



Newsletter – January 2021

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The prophetic office of the laity

In the previous letter, we have seen how we are called to share in the kingship of Christ through our baptism. In the same way, “the holy people of God shares also in Christ's prophetic office”¹. According to the Catechism of Catholic Church, “Christ ... fulfils this prophetic office, not only by the hierarchy ... but also by the laity. He accordingly both establishes them as witnesses and provides them with the sense of the faith (*sensus fidei*) and the grace of the word” (CCC, 904). “By virtue of their prophetic mission, lay people are called ... to be witnesses to Christ in all circumstances and at the very heart of the community of mankind” (CCC, 942).

This prophetic office can be exercised in three areas:

1. **In the Family**, parents fulfil their Christian vocation "in being witnesses of the faith and love of Christ to one another and to their children."² They “have the first responsibility for the education of their children. They bear witness to this responsibility first by creating a home where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity, and disinterested service are the rule” (CCC, 2223). They are also called to teach their children the basics of the faith. Then, imbued with Christian virtues, the Family by itself becomes a prophetic sign for others.
2. **In the Church**, “lay people who are capable and trained may also collaborate in catechetical formation, in teaching the sacred sciences, and in use of the communications media” (CCC, 906). Indeed, “to teach in order to lead others to faith is the task of every preacher and of each believer.” And lay people share the responsibility with priests and religious to spread the good news of the Kingdom. In the family, parents are even the first catechists of their children. And for the good of

¹ Vatican II, Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, 12.

² Vatican II, Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, 35.

the Church, they are called to share their experience within their parish. The role of lay people in the Church is not limited to administrative and logistical work. But "in accord with the knowledge, competence, and pre-eminence which they possess, they have the right and even at times a duty to manifest to the sacred pastors their opinion on matters which pertain to the good of the Church" (CCC, 907). It is in relation to the prophetic mission of Christ that the whole People of God share in the responsibility to serve the truth and to seek it faithfully in a spirit of listening and dialogue.

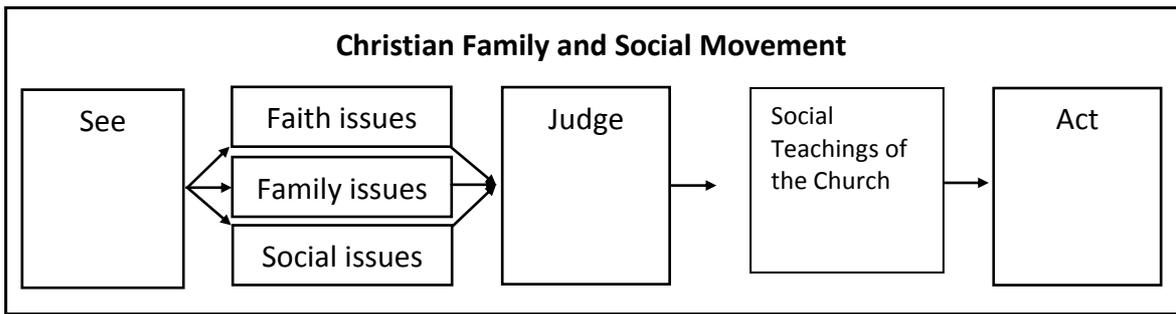
3. **In the world**, lay people share in the prophetic office of Christ through the transmission of the Good News of Jesus Christ to the people around them, in the family, at work and in social life. They "fulfil their prophetic mission by evangelization, that is, the proclamation of Christ by word and the testimony of life" (CCC, 905). The proclamation of Christ by word will only make sense if it is confirmed by a testimony of life. It means that the prophetic and kingly offices of the laity must be exercised together to be relevant. Just as the prophetic office of Christ defined not only the words and actions of Jesus, but his entire life, so must the prophetic office of the laity define their way of living. The prophetic office, like the kingly office, is part of the life of the disciple of Christ who is engaged in the church's mission to proclaim and promote the reign of God by virtue of one's baptism.

Reading: Vatican II, Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, 35

"Christ, the great Prophet, who proclaimed the Kingdom of His Father both by the testimony of His life and the power of His words, continually fulfills His prophetic office until the complete manifestation of glory. He does this not only through the hierarchy who teach in His name and with His authority, but also through the laity whom He made His witnesses and to whom He gave understanding of the faith (*sensu fidei*) and an attractiveness in speech so that the power of the Gospel might shine forth in their daily social and family life. [...] This evangelization, that is, this announcing of Christ by a living testimony as well as by the spoken word, takes on a specific quality and a special force in that it is carried out in the ordinary surroundings of the world. [...]

Where Christianity pervades the entire mode of family life, and gradually transforms it, one will find there both the practice and an excellent school of the lay apostolate. In such a home husbands and wives find their proper vocation in being witnesses of the faith and love of Christ to one another and to their children. The Christian family loudly proclaims both the present virtues of the Kingdom of God and the hope of a blessed life to come. Thus by its example and its witness it accuses the world of sin and enlightens those who seek the truth.

Consequently, even when preoccupied with temporal cares, the laity can and must perform a work of great value for the evangelization of the world..."



Sharing

See

1. How do I bear witness to my faith in Christ in my family? In my community? In the world?
2. How does my way of living, or that of my brothers and sisters in Christ in my parish or the movement, prevent the spread of the faith?
3. What are the obstacles to the spreading of the Gospels in my family, in my community, at work?

Judge

1. What are my responsibilities as a Christian in the transmission of faith?
2. How to become a better missionary?
3. How can freedom of expression and religious freedom go hand in hand?

Act

1. What do I need to change in order to bear witness of Christ in my family? In the movement? At work?
2. How can I help my family, the movement or my community to become more missionary-minded?
3. What can the movement do to participate more actively in the prophetic mission of Christ?



CFSM Spiritual Director Father Dominique
and CFSM Executive Committee
wish all CFSM members
and their families
a Blessed New Year.

Light of the World Nativity - Br Mickey McGrath OSFS