

Personal testimonies 'best way to evangelize youth'

Personal testimonies 'best way to evangelize youth' Stories about life appeal to young Filipinos, Cardinal Tagle says Personal testimonies 'best way to evangelize youth'



Want to effectively inculcate the Gospel to young minds? Use personal testimonies.

"Personal, authentic testimony is a form of new evangelization" that strongly appeals to the youth, according to Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle of Manila.

"From what I see today, it seems that among the top methods for the youth in terms of evangelization is, first, they love testimonies," said the prelate.

He said the youth would like to hear testimonies about "Christian witnessing" and, among others, how to overcome a particular issue as a Christian.

Traditionally, preachers, including most members of the clergy, start with the teachings and then ask people to apply it on their daily lives.

"But when you start with a testimony, that's when teaching enters," said Cardinal Tagle during a media briefing ahead of the Philippine Conference on New Evangelization scheduled this month.

"Today, the youth seems to listen to stories about life," he said, adding that what he does is after giving a testimony he cites a similar story in the Bible.

"The teaching moment, the doctrinal moment, is like a latecomer. So the first is testimony," said Cardinal Tagle, who is also a sought-after speaker on theology.

The Manila prelate stressed that today's young people are seeking active involvement in the church, from charitable to pastoral activities.

"They want to do something," he said. "Our youth, while they are savvy in the digital world, are also looking for something existential," he added.

He downplayed observations that today's young people are not interested in the church and in spirituality.

He cited a July 1 event in Manila where more than 15,000 young Catholics gathered in prayer and discussions.

Cardinal Tagle, who spoke before the gathering, noted that the atmosphere was "electrifying."

"It really was contagious," he said. "Nowhere else in the world would a bishop get such a warm reception from young people," said the cardinal.

On July 28, thousands of Filipino Catholics are expected to attend the three-day meeting in Manila on new evangelization that will feature discussions on ecology, new media, social justice, interreligious dialogue, and the youth.

Among the speakers during the event are Archbishop Salvatore Rino Fisichella, president of the Pontifical Council on New Evangelization, and Archbishop Bernardito Auza, the Holy See's permanent observer to the United Nations.

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