

Liturgy Matters: A Typical Conversion Process

Last week we looked at some powerful stories about conversion. Why is it that some people have the kind of human experiences that I have mentioned and they experience conversion, while other people become agnostic or atheistic, or some turn to contemporary forms of idolatry? Some theorists suggest that it is the importance of community in facilitating conversion experiences. The community might take the form of one person who represents the community and tradition—a pastoral counselor, a spiritual director, a neighbor, a friend, a relative. Or the community might be represented by a small group, a small community or a program or organization or ministry at church. It is being with people of faith, conversation, and prayer that help an individual take the leap of faith that is conversion, to begin to trust, hope, surrender, and experience God and community in a new, fresh way. Community is the context, the agency through which conversion happens. Worship is the culture that fosters conversion. We come to one another and worship with one another with the intuition, "I think I have met God through human experience. I think I heard the voice of God in a contemporary burning bush." Community is the source of confirmation that indeed we have met God. It is hard to "grow" as a Christian without community.

More about evangelization next week.

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