

HAPPY VOLUNTEERS! (Part 2)

A Christian, wherever he is, is called to leave the sweet fragrance of Christ around him. And if he is able, among his own people, in his parish. Here are some illustrations.

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Expanding the role of churchwarden...

The support given to parishes by lay people also involves administration

tasks. Marie-Thérèse, for example, has a six-year experience as churchwarden at St-Thomas-d'Aquin Parish in St-Lambert.

Her role expanded as years passed by: "A parish is more than an administrative subdivision. It is about God and his project of love and salvation". Rather than focusing exclusively on her administrative task, she widens its scope: "This work is necessary but we must not forget the people behind the documents and decisions. They are at the center." Her experience as a teacher has familiarized her with people of different languages and ethnicities, a reality also found in parishes. This background makes it easier for her to interact with people and opens the door to caring for parishioners. For her, a churchwarden is not just a counsellor. He or she works for very concrete people. This is the perspective she tries to integrate into

her role and which allows her to evangelize through the personal ties that are forged over time.

Christ on the Internet?

An expert in information technology (IT) security confirms Marie-Thérèse's words: "Our parish is truly a family. It is the house of God. There, we pray to Him with love, we receive Him in the Eucharist. And moreover, we experience a community where we help each other," summarizes Elie.

In the Maronite Catholic parish of St. Charbel in Mississauga, Ontario, where everything is done in Arabic, Elie and his wife Rita are responsible for marriage preparation and their four children, aged 8 to 2, receive catechism classes in their own language.

Of Lebanese origin, Elie made a great discovery when he met Opus Dei:

"My life changed when I realized that I didn't have to be a priest or religious to become a saint. I know that I can sanctify myself in my professional work and family life."

Elie does not doubt for a moment the importance of new technologies in the life of the Church. There is much to be done, he believes, to support the new evangelization so much called for by the popes in recent decades. To reach young people who are constantly surfing on social media. To reach out to our culture of the immediate.

As he speaks enthusiastically about the possibilities of the Internet and new technologies, his words echo those of Saint John Paul II on the 36th World Day of Social Communications (2002): "The Internet brings billions of images to millions of computer screens around the world. From this galaxy of image

and sound, will the face of Christ emerge and will the voice of Christ be heard? For it is only when His face is seen and His voice is heard that the world will know the good news of our redemption. This is the goal of evangelization. (...) I urge the whole Church to cross this threshold courageously, to reach out into the depths of the Internet, so that now, as in the past, the great commitment of the Gospel and of culture can show the world ‘the glory of God which is in the face of Christ’ (2 Cor 4:6).”

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