

+ACM First Vinculum Formation Class, September 26th, 2015 by Fr Chris Foeckler, MJ

Introduction: Greetings from Fr Chirs Foeckler here in Poenix, Arizona where even at the end of September the temperatures are still in the 100's . Folks wake up in Arizona saying, "Shucks, it's another sunny day."

1. We are launching today the first class of formation for the Vinculum of Miles Jesu. It is part of our very charism as an approved Ecclessial Family of Consecrated life in the Church in which "We participate in the Church's mission principally through the new evangelization: Led by the spirit of the Gospel for the sanctification of the world from within as leaven LG4. Our goal is to provide a specific means for the laity to recognize and live out the call to become saints, not only by work but by family and social commitment, and to help others become saints. This call for leaders in seeking the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs by ordering them according to the plan of God.

2. This 30 minute class will include a brief reflection on the call to holiness of all the lay faithful of whom our vinculum friends and members are a part. We offer this as an aide to your ordinary means of being fed by your local church and parish and not as a substitute.

3. There will be a time for **intercessory prayer** for each other, vinculum members at large, all of Miles Jesu

4. There will be time for announcements and news at the very end of the program.

Prayer: So let's get started with a prayer: Come Holy Spirit...Dear Lord guide our thought and our words now so that our lives may reflect your life and goodness. Hail Mary...Immaculate Heart of our Lady of the Epiphany, pray for us.

Teaching this month: **If one word could characterize the main focus** and effort of the Papacy of Pope Francis it would certainly be "Evangelization"! He gives it such an urgency at times it sounds like: "What are you waiting for?!"

"Every Christian is challenged, here and now, to be actively engaged in evangelization; indeed, anyone who has truly experienced God's saving love does not need much time or lengthy training to go out and proclaim that love.—*Evangeli Gaudium*

"Be servants of communion and of the culture of encounter! I would like you to be almost obsessed about this. Be so without being presumptuous, imposing "our truths," but rather be guided by the humble yet joyful certainty of those who have been found, touched and transformed by the Truth who is Christ, ever to be proclaimed.—Homily, World Youth Day, July 27, 2013

“The spread of the Gospel is not guaranteed either by the number of persons, or by the prestige of the institution, or by the quantity of available resources. What counts is to be permeated by the love of Christ, to let oneself be led by the Holy Spirit and to graft one’s own life onto the tree of life, which is the Lord’s Cross.—Homily, Mass with Seminarians and Novices, July 7, 2013

This is not a new theme from the Vatican, St. John Paul II made it the very heart of the document he wrote to Christ’s Lay Faithful in 1988. He wrote 3. The basic meaning of this Synod and the most precious fruit desired as a result of it, is the *lay faithful's hearkening to the call of Christ the Lord to work in his vineyard*, to take an active, conscientious and responsible part in the mission of the Church *in this great moment in history...*A new state of affairs today both in the Church and in social, economic, political and cultural life, calls with a particular urgency for the action of the lay faithful. If lack of commitment is always unacceptable, the present time renders it even more so. *It is not permissible for anyone to remain idle.*

Catching our breath for a moment, we have to stop and see something so essential to this call to Evangelization: Our personal and individual connection to Jesus Christ! “the *lay faithful's hearkening to the call of Christ the Lord*”, “indeed, anyone who has truly experienced God’s saving love does not need much time or lengthy training to go out and proclaim that love.” Again, “What counts is to be permeated by the love of Christ, to let oneself be led by the Holy Spirit and to graft one’s own life onto the tree of life, which is the Lord’s Cross.”

The point I want to make here in our Formation class is that we cannot give what we don’t already have! Or as St. John Paul II put it in his Apostolic Exhortation, “I am the vine and you are the Branches.” According to the Biblical image of the vineyard, the lay faithful, together with all the other members of the Church, are branches engrafted to Christ the true vine, and from him derive their life and fruitfulness. **Evangelization can only be started and carried through and bear fruit to the degree that the Evangelizer is connected to Christ!**

Incorporation into Christ through faith and Baptism is the source of being a Christian in the mystery of the Church. This mystery constitutes the Christian's most basic "features" and serves as the basis for all the vocations and dynamism of the Christian life of the lay faithful (cf. Jn 3:5). In Christ who died and rose from the dead, the baptized become a "new creation" (*Gal 6:15; 2 Cor 5:17*), washed clean from sin and brought to life through grace.

This may seem obvious to some of our listeners or more something that you have heard before – hopefully. But as we begin a new effort to animate and encourage Vinculum members who have been in association with us for a number of years to remain active or be active again and reach out by this new medium to others **we must lay the solid foundation of our Catholic Faith: Jesus Christ.** **JPII** “Only in the measure that the Church, Christ's Spouse, is loved by him and she, in turn, loves him, does she become a mother fruitful in the Spirit.”

Call to Holiness from the Second Vatican council: "The Second Vatican Council has significantly spoken on the universal call to holiness. It is possible to say that this call to holiness is precisely the basic charge entrusted to all the sons and daughters of the Church by a Council which intended to bring a renewal of Christian life based on the gospel(41). This charge is not a simple moral exhortation, but an *undeniable requirement arising from the mystery of the Church: she is the choice vine*, whose branches live and grow with the same holy and life-giving energies that come from Christ; she is the Mystical Body, whose members share in the same life of holiness of the Head who is Christ; she is the Beloved Spouse of the Lord Jesus, who delivered himself up for her sanctification (cf. *Eph 5:25 ff.*). The Spirit that sanctified the human nature of Jesus in Mary's virginal womb (cf. *Lk 1:35*) is the same Spirit that is abiding and working in the Church to communicate to her the holiness of the Son of God made man.

In Christifidelis Laici, St. John Paul II comments extensively and beautifully on the Lay Faithful's call to holiness within the world:

The Life of Holiness in the World

17. ...The vocation to holiness of the lay faithful must be recognized and lived by the lay faithful, first of all as an undeniable and demanding obligation and as a shining example of the infinite love of the Father that has regenerated them in his own life of holiness. Such a vocation, then, ought to be called an *essential and inseparable element of the new life of Baptism*, and therefore an element which determines their dignity. At the same time the vocation to holiness is *intimately connected to mission* and to the responsibility entrusted to the lay faithful in the Church and in the world. In fact, that same holiness which is derived simply from their participation in the Church's holiness, represents their first and fundamental contribution to the building of the Church herself, who is the "Communion of Saints". The eyes of faith behold a wonderful scene: that of a countless number of lay people, both women and men, busy at work in their daily life and activity, oftentimes far from view and quite unacclaimed by the world, unknown to the world's great personages but nonetheless looked upon in love by the Father, untiring labourers who work in the Lord's vineyard. Confident and steadfast through the power of God's grace, these are the humble yet great builders of the Kingdom of God in history.

Holiness, then, must be called a fundamental presupposition and an irreplaceable condition for everyone in fulfilling the mission of salvation within the Church. The Church's holiness is the hidden source and the infallible measure of the works of the apostolate and of the missionary effort. Only in the measure that the Church, Christ's Spouse, is loved by him and she, in turn, loves him, does she become a mother fruitful in the Spirit.

The dignity as a Christian, the source of equality for all members of the Church, guarantees and fosters the spirit of *communion* and fellowship, and, at the same time, becomes the hidden dynamic force in the lay faithful's apostolate and mission. It is a *dignity, however, which brings demands*, the dignity of labourers called by the Lord to work in his vineyard: "Upon all the lay faithful, then, rests the exalted duty of working to assure that each day the divine plan of salvation is further extended to every person, of every era, in every part of the earth"(51).

In conclusion: Pope Francis gets very specific in the manner and even wording of our proclamation, but we have to hear it first for ourselves before we can proclaim it to other:

On the lips of the catechist the first proclamation must ring out over and over: “Jesus Christ loves you; he gave his life to save you; and now he is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen and free you.... nothing is more solid, profound, secure, meaningful and wisdom-filled than that initial proclamation. ” —*Evangelii Gaudium*

Intercessory Prayer time:

Now for our prayer intentions: *you can send in your prayer intentions through the website and facebook page.*

For the Holy Father in America

For the Bishops in communion with him and in particular for the Bishops of the Dioceses where Miles Jesu is present

For all consecrated persons in the Church in this Year of Consecrated Life, especially for the members of Miles Jesu and for vocation to all the forms and Institutes of Consecrated Life in the Church

For all the Faithful who are offering a supreme witness to the Faith by their sacrifices of liberty and goods , of their own safety and even the supreme sacrifice of their lives for Christ and Faith in Him

For all our family members, especially those who need it the most

For the needy in the world that the Lord will provide for and protect them and inspire many good people to come to their aid

And for the repose of the soul of Mr. Elmer Vota, the father of Fr Paul Vota, who passed away last Saturday at his home in Sacramento, CA attended by his wife Doris and their three daughters and families.

And finally now in a moment of silence for each ones to pray for their own personal needs and intentions

We conclude with the prayer that the Lord taught us as children of God, Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be...

Announcements and News:

Let there be an unwritten agreement between us here behind the microphone and you in your homes. Each month one of us priests of MJ including also Fr Nicoletti and Fr Cahill will present this formation program on the 4th Saturday of the month at the same time, we simply ask you to consider these benefits and expectations:

Benefits and Expectations

1. Gives me a chance to deepen my Catholic Faith, nourish my soul, mind and heart.
2. Gives me support and encouragement and guidance in the most important aspect of my life, my Faith, meeting (virtually for now) with like- minded people also in the path to become better catholic Christians.
3. Answering questions about the “faith in the headlines”, current events of the Church and the world and helping to spread the faith and answer questions about it.
4. Join in prayer for others and my own intentions.
5. Having a sense of not being alone in my personal struggle to be a good Catholic while helping to support others in the same struggle as a member of the Miles Jesu Faith Family.

Expectations

1. Participate as regularly as possible and invite at least one other to participate in the call each class.
2. Strive to put into practice what is presented in the classes and give feedback.
3. Pray with and for the intentions of those who also participate in the call.
4. Pray for the needs and intentions of all of Miles Jesu members and projects.
5. Ready to give a BRIEF testimony about living my Catholic faith.