

NEW EVANGELIZATION

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“Evangelization is the act or the process of proclaiming the Good News of Christ to all people, with a view to establishing the kingdom of God.”¹ Evangelization has been the mission of the Church since Her inception and continues to be the reason she exist. Although in the recent decades the Church has recognized the need for a New Evangelization, this does not mean the eternal message of Christ changes but is renewed in its ardor, expressions, and methods. “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8), but the needs and means of reaching the members of His Church today have changed. Therefore the evangelization needs to be renewed in its ardor, expression and method. Let us look more in-depth of each of these areas that our late Holy Father Bl. John Paul II encouraged renewal.



First, a renewed ardor calls for our personal zeal to share the message of Christ to be renewed by the power of the Holy Spirit. In Pope Francis' recent apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*, he explains that many in the Church today want to justify their lack of zeal or ardor because of the difficult conditions of our society or due to different human circumstances such as weakness, and self-absorption. He encourages the Church, “Let us not say, then, that things are harder today; they are simply different. But let us learn also from the saints who have gone before us, who confronted the difficulties of their own day.”² He is encouraging us not to allow the faith that the early missionaries brought to new lands to not bear fruit. This same fervor that consumed them needs to stay alive in us today and will drive us to be missionaries in our own circumstances.

Second, the expression of evangelization needs to be renewed. The original expressions of the faith have either already been heard or are not being received well. In this aspect our Holy Father Pope Francis reminds us that; “Jesus wants evangelizers who proclaim the good news not only with words, but above all by a life transfigured by God's presence.”³ Witnessing the power of the Risen Lord in one's life is the authentic expression that members of the Church today are responding to. These days words are cheap and many people talk but to see the effects of God's love in one's life as well as experience His merciful love in a tangible way are true expressions of evangelization that are not easily dismissed.

Thirdly, the method and approach of evangelization needs to be reconsidered for today's modern person in order to effectively reaching them. “To be evangelizers of souls, we need to develop a spiritual taste for being close to people's lives and to discover that this is itself a source of greater joy. Mission is at once a passion for Jesus and a passion for his people..... Jesus himself is the model of this method of evangelization which brings us to the very heart of his people.”⁴ This mission of evangelization is more than an obligation and duty of each member of the Church, rather it should be a source of joy that gives meaning to one's life. This method reveals the great dignity of each human person showing their immense worth in the eyes of God.

In conclusion, the New Evangelization is calling for a renewal in its ardor, expression, and method but not in the content of the saving message of Christ.

¹Cf; Anaeto, Dominic, Fr., PS 514: Mission and Evangelization; Lesson Summaries- Week Two: Definition of Evangelization.

²Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*, (November 24, 2013) 263

³EG, 259

⁴EG, 268-269

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