

God has given us the gift to evangelize our faith. The gifts of wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord have all been granted to us through God's grace in the sacraments, especially Confirmation. Some have turned away from God and His gracious gifts He gives us. As those who left the Church deny these gifts and their faith, we are called to bring them back home and embrace God once again. Jesus tells us to leave 99 faithful sheep to go and bring home the one lost sheep. Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we are able to evangelize our faith and encourage those who have left the Church to return home.

In Luke 15 Jesus tells us the parable of the lost sheep. He addressed the crowd saying "What many among you having a hundred sheep and losing one of them would leave the ninety-nine in the desert and go after the lost one until he finds it? And when he does find it, he sets it on his shoulders with great joy"(Luke 15:4-5). God is constantly calling us home and calling us to bring the lost and those who abandoned Him with us.

We can do this through the power of the sacraments. Sacraments such as reconciliation offer God's undeniable forgiveness. Bringing friends and family members who have left the Church to reconciliation can open their hearts back up to God's grace. As you take this family member(s) or friend(s) to reconciliation you can lead by example and faith by offering prayer books and books of worship. Offering prayer and worship books can make those who you have brought with you more comfortable and they embrace God's presence.

If they do not feel comfortable going to reconciliation, taking those who have fallen out of practice, to adoration is another way to encourage them to return to the Church. As you attend adoration you can pray for all those who have left the Church and have turned away from religion. Prayers such as the rosary or even more specific to the turning away from faith such as, "Almighty Father, you desire not the death of the sinner, but that he may be converted and live. Pour out upon us Your mercy and hear the prayers of Your servants. Soften the hearts of Your children who have strayed from the true path which You have established for their

salvation. They are now forgetful of their duties as Catholics and pursue the pleasures of the world. Grant that they may quickly return to the practice of every Christian virtue, so that their lives may shine with the integrity of faith, the fervor of piety, and the ardor of charity. Restore them all to Your sacraments and the life of Your grace, through the merits of the Most Precious Blood of Your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen" (Father John Hardon's *Catholic Prayer Book*).

Prayer and example can encourage those who have left the Church, to return home. The sacraments are God's grace for us. When we are guided by the Holy Spirit through His gifts we are able to evangelize and pour our faith into the world. Through prayer and evangelizing those who have turned away from Catholicism may be able to embrace the sacraments once again. As those who are experiencing denial God and the Catholic Church, His bride, feel His presence through our prayer and example.