

Lithuania Priests

Talk Five

The New Evangelization

Pope Francis is giving New Evangelization a more personal and character with a focus on the marginalized.

“When the Church does not come out of herself to evangelize, she becomes self-referential and then becomes sick” (Message of Cardinal Bergoglio in pre-conclave sessions). Since repeated. This fits with Paul VI: “the Holy Spirit is the principal agent of evangelization” (EN, 75).

Going out – Mission – to talk about Jesus, to show the love of Jesus.

Going out to periphery and to extremities.

John Paul II: “a proclamation of the Gospel which is always new and always the bearer of new things, an evangelization which must be ‘new in its ardour, methods and expression’.” (SV, 106).

Again, not one thing the Church does among many. It belongs to nature of the Church.

Proclamation of the Kerygma first: didache and catechesis after. Gospel is good news announcing an event: victory of Jesus over sin and death. Proclamation of event which requires some account of its meaning. This kerygma has a power to pierce the heart, to produce faith with conversion. Catechesis is no substitute for this proclamation, however good. Problem with how RCIA has been implemented in many places. Church documents clearly present Initial Proclamation for Initial Conversion, Catechesis prior to Baptism, Mystagogia after Baptism.

Synod of 2012 Proposition 9: NEW EVANGELIZATION AND INITIAL PROCLAMATION

The foundation of all initial proclamation, the kerygmatic dimension, the Good News, makes prominent an explicit announcement of salvation. “For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve” (1 Cor 15:3-5).

The ‘first proclamation’ is where the kerygma, the message of salvation of the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ, is proclaimed with great spiritual power to the point of bringing about repentance of sin, conversion of hearts and a decision of faith. At the same time there has to be continuity between first proclamation and catechesis which instructs us in the deposit of the faith. We consider it necessary that there be a Pastoral Plan of Initial Proclamation, teaching a living encounter with Jesus Christ. This pastoral document would provide the first elements for the catechetical process, enabling its insertion into the lives of the parish communities.

The Synod Fathers propose that guidelines of the initial proclamation of the kerygma be written. This compendium would include:

- Systematic teaching on the kerygma in Scripture and Tradition of the Catholic Church;
- Teachings and quotations from the missionary saints and martyrs in our Catholic history that would assist us in our pastoral challenges of today; and
- Qualities and guidelines for the formation of Catholic evangelizers today.”

But it is the Holy Spirit who reveals the core, the centre: “He will take from what is mine and make it known to you.” (John 16: 15). “He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.” (Rom. 4: 25). “He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.” (1 Tim. 3: 16).

Holy Spirit gives the desire, the longing to evangelize. Holy Spirit enables us to care about salvation of others. With this fire within, the Word will convince.

Holy Spirit gives the sense of urgency that most of us lack!

Difference between need of all Christians to bear witness to the faith that is in them (1 Peter 3: 15), and a specific call to be an evangelist. Part of discerning charisms is for us as priests to identify those people the Holy Spirit is calling to be evangelists. We have catechists, but we also need evangelists. A few instances.

Blazing the Trail mentions 2 mistakes:

1. Enough or Necessary to present whole of revelation at every stage. (26). Much Catholic education was doing this. This worked to some extent in a society where parents, especially mothers, presented the good news of Jesus to their children.
2. Explanation replacing proclamation. Proclamation requires a response. Explanation doesn't require anything. We cannot argue people into faith. Explanation has a limited place in removing obstacles to faith in those who are already seeking. Apart from God's sovereign interventions, it never converts people by itself.