

Evangelization through education.

In 1656 James Harrington wrote in *Oceans* that, "Every man, either to his terror or consolation, has some sense of religion." It was with this quote that I found a sense of relief one troubled night. As I have often found myself under assault directly related to my work with relics, one particular night was more troubling than others. I was questioning my reason for even doing this work at all. I called my most dear friend, a Russian Archbishop and started to whine. I didn't know why I continue under the assaults, I told him, "Sometimes I just feel like giving up." I was very tired working seven days a week, a secular job and traveling the country on the weekends. My dear friend the Archbishop gave me a very simple and profound reason why I do what I do. He said, "You give them the most important gift that anyone can give, you give them hope."

As I have traveled the United States, I have become increasingly aware of the necessity of bringing the relics and the lives and legends of the saints to the schoolchildren. It was very apparent that this ministry could keep the saints alive in the hearts and minds of the faithful while catechizing and evangelizing the faithful and curious are like.

It is with this in mind that I have decided to create a special organization that will specifically target the primary and secondary catholic schools throughout the United States.

As I have flown between cities, from cathedral to cathedral, I have often looked out the window at the vastness of America. There is so much open space dotted with small towns and villages. As I look down I see a tremendous need, I need to travel throughout the U.S. from town to town, parish to parish. The faithful in large cities often get the opportunity and spiritual benefits of participating in special

events at the diocesan level, while the faithful of surrounding areas do not.

In the same spirit of the traveling Pilgrims who through their pilgrimages to the relic shrines of the saints opened up the trade routes of Europe, I would like to create a traveling exhibit and catechism program based on the lives of the saints.

A five-year program approved and endorsed by the Catholic Church hierarchy and privately funded could educate as well as evangelization for the youth of America. In the catholic school system where actual catholic student enrollment is mixed with non-catholic, this could allow the children to take home stories of the saints. This would be a perfect form of ecumenism without watering down doctrine or dogma. The parents of Catholics and non-catholic students could publicly venerate the saints at their local parish.

The mission of the ICHR is to bring schoolchildren, the faithful, and curious alike to Christ through the lives of the saints. To Christ through the saints is not a novel concept. It has been the base of evangelists from the first moment Christ sent out the Apostles to, teach all nations.

Our goal is to create an opportunity for the education and public veneration of the remains of the saints. By this method, the faithful and inquisitive have the occasion to become aware of the lives and legends of the saints, their life struggles, their trials and tribulations, and the holy perseverance that was the pathway to Heaven. The tactile presence of an actual remain or artifact from that individual links the present to the past, the past to the future. In the book, *A woman of No Importance*, Oscar Wilde wrote, "The only difference between the saint and the sinner is that every saint has a past and every sinner has a future."