

# The ‘Little Way’ of an Apostle

*Some tips and tricks for the modern lay apostle*

## General Dispositions

- Show the people you want to convert — family, friends, co-workers, etc. — that you care for them. This is done in “little ways” (like St. Thérèse) by showing interest in their interests: their families, jobs, hobbies, joys, sorrows, etc. If what interests them interests you, there is a “communion” established between you. That gives you leverage and credibility. If you show people no interest in any tangible way, how do you expect them to think you are interested in their eternal salvation?
- Remember to be pleasant and cheerful. Dour, sad people do not attract others.
- Don’t offend people needlessly. Always be a lady or a gentleman.
- Remember that your enthusiasm will speak to people of the importance of the Faith. If the Faith is truly important to you, this will show in a variety of ways.
- Make yourself a “helpful” person by volunteering in different religious and civic organizations (your parish, Boy Scouts, pro-life organizations, etc.). In these contexts, you can help to influence people.
- Give good example. Saint Peter himself endorsed this as a means to gaining converts: “Having your conversation good among the Gentiles: that whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by the good works, which they shall behold in you, glorify God in the day of visitation” (1 Peter 2:12).
- If you are the mother or father of a family, remember that *your family comes first*. Living properly the obligations of your state in life is a very effective and practical way to work for a Catholic America — it’s called *raising* it! Conversely, abandoning the home-base for otherwise noble purposes is sinful and, ultimately, ineffective.

## The Soul of the Apostolate

- Live a wholesome Catholic spiritual life, fed on the Church’s sacraments and liturgy, the Rosary, spiritual reading and personal prayer. Ultimately it is holiness you are trying to spread, so work with Our Lord to get it yourself, first. *Nemo dat quod non habet*. (“No man can give what he does not have.”)
- Make, renew, and live your Marian Consecration according to the formula of Saint Louis de Montfort (Saint Maximilian Maria Kolbe also has a good one). You can also consecrate your family to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.
- Pray for the person you are trying to convert. Have Masses said. God is interested in what you are trying to do; He might like to hear about it.
- Pray for the grace to be a good apostle for the Faith. Saint Maximilian Maria Kolbe’s prayer of consecration to Mary has this intention built into it.
- Pray to the guardian angels of those you’re trying to convert.

## Good Habits

- Have “conversation starters” all around. Decorate your house with holy images. Do the same with your desk at work. If there is a rule at your place of employment that you can’t have “religious pictures” in your workspace, then make sure your family pictures have religious images (crucifix, Mary statue, etc.) in them. This is known as being wise as serpents.

- Carry around and hand out [Miraculous Medals](#). Saint Maximilian Maria Kolbe called these his “bullets.” (Remember the story of [Alphonse Ratisbonne](#).) You can even leave them with the tip at a restaurant. And make sure it is a decent tip!
- With the knowledge you have of your would-be convert — remember, you’re interested in him, right? — offer him articles on his interests from Catholic sources. (E.g.: “Tom, I know you like U.S. History. Here’s a good article on the diplomat who secured peace with Sitting Bull.”... and hand him something on Father De Smet.)
- Keep Catholic tracts and/or booklets with you. Hand them out when the occasion arises. (For those who have to be clever as serpents at your workplace, “accidentally” letting these fall out of your briefcase or remain open on your desk can help.)
- Be a “public Catholic.” That is, say grace before meals (crossing yourself!), and do other visible acts of Faith in a non-pompous manner. Your car can be Catholic, too, in a tasteful way, with a Rosary hanging in the right place, a mini-statue on the dash, and even a side-or rear window holy picture.
- Always show reverence for the Holy Name of Jesus. Bow your head when it is said. Do that and say “Blessed be God” if someone uses the Sacred Name irreverently.
- When someone tells you about his problems, promise him your prayers. You can even have a Mass said. This is a way to show (and act upon) your concern for that individual. In his mind, this will connect your Faith to your practical charity for that person.
- Chances are, the person you are speaking with has a Christian name. Tell him about his patron saint. (If there are multiple candidates — *which Saint Andrew?* — pick one for him!) You can direct him to a good book on the saint, and encourage him to pray to his patron.

### **Incidental Practices**

- Put Catholic messages on your mail, e.g., “Saint Anthony Guide.”
- Get people to be regular readers of our web site. Send emails recommending particular articles. Put a link to the site on your email signature. If you use Facebook, post articles from our site and Catholic “status messages” on your wall.
- If you read the local paper and see good letters to the editor on hot-button moral issues, send the letter-writer a personal note with kudos and a recommendation to read something Catholic on the same issue (e.g., pro-life, pro-family).

### **Continuing Education/Formation**

- Study as part of the [Saint Augustine Institute](#). Your studies, however modest, will inform your conversations about the Faith, and make you a better apostle. If you organize a study circle — a very good personal apostolate — you can invite people to learn in a group setting.
- Joining the Third Order of the Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary helps in many ways. For example, by working *together* at our own sanctity, we assist each other in becoming saints; and by remaining a school of thought with a common sense of purpose, we present a “united front” to the Church and the world. This can make us an organized force for the conversion of America.

“My brethren, if any of you err from the truth, and one convert him: He must know that he who causeth a sinner to be converted from the error of his way, shall save his soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins” (James 5:19-20).

(Available online, at <http://catholicism.org/ad-rem-no-105.html>.)