated flop, and I didn’t understand it.”

#### D. **Cultural collapse**

“Something had changed: it was the 60’s. The overall Christian culture of the country had collapsed, and the Catholic subculture was collapsing with it. People coming up through it were *not* disposed to believe the things that were being taught to them. The thing that I was supposed to be doing, and wasn’t doing very well, was to bring my students to a faith of conviction. What do we have to do to turn that around?”

#### E. **Faith of *Experience*: From Conviction to Encounter**

“I myself got evangelized. I heard the Gospel in a way that I hadn’t heard before. I responded in a new way, and the Lord captured my life, and turned me 180 degrees around. The Lord inspired a ‘revolution’ in my mind, spirit, emotions, pastoral practice, and everything else. I began to understand that God Himself wanted to run the Church; I had never known that. I had thought I was supposed to run the Church. Now I realized I was to work with Him, and give up control, let Him direct the operation. I became an evangelized priest.”

### IV. Evangelization in Action

#### A. **The Lord’s Dynamic in the classroom and the pulpit**

“I went back into the classroom, prayed up a storm, listened to the Lord, and felt he was giving me 5 key scriptures. I began using them day after day with my students, repeating each one and explaining it.”

- 1) “*If you seek me with all your heart, I will allow you to find me.*” (Jer 29:13)
- 2) “*Commit your life to the Lord. Trust in him, and he will act.*” (Ps 37:5)
- 3) “*To those who accepted him, he gave power to become children of God.*” (John 1:12)
- 4) “*I stand at the door and knock. If anyone will but open the door, I will come in, sit down at table and have supper with him.*” (Rev 3:20)
- 5) “*Draw close to God and he will draw close to you.*” (Jas 4:8)

“I was amazed at the power contained in the words of that God lead me to. I noticed that my students and the people in the pews were giving me attention that they weren’t giving me before.”

**B. Characteristics of an evangelized person:**

1) *Hunger for the Word of God*

- The Holy Spirit helps us to understand and desire the Scriptures in a new way.

2) *Change in Priorities & Conversation*

- Evangelized people want to talk about Jesus.

3) *Expectancy for God to Speak and Act*

- Communal and personal prayer come alive with expectancy.

4) *Desire to Celebrate God*

- Evangelized people experience authentic joy in the things of God.

5) *Desire to Share about God*

- Not only to talk about God, but to share their experience of Him with others.