

Reflections

Father Nicolas Schwizer

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External Apostolate

We can distinguish some different means.

1. The apostolate of the word. The word gives a name to what a mode of living suggests. It openly proposes the meaning one gives life and which became transparent by giving testimony. It is a word which in order to be truly apostolic, must be respectful, understandable, and having foundation.

In the long run, the most beautiful testimony will be revealed as powerless, if it is not made clear, justifiable, and explicit. Paul VI teaches us this in one of his encyclicals. And we are Christians because one day we received that clear word. And in gratitude, we also should direct that word – in a given moment – to brothers and sisters who are searching, consciously or unconsciously, for the meaning of their lives.

2. The apostolate of action. Over all, there are three areas offered to us for this: our community, the Church, and the world.

2.1 The building up of **our community** is a priority for us. The best service we can lend to our Church will consist in forging a numerous, missionary, and vigorous community. This requires dedication and constant surrender. Personally, I am convinced that some of us do many things, and among them, we also participate in our community. Some, perhaps, do what is urgent and then do not have time left for doing what is important. Others are not able to say “no to the apostolate.” Perhaps we all lack a clear list of values. Would this not be the opportunity for each one or each married couple to make a list of their personal priorities?

2.2 Another apostolic area is **the Church**. We want to be heart of the Church. I believe that sooner or later we are also going to have to develop an **apostolic strategy**. Our apostolate can not only be the fruitfulness of likes or personal vocations, but has to also respond to the greater and broader needs.

We have to also be disposed for it if it is necessary. Let us think, for example, in the possibility of assuming someday the responsibility for an institute on family pastoral needs, etc.

2.3 The other area is **the world**, a more specific area for the laity. We are called to transform the world, to transform our country. God, through us, wants to create a new social order. We have the responsibility of working and striving so that our earth can be a piece of Heaven.

The world of politics, social concerns, economy, and the culture of the arts and other realities open to the apostolate await us.

3. An ultimate means, besides the word and action, is the apostolate of prayer and suffering. It is an apostolate which everyone can perform.

Sometimes it is the only effective and fruitful apostolate. Regardless, it should always accompany our external apostolic activity. But I have the impression that it requires more of us than the action does. We are still far from being masters of prayer and sacrifice.

4. Another step. On the level of family, we should seek – perhaps – community forms of apostolate in which all of the members can help. Thus the family becomes a school of apostles and a small Cenacle from which each one is sent to assume his/her personal apostolic commitments in the Church and world. Our home plays a decisive role in this: as a place where one is rooted and supported, as a place of formation and transformation, as a place of apostolic sending forth.

Questions for reflection

1. At the present, what apostolate am I carrying out?
2. What type of apostolate would I like to perform?
3. In which way can I change my environment?

If you wish to subscribe, comment on the text or give your testimony, write to: pn.reflexiones@gmail.com

Translation: Carlos Cantú, Schoenstatt Family Federation, La Feria, Texas USA 01082011
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