



INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE APOSTOLIC ACTION

What is Apostolic Action?

Some definitions:

Apostle: a personal representative or agent sent to do Christ's work.

Action: is the carrying out of a commission.

Apostolic Action: is the commission given to all Christians, such as to "Make a friend, be a friend, bring your friend to Christ."

"Apostolic Action has been described as action that is taken in genuine love of God and neighbour, occurring when one dies to self and allowing the Grace of God to penetrate his or her active being.

Examples of Apostolic Action:

Apostolic action is the planned activity that brings people into a better understanding of Christ in their daily lives. Apostolic Action is not simply carrying out a good deed of the day.

We must plan our Apostolic Action by praying to God about our friends, before we approach our friends with the concept that they can have a life in Christ. Once we have received the endorsement that our friends are ready to talk about Christ, and then we pray with them about learning more. We are reminded that restricting our action to the Cursillo method is not necessarily Apostolic Action. Apostolic Action has much broader implications.

Individual Apostolic Action

Our commission is to bring people to Christ one person at a time. We can nurture them as completely as we are able. Unfortunately, as Anglicans, we are often tongue-tied. We are not asked to speak publicly, if we do not want to; rather our method is to approach one person at a time. Often, we do not know the correct words for a given occasion but pray to God for the right words. Often, Christ shows through us as we carry out our daily tasks. Our example shows others how we respond to our daily activities, all of them! When the time is right for the Cursillista, he or she will approach the friend who has shown interest. Actions speak louder than words. Our actions can be the best form of witness. Reports say that St. Francis said, "Preach the Gospel every day, use words only if you must."

Individual and Collective Apostolic Action

Remember Moses had a stutter, yet he talked to Pharaoh. Peter was a fisher who perhaps did not have a full education yet spoke up when necessary. Jonah did not want to go to Nineveh yet finally he went when he realized that God was with him all the time. God called each of these people and gave them the knowledge to carry out what was required of them. All of us are equipped with all that God requires for the tasks set for us.

Group/Collective Apostolic Action

Our expectation is not to thrust Christianity on those who do not want to hear. Our job is to ask God's help in talking to the individual, letting God do the work using our hands, feet and voice. Prayer and study are the foundation of our action. In prayer, we call on God for guidance, in study we learn what our predecessors did; in their action, we learn by their example. People have helped the disadvantaged throughout history. Examples include Brother Lawrence in the 17th century monastery kitchen, Mother Theresa in Calcutta, and Archbishop Oscar Romero in San Salvador. Others include those who have organized and have distributed food, water and shelter to the people affected by natural disasters and pandemics and helping especially where local resources have proven inadequate.

Questions to ask in planning Apostolic Action

How active are we in bringing people to Christ?

Do we take the advantages presented to us?

Do we recognize these advantages?

How can we make things happen, when we work with others, such as in Group Reunion?

Do we uphold one another in passing the message on to those around us?

Do we pray unceasingly for the people around us that they may see Christ at work in us?

Is this action needed? Should others be invited to help with the project?

Constantly our questions must be:

"What are we doing to bring this person to Christ?"

About whom are we praying?

How well do we know this person?

Do we have any idea where they are on their road to Christ?

What encouragement can we give them?

When in God's time shall we talk to them about Christ?

Individual and Collective Apostolic Action

Getting Started

The biblical statement for us is to carry out our mission of bringing people to Christ one at a time, with the encouragement of our small group. We are not expected to act alone, but with the endorsement of the group. There are people all around us who are looking for a spiritual home. As Cursillistas, our focus is to bring those people to Christ.

Our Apostolic Action begins with us as individuals. We must encourage others to join us in our activities making them collective. We need to develop our resources in our small groups and then to grow as our influence and expertise improves and expands.

In our Group Reunion, we can discuss our aims and can test them with our peers. We need to show that we succeed through our prayer and study. We learn through our mistakes.

At Group Reunion and Ultreyas, people are encouraged to create opportunities not only to meet people but also to create actions that extend the Kingdom of God one environment at a time. The group prays about the environment that they wish to approach, using prayer and study. These topics of prayer and study will focus on the particular environment to learn more about it. Then it is brought to God. The action is to spread the Word in the environment once everyone is ready for collective action in the selected environment. The choice of environment will most likely be one with which the group is most familiar. It may be in the workplace, hobby or as an outreach topic. Action means doing something, it is factual; it has a sense of accountability. Each time the group meets, the action is discussed as to its achievement and its setbacks. Keep the project alive!

Reference:

ECM Lay Talk Workbook
ECM Leaders' Manual