



# Plunging our Roots into Christ

*“That you, rooted and grounded in love, may know the love of Christ that surpasses understanding.”*



## The Spiritual Battle

Why is it that stories of battle and bravery like the *Chronicles of Narnia* and the *Lord of the Rings* attract us? Perhaps it is because they tell the story of something very *real*: the battle between good and evil that is at the heart of every human experience. And what's more, the characters in these stories show humanity at its greatest in this battle. They show true valor before great evil and the heroic conviction that stands firm even in the face of death itself. A glimpse of this kind of courage kindles in the heart a flame of desire to live that kind

of heroism. And for the Christian, this image of courage in battle is one of the most eloquent in describing what it means to live life in Christ.

In recent decades, one of the biggest losses we as the Church have suffered is the loss of the sense of the Christian life as a spiritual battle. This is largely due to the widespread denial of the existence of the devil. In the words of the French poet Charles Baudelaire, “The greatest trick the devil ever pulled was convincing the world he doesn't exist.” And yet, for centuries, the Church has always considered herself in a state of battle here on earth, not a battle with human beings, but in the words of St. Paul, a battle “against the power and the principalities and the world rulers of this present darkness” (Eph 6:12). Recently, Pope Benedict XVI called our attention to the traditional title of the Church on earth as the Church Militant. He said, “Today the word *ecclesia militans* [Church Militant] is a bit out of fashion, but in reality we can always better understand that which is true...We see how evil wants to rule the world and that it's necessary to enter the struggle against evil. We see how it does this in so many very violent ways, with different forms of violence, but also posing as a force for good while destroying the moral foundations of society.” We see the Holy Father echoing here the words of St. Leo the Great, “For the old enemy does not cease to transform himself into an angel of light, and spread everywhere the snares of his deceptions, and make every effort to corrupt the faith of believers.”

When we consider this metaphor of spiritual battle correctly, we see how it illumines an important aspect of evangelization. As we work for the conversion of souls back to God and the Church, we must also understand that we are in a real spiritual struggle. The works of human sin and the devil cannot be uprooted without a fight and so it is important that we be “armed” with weapons from the Church's great armory: the sacraments, the Rosary, virtue, prayer, a strong community, and deep sanctity. Let us allow these great stories of battle to inspire us to take up the struggle with courage and joy, knowing that our Victor has already won the battle for us!

For a great image of the spiritual battle (from *Lord of the Rings*—don't mind the ugly orc faces!):

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hXV8eALykN0>

# Evangelization

## Summer Movie Watch

Many thanks to John Doman, Jr. for this great idea about hosting a neighborhood movie watch as a work of evangelization. Neighbors are invited to bring beach chairs, snacks, drinks, and to enjoy the backyard show! The Domans show a series of one-hour movies over a period of 7 weeks to help draw their neighbors to learn more about the Catholic Faith! A sample of the note they send out (feel free to contact John for more information or tips):

*Dear Friend/Neighbor, Michele and I are inviting you to join us tonight and for the next 7 weeks to watch a series of beautiful one hour movies about the Catholic faith. The show will start at 8:45 in our backyard. Bring your beach chairs, snacks and drinks. (Some chairs are available.) You don't have to be Catholic to enjoy the show. We would love to see you here. -John Doman Jr jmdomanjr@gmail.com*

### **Summer Movie Watch Idea: Lord of the Rings/Chronicles of Narnia**

One thoroughly (but no overtly) “Catholic” movie that young adults or families with teens can enjoy and reflect upon is the *Lord of the Rings* (PG-13), written by devout Catholic author J.R.R. Tolkien. For families with younger children, the *Chronicles of Narnia* is a good alternative. (For very young children, EWTN has great cartoon movies about the saints.) A movie watch could be a parish or neighborhood initiative.

Some reflection questions to foster conversation after the movie:

1. Who were the characters you liked best and why?
2. What do you think about the struggle between good and evil portrayed in this movie? Do you think the battle between good and evil still happens? What does it look like in our world today? Have you sometimes felt like you were doing battle in a similar way? How?
3. *Lord of the Rings*: It could be said that the Ring is a symbol of human sin. From what you saw in the movie, do you think this might be true? What in Frodo's struggle with the Ring makes it seem like it is ultimately about a struggle with our own personal sin? Why is it significant that Tolkien tells us in his book that the Ring was thrown into the fire on March 25 (The Feast of the Annunciation)?



4. *Lord of the Rings*: Some have said that the three main characters, Frodo, Gandalf, and Aragorn, represent the three offices of Jesus Christ (and therefore of the baptized), priest, prophet and king. What do you think about this interpretation? Do these characters help you understand your Christian vocation in a new way?

5. What are the good qualities in the characters that make you admire them? Do you think it is possible to show these same qualities? Are there situations in modern life where the same kind of courage and valor is still necessary? Is it possible to be in a battle against evil even if orcs do not exist? Whom do the enemies represent?

Visit our website: [http://archphila.org/evangelization/formlaity/parish\\_evangelization/parish\\_evangelization.htm](http://archphila.org/evangelization/formlaity/parish_evangelization/parish_evangelization.htm)



# Grandparents: The Family's Great Evangelizers

Pope John Paul II, the great Pope of the “new evangelization”, saw that every human person, in every situation and at every time of life, had a role to play in the Church’s great work of bringing Christ to the world. He turned to grandparents and encouraged them, saying,

*The Christian community can receive much from the serene presence of older people. I think first of all in terms of evangelization: its effectiveness does not depend principally on technical expertise. In how many families are grandchildren taught the rudiments of the faith by their grandparents!*  
~ Letter to the Elderly 13

In many families, grandparents are the ones who keep the Catholic Faith alive by teaching their children and grandchildren the truths of the faith and by setting the example of going to Mass and Confession regularly. It falls to grandparents, now more than ever, to become a light to their families of the great love of Jesus Christ and the joy of life in the Catholic Church. *Grandparents, be bold in proclaiming the joy of Christ, the peace that comes from a regular practice of the Sacraments, and the importance of raising children in the Faith!* In order to nourish the faith of Grandparents and also encourage them in their evangelizing role in the family, consider these ideas:

## Celebrate Grandparents

**St. John Bosco Parish in Hatboro** celebrated Grandparents on Sunday, 7/29 - near the feast of St. Ann and St. Joachim (the grandparents of the Lord). There was a special blessing at the 9AM Mass for all grandparents and morning tea afterwards. For more information or tips, please contact: John and Janet Sikina [jjsikina@comcast.net](mailto:jjsikina@comcast.net)

## Nourish the Faith of Grandparents

Bring in a presenter to highlight Pope John Paul II’s *Letter to the Elderly*, or start a study group that will read the document together. Help the group to formulate a plan for how to evangelize in their current situation. Click the link below for the *Letter*:

[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/letters/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_let\\_01101999\\_elderly\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_01101999_elderly_en.html)

## Host a Grandparents’ Evangelization Workshop

Many grandparents may feel at a loss for how to reach the younger generations with the message of faith. Develop a workshop that covers 1) issues and concerns of the younger generation, 2) how to evangelize in a way that is inviting and loving, not critical or nagging, 3) what new tools the Church has given us for speaking to the young about Christ and the Church (e.g., the YOUCat, Theology of the Body, Catholic Underground, etc...)

Visit our website: [http://archphila.org/evangelization/formlaity/parish\\_evangelization/parish\\_evangelization.htm](http://archphila.org/evangelization/formlaity/parish_evangelization/parish_evangelization.htm)

# Around the Archdiocese...

To share information about evangelization events being hosted in your parish, please contact:  
Meghan Cokeley, Assistant Director, Office of Life, Family and Laity  
215-587-5630 • [mcokeley@adphila.org](mailto:mcokeley@adphila.org)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Where</u>
<b>July 25, Aug 1, 8 at 7-9pm</b>	<i>Evangelization Formation: Persons In Christ: Figures of the New Evangelization</i>	Mary, Mother of the Redeemer North Wales
<b>Topic:</b>	A contemplative look at those who shared greatest intimacy with Christ during his earthly life in order to discern the rich and diverse dimensions of evangelization. A formation program for anyone interested in evangelization.	
<b>Speaker:</b>	Meghan Cokeley, Assistant Director, Office of Life, Family and Laity	
<i>For more information and the rest of the summer schedule:</i> <a href="http://archphila.org/evangelization/formlaity/parish_evangelization/pdf/PersonsInChristCalendar.pdf">http://archphila.org/evangelization/formlaity/parish_evangelization/pdf/PersonsInChristCalendar.pdf</a>		
<b>August 10 or 11</b>	<i>Great Adventure Bible Study Basic Training</i>	<b>Aug 10:</b> Ss. Simon and Jude, West Chester <i>or</i> <b>Aug 11:</b> Archdiocesan Pastoral Center
<b>Topic:</b>	How to run a fruitful and life-changing Bible study in your parish using the <i>Great Adventure Bible Study</i> series <i>A Quick Journey Through the Bible</i>	
<b>Speakers:</b>	Thomas Smith, former director of Denver Catholic Biblical School and <i>Great Adventure Revelation</i> author Corinne Murphy, Bible study specialist and Community Relations Manager for Ascension Press	
<i>For more information:</i> <a href="http://archphila.org/evangelization/formlaity/parish_evangelization/planfor2012/pdf/AscensionTraining2012.pdf">http://archphila.org/evangelization/formlaity/parish_evangelization/planfor2012/pdf/AscensionTraining2012.pdf</a>		
<b>To register:</b>	August 10, 5:30-9:30pm at Ss. Simon and June, West Chester: <a href="http://Regonline.com/TGABasicTrainingWestChester2012">Regonline.com/TGABasicTrainingWestChester2012</a>  August 11, 8:30am-12pm at the Archdiocesan Pastoral Center: <a href="http://Regonline.com/TGABasicTrainingPhila2012">Regonline.com/TGABasicTrainingPhila2012</a>	
<b>Aug 16, 23, 30 at 7-9pm</b>	<i>Evangelization Formation: Persons In Christ: Figures of the New Evangelization</i>	St. Thomas Aquinas Parish Croydon
<b>October 20, 9am-3:30pm</b>	<i>Be Not Afraid: Supporting Parents Who Experience a Poor Prenatal Diagnosis</i>	Vianney Hall St. Charles Seminary, Wynnewood
<b>Topic:</b>	Come join us for a workshop on how to support parents struggling with being told that their unborn baby has a structural anomaly, physical or intellectual disability.	
<b>Speaker:</b>	Tracy Winsor, co-founder of <i>Be Not Afraid</i> , which provides support and resources to help couples give life to their babies in challenging circumstances.	

*For more information:* Sr. Kathleen Schipani, IHM • 215-587-3913 • [srschipa@adphila.org](mailto:srschipa@adphila.org)

Visit our website: [http://archphila.org/evangelization/formlaity/parish\\_evangelization/parish\\_evangelization.htm](http://archphila.org/evangelization/formlaity/parish_evangelization/parish_evangelization.htm)