

Discovering the *Essential* Role of the *Lay Person* in God's Plan

based upon the teachings of Pope Saint John Paul II in his document entitled **Christifideles Laici**

Friday evening, Feb. 17, from 7 – 9 p.m.

Mass @ 7 pm – Fr Craig Best, Pastor of St Philip/St Francis de Sales
then introductory remarks and 1st reflection* – Marybeth Kenny

Saturday, Feb. 18, from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Mass @ 9 am - Fr David Endres, Academic Dean
and Professor of Church History,
Mount St. Mary's Seminary/Athenaeum

9:45 am - 2nd reflection* - Fr David Endres

10:45 am - 3rd reflection* - Patty Moores

11:45 am - complimentary lunch served

1 pm - 4th reflection* - Jeff Kenny

2 pm - 5th reflection* - Jeanie Stephens

3 pm - Closing Prayer

Interactive format!

**All retreat reflections are approximately 20 to 25 minutes in length followed by small group discussions*

Friday Night – Marybeth Kenny - Introduction and Section I - Small Group Questions:

- 1) If you don't already know each other, introduce yourself to the others in your small group. What are your current circumstances (*at work, home, community, church involvement*) living as a lay person?
- 2) Did the laity examination of conscience during the talk reveal anything specific to you? Why? Can you identify any of your weaknesses or gaps in living out your baptismal calling as priest, prophet, and king?
- 3) Is there a particular area you can identify where your God-given natural gifts and talents are easy for you to use? Is He employing those natural gifts, or is He possibly calling you to work for Him somewhere outside your comfort zone?
- 4) I realize I can't live my lay vocation alone. I need: _____, _____, _____

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DAY 2: Discovering the *Essential* Role of the *Lay Person* in God's Plan

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Saturday Morning 9:45 a.m. – Fr. David Endres - Section II - Small Group Questions:

- 1) Being a Christian means being in the image of God -- the Trinity. What does that mean to you? Have you encountered any images of the Trinity in your life? Through other people? In the natural world?
- 2) In ***Christifideles Laici***, the Pope says, “every member of the lay faithful is seen *in relation to the whole body* and offers a *totally unique contribution* on behalf of the whole body.” Since each of us has a unique part to play, can you think of someone in your parish who makes a special contribution? What is that contribution? How does it contribute to the whole? And what is your contribution to your parish? How do you contribute to the whole?
- 3) On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the most comfortable, how comfortable are you with sharing your faith with others? Can you think of a time you shared your faith with another – a family member, a co-worker or neighbor, a stranger? How was it received?

Saturday Morning 10:45 a.m. – Patty Moores - Section III - Small Group Questions

- 1) Has God ever given you a sign that He is pleased with you – when you have stepped out in faith -- to live your faith in a new way?
- 2) What about a time when you felt the Lord was calling you to try and share/live your faith in a new way, or share a “God moment” with someone in a conversation, and it bombed? Should we let those “bomb” moments control our future attempts of sharing our faith, or should we be delighted that the Lord wants to use us yet again? ***1 Peter 4:14: If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.***

- 3) Jesus tells us He is *“the WAY, the TRUTH, and the LIFE”* – John 14:6. Someone once said, *“You really need to walk on the WAY with the person – you can’t just beat them over the head with the TRUTH...they most likely won’t be open enough to accept that...you may have to walk with them for a while on the WAY before they can hear the TRUTH.”* What does this mean to you, in your life?

- 4) God as **Primary Cause and Creator** has extended to us the great dignity of being **secondary causes** in both prayer and action. Ponder this possibility: What if it **all depends on the part you have been called to play** for a particular person’s eternal destiny; and if you don’t share the Lord with them, then they will not spend eternity in heaven. The 7 desires of the human heart must be met – we can’t just preach **at** people. Those 7 desires are: to be heard and understood, to be affirmed, to be blessed, to be safe, to be touched, to be chosen, to be included. We must keep these in mind; and that when these desires are not met, no real relationship exists in order to positively influence someone else.

- 5) Do you think our culture is in crisis? If so, do you feel any personal responsibility for the lack of Christian values being practiced today? What about the prevalence of people who describe themselves as Catholic but are contradicting Church teachings? What can you do to share the correct teachings of the Church?

Saturday Morning 11:45 a.m. – Lunch Break – We encourage you to continue the conversations with your small group over lunch, and consider the following questions:

- 1) Do you recall a time when someone shared a personal story from their faith life walking with God -- and that story really BOOSTED your faith?

- 2) Do YOU have a story of when God made Himself truly known, truly present to you – that you could share now?

- 3) Can you think of someone who really needs to hear one of the above stories – to let God use that story to produce an amazing increase of faith in them? Do you think you might call that person or write to them, and tell them that the Lord has put him/her on your heart, and that you feel like the Holy Spirit wants you to share a particular story with them?

- 4) Can you commit to helping the Lord with His desire that *“**all** men be saved and come to the knowledge of the Truth?”* – 1 Timothy 2:4. So, how can I be a better Catholic lay person to total strangers? Sometimes I fail to see the innate dignity of the human being right in front of me.

- 5) If someone confides in you about a problem, could you invite them to pray about that topic with them, right on the spot? Could you take their hands and lift up that intention in a spontaneous prayer spoken aloud with them? Wouldn’t that short prayer absolutely delight the Lord? What if we in our small group hold hands right now and pray for the strength and the words and the wisdom and guidance of the Holy Spirit, so that we can do this at every opportunity with joy and confidence?

- 6) What has been holding you back from sharing the Gospel? Fear? Pride? Doubt? Lack of confidence?

- 7) What are some areas of your spiritual life that need strengthening so that you can go forth and proclaim the Good News? **Do you pray specifically for courage and wisdom?** In James' letter, Chapter 1, verse 5-7, it says: ⁵ *If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.* ⁶ ***But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.*** ⁷ *That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord.*

- 8) What has resonated with you so far today? What is God saying to you?

- 9) What new thing will you commit to do starting today to help bring about the Kingdom of God?

Saturday Afternoon 1 p.m. – Jeff Kenny - Section IV - Small Group Questions:

Being Catholic is more than engaging in intellectual debates about Church teachings. It can be stressful, though, to be put on the spot when these discussions present themselves, so it is worth practicing in a safe environment to defend one's faith, and not remain quiet, and not leave people in a state of confusion or error about Church teachings. In your small group, try to role-play these apologetic situations in a loving way using one or more of the following topics:

1. "Why do Catholics worship Mary? Statues?" [Suggestion: search for this in-depth answer: YouTube video: ***"Dr. Brant Pitre Blows Your Mind on Mary"***]

2. "Why does the Catholic Church hate gay people?" [Suggestion: search for in-depth answer: ***Ascension Presents "Does the Church Hate Gay People?"*** and ***"How to Talk About Homosexuality in the Church w/ Fr. Mike Schmitz and Dr. Scott Hahn"*** and ***"Beyond No: What the Catholic Church Has to Say About Same-Sex Attraction | Fr. Mike Schmitz"***]

3. "The Bible says to 'Pray alone.' Why do I need to go to Church?" [Suggestion: search for in-depth answer: ***Celebrating Mass in the Power of the Holy Spirit*** by Fr. Al Lauer, Presentation Ministries, and ***Missing Mass is Deadly*** – podcast by Karlo Broussard]

4. "Why do I have to confess my sins to a priest?" [Suggestion: search for in-depth answer: ***The Secret of Confession*** by Fr. Al Lauer, Presentation Ministries]

5. "Why does God allow bad things to happen?" [Suggestion: search for in-depth answer: ***Ascension Presents "Why Does God Let Bad Things Happen?"*** and ***Word on Fire - "Why Does God Allow Evil and Suffering to Exist?"***]

6. "I think women have the right to abortion." [Suggestion: search for in-depth answer: ***What Abortion is Not*** www.actsxxix.org/trailer/what-abortion-is-not by Fr. John Riccardo; and search USCCB.org and Abortion]

Saturday Afternoon 2 p.m. – Jeanie Stephens - Section V - Small Group Questions:

1. Can you give an example of the problems we find ourselves in because of the separation of faith from life?
2. Do you have a spiritual director, mentor, or companion? Are you part of a homebased Christian community that helps you grow in knowledge of your faith, grow in courage and confidence, so you can be strong in letting the Holy Spirit use you? Do you think becoming more closely attached to the vine, which is Jesus, is a lifeline you need? How can you regularly surround yourself with other strong Christians?
3. What do you think it means for a person to truly “bear fruit” for God’s kingdom? What do you envision for your life as you read these words from JP II? “...[a] fundamental aspect of the lay faithful’s life and mission: *the call to growth and a **continual process of maturation...***” Can we get lazy and stop growing spiritually? What consequences occur? How can YOU continuously grow? The Pope says it is necessary to grow for total and ongoing formation of the lay faithful.
4. From Section 58: *“To be able to discover the actual will of the Lord in our lives always involves the following: a receptive listening to the Word of God and the Church, fervent and constant prayer, recourse to a wise and loving spiritual guide, and a faithful discernment of the gifts and talents given by God...”* And he continues: *“Therefore, the fundamental and continuous attitude of the disciple should be one of vigilance and a conscious attentiveness to the voice of God. It is not a question of simply knowing what God wants from each of us in the various situations of life. The individual must do what God wants, as we are reminded in the words that Mary, the Mother of Jesus, addressed to the servants at Cana: “Do whatever he tells you” (Jn 2:5).”* **How/when do YOU hear God? Do you need any help with developing spiritual listening skills? Where can you find this help?**
5. How will you change the way you are living your Catholic life as a result this talk or this retreat? We invite you to spend 5 minutes in personal prayer and reflection with a prayer team, and ask the Holy Spirit for the answer to this question.

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About Presentation Ministries

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If you are interested in investigating the possibility of becoming part of Presentation Ministries either as a coworker or homebased community member, we invite you to learn more firsthand and consider visiting several homebased communities, who would welcome your visit and your questions. Contact Nancy Kenny @ 513.295.5293 or Betty Orlando @ 513.373.2397 for more details.

To learn more about this topic after this retreat is over:

Listen to Fr Al Lauer’s recorded teachings on ***Christifideles Laici*** addressing the Lay Vocation:

Go to presentationministries.com

Click on Learn

Click on Vocations

Scroll down to: “What is the Lay Vocation?” (Parts 1-5)

Other Recommendations to be more fully equipped to do God’s will:

Listen to Fr Al Lauer’s recorded teachings on all 73 books of the Bible:

presentationministries.com

Click on Learn

Click on Bible

Listen to **The Catechism in a Year** and/or **The Bible in a Year** - Daily Podcast by Fr. Mike Schmitz - listen every day or just when the Lord makes it possible for you to catch an episode.

Follow the Catholic Charismatic Renewal National Service Committee - Facebook Page

Visit www.CHARISUSA.org

Read: ***Miracles Do Happen*** by Sister Bridge McKenna, O.C.S.

Reflect on these quotes:

“Ordinary Catholics will not survive this age; only heroic Catholics will survive.” – Fr. John Hardon, S.J.

“God’s love calls us to move beyond fear. We ask God for the courage to abandon ourselves unreservedly, so that we might be molded by God’s grace, even as we cannot see where that path may lead us.” – St. Ignatius of Loyola

Invite St. Joseph to help you walk more closely with the Lord and do His Holy Will:

O St. Joseph, whose protection is so great, so prompt, so strong,
before the throne of God, I place in you all my interests and desires.

O St. Joseph, do assist me by your powerful intercession,
and obtain for me from your Divine Son
all spiritual blessings, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

So that, having engaged here below your heavenly power,
I may offer my thanksgiving and homage to the most loving of fathers.

O St. Joseph, I never weary contemplating you and Jesus asleep in your arms;
I dare not approach while he reposes near your heart.

Press him in my name and kiss his fine head for me and
ask him to return the kiss when I draw my dying breath.

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Upcoming Retreats offered by Presentation Ministries at our beautiful retreat center in Peebles, Ohio:

March 17, 2023 - Women's Retreat ~ The Identity of The Catholic Woman

April 21, 2023 - Living in Reality

May 19, 2023 - Additional Life in the Spirit Seminars

June 9, 2023 - 40 Hours Devotion and Family Campout

June 19, 2023 - Family Vacation with the Lord!

June 23, 2023 - Living in Reality

June 26, 2023 - How Do I Seek the Kingdom of God?

June 28, 2023 - Lifestyle in The Spirit

July 1, 2023 - Silent, Self-Directed Retreat

July 4, 2023 - Intimacy with God - The Seven Sacraments

July 5, 2023 - Who Am I In Christ?

July 7, 2023 - Discover Your Spiritual Gifts

July 10, 2023 - Intercession & Healing Retreat

July 12, 2023 - Prophecy and Discernment

July 14, 2023 - Worship & Evangelization Retreat

July 17, 2023 - Discipleship, Redemptive Suffering & Mary

July 20, 2023 - Silent, Self-Directed Retreat

July 24, 2023 - How to Teach the Bible in The Power of The Holy Spirit Retreat

July 28, 2023 - Building A Civilization of Love ~ Part 1

July 31, 2023 - Building A Civilization of Love ~ Part 2

August 4, 2023 - Directed Retreat to Complete The 40-Day Discipleship Formation Program

September 15, 2023 - Healing the Broken Hearted: A Retreat for Divorced Or Separated

September 15, 2023 - Consolation of The Holy Spirit: Strength in the Challenge of Widowhood

September 22, 2023 - Hope for Single Catholics 30+: Tobit, Sarah, Tobiah & Raphael

October 6, 2023 - Building A Civilization of Love ~ Part 1

October 9, 2023 - Building A Civilization of Love ~ Part 2

October 13, 2023 - The Gospel of Luke: The Holy Spirit Forms Disciples

November 10, 2023 - Retreat for Married Couples

December 1, 2023 - Men's Retreat

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To learn more, ask questions, or register for any of these retreats:

Call (937) 587- 5464 or (513) 373-2397, or visit www.PresentationMinistries.com

Email: bpojesu2000@gmail.com All retreatants are welcomed to come and partake, and everything is always provided for **a free-will offering**, including overnight accommodations at our retreat facility in Peebles, Ohio, on Our Lady's Holy Mountain.
