



## *Fellowship of Catholic Christian Women*® **Excerpts from Sharing the Faith You Love....Reflections**

*Our new topic, "Sharing the Faith you Love," may come to you as a surprise. How gracious is our God who surprises with new ways to grow in love for Him! We who have been blessed, healed, and gifted by God—now have the honor of showing our gratitude in beautiful, tangible ways.*

*We are shifting from studying the Old Testament— to the New Testament and our call to share the Good News of Gospel — the Mercy of God. Pope Francis has been exhorting the whole Church to embrace this call since the beginning of his papacy. Mercy and Mission permeate all his homilies, papal visits around the world, and his encyclicals.*

**It is an invitation, a summons** from Christ through Pope Francis and the Church, to engage more fully in the life and mission of the Faith we profess. We do this right in our neighborhood, where we frequently engage with people in such diverse activities as our place of work or volunteering, grocery shopping, the dentist office, a restaurant, a public library or park — any place we encounter people with whom we can share God's mercy.

**The Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy:** Christ is pouring out his gifts on his people abundantly, so that they may be His face to the world, his hands that heal and comfort, and his heart of compassion in a hurting world.

**We share in the common priesthood of Christ** (vs. ordained priesthood) in building up the Church, when we exercise the grace of Baptism in "a life of faith, hope, and charity, a life according to the Spirit." (CCC: 1546–1547). "The whole church is a priestly people. Through Baptism all the faithful share in the priesthood of Jesus." (CCC: 1591. See also CCC: 871–873)

**In evangelizing, we live the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy.**

**-Corporal** (performed in volunteer work or ministry): Feed the hungry; give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, welcome the stranger, visit the sick, visit the imprisoned, bury the dead.

**-Spiritual:** *specifically* – Counsel the Doubtful, Instruct the Ignorant, Comfort the Afflicted, Pray for the Living, (also, admonish the sinner, forgive offenses willingly, bear wrongs patiently, and pray for the dead).

**The Creed:** At every Mass, we recite the Creed, proclaiming the four attributes of the Church: "I believe in One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic church." This means our Faith is founded on the missionary work of the Apostles, and this work continues until the end of time. (CCC: 811–865). Thus, we are responsible for continuing the apostolic work – the mission of the church.

**The Holy Spirit is the divine agent working through us**, when we step out in faith and 'share the faith we love' with others. *We don't share our faith solely on our own power.* We must be women of faithful prayer to the Holy Spirit, asking for the gifts we need, and to Jesus Christ for the fortitude and strength to fulfill His will.

**People are thirsting for the mercy of God!** We women are naturally endowed with the gift of nurturing, comforting, and lifting up others — the innate ability to show mercy. Our new study will equip us to pray for others, to be God's touch of tenderness to those in pain or fatigued, to spread the light of Christ wherever we happen to be during our day, and to explain our Faith to others when the opportunity or need arises.

**God uses us just as we are!** *Some examples from my parish:*

**Witnesses of faith at a Planned Parenthood abortion clinic:** "Irene" faithfully prays the rosary with a group on the sidewalk outside the clinic every week, and the lives of many babies are saved through this *public witness and the power of prayer!*

**Bringing healing to wounded people:** Once when I was praying for a client at St. Francis House, who had interviewed for rent assistance in the Homeless Prevention program, a woman in the next room overheard the prayer. When it was time for her interview, the first words she spoke were, "Would you pray for me, too?" As I prayed, "Jenny" began to weep. I hugged her, and continued to hold her and pray until she was calm. *What a sacred moment!*

**Encouragement:** When we begin our study of 'sharing the faith we love,' we will learn little by little how to do it, and we will grow "from strength to strength" (Psalm 84:7). It is a learning process that requires patience, practice, faithfulness to prayer, and mutual support. We will surely have the support of one another in our fellowship!

**The study books:** The basic book, "Sharing the Faith You Love," is a "how to" book with examples and exercises to help us develop the skills of evangelization. The second book, "Evangelizing Catholics," explains the mission of the Church and why we evangelize. Both books are written by lay Catholics. The Boucher's are veteran evangelists. Author Scott Hahn is a highly respected Catholic theologian and a life-long evangelist.

*God bless you all! .... by Kathy Bitschenauer*

A copy of the full presentation with references is available at  
<http://www.fellowshipofcatholicchristianwomen.org> under "Current Study/2016-17 Study)