



FIAT-Newsletter Nr 69 – June 2019

The Art of Being an Apostle

by Cardinal Danneels (1933-2019)

Cardinal Danneels always emphasized "gentle evangelization".

Just as there is an art practicing a profession and a lifestyle, there is also an art for being an apostle. The originality of the apostolic experience, however, comes from its origin: at the starting point, there is our Lord.

From the experience given by the Lord, Cardinal Danneels invites us to reflect on the basic attitudes, and the currents that carry apostolic wisdom.

We share some extracts from the article published in "Pastoralia" 09/1995 p. 148-150. (Archdiocese of Malines-Brussels).



"Even today, Jesus is born of Mary and the Holy Spirit".

+ L.J. Cardinal Suenens

1. Become aware of finitude

To be able to carry the weight of the day and the hour, it is necessary to accept its limits. To recognize one's limits is not an act of resignation: it involves a certain amount of joy. Weakness in ministry is not necessarily a handicap. It is the crucible of grace and, therefore, a source of courage.

2. Realize that we are not alone

As I age, I realize more and more how connected I am to many others, through the communion of saints and the innumerable collaborations that weave the reality of the universal Church.

If I take a look back, I see that I am backed by a history of the Church rich in more than 2000 years of varied testimonies. The apostles and saints remain great collaborators in the Church, even though they are already dead.

If I look around me, I feel myself inserted into a planetary Church; and it gives me great support and a lot of courage; know-how too. I look at how it is done in Africa, Japan or Latin America. This allows me not to absolutize our own situation.

3. To know one is called

One must always have before one's eyes the sense of one's personal vocation. I found this call in my life. I did not produce it. Knowing I am called relaxes me very much.

Discovering this great knowledge creates an unlocking, and cures of the feeling of hyper responsibility. I say, "I can do it", that is, God gives me the ability to do it, rather than "I have to do it".

4. Immerse oneself in a spirituality of listening

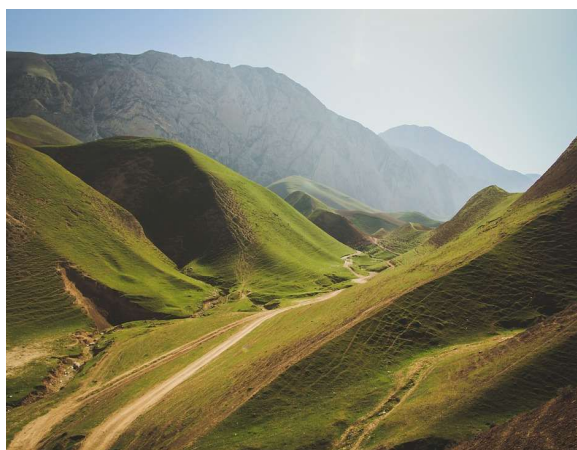
I practice the same listening before everyone. The man of faith also becomes, on the psychological and relational level, a man of listening and empathy.

Faith is to be told by God. The apostolate is to be told by circumstances and by people. It means letting people speak from the bottom of their hearts, even if it can lead to insults. Let all speak.

5. Be available for the unexpected

Another basic attitude: permanent availability to question, to upset all one's plans, even if it has covered a lot of work.

Be vulnerable, open to the time of God. Often the will of God hides in the folds of our previsions. One must learn to read between the lines, about what is written is not written. Similarly, the unforeseen of God hides in the hollows of our existence.



6. Have a sense of humor

If God is infinite, God is also infinitely humorous. The sense of humor is most importantly in the relativisation of our failures and in the fact that I do not speak about my success, like a hen. Humor is synonymous with humility and truth.

© Pastoralia 09/1995 p. 148-150. (Archdiocese Malines-Brussels).

The FIAT Association Asbl, has published a booklet (15 x 10 cm; 16 p.. € 2 / PC) with texts of Cardinal Danneels which offer more deepening of "The art of being apostle":

"Mary, mother of evangelization".

"Whatever the gift that you're willing to present to God, do not forget to entrust it to Mary, because grace goes back to the donor through the same channel that brought it. "

(St Bernard, 12th century)

The whole FIAT apostolate is based on voluntary work. However the running of the international secretarial office requires some funding. We are very often invited to offer reductions on costs for sending rosaries and various evangelization tools to economically weak countries. We are grateful for financial support.

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