



CHRISTLIFE™

CATHOLIC MINISTRY FOR EVANGELIZATION

May/June 2007

Dear brothers and sisters,

May the mercy of the crucified and risen Lord Jesus increase your reliance on his faithfulness, as we expectantly wait in prayer for the coming of the Holy Spirit this Pentecost!

The last few months have been action-packed with opportunities for us to proclaim the Lord Jesus, as well as present evangelization training at parishes. We have been particularly focused on preparations for our first *Discovering Christ* course to be held at the Church of the Crucifixion, beginning April 17th! Please join us in praying that the Lord will bring many people to encounter Him during the six-week course!

“Come follow me and I will make you fishers of men.” Matthew 4:19

As we have worked with parishes and dioceses nationwide over the years, we clearly see how essential it is for our parishes to break out of a programmatic worldview to be an effective evangelizing community. This paradigm affects us at both the parish and personal levels.

Let me share with you about a paradigm shift necessary on the level of individual Catholics. If this change occurs for each of us, it will bring radical change for the parish as well. When the parishioners begin to grasp that *evangelization is the essential mission of the Catholic Church, and that I am called by Jesus to personally evangelize*, many react saying, “I am too busy to add one more thing to what I am already doing!” But the mission Christ calls us to is not a call to add one more thing to our schedules.

What is called for is a fundamental shift in the way we think and live as Catholics. **Evangelization - sharing Jesus Christ with others and inviting them into relationship with the Trinity in the context of the Church, is something that is meant to be a normal part of my daily life.** Evangelization is something that can happen anytime and anywhere.

Sharing God’s love with others is not restricted to being on a committee, serving on an evangelization retreat, or going on a mission trip. It is following Jesus, and inviting the Holy Spirit to lead and use us during our ordinary daily life. Opportunities will arise that cover the spectrum from kindness to a stranger whose car is broken down or taking the time to greet the gas station attendant by name, to explicitly sharing about your personal relationship with Jesus Christ as Lord.

If we make love our aim, and ask the Lord Jesus to let us see what he is doing, anytime and anywhere, evangelization will become a normal, natural part of my life, i.e., on the radar screen 24/7. It will no longer be primarily programmatic or one more thing to add to my already busy life.

St Paul said, *“For the love of Christ compels us because we are convinced that one has died for all!”* (2 Corinthians 5:15) It is the knowledge of Christ’s love for me personally that compels me to share this good news with others as part of my daily life that will make the difference! Jesus died for all!

We remember you each day in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament as we ask the Lord Jesus to use you as his witnesses. May you continue to surrender your life to him and grow in the knowledge of Christ’s love for you personally that you may be compelled to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with those you meet!

Sincerely,

Dave Nodar, Director

WHY JESUS MATTERS

by Bert Ghezzi, Ph.D.

When asked why Jesus matters, many people say such things as “Jesus was a good man,” a “great teacher,” or “a great moral example.” All these views express some truth, but they are grossly inadequate. If Jesus were merely a good man, like my wonderful neighbor Mr. Lam, we would not be talking about him. If he were merely a great teacher, we would be ignoring him just as we ignore most of the world’s great teachers. And if Jesus came only to give a good moral example, we would be despairing of measuring up to his high standards, just as Saturday golfers may despair of measuring up to the high standards set by Tiger Woods.



Jesus matters to us for something he did that was far bigger and more important than any of these mere human callings. In his public ministry that climaxed in his death and Resurrection he changed human history forever with an accomplishment of eternal significance. Jesus launched his work by announcing the coming of the kingdom of God (see Mt

4:17) He was declaring that in his person, God himself was already overthrowing the forces of evil and setting things right in the world. God was acting through him to release all who were imprisoned in the kingdom of darkness. In short, God was, in Christ, rescuing his creation and restoring it (see Mt 4:23–25).

For proof that God was on the move to reclaim and renew all creation, Jesus went about healing people of all diseases and delivering people from evil spirits. He also showed that he was acting with divine authority by exercising control over nature by calming the winds and sea, raising the dead, and even forgiving sins (see examples in Mt 8:23–25; Mt. 9).

Jesus invited men and women to collaborate with him in building the kingdom of God. His followers would be a light to the world, advancing with him God’s great rescue project (see Mt 4:18–22). He taught his disciples to live in ways that would manifest the presence of God’s kingdom. He charged them to set their hearts on serving God, to depend on God for everything, to forgive all offenders, to work for peace, and to accept persecution in his name. He also taught them to love their enemies, give generously, respect women, live chastely, and respond to evil with good (see Mt 5–7).

Finally, Jesus established the kingdom by his death and Resurrection. He destroyed evil not by violence, but by

absorbing its full force in his death on the cross, thus permanently robbing it of its power. And he launched God’s kingdom—God’s great restoration of all things—by his resurrection to new life.

This cosmic revolutionary transformation of all creation is why Jesus matters to us. Whether we realize it or not, as human beings caught up in what the Lord is doing to rescue creation, we are already involved in his effort. But Jesus wants us to choose to work with him to establish God’s kingdom. He wants us to give our life to God and use our gifts to overcome evil and injustice. He wants to make us a light to the world.

How will you respond to his invitation?

For this article and other great reflections, visit www.christlife.org/sharefaith/articles.html

Bert Ghezzi is a member of our Board of Directors. Bert, a popular author, columnist, and speaker, earned his PhD from the University of Notre Dame. He has written sixteen books including, *Sacred Passages: Bringing the Sacraments to Life*, *Voices of the Saints*, *Keeping Your Kids Catholic*, and *Mystics and Miracles*. He edited *The New Jerusalem Bible: Saints Devotional Edition* for which he collected selections from writings of the saints. His most recent book is *The Sign of the Cross: Recovering the Power of the Ancient Prayer*. Hundreds of his articles have appeared in the Catholic press. Bert has extensive experience as editorial director for several publications firms including *Servant Publications* and *Strang Communications*. Currently, he is a senior acquisitions editor for *The Word Among Us Press*.

CALENDAR EVENTS

Come and Bring a Friend!

Discovering Christ

April 17-May 22, 6:30-9:00 PM

Church of the Crucifixion, Glen Burnie MD

New Pentecost for New Evangelization

June 8-10, Charismatic Renewal Conference,

Franciscan University of Steubenville, OH

SPOTLIGHT ON FR. ERIK ARNOLD

Meet Fr. Erik Arnold, our newly appointed member of our Board of Directors. Fr. Arnold is the pastor of the Church of the Crucifixion parish in Glen Burnie, Maryland. He also served as the Archdiocesan Liaison for Archbishop William Cardinal Keeler to the Franklin Graham Festival held in Baltimore this past summer. ChristLife had the privilege of working closely with Fr. Arnold on this event.



Fr. Arnold is a wonderful addition to our Board, as he possesses a personal passion for evangelization. Recently, Fr. Arnold opened the doors of Crucifixion parish to be the host for ChristLife's first pilot course of Discovering Christ. Beyond pasturing, Fr. Arnold has a wealth of other talents. He is creative, innovative, and gifted with technology. He also is an inspiration to his parish family and to his fellow priests. In his spare time, Fr. Arnold enjoys kayaking and being outdoors. We are truly blessed to have Fr. Arnold as part of the ChristLife team!



MEET THE STAFF FOR CHRISTLIFE

Pete Ascosi – *Young Adult Project Manager*,
Dave Nodar - *Director*, Dianne Martin – *Program Director*,
Leo Rudegear – *Administrative Director*, and
Chad Zik – *College Intern*

GET INVOLVED!

Join the mission of ChristLife today.

You can participate by . . .

- **Come to Discovering Christ.** Beginning April 17th until May 22nd, the first pilot course for Discovering Christ will be held at Church of the Crucifixion in Glen Burnie, MD, from 6:45 p.m. until 9:15 p.m. The evening includes dinner in a small group, a teaching on the foundations of Catholic Christianity, coffee, dessert, and a small group discussion.

For those who are unable to attend the weekly sessions of the course, consider coming to one or two sessions to support the mission in prayer and to hear dynamic teachings.
- **Join our Missionary Corps.** Meetings will resume upon completion of the Discovering Christ course on June 19 at 7:30 at our office building in Ellicott City, MD. All are welcome!
- **Invite ChristLife to conduct a workshop for your parish.** We need you to spread the word to others that we are committed to Building Evangelizing Eucharistic Communities. We can help your parish community or small group begin a focused endeavor to make evangelization your number one priority.
- **Begin the Sharing Christ course in your parish or home.** Commit yourself to learning with others how to be fully engaged in the mission of evangelization and to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ in one-to-one relationships.
- **Pray for us.** Intercessory prayer is the foundation for evangelization. Without prayer all of our efforts are in vain. Consider making a commitment to praying for the mission and work of ChristLife regularly. Never underestimate the power of this invaluable gift of the Spirit
- **Give generously to financially support the work of ChristLife.** Your contributions make it possible for us to train Catholics for the essential mission of the Church, evangelization. We work to equip men and women in the marketplace so that others may encounter the love of God through Jesus Christ our Lord and experience the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. Though we are an apostolate of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, almost all of our funding comes from faithful individuals who share God's heart for the lost. Please help us to continue this important work.

Information about each of these valuable activities is available online at www.christlife.org

Discover Christ at Crucifixion

Beginning April 17, Crucifixion, Glen Burnie, will be hosting a program entitled “*Discovering Christ.*” This six-week series explores the foundations of the Catholic faith and is designed to help men and women encounter the person of Christ and accept his invitation to know him and his church, said Father Erik Arnold, pastor. For six consecutive Tuesdays from 6:45 to 9:15 p.m. participants will share a meal and listen to teachings and small group discussion.

“Explore the answers to these basic questions: What’s it all about? What gives meaning and purpose to life? Why does Jesus matter? Does God really love me? Why do I need a savior? The Holy Spirit – who is he? How can I begin this new life? How do we grow from here? How do we live as disciples of Christ?” said Father Arnold.

The program was designed by ChristLife, a lay Catholic apostolate of evangelization in Baltimore.

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CHRISTLIFE is a tax exempt ministry dedicated to equipping Catholics for the work of evangelization. To continue in this work, we depend entirely on the donations of fellow Christians like you. Please send donations to: CHRISTLIFE: 12290-A Folly Quarter Road, Ellicott City, MD 21042 USA, *We appreciate your support!*

For more information on our mission and activities visit our web site: www.christlife.org

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