

WITNESSING OF THE PAULINIANS TO ST. PAUL UNIVERSITY PHILIPPINES' EVANGELICAL MISSION

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Abstract

This paper endeavored to determine the extent to which the faculty and students of St. Paul University Philippines witness to the University's evangelical mission owing to its Catholic character as a Higher Education Institution. Paulinian faculty and students by its Catholic nature are all called to share themselves and be proactive engaged in the Apostolic Mission of the Church. This study investigated the witnessing of the Paulinian study participants on the following focus of evangelization: pro-God (*maka-Diyos*), respect for the dignity of the human person (*makatao*), pro-life (*makabuhay*), patriotic (*makabayan*) and care for the environment (*maka-kalikasan*).

This study used two forms of questionnaire that were administered to students and teachers. Findings of the study revealed that the study participants generally have high extent of witnessing in all the five focus of evangelization. Specifically, the institution has a roster of female dominated educators and students who are prayerfully grateful, deeply Marian believers, lovers of the Eucharist, moderately observant of their Sunday obligation, sacramentalized but not fully evangelized, generous, and with soft spot for the sick, the poor, the underserved and the underprivileged.

Keywords: *Evangelical mission, Christian witnessing, Paulinian Spirituality*

Introduction

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing... to God.”

Witnessing flows from and it is innate in every human being because man is created in God’s image and likeness. Christian witnessing is not about intellect neither a debate skill. Paul’s letter to the Corinthian Church addresses the heart of [Christian] witnessing.

“As for myself, brothers, when I came to you I did not come proclaiming God’s testimony with any particular eloquence or wisdom. No, I determined that while I was with you they speak of nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified. When I came among you, it was in weakness and fear, and with much trepidation. My message and my preaching had in one of the persuasive force of wise of argumentation but the convincing power of the spirit. As a consequence, your faith rests not on the wisdom of men but on the power of God.” (2:1-5)

Thus it is not one’s self that one is preaching, but Christ Jesus as the Lord, and one’s self as servant that one preaches.

Witnessing essentially is sharing not just what one possesses in life but more so of one’s self with others. It is living in accord with each other that is to all people from all walks of life and in harmony with God. It is making one’s life a living exemplar of Christ. It is doing an impressive act for others and God unselfishly. It is said that one’s attitude towards others is a reflection of his attitude towards God. One’s attitude towards God if it is true and genuine is reflected in the way one relates with others and his environment.

By virtue of St. Paul University Philippines’ Catholic character, Paulinians are all called to share themselves and contribute especially in the Apostolic Mission of the Church. This mission is to proclaim Jesus Christ as the God News of salvation. This assertion creates in every Paulinian the commitment to carry on to this mission with dynamism and burning desire to make Jesus Christ increasingly loved and known through one’s good deeds and behavior. The Paulinians’ fidelity to the charism of the Pauline foundation should give them the vitality to this commitment.

St. Paul University Philippines' quest for excellence and quality as an institution must not only be focused on the academic aspect of the Paulinians' lives. Equally important is the holistic Catholic Christian formation of the entire Paulinian community. Paulinian education should commit itself to the realization of its vision-mission. Part of this vision is to form persons who are pro-God (maka-Diyos), respectful of the dignity of the human person (makatao), pro-life (makabuhay), patriotic (makabayan) and protective of environment (maka-kalikasan). Thus to be true, genuine and authentic Paulinians one ought not only be an expert of his own field of study but also should focus on the development of his entire being which goes along with a sense of God which will eventually develop his mature, professional and responsible attitude towards others and his environment.

Paulinians pledge, not just, because they are Paulinians but by virtue of their baptism that their whole life must be apostolic. Each Paulinian must bear witness to Christ by who and what he is, dedicating himself in a singular way to the service of all, especially, to the least, the lost and the last.

St. Paul, the patron saint of Paulinians had so much zeal and enthusiasm in bringing Christ to others. His missionary zeal inspires and urges Paulinians to serve with simplicity, generosity and with enthusiasm as they carry out their mission in bringing Jesus Christ to all not just through one's words but more so through their actions as well. With their zeal in serving the poor, the least and the last this will eventually develop them into becoming living witnesses of Christ not just in their own locality but eventually lead them to carry out in their lives wherever they are or they may be. *"It is not ourselves that we are preaching, but Christ Jesus as the Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake" (2 Cor. 4:5).* Paulinians allow Christ and His love to be their strength, force and power to help them carry on to this mission. "He will never fail us If Christ is for us who can be against us? Let the charity of Christ impel us to carry out our mission as Paulinians to proclaim Jesus Christ as the Good News to ALL. *'Caritas Christi Urget Nos.'*"

Statement of the Problem

This study entitled, "The Witnessing of the Paulinians to the St. Paul University Philippines' Evangelical Mission," sought to determine the extent to which the administrators, faculty and students witness to the SPUP's evangelical mission.

Specifically, it sought answers the following:

- 1) What is the profile of the student-respondents in terms of the following variables:
 - 1.1 Age
 - 1.2 Sex
 - 1.3 Year Level
 - 1.4 School/department, and
 - 1.5 Religious Affiliation?

- 2) What is the profile of the teacher and lay administrator-respondents in terms of the following variables:
 - 2.1 Sex
 - 2.2 Length of Service, and
 - 2.3 Faculty Rank?

- 3) What is the extent of witnessing of the respondents in terms of the following focus of evangelization?
 - 3.1 Maka-Diyos
 - 3.2 Maka-Tao
 - 3.3 Maka-Bayan
 - 3.4 Maka-Buhay
 - 3.5 Maka-Kalikasan

Methods

This study made use of the descriptive research design. The respondents consisted of the college students from 2nd to 5th year as well as the teachers and non-religious lay-administrators from elementary to college levels. The student-respondents of this study were selected using cluster sampling. The number of students who participated in this research as respondents was determined with the use of Slovin's Formula with a margin of error of 0.01. On the other hand, all teachers and non-religious lay-administrators were included as the second group of respondents.

Data Gathering Instrument

This study mainly used the questionnaire for data gathering. It is a non-standardized questionnaire. Two forms of questionnaire were separately administered to the students and the teachers.

Data Gathering Procedure

A draft of the prepared 2 sets of questionnaire was submitted to a panel of evaluators for face and content validation. The panel consisted of the Vice-President for Christian Formation, a Theology instructor and another religious SPC Sister. After incorporating all the corrections, comments and suggestions of the members of the panel of evaluators, the final draft of the questionnaire was reproduced and floated to the target respondents.

Statistical Treatment of Data

This study made use of the weighted mean to interpret the data gathered from the use of the questionnaire.

The following scale was used to interpret the mean.

SCALE	RANGE	INTERPRETATION
5	4.20 – 5.00	Always/Very Highly Important
4	3.40 – 4.19	Often/Very Important
3	2.60 – 3.39	Occasionally/Important
2	1.80 – 2.59	Seldom/Slightly Important
1	1.00 – 1.79	Never/Not Important

The t-test for independent samples was used to determine whether or not there is a significant difference in the extent of witnessing between the students and teachers with respect to the different focus of evangelization.

The One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to determine whether or not there is a significant difference in the extent of witnessing of the students with respect to the different focus of evangelization when grouped according to age, year level, School/department, and religious affiliation.

Results and Discussions

A. Profile of Respondents:

1. The biggest number of student-respondents is of ages 18 and 19 representing more than 50% of the total number. Majority of the teacher-respondents are female and only around one-third of them are male.

2. Majority (67.97%) of the student-respondents are female and only around one-third of them are male and the biggest number of student-respondents comes from the 2nd year level followed by the 4th year level.
3. Majority of the student-respondents are Catholic and only about thirteen percent (13%) are Non-Catholic.
4. The biggest number of the teacher-respondents has been in service to the University for 10 years or less.

B. Extent of Witnessing of the Respondents in terms of the following Focus of Evangelization:

MAKA-DIYOS

1. Both students and teachers “always” pray before going to bed for sleep but only “occasionally” pray before and after meals. It was also shown that both type of respondents “often” pray upon waking up and in some other occasions. The students and teachers do not pray the same as much when they retire for bed and as they wake up after sleep.
2. The teacher-respondents “always” pray with the intentions of adoring and thanking God together with their intent to seek for petition and to ask for forgiveness to sins being committed while the student-respondents “always” pray only for purposes of thanksgiving and “often” pray for praise, contrition and petition. Generally, both types of respondents are grateful people praying to God for the purpose of paying gratitude for graces and blessing received from God.
3. Both the respondents “occasionally” pray with scriptures as well as visit the chapel and pray. It was shown further that the teacher-respondents “always” use both the spontaneous and basic/formula prayers while the student-respondents “often” use the two forms. Both types of respondents put a “very high” level of importance on prayer. Lastly, the teachers “occasionally” attend novenas while students “seldom” do.
4. Most of the teacher and student-respondents attend the “Perpetual Help” Novena and the Aguinaldo Novena of Masses before Christmas. The respondents’ give give high regard to Mary

as Jesus' Mother . But very few of the student-respondents attend the First Friday Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus & Mary.

5. Teacher-respondents “always” hear mass, attend Eucharistic celebrations in the University and observe their Sunday Mass obligations while they only “often” pray or recite prayers in observance of their devotion to the saints. On the other hand, the student-respondents “often” hear mass and observe their Sunday mass obligation and “occasionally” attend Eucharistic celebrations in the University as well as pray in observance of their devotion to saints. The observance of their Sunday obligation and hearing mass is not so strong.
6. A significant number of the teacher and student- respondents know how to pray the Rosary but a few of the still do not know it.
7. The teacher-respondents generally have mastery of all prayers contained in the Rosary. It was found out that the student-respondents “occasionally” pray the Rosary privately while the teachers do it “often”.
8. Both students and teachers consider the sacrament of Baptism as important.
9. Both teachers and students occasionally approach the sacrament of confession.
10. Both respondents attend recollections and retreats whenever they are given the opportunity.
11. Teacher - respondents’ marriage are all sacramentalized while the student- respondents were all single.
12. Most of the children of the teacher-respondents have received the 2 Sacraments of initiation.
13. A significant number of the teacher and student respondents’ are presently godparents.
14. Both respondents possess a healthy relationship with their godchildren but should further strive to carry out their duties and responsibilities as godparents.
15. Both types of respondents are aware of the parish to which they belong and the awareness of the affairs and activities in their parish. However, a significant number of student-respondents are not aware of their parish ongoing activities.

16. Both the teacher and student-respondents are seldom involved in parish activities either as an officer or member of the Parish Pastoral Council, nor in other programs such as Liturgy/Worship, Education etc.

MAKA-TAO

1. Majority of the respondents share their material blessings by donating money, goods/grocery items, clothing, etc. to victims of typhoon and other calamities and disasters, by lending money, practice of almsgiving, and listening to people who seek for spiritual and emotional guidance.
2. More than 60% of the teacher-respondents sponsor or assist in the education of their siblings, nephews and nieces and other relatives. Furthermore it was revealed that the teacher-respondents are more sympathetic to the needs of the sorrowing and the afflicted (i.e., burial assistance, etc.)
3. Both student and teacher-respondents maintain good socio-spiritual relationship with people surrounding them either at home, in school or anywhere.
4. Both types of respondents have truly imbibed the value of generosity of their founder Fr. Louis Chauvet and that they are strongly *maka-tao*.

MAKABAYAN

1. Both types of respondents have a strong and healthy relationship with the society.
2. It is clearly indicated that both types of respondents are *maka-bayan*.
3. Both types of respondents have the tendency to agree to and accept capital punishment as the best means to eradicate the commission of crimes.

MAKAKALIKASAN

1. Teacher-Respondents are truly *maka – kalikasan*. The student-respondents also demonstrate a high degree of love and respect for nature and the environment.

2. Almost all of the indicated duties and responsibilities were “always” observed and implemented by the teacher-Respondents with the exception of “participation in the resolution of local and national issues and problems” and “purchase of Philippine-made products” and always” feel proud of being a Filipino and use the national language as well as their dialect.
3. The student-respondents also demonstrate a high degree of love and respect for nature and mother earth as indicated in the “very satisfactory” rating they gave themselves in their adherence/ compliance with/ participation in most of the indicators of their value of nature/ mother earth/ natural environment.

MAKABUHAY

1. Both types of respondents put a high regard/value to life. For acts/practices that are detrimental to life - abortion, smoking, drinking liquor, they either “never” or “seldom” indulged in them. While, for those acts that promote and preserve life, they either “often” or “always” indulge/implement/practice them, like, having enough rest and sleep, having adequate leisure and relaxation and eating nutritious food. This is also revealed in the high general rating of “excellent” that the teacher-respondents and “very satisfactory” that the student-respondents gave themselves on the value of life. It was shown that both types of respondents have the tendency to agree to and accept capital punishment as the best means to eradicate the commission of crimes.
2. Teacher-Respondents are truly *maka – kalikasan* since they gave themselves a high rating of either “excellent or “very satisfactory” for their adherence/ compliance with/ participation in all the indicators of their value of nature/ mother earth/ natural environment, except for the last indicator - attending seminars on preservation of mother earth/ natural resources and the like, for which they rated themselves only “satisfactory”.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are derived.

SPUP which has a pool of educators and students that is highly female dominated are:

1. generally grateful people praying to God because of the graces and blessing received from God;
2. deeply Marian but give less importance for the Sacred Heart of Jesus.
3. lovers of the Eucharist but their observance to their Sunday obligation and hearing mass is not so strong;
4. are sacramentalized but are not truly evangelized;
5. generous people;
6. caring especially for the sick, the bereaved, the poor and underprivileged and their relatives.

Recommendations

In the light of the findings drawn and the conclusions arrived at, the following recommendations are forwarded:

1. Find out students who are not yet familiar in reciting/praying the rosary and they must be given attention especially by Religious Education Teachers.
2. There is a need to strengthen and deepen students' understanding of prayer to balance their life of prayer. There are two types of prayer; these are both personal and communal. Thus, the students must be aware of the importance of personal prayer for as Catholics this is necessary to strengthen ones personal life with God.
3. Both teachers and students must be given a pre-sacramental catechesis especially the sacraments of Confession for them to approach this regularly and Eucharist which is the highest form of worship to nourish themselves spiritually.
4. Teachers must be given an orientation for them to understand certain devotion to saints as something that can help deepen and strengthen their spiritual life.

5. SPUP must initiate and extend its services by making a survey of those employees whose children are not yet baptized and confirmed and help these children receive such sacrament.
6. Parish awareness program must be strengthened by the school.
7. Seminars on preservation of mother earth/ natural resources and the like must be initiated.
8. Seminars, symposia and lectures on the inviolability and dignity of human life must be organized to change ones attitude towards oneself, others and the life of the criminal.
9. St. Paul University Philippines' quest for excellence and quality as an institution must not only be focused on the academic aspect of the Paulinians' lives. Equally important is the holistic Catholic Christian formation of the entire Paulinian community. Paulinian education should commit itself to the realization of its vision-mission. Part of this vision is to form persons who are pro-God (maka-Diyos), respectful of the dignity of the human person (makatao), pro-life (makabuhay), patriotic (makabayan) and protective of environment (maka-kalikasan). Thus to be true, genuine and authentic Paulinians one ought not only be an expert of his own field of study but also should focus on the development of his entire being which goes along with a sense of God which will eventually develop his mature, professional and responsible attitude towards others and his environment.

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