

May evangelization succeed

There's a new sheriff in town. How we want him to succeed! Father John Hurley, a Paulist Priest, heads the newly formed Department of Evangelization.

Evangelization is a big word. My favorite definition of evangelization is one I learned from Pope Paul VI more than 30 years ago: "Evangelization is proclaiming the Good News to all strata of society, and transforming humanity from within!" We need an awareness of a God who makes a difference in our world and in our personal lives. Allow me to offer two examples, both from the New York Times, July 31.

The first was an article about the Hitchens Brothers.

Christopher Hitchens is a world-renowned atheist. He blames practically all the ills of the world on organized religion. (He would probably love me, I'm so disorganized. But I digress). He even wrote a book mocking Mother Teresa. (I guess he wouldn't love me after all. I'm a fan of hers.)

His brother, Peter Hitchens, is an ardent defender of religion. His latest book is titled "The Rage Against God," which defends religious belief. Ironically, his writings are much less well known, mostly only to Britons. The article I read about the brothers is written by Mark Oppenheimer. Here is his brief summation of the book: "He realized that Christendom helped to shore up what was best in old England. Much of the "Rage Against God" is, in fact, a rage against the forgetfulness of Britons who no longer know their hymns, their great literature, or the heroism of their forefathers who died in two world wars. Having noticed that the secularization of England seems to have coincided with its decline, he becomes alive to serious flaws in the reasoning of atheists, like his brother.

He notices that post Christian societies, like Russia, where he lived for two years as a correspondent, are "coarse and brutal."

It's so easy to point out what's wrong with religion. We need to look at what's wrong with a world without religion!

In the same issue of the times was an article written by Bob Herbert, titled: "A Sin

and A Shame.” He writes: “The treatment of workers by American corporations has been worse – far more treacherous – than most of the population realize Many of the workers were cashiered for no reason other than outright greed by corporate managers.”

Economics professor Andrew Sum writes: “Not only did they throw all these people off the payrolls, they also cut back on the hours of the people who stayed on the job.”

They offer specific data: “The recession officially started in December 2007. From the fourth quarter of 2007 to the fourth quarter of 2009, real aggregate output in the U.S., as measured by the Gross Domestic Product, fell by about 2.5 percent. But employers cut payrolls by 6 percent.

“At the end of the fourth quarter in 2008, corporate profits begin to really take off, and they grow by the time you get to the first quarter of 2010 by \$572 billion. And over that same period, wage and salary payments go down by \$122 billion.

“In short, the corporations are making out like bandits. Now they’re sitting on mountains of cash and they still are not interested in hiring to any significant degree, or strengthening workers paychecks.”

What “saved” the Catholic Church in the U.S. in the past century, is that we were known at the “friend of the workingman.” Average people felt the church was on their side.

We are proud of our defense of the unborn. May we also be proud of our defense of the unemployed and of the underemployed! May evangelization succeed! May our minds, hearts, and spirits be transformed!