



How to bring others to conversion

Read:
1 Cor. 2:1-5
Luke 4:16-30

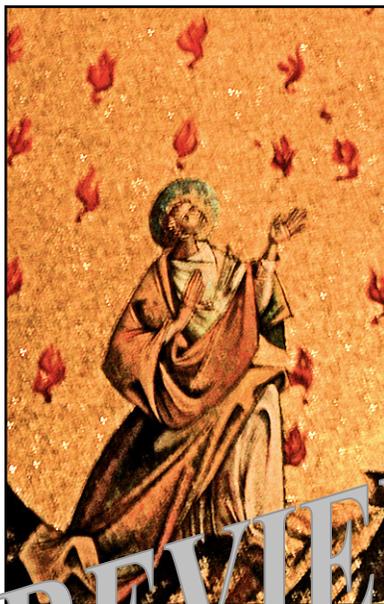
When we fail at convincing someone to go to church or to trust in Jesus, have we allowed ourselves to get swept into a debate? St. Paul tells us in 1 Cor. 2:1-5 to rely instead on "the convincing power of the Spirit". Debates don't inspire conversion. They make people get defensive, because they feel pressured into changing their point of view. Defensiveness closes the ears of their hearts, and then they cannot listen with an open standing.

Only the Holy Spirit grants understanding — it's a gift — and the Spirit works not in debates and arguments, but in love and compassion.

Paul preached nothing but Jesus Christ crucified: with his words *and* in how he served. However, the crucifixion is not a pleasant topic. And yet, Christ's sacrifice is a far more persuasive reason to believe in God's love than anything we could ever say in a debate.

When unbelievers are ready to see what Jesus did for them on Good Friday, their resistance melts. When they understand why he did it, they experience conversion. But how can we help them see and understand without getting into arguments?

We preach Jesus most effectively by the sacrifices that we make in his name. By serving the needs of others (especially when they've not been kind to us) and imitating Jesus who went to the cross for those who sinned against him, we give a powerful testimony of God's love.



Since there are no quick journeys to faithfulness, we'll probably have lots of time and plenty of opportunities to show that we care — repeatedly — before they are ready to understand the connection between our sacrificial love and Christ's. Then we must be ready to use words to explain God's love. This is much more effective than making them feel guilty about not going to church.

In Luke 4:16-30, Jesus begins the synagogue lesson — and his public ministry — with: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me." It was the Holy Spirit who anointed Jesus and sent him into the world to preach. Likewise, it's the Holy Spirit who anoints you and me and sends us into the world to bring others to Christ. And it's the Holy Spirit who changes the hearts of those we evangelize.

Not everyone will pay attention to what the Holy Spirit is doing and saying through us. Some will reject the truth no matter how greatly we love them. But when people do experience conversion and spiritual growth, their new faith will be founded not on our wisdom, but on the power of God.

Your church info goes here.
For example,
an invitation to join
the evangelization ministry
or RCIA team