

Becoming Intentional Disciples – Last week we introduced Sherry Weddell’s thoughts on what she calls the five thresholds of conversion. We mentioned the first threshold of conversion – Initial Trust. This week we will speak of the second threshold – **Curiosity**.

Sherry Weddell shares these key thoughts: Our ultimate mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ, so we must first arouse curiosity about Jesus himself. To do that, we have to talk about Jesus. We must help each other and those outside the Church to fall in love with Jesus Christ. The threshold of curiosity is a time to explore that a personal God exists and that you can have a personal relationship with God. The three basic stages of curiosity are: 1) Awareness – you become aware that there are more possibilities in life than you have imagined or experienced; 2) Engagement – take concrete steps to make friends with a Christian, read about Jesus, etc.; 3) Exchange – move from mere listening to actively asking questions and exchanging ideas. Jesus asked His disciples 2,000 years ago and He asks us today: “Who do you say that I am?” (Mt 6:15). Jesus welcomes and cultivates curiosity.

One powerful way to rouse curiosity is to tell stories. Jesus was masterful in His use of parables and stories. Jesus wanted His listeners to begin actively thinking. As Catholics we are called to “live curiously”, i.e. to live lives of such inexplicable joy, love, faith and peace that all the normal categories by which nonbelievers try to classify us won’t work. This requires that we think and act in Kingdom-oriented and countercultural ways in our daily lives.

Forgiving and asking forgiveness of those who have betrayed and abused us are perhaps the most countercultural things we can do. Speaking the truth in love, honouring others with our words, living in healthy relationships, caring for the poor, sharing possessions freely, praying for healing and provision, and even simple family prayer times can be startling countercultural witnesses.

A prayerful life that springs from the supernatural power of the Eucharist and the sacraments and issues in the corporal and spiritual works of mercy such as feeding the hungry, caring for the sick, and praying for the living and the dead can be a powerful sign of contradiction that creates the curiosity that calls a soul to Christ. This curiosity is the threshold individuals must cross before they can truly become intentional disciples, who know and experience Jesus as Lord and Saviour and who begin to put the charisms they have received from God at the service of others. The big question we need to ask ourselves is: Are we curious enough to get to know Jesus more deeply?