

**SHARING YOUR FAITH STORY!**

**WHY DONT WE SHARE OUR STORIES OF FAITH?**

**We come from a historical tradition of immigration in the US where our faith was private. Today we are politically correct and believe it does not belong “in the workplace”. Yet, our faith is built on THE GREAT COMMISSION. The Church does NOT exist for itself; Its MISSION and PURPOSE is to make known to the world - Jesus Christ and his teachings and preachings.**

**JUST WHAT IS EVANGELIZATION?**

It is the new buzzword…but what does it mean and HOW do we Evangelize? The simple fact is that the new evangelization is not much different from the old evangelization. We may have new technologies for communication, but what we are communicating is the same: We are communicating our faith stories. Other than our witness of a “living the gospel every moment”, sharing faith stories is the simplest and most effective way to build up the Church and evangelize.

**WHAT IS A FAITH STORY?**

A faith story is any account we share about how our Catholic faith has been real in our lives. It may be a dramatic miracle story, or it may be a down-to-earth story about an answered prayer, an unexpected grace, or a simple blessing. Remember your story comes from God’s story!

**WHY ARE FAITH STORIES THE CORNERSTONE OF EVANGELIZATION?**

Because people are hungry to hear about the reality of God’s work in the world. We all need to be catechized properly and learn the truths of the faith. We also need to learn how to behave as followers of Jesus Christ, but more than these doctrines and rules, we also need to hear about the firsthand experiences of those who are walking with Christ.

**HOW DO FAITH STORIES EVANGELIZE?**

Faith stories evangelize because they remind people of the reality of God in ordinary life. God is not a theory. He is alive and active in the world. Jesus Christ is not a dead historical figure. He is alive and active in the world. The Holy Spirit is not a theological idea. He is alive and active in the world, and faith stories show us how that is true.

**IN THE BEGINNING…**

 ...there were faith stories. Stop and think about it for a moment. The largest part of sacred Scripture consists of faith stories. The Bible is one great saga of the relationship between God and humanity; from Adam and Eve to the Gospels and continuing with the adventures of the apostles—the Bible is one long, exciting, and thrilling faith story.The story of God’s love for his children continues in the history of the Church. For 2,000 years we have been telling the faith story of the people of God. Through the history of the Church and the lives of the saints, we have shared how God is at work in the world.

**AND THE PROBLEM IS……**

One of the problems with the modern Church is that we have forgotten how to tell our faith stories. We try very hard to catechize our children, but the Catholic faith is more than just memorizing statements about certain truths. The faith is more than simply absorbing and adopting a set of rules and regulations for life. As Popes Benedict and Francis keep reminding us, the Catholic faith is first and foremost about a living encounter with Christ the Lord.

**BEGIN WHERE YOU ARE….**

In any journey the place to start is where you are. That seems obvious, but we often look so far into the future with our dreams and ambitions that we fail to remember that everything great starts small. The place to start sharing your faith story is here and now.

Betty Manion DRE

St. Mary Magdalene Parish, Waupaca

bettymanion@yahoo.com

**Sources:**

Faithencourage.org. storage.cloversites.com

Catholicdigest.com/ Fr.Dwight Longenecker testimonytrain.com

“Why Don’t Catholics Share their Faith?” America Magazine/Sept.19, 2005

**How to tell your faith story…**

**Step 1. Choose Your Story …. Carefully!**

Tell ONE story; not your life story; and not a string of stories,

Let the Holy Spirit be your guide as to what is on your heart that you feel compelled to share and God wants others to hear.

**Step 2. What Happened in the Story?**

How did your story start? What was wrong? Share the important story lines and highlights…not every detail! Where was God and where were you with God?

**Step 3. What is the Problem or Conflict of the Story?**

The conflict or problem must be the heart of the story. Without one it is just a simple anecdote. What was your struggle? And where is God now in your story?

**Step 4. What Changed?**

Explain the change that took place and how YOU (the storyteller) reacted to the change? What did you do - after Jesus did what He did for YOU?

**Step 5. Drumroll Please! What About Your Story Amazes You?**

And the outcome is what? The story has to have a point or outcome, otherwise hmmm…what is the point of the story? How did you go forward? How is your faith different now?

