

聖神與福傳（三）

（摘自「神恩」第廿八期）

神恩——為福傳而普施的工具

神恩是聖神能力的具體表現，是天主用以建立教會和團體，並伴之以福傳的恩賜。這樣說來，這些福傳工具應該是由聖神普遍給予信友，幫助他們履行基督的訓令：「往普天下去，向一切受造物宣傳福音。」（谷 16:15）

在梵二時，有兩位樞機會為「神恩是普遍性的恩賜」，抑或「極端地非比尋常而絕對例外的恩賜」而激辯。最後比利時的徐（或譯孫）能斯樞機的論點被梵二大公會議接受，收錄進《教會憲章》：「同一聖神，不僅用聖事及聖職來領導聖化天主的子民，並以聖德予以裝飾，而且把自己的恩寵隨祂的心願，分配合每一個人（格前 12:11）。在教友中也分施各級不同的特別恩寵，使他們能勝任愉快地去進行各種事業或職務，以利教會的革新與擴展，即所謂『聖神顯示在每人身上不同，但全是為人的好處』（格前 12:7）。」（7）（8）

許多熱愛天主的人，或者因為不好的經驗見聞，或者因為一些誤解，而對聖神能力的這種表現方式不抱開放和渴慕的態度，忽略了去配合天主在福傳事業上的這種力量，實在可惜。

單靠知識傳不了

信仰是一份恩寵、一份禮物，也是人的自由抉擇。我們的信仰基於理性和感情，但又超越它們。話雖如此，在這個以為知識可以解決一切的時代，在這個事事要自己明白清楚才走下一步的時代，教會也容易陷進了過於倚重理性知識的困境。

傳福音的困難之一，是現代的知識及資訊爆炸，每一件事都可以不同的思考方式。天主、創世、生命、靈魂……這些事物觀，我們有一套，人家也有千百套。所以單靠智慧動聽的言詞和辯證是絕對不足以福傳的。

先經驗愛後悔改

傳福音離不開講論「天主是愛」這個中心點，但愛不是靠講的，被愛是一種體會、一份經驗，信仰始終是一份人與天主間被愛與愛祂的關係。一個人在感受到天主愛他之後，他才會開始去愛天主；一個人是在遇到主耶穌之後，被祂的聖神觸動心靈之後，才能去悔改，而不是自動會去悔改，之後才遇到耶穌。聖經中稅吏匝凱和井邊撒瑪黎雅婦人的悔改事蹟，就是明顯的例子。

聖神自己去福傳

對人的關懷與服務，固然可以在福傳時幫助人感到天主的愛，但我們其實有另一種更直接的愛的資源未被充份使用，那就是為對方覆手祈禱。求聖父聖子之間的愛——聖神，直接地去令那人體驗天主的愛。

三年前，我們與那位覺得生命中一切都很混亂的女郎短聚，祇能簡略重述福音，並為她覆手祈禱，過程穩定而平淡。其實覆手祈禱時並非一定會出現甚麼奇妙的先知話、肉體醫治等神恩。聖神才是主宰，一切由祂現場決定。

那次平靜的祈禱過後一個月，女郎寫信告訴我們：她回去後生命、工作、愛情仍是一片混亂，但已經不要緊了。這句「不要緊了」實在非常要緊，因為她知道並體會到天主在愛著她。這幾年來，她棄絕了「新紀元」的思想，生活又慢慢上了軌道，並組織了唸玫瑰經的祈禱會，熱切地見證天主和傳揚福音，堅固旁人的信仰。

為人覆手祈禱並不需要甚麼特別的神恩，當其時祇是聖神自己在工作。一位在普世青年節認識的朋友，曾在聖堂為很感困擾的人接手祈禱，邀請聖神幫助他，那位接受祈禱的人感動得非常厲害。另有位剛參加了「運用神恩——覆手祈禱培訓班」的姊妹，為她久不進堂的基督教同事試做覆手祈禱，實在驚訝天主聖神的大能，那位同事竟又重新對天主熱切起來。

在福傳時運用聖神的能力，不單會令接受者直接向天主開放，傳福音的人常常也能振奮自己的信仰。耶穌說：「你們將充滿聖神的德能（英譯為 Power，意即威力，在此更為傳神）……直到地極，為我作證人」（宗 1:8）。

*** 請記下你對以上文章的任何感想或有任何信仰分享，投入我們設在聖堂反面的收集箱內。**

Reflection on last article (to be continued on page 4):

Last issue of the Evangelization article discusses and witnesses the power of the Holy Spirit in the process of evangelization. St. Paul said, “My message and my proclamation were not with persuasive words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of spirit and power, so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom but on the power of God.” (1 Cor 2:4-5)

In our effort to bring the Good News to people sometimes we’ll meet frustration, even with our family members. For example, our two adopted teenager daughters are baptized Catholics: they go to Catholic schools and attend Mass on Sundays. However, whenever I talk about God at home, they would retort, “Ma, this is not Church!” “Here God has come again” and then quickly return to their intense activities on the internet. I feel I am losing them gradually to the wisdom of the secular world that seems full of excitement and fun while my life of serving and learning was ridiculed by them as “you don’t have a life.”

For the past 14 years when people saw my beautiful daughters they would say, “You have done a good thing (adoption)”, which I always vehemently disagreed in words and in heart: we are the simple people who just love to live with kids, nothing more or less, no charitable acts involved.

However, this viewpoint has met a challenge when I did some studies on the current situation of the country my daughters and I originally came from, and am stunned at the degenerating popular moral values and the exploiting, dangerous situation especially of the girls from the poor and the weak. What would my girls become if they grew up in orphanage? I start to see that in any adoption there is the sign of God’s love and His message of deliverance that we sometimes missed. I shared with my daughters that we as parents realized that we did do a good thing that saved you, but God is the ultimate Savior who chose you to be delivered and we are just His cooperators even if most of the time we were unaware of it. The Lord who chose to deliver your mom from a broken family to a family of faith is also the Lord who delivered the Jews from oppression to being the children of God. And it’s the same Lord who chose to deliver you from harm to becoming baptized Catholics. Please see the fact that God is in our lives otherwise we won’t be a family.

Holy Spirit and Evangelization (III) (Article from the 28th issue of God Grace magazine)

God's Grace – the advocate of evangelization.

Grace is the manifestation of the power of the Holy Spirit sent by God to establish the Church and the Christian community. It is a gift sent by the Holy Spirit to the faithful to assist them in carrying out the mission of evangelization in fulfillment of Christ's command: "Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature." (Mk 16:15)

The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of Vatican II proclaims that "In the building up of Christ's body there is engaged a diversity of members and functions. There is only one Spirit who, according to his own richness and the needs of the ministries, gives his different gifts for the welfare of the Church." (*Lumen Gentium*, #7, cf. 1Cor. 12:1-11) "But one and the same Spirit produces all of these, distributing them individually to each person as he wishes." (1Cor 12:11) "To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit." (1Cor 12:7)

Many of the faithful who love God, but due to some unfortunate experience or misunderstanding couldn't keep an open mind to God or lack the desire to embrace the power of the Holy Spirit, missing the opportunity to receive this power of grace to cooperate with God in evangelization.

Knowledge alone does not work.

Faith is a grace, a gift and also a choice from our freewill. Our faith is based on reason and emotion while transcending both of them. In the age of knowledge and rationalism, the church community by no exception is easy to fall into the tendency of placing too much emphasis on rational knowledge.

One of the difficulties of evangelization is caused by the bombardment of the influx of information and knowledge: the world is saturated with different ways of thinking where the Christian view about God, Creation, life, soul and etc is challenged by thousands of secular viewpoints. Therefore, to depend on rhetoric or apologetics alone is absolutely not enough for an effective evangelization.

The experience of love leads to the repentance.

The Gospel centers on "God is love". However, love cannot be received through words alone, but experience. Our faith is ultimately an experience of a loving relationship with God: it is not until a person has experienced God's love is he able to love God; it is not until a person has encountered Jesus Christ and touched by his Spirit is he able to repent; the Biblical characters, the tax collector Zacchaeus and the Samaritan woman at the well, have illustrated such experience.

Let the Holy Spirit work on evangelization.

Caring for people certainly helps a person feel God's love however there is a more direct source of love that has not been fully drawn upon: praying for a person and laying hands on him. In this sacred rite of the laying on of hands we are asking the Holy Spirit, the communal love between the Father and the Son, to enable that person to directly experience God's love.

Three years ago we met a young lady who was quite messed up in life. We shared with her God's words and prayed for her over the laying on of hands. The whole process was simple and peaceful:

it doesn't have to involve the appearances of prophecies or miraculous healing. Instead, we depend on the Holy Spirit who is the dominion of the situation.

One month after this quiet prayer meeting the young lady wrote to tell us that after she went back, her life, work and love were still in a mess, but "it is not important now." Actually this "not important" is very important, for it shows that she started to know and experience that God has been loving her all the time. These years her life is gradually coming back on the right track: she has become the organizer of a Rosary Prayer group, an enthusiastic witness of faith and an active participant in evangelization to support the faith of the parishioners.

The laying on of hands does not need some special grace, because the Holy Spirit is doing the work. A friend I came to know on World's Youth Day did the laying on of hands for a disturbed person in the church, invoking the Holy Spirit to help him and the person who received the prayer was greatly moved. Another parishioner who has just joined the class of "Invoking God's Grace -- the Rite of Laying on of Hands" prayed for her Christian co-worker who had been away from church for some time. The power of the Holy Spirit is amazing: the co-worker is becoming enthusiastic about God again.

Invoking the power of the Holy Spirit in evangelization would not only enable the receiver to open to God, but also strengthen the faith of the evangelists, as Christ said, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witness... to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

**** If you have any reflection on this article or your faith sharing, please write it down and put it into the collection box located at the back of the church.***

Reflection on last article: (Continue)

Because He chose us and because we are chosen, we bear a unique mark of his. We'll have a different and better path of life than the locals, a purposeful life, a life full of love and a joyful duty to share with others His Good News of deliverance. Therefore we need to see our lives in this new light.

My daughters appeared very intense listening to my messages, although they knew their adoption at a young age. They didn't even attempt to retort, neither did they return to their websites. They were silent. They were thinking instead of reacting. Perhaps they were stunned by the spirit of truth, just as I am: that night the Holy Spirit enveloped us. From that day on we seem to have a real connection based on a mutual understanding that we belong to the people saved by God.

I don't know how powerful the Holy Spirit could be, but I know it has the power to transform the hardened human heart. If we keep the love of the Holy Spirit in our heart, we will recognize him when he comes in, as we do with a best friend. We cannot pinpoint when he will come, but we know he will come in time for our deliverance.

