

# Don't bury the talents God has given you

The previous five articles in this series *Go and Make Disciples* have focused on the ins and outs of what it means to be a missionary disciple of Christ. Put simply, a *missionary disciple* is a person who brings Christ to others through the situations of daily life and activities. In our actions and in our words—how we live and what we say—we can reflect the beauty of living as a Christian. Our lives should reflect the joy of walking with Jesus each day. This is your call and opportunity even while you are in prison or jail.

Through our example, others may be inspired to say yes to Jesus and follow him too. It likely won't happen on the first shot, or right away—like we often hope it will—but over time, it may. We may not be around to see it happen. It's all done in God's time.

So what is stopping us from living as missionary disciples? The articles in this series are not intended to be only head knowledge, just another thing to maybe think about. Rather, they are intended to encourage and help us respond to the call to be missionary disciples. (The box above summarizes the four main points made in the articles.)

**Jesus wants this for us.** Jesus reaches out to us and gives us goodness beyond anything we can imagine. Like when he stretched out his hand and cured the leper (see Mark 1:40-45). Jesus wanted to heal him, and he did. In a similar way, he gives us the gift to be missionary disciples. So, he enables us by giving us the grace to do that. He will give us the wisdom, words, and the courage to follow him as a missionary disciple. So step out in faith and say yes to him. And follow.

**Jesus calls sinners to be his disciples.** Jesus himself said, "I did not come to call the righteous but sinners" (Mark 2:17). He also said, "Follow me" (v. 14). We can pretty much agree that we are among the sinners he is calling. Our life as a disciple is to follow Jesus. Keep walking with him. Don't stop. Don't get comfortable and stop.

### Living as Missionary Disciples

1. **Encounter Jesus in your life.**
2. **Accompany others on the journey to conversion.**
3. **Grow in the community of God and neighbor.**
4. **Go forth as a missionary disciple.**

The Holy Spirit is soaking us with grace. Let's be open to it. When we stop following, let us gaze into the Lord's eyes and pick up and follow. May his gift to you grow. Don't bury the talents God has given to you. You may be in "enemy territory," but follow with trust and confidence. Surprises surely await those who walk with Jesus.



**Here I am Lord. I come to do your will.** This is what the Psalmist proclaimed (Psalm 40). To be a missionary disciple, we need to know that Jesus is the one to follow. And then follow. But we all know we fail from time to time, or even more often. As we follow, we witness to others and are a witness. We belong to Jesus and need a relationship with him.

Many times, our lives are "about me." But to be a missionary disciple, we need to know that we need a relationship with Jesus. We develop this relationship through our daily prayer and participation in Mass, and through our prayerful reading of Scripture. This relationship grows as we live the Christian life with others in community, and as we care for those in need. In these ways we meet Jesus and become his disciples.

**Trust in God.** Christ is risen. We have nothing to fear, for God gives us much. Rejoice in God's generosity. Let's use it to become his missionary disciples. Of course, we will fail. But we can get back up and continue on. This is all part of our life-long journey with Christ. Remember Jesus' words to his fearful disciples on the stormy sea of Galilee: "Take courage, it is I, do not be afraid!" (Mark 6:50).

You are called to be a missionary disciple. You are sent on mission! Accept the call. Take courage and respond.

~ Anthony Bosnick

*This is the final article in this series. It is based on the teaching of Pope Francis and the Catholic Bishops of the U.S.*

## Put the pedal to the metal!

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this prayer. Tap into them. If you need a Rosary and it is permitted in your situation, write to Paulist Prison Ministries (at the address on page 2) and we can send you a simple Rosary. This prayer is another way that helps us to see and believe.

**Let's Talk!** responds to prisoners' questions. Write to us at the address on page 2 of this newsletter. We like hearing from our readers.

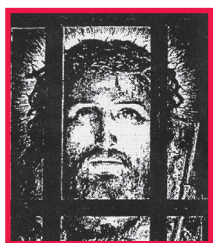


## The Hail Mary

*Hail Mary, full of grace. The Lord is with thee.  
Blessed art thou amongst women,  
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.  
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners,  
now and at the hour of our death.*

*Amen.*

**Pray for our benefactors** *Let's Talk!* and its Spanish translation *¡Hablemos!* are supported by donations. They are given free of charge to prison chaplains for distribution to inmates by Paulist Prison Ministries. Please pray for our benefactors. To help support this ministry, please send your donation to the address on page 2 of this newsletter.



A CATHOLIC MINISTRY  
TO PRISONERS

# Let's Talk!

A SERVICE OF PAULIST EVANGELIZATION MINISTRIES

PO BOX 29121 ♦ WASHINGTON, DC 20017

Vol. 27, No. 2 – April/May/June 2020



## So where's the joy?

**O**n Easter—and during the Easter Season—we hear the good news proclaimed during Mass: “The joy of the resurrection renews the whole world” (Easter Preface IV). St. Augustine reminds us that “We are an Easter people, and Alleluia is our song.”

What a wonderful truth the Church declares. It should give us hope and joy on Easter Sunday, during the Easter Season, and throughout the year. Do you feel the joy? Probably even out of prison, you were likely a bit joy-impaired. It is probably worse now. Most people—inside *and* outside of prison—are likely in the same boat. So, what's going on?

**The way to joy.** In many ways, *we ourselves* are the greatest obstacle to joy in our lives. That's because so much of our lives is about us. It's all about *me!* Me first. This gets us into a lot of trouble, all

across the board. With God and with those around us.

There is a way out. Think of the word **JOY**. “**J**” stands for Jesus. “**O**” stands for “others.” “**Y**” stands for “you.” So, in your life, put Jesus first. Others come second. You come last. This is likely *opposite* the way we usually go about life.

**Jesus first.** To know joy in our lives, Jesus must be at the center of our journey. The great thing is that Jesus *wants* to be at the center of our lives. Scripture tells us to “keep our eyes fixed on Jesus,” the author and perfecter of our faith. He has already been faithful to the cross, and all who live in him share in his joy (see Hebrews 12:4). Jesus is the starting point



of our journey and he wants to give us blessings. In those blessings, we experience joy. Go for it.

**Others second.** The greatest commandment is to love God and the second is like it: “You shall *love your neighbor as yourself*” (Matthew 22:39; see also John 13:34-35). Let's take that as our goal, guided by St. Paul: “Bear one another's burdens. . . . Let us not grow tired of doing good, for in due time we shall reap our harvest” (Galatians 6:2, 9).

**You last.** This follows from the first two! Do your own Bible study on what it means to come last.

So, you want some **JOY** in your life? Follow the plan. Begin now. God will not disappoint you.

### Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Easter Season should be a time of great joy. The Church celebrates for fifty days. How hard that is when you are in jail or prison. But still, it is the truth. So ask God for the grace to live in his life and love, renewed in the Easter Season.

Christ is risen. As we write in an article in this issue, “We have nothing to fear, for God gives us much. Rejoice in God's generosity.” Know that the Risen Lord wants the best for you. Walk with him daily. This is all part of our life-long journey with Christ. Take Jesus' words to heart, “Take courage, it is I, do not be afraid!” (Mark 6:50). Trust in that promise and you will not be let down.

Let us pray for one another.

Father Frank DeSiano, CSP  
President  
Paulist Evangelization Ministries

### Q&A

## Put the pedal to the metal!

**OK**, we're off with some interesting questions in this issue that are perfect to consider in these weeks of Easter and following. They are good examples of the fun and challenges we face when we seek to live in a spiritual way. So put the pedal to the metal and let's go!

### Q. Why do some people see and not believe? And others see and believe?

**A.** This is a great question to consider in the Easter Season. In a Gospel passage very appropriate for this time of year (John 20:1-9), we read of the apostle John when he went to Jesus' empty tomb: “He saw and believed” (v. 8). Yet, there were others who did not believe. Why? What's going on here and what does it tell us?

Seeing and not believing applies to us as well. There can be a disconnect in our spiritual lives. We hear the truths taught and proclaimed about God, and about the life and love God has for us. We hopefully have at times sensed or experienced God's life and love. Yet for the most part we go on living our lives as if nothing has happened, as if it isn't true.

This is the truth: Our fellowship is with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. When we encounter Jesus, our priorities should change. Otherwise, we will go on living like nothing is different. And things won't change in a positive way in our lives if we go on living like we did in the past—thinking mainly about ourselves and our own desires.

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## CHURCH CALENDAR

### APRIL 2020

- 5 **Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord**
- 9 Holy Thursday
- 10 Passion of the Lord (Good Friday)
- 11 Holy Saturday
- 12 **Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord**
- 19 **Second Sunday of Easter, Divine Mercy Sunday**
- 25 **St. Mark, evangelist**
- 26 **Third Sunday of Easter**
- 29 St. Catherine of Siena, virgin and doctor

### MAY 2020

- 1 St. Joseph the Worker
- 2 St. Athanasius, bishop and doctor
- 3 **Fourth Sunday of Easter**
- 10 **Fifth Sunday of Easter**
- 14 **St. Matthias, apostle**
- 17 **Sixth Sunday of Easter**
- 24 **Ascension** (in some places celebrated May 21)
- 26 St. Philip Neri, priest
- 31 **Pentecost**

### JUNE 2020

- 1 Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church
- 3 St. Charles Lwanga and Companions, martyrs
- 5 St. Boniface, bishop and martyr
- 7 **Most Holy Trinity**
- 11 **St. Barnabas, apostle**
- 13 St. Anthony of Padua, priest and doctor
- 14 **Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi)**
- 19 **Most Sacred Heart of Jesus**
- 20 Immaculate Heart of Mary
- 21 **Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 24 **Birth of John the Baptist**
- 28 **Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**
- 29 **Sts. Peter and Paul, apostles**

## Let's Talk!

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Thank you for your help.

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## Q&A Put the pedal to the metal!

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As we change our lives and actions, this lays a new foundation in our lives. The result is that we begin to see and believe. This is because we are building up new ways of thinking and trusting in God. Then even more, we see and believe and act accordingly.

This comes at a great cost to us. You likely know that! We have selfish habits. We have unrepented sin. We can be mean-spirited. Don't let this stop you. Run to Jesus. Walk with him daily. Ask God to open your heart and mind to him. Let everything in you be part of your encounter with Christ. Ask God for this grace. He wants us to know him and experience him.

This is the grace of Easter. It is the grace of every day. Let it be a grace of your day, no matter what your life has been like in the past. See and believe.

### Q. This is hard. How do I do that?

**A.** It is hard, no doubt about that. But if we want to set off on a new life, which is God's call and gift to us, we have to make efforts each day. So do little things. Trust in little things. Let God build on that.

Let virtue—good qualities—grow in you. These are the good things in our lives, especially as we relate to others. Here is an example from Scripture: "Put on . . . heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another. . . . As the Lord has forgiven you, so you must also do" (Colossians 3:12-13). Here is the clincher: "And over all these things put on love, that is the bond of perfection" (v. 14).

You might say, "these aren't little things, they are big." They are big! But they are the normal things we need to embrace and let grow in us as we relate to others. They are part of our life-long journey of living for and with God.



They are the things we need to do if we want to join with those who "see and believe." Begin small. Over time you will be surprised to see that your life is quietly and slowly changing. Great things come about in our lives when we simply walk with Jesus each day and learn from him.

That's how we set off on a new life. If you want that life, go for it.

### Q. How can I set my mind on God and grow in seeing and believing?

**A.** Pray. Read Scripture. Think about God. Care for others. Pray the Rosary.

May is traditionally considered the month of Mary, the Mother of Jesus and our Mother. To put it mildly, Mary is quite a woman. She opened her heart to God and accepted his will for her to become the Mother of God, of Jesus, her Son.

So, as we are thinking about ways to go for it and become those who see and believe, we recommend praying the Rosary. Why? Because it helps us think about God. It brings us into touch with Scripture and biblical truths. It softens our hearts so we can care for others.

Learn to pray the Rosary. There are lots of resources that can help you learn

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## Prisoner Saint

**Bl. Franz Jägerstätter (1907 - 1943)** + Franz was an Austrian farmer and peasant who died at the hands of the Nazis during World War II. As a young man, he worked hard on the farm and in the mines, like many other young Austrians in the countryside. Neighbors saw him as somewhat wild and he fathered a daughter outside marriage in 1933. Franz later married another woman who inspired him to deep faith. Together they had three daughters. By 1940, Franz concluded it was a serious sin to participate in the Nazi war effort. Twice his call to military duty was postponed until 1943. When called again, he refused to fight and was imprisoned. Franz was found guilty of treason and was beheaded by guillotine in August 1943. He was beatified in 2007. His life story is told in the recent movie *A Hidden Life*.

**Feast Day: May 21**

## Pope Francis' Prayer Requests for April/May/June 2020

Each month the Pope entrusts prayer intentions to the Apostleship of Prayer, his Worldwide Prayer Network. His monthly prayer intention is a global call to transform our prayer into "concrete gestures" of service. It is a monthly action plan mobilizing us to join together to build a more human and caring world.

In addition to the monthly requests below, the Holy Father at the beginning of the month offers a second prayer intention for his immediate concerns, a "last minute" intention to get us out of the "globalization of indifference." Your chaplain or volunteer may be able to get this request for you.

### APRIL

**Universal:** *Freedom from Addiction:* We pray that those suffering from addiction may be helped and accompanied.

### MAY

**Evangelization:** *For Deacons:* We pray that deacons, faithful in their service to the Word and the poor, may be an invigorating symbol for the entire Church.

### JUNE

**Evangelization:** *The Way of the Heart:* We pray that all those who suffer may find their way in life, allowing themselves to be touched by the Heart of Jesus.

*Pope Francis invites you to join him in praying for these intentions. Your prayer is needed and can help change the world.*

## The Big Catholic Buffett, Part 2

# The ancient, spiritual buffet

**Peaches:** OK. So tell me what you mean by the "Big Catholic Buffet."

**Me:** The ancient, spiritual buffet! Tested in every culture and condition for over two thousand years! It's pretty impressive.

So let's break it down into three areas: Prayer, Life-style, and Mission. That way I'll be able to give you at least a sample of each.

**Peaches:** Wow! That big, huh?

**Me:** It would take an encyclopedia to lay it out.

**Peaches:** OK, so Prayer . . .

**Me:** "Spirituality" is originally a Catholic word. It means a person's lived experience and the practices that go with it.

**Peaches:** Where the "rubber meets the road."

**Me:** That's right. For us Catholics we are talking about how you *do the Gospel*. How you *live in the Spirit of Jesus*.

**Peaches:** Cuz with over a billion of us one size does NOT fit all!

**Me:** For starters you could look at the hundreds of religious orders in the Church.

**Peaches:** Groups of priests, nuns and brothers.

**Me:** Yes. And they all have different approaches to living the Gospel often based on following the approach or spirituality of their founders.

**Peaches:** So regular lay people could follow one of those paths that suit them?

**Me:** Sure. There are lay groups connected with all these religious families to help regular people learn and live their approach.

**Peaches:** You have to find your "cup of tea."

**Me:** Or, you can do what I do and mix and match different things in each that appeal to you. They are all approved and tested.

**Peaches:** So your spirituality is "Chinese Menu"?

**Me:** One from column A and one from B!

**Peaches:** OK. So these are like theories?

**Me:** They have different views, approaches and styles, also different spiritual practices. The Franciscans gave us the Stations of the Cross. The Jesuits originally gave us modern Retreats. The Dominicans gave us the Rosary.

**Peaches:** So what about Life-Style?

**Me:** As Catholics, we do not believe we are just "brains." We are whole people with bodies. When we pray we don't just stay in

our head, we use our bodies too because that's what's real.

**Peaches:** We stand, sit, kneel, sing, use beads to touch and incense to smell and beautiful sights for the eyes!

**Me:** Yes. So part of our prayer is life-style. We are all called to be holy. . . .

**Peaches:** Baptism!

**Me:** Yes. But that can be lived out best in different ways for different people. Some people can be holier as a father and husband than as a monk. Some people can be holier as a monk. That's why the Holy Spirit calls us to different Gospel life-styles.

**Peaches:** What are the choices?

**Me:** Lay people (single or married), sister, brother, monk, priest, deacon (single, married, religious order). We even have hermits!

**Peaches:** Quite a range of options! So what's the Mission piece?

**Me:** Baptism calls us to join in Jesus' mission. You have to *do* something for your spirituality to be complete.

**Peaches:** It's not a head-trip.

**Me:** So let's take a girl. She's baptized. The Holy Spirit calls her to be a sister. Now, it's like dating. She has to find a religious order that suits her just like if she was getting married.

**Peaches:** You better "shop around"!

**Me:** Yes. And part of that decision is what kind of work does that community do? Is this girl adventurous? She may join a group of missionary sisters and live and work far from home.

**Peaches:** Sounds pretty much like regular life.

**Me:** It is. We are all baptized to live a gospel spirituality, live a gospel life and do a gospel work. That's Catholic spirituality; at least, it's a taste of the big buffet.

**Peaches:** So, what should we do?

**Me:** Ask your good Catholic friends or your deacon and priest about their own spiritualities. Go on retreats. Check out parish groups in the bulletin at church. Do Internet searches on them. Find something that speaks to you.

**Peaches:** So, get a life! Get a gospel life!

**Me:** Well, at least, check the "menu."

*Deacon Dennis Dolan is a retired chaplain from York Correctional Institution in Connecticut. He continues his ministry with and for prisoners through his writing.*