

St. Francis Xavier Lay Missionary Society

"Serving God in Asia with Faith & Love"



Archdiocese of Denver 2025 Convocation of Parish Lay Leaders

August 12, 2025

"When trying to evangelize, no tool is more effective, than that of personal witness. People can argue with points of doctrine but no one can argue, with a personal testimony."

- On Evangelization by St. Francis Xavier



"St. Francis Xavier Preaching in India," Oil on Canvas

Artist: Antoine Plamondon

Prayer To Saint Francis Xavier

O Father of goodness,

You so loved the world to give your only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life.

Through the intercession of St. Francis Xavier, who brought the Gospel of salvation to many people, grant me be a courageous preacher of Your Word, salt of the earth and light of the world.

I nrough the gift of the Spirit and the witness of my life, May Your mercy be better known and all people enjoy Your salvation,

Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.



"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

- Acts 1:8

Reflection Questions

1. Evangelization

- Why is evangelization a key responsibility for all Christians? How can we, as laypeople, live out this call in our daily lives?
- How can we meet people where they are and help them encounter Jesus through our personal experiences of faith?
- How do you find yourself in a unique position to share your faith with those you encounter in daily life?

2. Role of the Laity in the Mission of the Church

- How can we, as lay faithful, bring Christ into our workplaces, communities, and everyday life? What does it mean to be a "leaven of the Gospel" in today's world?
- How do you understand the concept of the "common priesthood" and your role in it?

3. Obstacles to Evangelization

- What are some of the obstacles you've encountered in evangelization? What has helped you to overcome them?
- Have you ever felt hesitant to evangelize because you didn't know all the answers? How did you handle it?
- How do you cope with the fear of rejection or persecution when sharing your faith?
- What moments of grace have occurred when trying to share your faith?
- What could be improved at your parish to foster a greater culture of evangelization?

4. Relationship with Christ

- What does your relationship with Christ look like, and where do you want it to be?
- How has my relationship with Christ transformed my life and influenced the decisions I make?
- How would you describe your relationship with Jesus Christ to another?
- What are some of the struggles you face in developing or maintaining a close, personal relationship with Jesus Christ?
- What has helped you form a deeper, personal relationship with our Lord?

5. Encountering Christ

- How do you see Christ in the Eucharist, the Word, the sacraments, one another, God's creation, and daily life? How does this strengthen your faith, and how can we help others encounter Christ in these ways?
- What are some practical ways to encourage others to form a personal relationship with Christ?

6. Witness, Relationship, Invitation

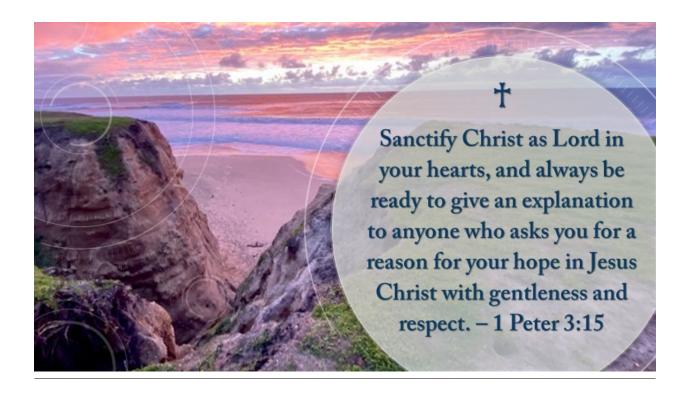
- How can you grow in virtue in your daily life to offer a good Christian witness to others?
- What special opportunities do you have to witness your faith in your special time and place?
- What relationships of grace and humanity can you form with those around you, especially those far from Christ, and how can you improve upon with God's help through grace and prayer the current relationships in your life?
- What opportunities do you have to invite people into an encounter with our Lord?

7. Living with Joy in Christ

- How does the joy of the Gospel influence your life and interactions with others, especially during challenging times?
- How can we radiate Christ's joy to those who are distant from the Church, even amid difficult circumstances?

8. Engaging with Others & Listening

- How can we engage others in meaningful conversations about faith, while showing warmth, respect, and understanding?
- How do you practice empathy and understanding when talking to someone who may not share your beliefs, and how can we listen more effectively in these conversations?



Reflection Questions

1. Personal Faith Journey

- Reflect on a time when your faith was tested. How did that experience shape your relationship with God?
- What are the most significant moments in your life where you felt God's presence? How do these moments influence your daily actions?

2. Trust in God's Plan

- How do you discern God's will in your life, especially during times of uncertainty or change?
- In what areas of your life do you find it hardest to trust God fully? Why do you think that is, and how can you work towards greater trust?

3. Spiritual Growth

- What spiritual practices or habits have helped you grow closer to God recently? What new practices would you like to explore?
- Where do you feel you need the most growth in your spiritual life? What steps can you take to work on this area?

4. Service to Others

- How does your faith call you to serve others, both within and outside your community? Are there specific people or groups you feel called to serve?
- Reflect on a time when serving someone else deepened your own faith. What did you learn from that experience?

5. Gratitude and Grace

- What are you most grateful for in your relationship with Christ? How do you express this gratitude in your daily life?
- How have you experienced God's grace in moments of failure or weakness, and how has this shaped your understanding of His love?

6. Role as a Witness

- How do you feel called to witness Christ in your life? In what ways do you feel confident in sharing your faith, and where do you feel more hesitant?
- How can your life, as it is today, reflect Christ's love to those around you?

Resource Guide

Bible Verses

1 Peter 3:15

"Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, and always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope in Jesus Christ with gentleness and respect."

Deuteronomy 6:4-7

"Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord alone! Therefore, you shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength..."

Matthew 28:19-20

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit..."\

Acts 1:8

"You shall be My witnesses ...to the end of the earth."

Ephesians 4:1

"I urge you to live in a manner worthy of the call you have received."

John 6

"I am the Bread of Life."

John 15:18

"If the world rejects you, remember that it hated Me first."

Matthew 25:31-46

"Whatever you did for the least of these, you did for Me."

Philippians 4:4-7

"Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! Your kindness should be known to all. The Lord is near. Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. Then the peace of God that transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

"Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus."

"Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ!" – St. Jerome

Quotes from the Saints

Paul the Apostle

"Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel!"

St. Irenaeus

"The glory of God is man (and woman) fully alive."

Mother Teresa

"The very fact that God had placed a certain soul in our way is a sign that God wants us to do something for him or her."

St. Francis Xavier

"When trying to evangelize, no tool is more effective than that of personal witness. Humbly sharing our own struggles which have been overcome by God's great love and mercy can soften even the hardest and most stubborn of hearts. People can argue with points of doctrine, but no one can argue with a personal testimony!"

Quotes from the Church Documents

Call to Evangelization

Evangelization in the Modern World, 14 (St. Paul VI)

"Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity..."

Christ's Lay Faithful, 33 (St. John Paul II)

"The lay faithful, precisely because they are members of the Church, have the vocation and mission of proclaiming the Gospel."

Joy of the Gospel, 120 (Pope Francis)

"Every Christian is challenged, here and now, to be actively engaged in evangelization..."

Developing a Relationship with Christ

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1816

"The disciple of Christ must not only keep the faith and live on it, but also profess it, confidently bear witness to it, and spread it..."

Gaudate et Exsultate, 6

"The Holy Spirit bestows holiness in abundance among God's holy and faithful people, for "it has pleased God to make men and women holy and to save them."

Gaudate et Exsultate, 7-8

I like to contemplate the holiness present in the patience of God's people: in those parents who raise their children with immense love, in those men and women who work hard to support their families, in the sick, in elderly religious who never lose their smile. In their daily perseverance I see the holiness of the Church militant... Let us be spurred on by the signs of holiness that the Lord shows us through the humblest members of that people which 'shares also in Christ's prophetic office, spreading abroad a living witness to Him, especially by means of a life of faith and charity. **Certainly the most decisive turning points in world history are substantially co-determined by souls whom no history book ever mentions.**

Inter Insigniores, 6

"SAINTHOOD, not priesthood is the highest calling."

Role of the laity in the mission of the church

Lumen Gentium 31

"These lay faithful are by baptism made one body with Christ and are constituted among the People of God; they are in their own way made sharers in the priestly, prophetical, and kingly functions of Christ; and they carry out for their own part the mission of the whole Christian people in the Church and in the world."

"By reason of their special vocation it belongs to the laity to seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and directing them according to God's will. They live in the world, that is, they are engaged in each and every one of the world's occupations and callings and in the ordinary circumstances of social and family life which, as it were, constitute their very existence. There they are called by God that, being led by the spirit of the Gospel, they may contribute to the sanctification of the world, as from within like leaven, by fulfilling their own particular duties.

Lumen Gentium 35

"The laity become powerful heralds of the faith in things to be hoped for (Hebrews 11:1) if they unhesitantly join the profession of faith to the life of faith. This evangelization – that is, the proclamation of Christ by word and the witness of their lives – acquires a special character and particular effectiveness because it is accomplished in the ordinary circumstances of the world."

The Vocation and Mission of the Lay Faithful (Apostolic Letter of St. John Paul II, Jan 2001) "If indeed, the parish is the Church placed in the neighborhoods of humanity, it lives and is at work through being deeply inserted in human society and intimately bound up with its aspirations and its dramatic events."

The Dogmatic Constitution on The Church

"Now, the laity are called in a special way to make the Church present and operative in those places and circumstances where only through them can she become the salt of the earth."

Quotes from the other well-known Catholics

Hans Urs von Balthasar

"Simon, the fisherman, before his meeting with Christ, however thoroughly he might have searched within himself, could not possibly have found a trace of Peter."

Pope Benedict XVI (Oct. 21, 2009)

"Dear brothers and sisters, this is true for every Christian: faith is first and foremost a personal, intimate encounter with Jesus..."

C.S. Lewis

"Next to the Blessed Sacrament itself your neighbor is the holiest thing you will ever encounter with your sense... if he is your Christian neighbor, he is holy in almost the same way, for in him also, Christ... Glory Himself, is truly hidden."

Pope Benedict XVI (Oct. 21, 2009)

"Dear brothers and sisters, this is true for every Christian: faith is first and foremost a personal, intimate encounter with Jesus, it is having an experience of his closeness, his friendship and his love. It is in this way that we learn to know him ever better, to love him and to follow him more and more."

Francis Cardinal George, Archbishop of Chicago

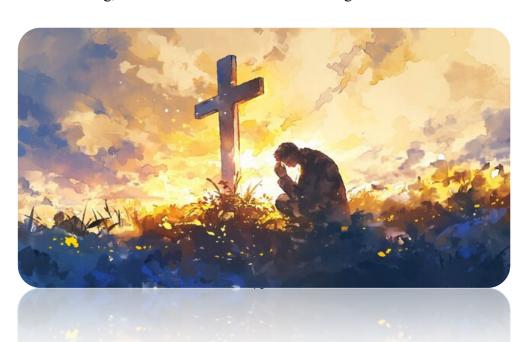
"Without a relationship with Christ, doctrine is just ideas and morality is only rules. Relationships give life."

Cardinal William Baum

"The danger... is to know about Jesus without knowing Him, to talk about Jesus but not to Him, to listen to experts speak of Him without letting Him speak about Himself. A deep, personal, intimate relationship with Jesus Christ is the foundation of holiness!"

Fr. Mitch Pacwa, SJ

"To know Jesus, to hear Jesus, to love Jesus, to trust Jesus, to obey Jesus, to share His life in the deepest fiber of our being, and then to serve Him – this is our goal."



Some Helpful Tips

- 1. Smile & Radiate the Light of Christ
- 2. Meet people where they are at
- 3. Approach with reverence
- 4. Listen with understanding and respect
- 5. Ask open questions
- 6. Use empathy
- 7. Validate their feelings
- 8. Discover & Reveal Christ in the Other
- 9. Be open to the Holy Spirit at work within you
- 10. Share your story



Reflection Questions to Consider for Evangelization

Reflection on Faith and Morality:

- How do you perceive the relationship between faith and moral principles in your life?
- Do you ever find yourself viewing faith and morals as mere rules or ideas? If so, why do you think that happens?

The Role of Relationship in Faith:

- How do you understand the concept of faith being based on a relationship with Jesus Christ, rather than on rules?
- In what ways do you experience your faith as a relationship rather than a set of regulations?

Dealing with Moral Relativity:

- Have you encountered situations where faith or moral principles are seen as relative or subjective? How do you respond to those views?
- How do you differentiate between moral relativity and the objective truths of your faith?

Countering Misconceptions about Faith:

- How have you encountered the view that faith is just "superstition" or a collection of "burdensome rules"?
- What experiences or insights help you counter that mindset in yourself or others?

Personal Faith Journey:

- How has your personal relationship with Jesus Christ influenced your understanding of faith and morality?
- What role does love play in shaping your response to the teachings of Jesus?

Evangelization Strategies at the Parish Teyel

- Recognizing, engaging, and supporting the Intentional Disciples in our midst
- Enlightening, forming, and empowering, especially through preaching, Catholics at every stage (and appropriately for that stage) of their faith journey to:
 - draw closer to Christ through prayer, study, service, worship, sacraments, sacrificial offering
 - o grow in the knowledge of their faith
 - o discern their unique calling in Christ
 - o actively pursue their call to sainthood
- Ministries around Evangelical formation and support
 - Dedicated prayer team
 - Faith formation (equipping for greater witness)
 - Outreach
 - o Hospitality that truly welcomes and engages
 - o Sharing of personal and ministerial testimonies
 - o Awareness of areas of evangelization
- Collaboration with other parishes & faith communities
- Always striving / fight complacency
- Growth in virtue, sacrificial love, witness to hope



Google form template for parishioner engagement

Prayers for Evangelization

