



SYNOD OF BISHOPS

XIII ORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**THE NEW EVANGELIZATION
FOR THE TRANSMISSION OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH**

LINEAMENTA

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PREFACE

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age" (Mt 28:19,20). *With these words, Jesus Christ, before he ascended to heaven to take his place at the right hand of God the Father (cf. Eph 1:20), sent his disciples forth to proclaim the Good News to the whole world. They were a small group who were called to be witnesses of Jesus of Nazareth, his earthly life, his teaching, his death and above all his resurrection (cf. Acts 1:22). Though this great task seemed an impossibility, the Lord Jesus offered them encouragement by promising the gift of the Paraclete, whom the Father will send in his name (cf. Jn 14:26) and who "will guide [them]... into all the truth" (Jn 16:13). In addition, he assured them of his abiding presence: "and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age" (Mt 28:20).*

After Pentecost, when the fire of God's love rested on the Apostles (cf. Acts 2:3) who were gathered together in prayer "with the women and Mary the Mother of Jesus, and with his brothers" (Acts 1:14), the Lord Jesus' mandate began to be realized. The gift of the Holy Spirit, abundantly poured out by Jesus Christ (cf. Jn 3:34), was the beginning of the Church, which is missionary by its very nature. In fact, immediately after receiving the anointing of the Spirit, St. Peter the Apostle "stood...lifted up his voice" (Acts 2:14) and proclaimed salvation in the name of Jesus, whom "God has made...both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). Transformed by the gift of the Spirit, the disciples went out into the then-known world to spread the "Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (Mk 1:1). Their proclamation reached the Mediterranean area, Europe, Africa and Asia. Guided by the Spirit who is bestowed by the Father and the Son, their successors continued their mission, which remains "in season" until the end of the ages. As long as she exists in this world, the Church must proclaim the Gospel of the coming of the Kingdom of God, the teaching of her Master and Lord and, above all, the Person of Jesus Christ.

The word "Gospel", τὸ εὐ αγγελιον, was already being used in the early days of the Church, oftentimes employed by St. Paul to indicate the entire new economy of salvation (cf. 1 Thess 1:5ff; Gal 1:6-9ff) and the preaching of the Gospel, divinely entrusted to him (cf. 1 Thess 2:4) and carried out "in the face of great opposition" (1 Thess 2:2). The term "Gospel", in addition to citations found in St. Mark (cf. Mk 1:14, 15: 8:35; 10:29; 13: 10; 14:9; 16:15), is oftentimes used by St. Matthew the Evangelist to designate "the Gospel of the Kingdom" (Mt 9:35; 24:14; cf. 26:13). St. Paul also uses the expression "to evangelize" (εὐ

αγγελίσασθαι, cf. 2 Cor 10:16), a term found as well in the Acts of the Apostles (cf. Acts 8:4, 12, 25, 35, 40) and one which received greater development throughout the Church's history.

In recent times, the term "evangelization" refers to every aspect of the Church's activity. The Apostolic Exhortation [Evangelii nuntiandi](#), promulgated on 8 December 1975, states that evangelization includes preaching, catechesis, liturgy, the sacramental life, popular piety and the witness of a Christian life (cf. [Evangelii nuntiandi](#) 17, 21, 48ff). In this Apostolic Exhortation, the Servant of God, Pope Paul VI set forth the results of the III Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, held from 27 September to 26 October 1974, to treat the topic of Evangelization in the Modern World. In succeeding decades, this document provided a notable impetus to the Church's evangelizing activity, which, in turn, was accompanied by authentic human promotion (cf. [Evangelii nuntiandi](#), 29, 38, 70).

In the wider context of evangelization, particular attention is dedicated to the proclamation of the Good News to persons and peoples who, until now, have not known the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This *missio ad gentes* has characterized the ongoing activity of the Church, which includes some privileged moments in her history, for example the missionary endeavours on the American continent, and, subsequently, those in Africa, Asia and Oceania. In the Decree [Ad gentes](#), the Second Vatican Council emphasized the missionary nature of the entire Church. In accordance with the mandate of her founder, Jesus Christ, Christians not only are to provide the support of their prayers and material resources to missionaries, namely those who proclaim the Gospel to non-Christians, but are themselves called to contribute to spreading the Kingdom of God in the world, each according to his proper vocations and means. This task has a particular urgency in the present phase of globalization in which, for various reasons, many people who have never known Jesus Christ immigrate to countries of ancient Christian tradition and, thereby, come in contact with Christians, who are witnesses of the Risen Lord, ever-present in his Church, especially in his Word and sacraments.

Since its institution over 45 years ago, the Synod of Bishops has treated the topic of *missio ad gentes* in various synodal assemblies. On these occasions, the bishops considered, on the one hand, the missionary nature of the entire Church and, on the other, the teachings of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council which, in the conciliar decree [Ad gentes](#), specifically attributed to the Synod of Bishops a missionary character: "Since the charge of proclaiming the Gospel in the whole world falls primarily on the body of bishops, the synod of bishops or that 'stable Council of bishops for the entire Church,' among the affairs of general concern, should give special consideration to missionary activity, which is the greatest and holiest task of the Church" ([Ad gentes](#), 29).

In recent decades much has been said about the urgency of the new evangelization. Considering that evangelization is characteristic of the Church's ordinary activity and taking into consideration that the proclamation of the Gospel *Ad gentes* requires the formation of the local community and the particular Churches in missionary countries of the first evangelization, the new evangelization is primarily addressed to those who have drifted from the Church in traditionally Christian countries. Unfortunately, this phenomenon exists in varying degrees even in some countries where the Good News was proclaimed in recent centuries, but today has not been sufficiently accepted to result in the Christian transformation of persons, families and societies. Though these situations were duly treated in the Special Assemblies of the Synod of Bishops of a continental and regional character, which were celebrated in preparation for the Jubilee of the Year 2000, the subject still remains a great challenge for the entire Church. For this reason, His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI, after consulting his brothers in the episcopate, decided to convoke the XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops from 7 to 28 October 2012 to discuss the topic: The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith. Continuing the reflection which has taken place thus far on the subject, the aim of the approaching synodal assembly will be to examine the present situation in the particular Churches and to trace, in communion with the Holy Father, Pope [Benedict XVI](#), the Bishop of Rome and Universal Pastor of the Church, the new methods and means for transmitting the Good News to people in our world today with a renewed enthusiasm proper to the saints, who were joyous witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ "who is and who was and who is to come" (Rev 4:8). It is a matter of drawing out a challenge

much like the scribe who became the disciple of the heavenly kingdom, was able to bring forth things new and old from the precious treasury of Tradition (cf. Mt 13:52).

These Lineamenta, drawn up with the assistance of the Ordinary Council of the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops, are an important stage in preparation for this synod assembly. At the end of each chapter some questions appear which are aimed at generating discussion at every level of the Church. With this in mind, these Lineamenta are being sent to the synods of bishops of the Eastern Catholic Churches sui iuris, the episcopal conferences, the dicasteries of the Roman Curia and the Union of Superiors General, with whom the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops maintains official contacts. These bodies are to encourage discussion on this document in their respective areas of competence: dioceses, pastoral areas of jurisdiction, parishes, congregations, associations, movements, etc. The episcopal conferences, synods of bishops and the previously mentioned bodies will then summarize the observations and submit a report to the General Secretariat no later than 1 November 2011, the Solemnity of All Saints. With the assistance of the Ordinary Council, these responses will then be attentively analyzed and integrated into the Instrumentum laboris, the work-document for the synodal assembly.

While expressing in anticipation my gratitude for this collaborative effort, which represents a valuable exchange of gifts, concerns and pastoral solicitude, I entrust every aspect of the XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops to the maternal protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Star of the New Evangelization. Through her intercession may the Church obtain the grace to renew herself in the Holy Spirit so she can, with renewed zeal, put into practice in our times the commandment of the Risen Lord: "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation" (Mk 16:15).

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2 February 2011

Feast of the Presentation of the Lord

INTRODUCTION

*"I have been found by those who did not seek me; I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me."
(Rom 10:20)*

The Urgency of a New Evangelization

1. At the conclusion of the Special Assembly for the Middle East of the Synod of Bishops, Pope Benedict XVI clearly placed the topic of the new evangelization at the top of the Church's agenda. "During the work of the Synod what was often underlined was the need to offer the Gospel anew to people who do not know it very well or who have even moved away from the Church. What was often evoked was the need for a new evangelization for the Middle East as well. This was quite a widespread theme, especially in the countries where Christianity has ancient roots. The recent creation of the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization also responds to this profound need. For this reason, after having consulted the episcopacy

of the whole world and after having listened to the Ordinary Council of the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops, I have decided to dedicate the next Ordinary General Assembly, in 2012, to the following theme: "*Nova evangelizatio ad christianam fidem tradendam* - The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith."^[1]

The Holy Father noted that his decision to assign the topic of the new evangelization to the next synodal assembly is part of a unified plan which includes the recent establishment of an *ad hoc* dicastery^[2] in the Roman Curia and the publication of the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Verbum Domini*.^[3] This plan arose from the Church's commitment to renew her evangelizing activity, which was a major characteristic of the Magisterium and apostolic ministry of both Pope [Paul VI](#) and Pope [John Paul II](#). Ever since the Second Vatican Council, the new evangelization has increasingly presented itself as an appropriate, timely tool in addressing the challenges of a rapidly-changing world, and the way to respond to God's generosity in our being gathered together by the Holy Spirit to experience God as the Father of us all and to bear witness and proclaim to all the Good News -the Gospel- of Jesus Christ.

The Duty to Evangelize

2. In proclaiming and transmitting the faith, the Church imitates God who communicates himself through the gift of his Son to humanity, who lives in Trinitarian communion and who pours out the Holy Spirit so as to carry on a dialogue with humanity. So that evangelization might mirror this divine communication, the Church must allow herself to be formed by the Spirit and make herself configured to Christ crucified, who reveals to the world the features of God's love and communion. In this way, the Church will rediscover her vocation as *Ecclesia mater*, who begets children for the Lord by transmitting the faith to them and teaching them the love which generates and nourishes her children.

The centre of proclamation is Jesus Christ, who is believed and to whom a person bears witness. Transmitting the faith essentially means to transmit the Scriptures, primarily the Gospel, which give a person the opportunity of knowing Jesus, the Lord.

Pope [Paul VI](#), in reemphasizing for the faithful the primacy of evangelization, stated: "It would be useful if every Christian and every evangelizer were to pray about the following thought: through God's mercy, people can gain salvation in other ways besides our preaching the Gospel to them; but as for us, can we gain salvation, if through negligence, fear, shame - what St. Paul called 'shrinking from the Gospel' - or as a result of false ideas, we fail to preach it?"^[4] This question from the conclusion of *Evangelii nuntiandi* could serve as an exegesis of the opening quote from St. Paul. It also allows us to go immediately to the heart of the subject-at-hand, namely, the absolute centrality of the task of evangelization for the Church today. A reassessment of our experiences and attitudes concerning evangelization, not simply at the practical level, will lead to an improvement in our practice and approach to proclamation. On a deeper level, this process will allow us to ascertain the calibre of our faith, to determine our sense of "feeling" and "being" Christians and disciples of Jesus Christ, who are sent forth to proclaim him to the world, and of our being witnesses filled with the Holy Spirit (cf. *Lk* 24:48ff; *Acts* 1:8) and called to make disciples of all nations (cf. *Mt* 28:19ff).

The words of the disciples on the road to Emmaus (cf. *Lk* 24:13-35) illustrate that proclaiming Christ is open to failure; their words were incapable of transmitting life. In recounting their frustration and loss of hope, the two disciples proclaimed someone who was dead (cf. *Lk* 24:21-24). For the Church in every age, their words speak of the possibility of a proclamation which, instead of giving life, keeps both those who proclaim and those who hear bound in the death of the Christ proclaimed. The transmission of the faith is never an individual, isolated undertaking, but a communal, ecclesial event. It must not consider responses as a matter of researching an effective plan of communication and even less analytically concentrating on the hearers, for example, the young. Instead, these responses must be done as something which concerns the one called to perform this spiritual work. It must become what the Church is by her nature. In this way, the matter is placed in context and treated correctly and not extrinsically, namely, by placing at the centre

of discussion the entire Church in all she is and all she does. Perhaps in this way the problem of unfruitfulness in evangelization and catechesis today can be seen as an ecclesiological problem which concerns the Church's capacity, more or less, of becoming a real community, a true fraternity and a living body, and not a mechanical thing or enterprise.

"The pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature."^[5] This statement from the Second Vatican Council summarizes the Church's Tradition in a simple and complete way. The Church is missionary, because she finds her origin in the mission of Jesus Christ and the mission of the Holy Spirit, according to the plan of God the Father.^[6] Furthermore, the Church is missionary, because she returns and relives her beginnings by proclaiming and witnessing to this revelation of God and by gathering together the scattered People of God, so that in this way she might fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah which the Church Fathers applied to her: "Spread your tent, extend the curtain of your dwelling without saving, lengthen the cord, strengthen your poles, so that you might be widened to the right and to the left and your descendants will possess nations, will populate once deserted cities" (Is 54:2, 3).^[7]

The words of St. Paul the Apostle, "For if I preach the Gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel!" (1 Cor 9:16) can refer and be applied to the Church as a whole. Pope Paul VI stated: "...evangelizing all people constitutes the essential mission of the Church. This task and mission are particularly urgent because of the expansive, penetrating changes in present-day society. In fact, evangelizing is the grace and vocation proper to the Church; her utmost identity. She exists in order to evangelize..."^[8]

In this dual missionary and evangelizing dynamic, the Church not only exercises her active role as proclaimer but also her reflective role as hearer and disciple. As an evangelizer, the Church begins by evangelizing herself.^[9] The Church knows herself to be the visible fruit of this uninterrupted work of evangelization, which the Spirit guides throughout history, so that the saved might bear witness to the living and divine memory of Jesus Christ. Today, we can be all the more certain of this fact, because the Church's history is replete with extraordinary examples of courage, dedication, boldness, intuition and reason; and inspiring moments which have been set down in written texts, prayers, models and teaching methods, spiritual programmes, programmes of initiation in the faith and educational works and institutions.

Evangelization and Discernment

3. In addition to these sentiments of gratitude and contemplation concerning the *Mirabilia Dei*, the Church has another important reason to be cognizant of the aspects of hearing and discipleship, which are inherent in the work of evangelization. Beyond being the agent of evangelization, the Church is the fruit of her own evangelizing activity, because she is certain that the entire process is not in her hands but in the hands of God, whose Spirit guides her in the course of history. St. Paul comes to this realization in the text cited at the beginning of this Introduction. The Church knows that the Holy Spirit guides her evangelizing activity, revealing the times, places and instruments required in her work of proclaiming the Gospel. In times of great change, as in the early days of the Church, St. Paul, knew all-too-well God's primary role in evangelization, not only theoretically but practically in its planning and realization, and was able to document the reasons for this primacy by turning to the Scriptures, especially the Prophets.

St. Paul the Apostle acknowledges the primary role of the action of the Spirit at a particularly intense and meaningful time for the nascent Church. In fact, some believers felt that other roads were to be taken; others among the first Christians displayed an uncertainty in facing and making some basic choices. The process of evangelization became a process of discernment. Proclamation first requires moments of listening, understanding and interpretation.

In many ways, our times are similar to those in which St. Paul lived. As Christians, we too find ourselves immersed in a period of significant historical and cultural change which we will have greater opportunity to treat later in these pages. Evangelical activity demands that we undertake a similar, corresponding and timely activity of discernment. The Second Vatican Council's description of the state-of-affairs some 40 years ago can also be applied to the present day: "Today, the human race is involved in a new stage of history. Profound and rapid changes are spreading by degrees around the whole world."^[10] Since the Council, these changes have steadily increased over the years and, unlike in those times, have brought with them not only hopes and dreams of utopia but also fear and skepticism. The initial decade of this new century / millennium, has witnessed developments which have indelibly marked the history of humanity and dramatically affected it in many ways.

We are living in a particularly significant, historic moment of change, of tension and of a loss of equilibrium and points of reference. These times are increasingly forcing us to live immersed in the present and in passing things which make it increasingly difficult for us to listen, to transmit an appreciation for the past and to share values on which to build the future for new generations. In this context, the Christian presence and the work of the Church's institutions are not easily perceived and, at times, are even looked upon with great reservation. In the last decades, repeated criticism has been levelled at the Church, Christians and the God we proclaim. Consequently, evangelization is facing new challenges which are putting accepted practices in question and are weakening customary, well-established ways of doing things. In a word, the situation is requiring the Church to consider, in an entirely new way, how she proclaims and transmits the faith. The Church, nevertheless, is not approaching these challenges totally unprepared. She has at her disposal the fruits of former assemblies of the Synod of Bishops which were specifically dedicated to the topic of the proclamation and transmission of the faith, in particular, the Apostolic Exhortations *Evangelii nuntiandi* and *Catechesi tradendae*. In the two related synodal assemblies, the Church lived a significant moment of self-evaluation and revitalization of her mandate to evangelize.

Evangelization in Today's World, Beginning with Its Challenges

4. The citation from St. Paul, which is like a refrain in this Introduction, helps us understand the scope and meaning of the next Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, now in preparation. After an extended period of time, which has been characterized by a variety of changes and revolutionary events, the Church would benefit from an opportunity to listen and engage in discussion, so as to ensure a high level of quality in the discernment required in the evangelizing activity which we, as a Church, are called to undertake. The next Ordinary General Assembly is intended to be a privileged moment and significant phase in this process of discernment. From the time of the synodal assemblies on evangelization and catechesis, cultures and whole societies have undergone significant and sometimes unforeseen changes, whose effects - as in the case of the financial-economic crisis - are still being visibly seen and actively felt in our respective local situations. Having been directly affected by the changes, the Church had problems to be considered, phenomena to be understood, practices to be rectified and programmes and real-life situations to be imbued in a new way with the Gospel of hope. Today, a similar set of circumstances is compelling us, in a totally natural way, to embark on this road which will lead to the next synodal assembly. After listening attentively and exchanging information, we will all leave totally enriched and ready to determine the initiatives God is taking, through his Spirit, to manifest himself and to allow himself to be found by humanity, as set forth in the text from the prophet Isaiah (cf. *Is* 40:3; 57:14; 62:10).

Discernment requires distinguishing the subjects and themes which need our attention, listening and common discussion. To sustain the Church's evangelizing activity and make any required changes, our exercise of discernment must place the essential aspects of this ecclesial task at the centre of our consideration, namely, the beginnings, growth and progress of the "new evangelization" within our Churches; the manner in which the Church assumes and fulfils her responsibility and task of transmitting the faith today; and the actual means at the Church's disposal to be utilized, in today's world, to generate the faith (Christian initiation, education) and to meet today's challenges. These aspects provide the structure to this document, which is intended to initiate a process of listening and understanding and to

broaden the horizons of the discernment already taking place in our Churches. In this way, discernment will become more attuned and even more "catholic" and "universal".

Questions

By its very nature, the discernment under consideration is always conditioned by history and a focussed intent. In other words, the process begins with elements taken from real-life and formulates a response to a specific situation. Generally speaking, our local Churches, while sharing the same Catholic culture, have, in recent decades, experienced events and stages in the process of discernment which are unique and determined by their surroundings and historical circumstances.

1. What past experiences in this regard do you feel should be shared with other local Churches?
2. In the process of discerning events in history, what should be shared with the universal Church, so that, by mutually listening to these happenings, the universal Church can recognize where the Spirit is leading her in the work of evangelization?
3. By now, the subject of the "new evangelization" is well-known in our local Churches. How has it been undertaken and delineated? What form has it taken?
4. What specific pastoral activity has benefited by undertaking the "new evangelization"? Give an account of any changes in these pastoral programmes or any significant renewal of activity? On the other hand, describe any obstacles or tensions which may have developed in this regard?

CHAPTER I

TIME FOR A "NEW EVANGELIZATION"

"...how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher?" (Rom 10:14)

"New Evangelization": The Meaning of a Definition

5. Though well-known and undoubtedly a part of the Church's many projects, the "new evangelization" remains a relatively new expression and concept in ecclesial and pastoral circles. Consequently, its meaning is not always clear and precise. Initially introduced by Pope John Paul II during his apostolic visit to Poland,^[11] without any specific emphasis or idea of its future role, the "new evangelization" was used again and given new life in the Holy Father's Magisterium to the Churches in Latin America. Pope John Paul II used the term to reawaken and elicit renewed efforts in a new missionary and evangelizing undertaking on the continent. In this regard, he said to the bishops in Latin America: "The commemoration of this half millennium of evangelization will have full significance if, as bishops, with your priests and faithful, you accept it as your commitment; a commitment not of re-evangelization, but rather of a new evangelization; new in its ardour, methods and expression."^[12] Consequently, the new evangelization is not a matter of redoing something which has been inadequately done or has not achieved its purpose, as if the new activity were an implicit judgment on the failure of the first evangelization. Nor is the new evangelization taking up the first evangelization again, or simply repeating the past. Instead, it is the courage to forge new paths in responding to the changing circumstances and conditions facing the Church in her call to proclaim and live the Gospel today. In the past, the Latin American continent was facing new challenges (the spread of a

communist ideology, the appearance of the sects). The new evangelization emerged after a process of discernment undertaken by the Church in Latin America to consider and evaluate the overall situation.

In this sense, Pope John Paul II again took up the expression in his Magisterium and proposed it to the universal Church. "Today the Church must face other challenges and push forward to new frontiers, both in the initial mission *ad gentes* and in the new evangelization of those peoples who have already heard Christ proclaimed. Today all Christians, the particular Churches and the universal Church, are called to have the same courage that inspired the missionaries of the past, and the same readiness to listen to the voice of the Spirit."[\[13\]](#) The new evangelization is primarily a spiritual activity capable of recapturing in our times the courage and forcefulness of the first Christians and the first missionaries. Consequently, it requires, first of all, a process of discerning the vitality of Christianity and a reconsideration of its accomplishments and the difficulties it has encountered. At a later date, Pope John Paul II clarified his idea of a new evangelization: "The Church today ought to take *a giant step forward* in her evangelization effort, and enter into *a new stage of history* in her missionary dynamism. In a world where the lessening of distance makes the world increasingly smaller, the Church community ought to strengthen the bonds among its members, exchange vital energies and means, and commit itself as a group to a unique and common mission of proclaiming and living the Gospel. 'So-called younger Churches have need of the strength of the older Churches and the older ones need the witness and impulse of the younger, so that individual Churches receive the riches of other Churches'".[\[14\]](#)

Presently, in reviewing the dynamics of the "new evangelization", the expression can now be applied to the Church's renewed efforts to meet the challenges which today's society and cultures, in view of the significant changes taking place, are posing to the Christian faith, its proclamation and its witness. In facing these challenges, the Church does not give up or retreat into herself; instead, she undertakes a project to revitalize herself. She makes the Person of Jesus Christ and a personal encounter with him central to her thinking, knowing that he will give his Spirit and provide the force to announce and proclaim the Gospel in new ways which can speak to today's cultures.

Understood in this manner, the idea of a "new evangelization" was again taken up and proposed in the continental synodal assemblies, celebrated in preparation for the Jubilee of the Year 2000. At that time, it became an accepted expression in the pastoral and ecclesial thought of the local Churches. A "new evangelization" is synonymous with renewed spiritual efforts in the life of faith within the local Churches, starting with a process to discern the changes in various cultural and social settings and their impact on Christian life, to reread the memory of faith and to undertake new responsibilities and generate new energies to joyously and convincingly proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ.[\[15\]](#) In this regard, the words of Pope John Paul II to the Church in Europe are particularly indicative and concise: "...an urgent need [has arisen] for a 'new evangelization', in the awareness that 'Europe today must not simply appeal to its former Christian heritage: it needs to be able to decide about its future in conformity with the person and message of Jesus Christ'".[\[16\]](#)

Despite the fact that the expression is widely-known in the Church, it has failed to be accepted fully and totally in discussion within both the Church and the world of culture. Some are hesitant to use the term, thinking that it is a negative judgment on the Church's past and a desire to remove certain pages from the recent history of local Churches. Others, especially among other Christian confessions, are suspicious that a "new evangelization" camouflages the Church's intention to proselytize.[\[17\]](#) Still others tend to think that the term might lead to a change in the Church's attitude towards non-believers, turning them into participants in a debate and no longer partners in a dialogue which sees us as sharers in the same humanity in search of the truth about existence. Regarding this last concern, Pope [Benedict XVI](#) had the following to say during his [Apostolic Visit to the Czech Republic](#): "Here I think naturally of the words which Jesus quoted from the Prophet Isaiah, namely that the Temple must be a house of prayer for all the nations (cf. *Is* 56: 7; *Mk* 11: 17). Jesus was thinking of the so-called 'Courtyard of the Gentiles' which he cleared of extraneous affairs so that it could be a free space for the Gentiles who wished to pray there to the one God, even if they could not take part in the mystery for whose service the inner part of the Temple was reserved. A

place of prayer for all the peoples by this he was thinking of people who know God, so to speak, only from afar; who are dissatisfied with their own gods, rites and myths; who desire the Pure and the Great, even if God remains for them the 'unknown God' (cf. Acts 17: 23). They had to pray to the unknown God, yet in this way they were somehow in touch with the true God, albeit amid all kinds of obscurity. I think that today too the Church should open a sort of "Court of the Gentiles" in which people might in some way latch on to God, without knowing him and before gaining access to his mystery, at whose service the inner life of the Church stands. Today, in addition to interreligious dialogue, there should be a dialogue with those to whom religion is something foreign, to whom God is unknown and who nevertheless do not want to be left merely Godless, but rather to draw near to him, albeit as the Unknown."[\[18\]](#)

As believers, we must also show concern for persons who call themselves agnostic or atheists, who may have fears when we speak of a "new evangelization", thinking that they are the primary objective of the Church's missionary activity. Even they, however, must consider the question of God. The search for God gave birth to western monasticism, and, with it, western culture. The first step in evangelization is seeking to keep this search alive and maintaining dialogue, not only with those professing a religion, but also with those who consider religion non-essential in life.

The image of the "Courtyard of the Gentiles" serves as a further element in our thinking on the "new evangelization" by showing that the Christian must never forego a sense of boldness in proclaiming the Gospel and seeking every positive way to provide avenues for dialogue, where people's deepest expectations and their thirst for God can be discussed. This boldness allows the question of God to be placed in context through one's sharing of personal experiences in seeking God and recounting the gratuitous nature of the personal encounter with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This will firstly require self-evaluation and purification, so as to recognize any traces of fear, weariness, confusion or a retreat into oneself resulting from cultural factors. This step must immediately be followed by renewed efforts and initiatives, relying on the grace of the Holy Spirit, at experiencing God as Father, which, in turn, can then be communicated to others in virtue of our personally encountering Christ. This is not a matter of successive stages as much as spiritual modes of the Christian life. St. Paul the Apostle spoke of them, when he described the experience of faith as a liberation "from the dominion of darkness" and an entrance into "the Kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins" (*Col* 1: 13, 14; cf. also *Rom* 12: 1,2). At the same time, this boldness is not something absolutely new or totally unheard of in Christianity, since indications of this boldness are already present in patristic literature.[\[19\]](#)

The Sectors Calling for the New Evangelization

6. The new evangelization is a frame-of-mind, a courageous manner of acting and Christianity's capacity to know how to read and interpret the new situations in human history which, in recent decades, have become the places to proclaim and witness to the Gospel. Delineated and treated on various occasions,[\[20\]](#) these sectors concern society, cultures, economics, civic life and religion.

The first sector calling for the new evangelization is culture. In our times, we find ourselves in an era of a profound secularism which has led to a loss in the capacity to listen and understand the words of the Gospel as a living and life-giving message. This is particularly the case in the western world, where history and identity have been deeply affected by events, changes in society and ways of thinking. In our cultures, many view the secularizing trend, in a positive sense, as a liberation from the things of the past or as the way completely to separate any idea of the transcendent from the world and humanity. Although anti-Christian, anti-religious and anti-clerical references are sometimes heard today, secularism, in recent times, has not taken the form of a direct, outright denial of God, religion or Christianity. Instead, the secularizing movement has taken a more subtle tone in cultural forms which invade people's everyday lives and foster a mentality in which God is completely or partially left out of life and human consciousness. In this way, secularism has entered the Christian life and ecclesial communities and has become not simply an external threat for believers but something to be faced each day in life[\[21\]](#) in the various manifestations of the so-

called culture of relativism. Furthermore, this tendency is having serious anthropological implications which put in question basic human experiences, for example, the relation between man and woman as well as the meaning of reproduction and death itself.

Traces of a secularized way of looking at life can be seen in the daily lives of many Christians, who are oftentimes influenced, if not completely conditioned, by the culture of images with its models and opposing forces. Temptations to superficiality and self-centredness, arising from a predominating hedonistic and consumer-oriented mentality, are not easily overcome. The "death of God" announced decades ago by so many intellectuals has given way to an unproductive cult of the individual. A real possibility exists that the fundamental elements of explaining the faith might be lost, which will then lead to not only spiritual atrophism and emptiness of heart, but also, on the other extreme, substitute forms of religious affiliation and a vague sense of the spiritual. In such situations, the new evangelization is seen as the needed impetus for weary and worn-out communities to help them rediscover the joy of the Christian experience, to find again "the love you had at first" which was lost (*Rev 2:4*) and to emphasize the true meaning of freedom in the search for truth.

At the same time, some regions of the world are showing signs of a promising religious reawakening. These many positive expectations, resulting from a rediscovery of God and the sacred in various religions, are, however, being overshadowed by the phenomenon of fundamentalism which oftentimes manipulates religion to justify violence and even terrorism, a serious abuse of religion. "We cannot kill in God's name!" [\[22\]](#) Furthermore, the proliferation of the sects continues to be an ongoing challenge.

Having briefly treated the cultural sector, we now turn our attention to the social sector, where the great phenomenon of migration is increasingly forcing people to leave their countries of origin for more urban settings, thereby changing the ethnic make-up of our cities, our nations and our continents. Consequently, our societies are experiencing an unprecedented encounter and mixing of cultures, resulting in forms of corruption, the erosion of the fundamental references to life, the undermining of the values for which we exert ourselves and the deterioration of the very human ties we use to identify ourselves and give meaning to our lives. In the process, culture becomes extremely fluid and "fluctuating", increasingly leaving little space for the great traditions of life, including those of religion, and their task of objectively contributing to a sense of history and the identity of individuals. Associated with this social sector is the so-called phenomenon of globalization which is not easily understood, thereby requiring Christians to intensify their efforts at discernment. If we consider only its aspects of economy and production, globalization is a negative phenomenon. However, in a positive sense, globalization can be viewed as an occasion for growth, in which humanity can learn to develop new forms of solidarity and new ways to share the development of everything for the greater good of all. [\[23\]](#) In such a situation, the new evangelization can provide the opportunity no longer to perceive the Church's mission as a north-south or west-east dynamic but one which transcends the geographic confines of past missionary activity. Today, all five continents are fields of missionary activity. We must also seek to understand the sectors and places in life where faith is absent, not simply as a result of drifting from the faith but from never having encountered it. Transcending the geographic confines of former missionary activity means having the capacity to raise the question of God at every moment in the encounters created by the mixing and rebuilding of the fabric of society, a phenomenon which is taking place in almost every local setting.

This extensive mixing of cultures is the backdrop to our third great sector which has an increasingly determined effect on the lives of individuals and the collective conscience, namely, the means of social communications, which, while today providing great possibilities for the Church, also represents one of her greatest challenges. Although these means of social communications, in their initial stages, were limited to the industrialized world, they are now able to influence vast portions of developing countries. Today, no place in the world is beyond reach and, consequently, unaffected by the media and digital culture, which is fast becoming the "forum" of public life and social interaction. Undoubtedly, the diffusion of this culture has its benefits, including major access to information; greater opportunities for knowledge, exchange and new forms of solidarity; and the capacity to build an increasingly "world culture" which leads to a common

patrimony of values and a greater development of thought and human expression. These potentialities, however, cannot hide the inherent risks when this kind of culture is taken to an extreme, including a selfish concentration on oneself and personal needs; an overemphasis on the emotive aspects of relations and social bonds; the loss of the objective values of experience, reflection and thought, which are reduced in many cases, to ways of reconfirming one's individualistic feelings; the progressive alienation of the moral and social dimensions of life which makes others a mirror for self or simply a spectator to one's actions; and, finally, the formation of a culture centred on passing novelties, the present moment and outward appearances, indeed a society which is incapable of remembering the past and with no sense of the future. In this sector, the new evangelization means that Christians need to show boldness in these "new *aeropaghi*", where they live everyday, and find the means and approaches to ensure that the Church's patrimony in education and knowledge, safeguarded by the Christian tradition, has a part to play in these ultra-modern places.[\[24\]](#)

A fourth sector in which changes call for the Church's evangelizing activity, is the economy. On many occasions, the Magisterium of many Popes has denounced the growing disproportion in the northern and southern hemispheres in access to resources and their distribution as well as the damage to creation. The persistent economic crisis today illustrates the problem of using material forces to establish rules in a global market intended to ensure greater justice in relations among peoples.[\[25\]](#) Although the communications media is giving less coverage to these problems, beginning with the plight of the poor, the Church needs to become more aware of these concerns and take concrete measures to address them.

The fifth sector is scientific and technological research. We are living at a moment when people still marvel at the wonders resulting from continual advances in scientific and technological research. All of us experience the benefits of this progress in our daily lives, benefits on which we are becoming increasingly dependent. As a result, science and technology are in danger of becoming today's new idols. In a digitalized and globalized world, science can easily be considered a new religion, to which we turn with questions concerning truth and meaning, even though we know that the responses provided are only partial and not totally satisfying. New forms of "gnosis" are emerging where technology itself becomes a kind of philosophy in which knowledge and meaning are derived from an unreal structuring of life. These new cults, increasing each day, ultimately end up by turning religious practice into a clinical form of seeking prosperity and instant gratification.

Finally, the sixth sector is civic and political life. The changes which have taken place since the Second Vatican Council can rightly be called colossal. The fall of Communism, which ended the division of the western world into two blocks, has helped foster religious freedom and has provided the opportunity for age-old Churches to re-establish themselves. New economic, political and religious forces are emerging in global politics from places like Asia and the Islamic world. This has created an unprecedented yet totally unknown situation which is rich in potential but also fraught with risks and new temptations of dominion and power. In this sector, the Gospel must be transmitted in the following endeavours: the duty to seek peace; the development and liberation of peoples; improvement in forms of world and national governments; the construction of possible forms of listening, living together, dialogue and collaboration by various cultures and religions; the safeguarding of the rights of persons, entire peoples and, above all, minorities; support for the most vulnerable in society; and the stewardship of creation and the commitment to the future of our planet.

Christians Facing These New Situations

7. An initial reaction to these changes can easily be confusion and fear, because these moments of transition lead us to question our identity and the very foundations of our faith. At such times, however, the reasonable thing would be to follow the often-voiced appeal of Pope Benedict XVI to engage in a critical discernment of the situation and reread the present moment in light of the Christian gift of hope.[\[26\]](#) Relearning the meaning of hope leads Christians to discover what they can offer in their world of

encounters, experiences and dialoguing with others, what they can share in the process and how they can better express this hope which leads to perseverance. The new sectors which call us into dialogue require turning a critical eye towards our manner of life, our thinking, our values and our means of communication. At the same time, the occasion must also serve as a self-evaluation of Christianity today, which must repeatedly learn to understand itself, beginning from its roots.

The foregoing activity gives the specific character and force to the new evangelization, which must consider these sectors of life, observe what is happening and, knowing how to overcome an initial reaction of defence and fear, objectively gather the signs of what might be new along with inherent challenges and weak points. A "new evangelization" means, then, to work in our local Churches to devise a plan for evaluating the previously mentioned phenomena in such a manner as to transmit the Gospel of hope in a practical way. In the process, the Church builds herself up by accepting these challenges and becoming more and more the artisan of the civilization of love.

A "new evangelization" also means to have the boldness to raise the question of God in the context of these problems, thereby fulfilling the specific character of the Church's mission and showing how the Christian prospective enlightens, in an unprecedented way, the great problems of history. The new evangelization calls us to engage in dialogue with these sectors, not remaining confined to our communities and our institutions, but accepting the challenge to take part in these phenomena so as to speak and bear witness in these sectors, from the inside. This is the form of Christian *martyria* in today's world, engaging in dialogue even with the recent forms of a militant atheism or an extreme secularism, whose purpose is to eliminate the subject of God from human life.

In this context, a "new evangelization" means that the Church must convincingly sustain her efforts at uniting all Christians in a common witness to the world of the prophetic and transforming power of the Gospel message. Justice, peace, living with others and the stewardship of creation have characterized ecumenism over the decades. Together, Christians can also offer them to the world as places where the question of God in people's lives can be addressed. These places, in fact, acquire their true significance only in light of and on the basis of the word of love spoken to us in his Son, Jesus Christ.

A "New Evangelization" and Spirituality

8. The effort to raise the question of God in the context of the problems of humanity today again brings us to the ideas of religious need and spirituality, which, starting with the younger generations, emerge with renewed vigour. The changes in the sectors which we have previously treated inevitably affect the way people speak about and practice their sense of religion. The Catholic Church herself is affected by this phenomenon, which provides resources and occasions for the evangelization envisioned decades ago. International meetings for youth, pilgrimages to shrines of ancient and recent origin and the flowering of movements and ecclesial associations are clear signs of a continuing religious sense. In this context, the "new evangelization" requires that the Church know how to discern the signs of the Spirit at work, addressing and educating people to the Spirit's manifestations, in light of a mature, informed faith "until attaining the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (*Eph 4:13*).^[27] In addition to these recently formed groups, which are a promising fruit of the Holy Spirit, the consecrated life, in its traditional and new forms, also has a great role to play in the new evangelization, particularly considering that, in the two-thousand years of Christianity, all the great movements in evangelization have been associated with forms arising from the radical nature of the Gospel.

Also included in this context are encounters and dialogue with the great religious traditions, particularly those of the East, which the Church has undertaken in recent decades and continues to intensify. This dialogue is a promising opportunity to learn and compare how the religious question is seen in other religions, thus allowing Catholicism to understand more deeply the ways with which the Christian faith can listen and respond to each person's religious sense.

New Ways of "Being Church"

9. These new circumstances in the Church's mission make us realize that, in the end, the expression "new evangelization" requires finding new approaches to evangelization so as "to be Church" in today's ever-changing social and cultural situations. The traditional, long-accepted model of a division of the world into "Christian countries" and "mission lands", despite its conceptual clarity, is now seen as limited, overly simple and no longer applicable to the present situation, and thus, unable to be used as a reference in building today's Christian communities. Instead, Christian life and practice must guide this reflection, in a deliberative process of devising new models of "being Church", which avoids the dangers of sectarianism and a "civic religion", and allows the Church, in today's post-ideological era, to continue to maintain her identity as missionary. In other words, in the variety of her models, the Church must not fail to be seen as a "domestic Church" and "The People of God". Even in places where she might be in the minority or subject to discrimination, the Church must not lose her capacity of remaining close to people in their daily lives so as to announce in that very place the life-giving message of the Gospel. According to Pope John Paul II, the "new evangelization" means to remake the Christian fabric of human society and the fabric of Christian communities themselves^[28] and to assist the Church to continue to be present "in the midst of the homes of her sons and daughters"^[29] so as to animate their lives and guide them to the Kingdom to come.

In this work of discernment, the Eastern Catholic Churches can be of great assistance as well as Christian communities which, in their recent past, have lived or are still living an experience of hiding, persecution, emarginalization or ethnic, ideological or religious intolerance. Their testimony of faith, perseverance, fortitude, unwavering hope and the intuition of some of their pastoral practices are gifts to be shared with Christian communities which, looking to a glorious past, are now experiencing a trying and difficult moment. For Churches little accustomed to living their faith in situations where they are a minority, to listen to the experiences of the Christian communities mentioned above is surely a gift which instills the indispensable trust required in the efforts for the new evangelization.

The time has also come for a new evangelization in the West, where many of those baptized lead totally un-Christian lives and more and more persons maintain some links to the faith but have little or a poor knowledge of it. Oftentimes, the faith is presented in caricature or publically treated by certain cultures with indifference, if not open hostility. Now is the time for a new evangelization in the West. "Whole countries and nations where religion and the Christian life were formerly flourishing and capable of fostering a viable and working community of faith, are now put to a hard test, and in some cases, are even undergoing a radical transformation, as a result of a constant spreading of an indifference to religion, of secularism and of atheism. This particularly concerns countries and nations of the so-called First World, in which economic well-being and consumerism, even if coexistent with a tragic situation of poverty and misery, inspires and sustains a life lived 'as if God did not exist.'"^[30]

Christian communities ought to know how to respond with responsibility and courage to this renewal required of the Church, because of cultural and social changes. They ought to learn how to devise and implement the long process of moving to newer models, while maintaining the mandate to evangelize as a reference-point.

The First Evangelization, Pastoral Solicitude and the New Evangelization

10. The missionary mandate which concludes the Gospel (*Mk 16:15ff; Mt 28:19ff; Lk 24:48ff; Acts 1:8*) is far from being fully carried out; it has simply entered a new phase. Pope John Paul II stated that "the boundaries between *pastoral care of the faithful, new evangelization and specific missionary activity* are not clearly definable, and it is unthinkable to create barriers between them or to put them into watertight compartments. [...] The Churches in traditionally Christian countries, for example, involved as they are in the challenging task of new evangelization, are coming to understand more clearly that they cannot be missionaries to non-Christians in other countries and continents, unless they are seriously concerned about

the non-Christians at home. Hence missionary activity *ad intra* is a credible sign and a stimulus for missionary activity *ad extra*, and vice versa."[\[31\]](#) Being Christian and "being Church" means being missionary; one is or is not. Loving one's faith implies bearing witness to it, bringing it to others and allowing others to participate in it. The lack of missionary zeal is a lack of zeal for the faith. On the contrary, faith is made stronger by transmitting it. The Pope's words on the new evangelization can be translated into a rather direct and crucial question: "Are we interested in transmitting the faith and bringing non-Christians to the faith?" "Are we truly missionary at heart?"

The new evangelization is the name given to the Church's project of undertaking anew her fundamental mission, her identity and reason for existence. Consequently, it is not limited to delineated, well-defined regions only, but is a way to explain and put into practice the apostolic legacy in and for our times. In the project of the new evangelization, the Church desires to bring her unique message into today's world and the present discussion, namely, to proclaim the Kingdom of God, begun in Christ Jesus. No part of the Church is exempt from this project. The Christian Churches of ancient origin must deal with the problem of the many who have abandoned the practice of the faith; the younger Churches, through the process of inculturation, must continually take measures allowing them to bring the Gospel to everyday life, a process which not only purifies and elevates culture, but, above all, opens culture to the newness of the Gospel. Generally speaking, every Christian community must rededicate itself to its programme of pastoral care which seems to become more difficult and in danger of falling into a *routine*, and thus little able to communicate its original aims and goals.

A new evangelization is synonymous with mission, requiring the capacity to set out anew, go beyond boundaries and broaden horizons. The new evangelization is the opposite of self-sufficiency, a withdrawal into oneself, a *status quo* mentality and an idea that pastoral programmes are simply to proceed as they did in the past. Today, a "business as usual" attitude can no longer be the case. Some local Churches, already engaged in renewal, reconfirm the fact that now is the time for the Church to call upon every Christian community to evaluate their pastoral practice on the basis of the missionary character of their programmes and activities.[\[32\]](#)

Questions

Our Christian communities are experiencing significant changes in the Church and society.

1. What are the principal characteristics of these changes in our local Churches?
2. How does the Church fulfil her missionary role of taking part in people's everyday-lives, "in the midst of the homes of her sons and daughters"?
3. How has the new evangelization been able to revitalize and reanimate the first evangelization or the pastoral programmes already taking place? How has the new evangelization helped to overcome the weariness and toil arising in the everyday life of our local Churches?
4. What has been discerned from evaluating the present situation in the various local Churches from the vantage point of the new evangelization?

The world is undergoing significant changes which bring about new situations and challenges for Christianity. Six sectors, affected by change, have been treated: culture (secularization), society (the intermingling of peoples), mass media, economy, science and civic life. These sectors have deliberately been described in a general manner.

5. What have been the specific effects of change in the various local Churches?

6. How have these sectors interacted in the life of the local Churches? How have they affected their lives?
7. What questions and challenges have they posed? What responses have been made?
8. What have been the principal obstacles and the most challenging efforts to raise the question of God in today's discussion? What have been the results?

Special attention is given to the religious sector.

9. What changes have taken place in people's religious experiences?
10. What new aspects are emerging in spirituality and religious needs? Are new religious traditions coming about?
11. How have Christian communities been affected by the changes in the religious sector? What is the principal work? What new opportunities are present?

In the new evangelization, the Church is to be transformed in her thinking so she can continue to carry out her mission of proclamation within these new sectors.

12. Describe the ways the new evangelization has been enacted in the local Churches?
13. How has the boldness, characteristic of the new evangelization, been displayed? What has this boldness prompted in ecclesial and pastoral life?
14. What aspects of the Church's life and activity need this boldness?
15. How have the local Churches undertaken and accomplished Pope John Paul II's appeal for "a new evangelization; new in its ardour, in its methods and in its expressions"?
16. How has the celebration of the continental or regional synodal assemblies assisted Christian communities devise a project for a new evangelization?

CHAPTER II

PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST

"Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation"(Mk 16:15).

A Personal Encounter and Communion with Christ, the Goal of Transmitting the Faith

11. The missionary mandate which the disciples received from the Lord (cf. *Mk 16:15*) makes an explicit reference to proclaiming and teaching the Gospel ("teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" *Mt 28:20*). St. Paul the Apostle presents himself as an "apostle [...] set apart for the Gospel of God" (*Rom 1:1*; *1 Cor 1:17*). Therefore, the Church's task consists in realizing the *Traditio Evangelii*, proclaiming and transmitting the Gospel, which is "the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith" (*Rom 1:16*) and which is ultimately identified with Jesus Christ (cf. *1 Cor 1:24*).^[33] In referring to the Gospel, we must not think of it only as a book or a set of teachings. The Gospel is much more; it is a living and efficacious Word, which accomplishes what it says. It is not so much a system of articles of faith and moral precepts, much less a political programme, but a person: Jesus Christ, the definitive Word of God, who

became man.^[34] The Gospel is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. However, not only does the Gospel have Jesus Christ as its content; but even more, through the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ is also the promoter and the centre of its proclamation and transmission. Consequently, the goal of the transmission of the faith is the realization of a personal encounter with Jesus Christ, in the Spirit, thereby leading to an experiencing of his Father and our Father.^[35]

Transmitting the faith means to create in every place and time the conditions for this personal encounter of individuals with Jesus Christ. The faith-encounter with the person of Jesus Christ is a relationship with him, "remembering him" (in the Eucharist) and, through the grace of the Spirit, having in us the mind of Jesus Christ. Pope [Benedict XVI](#) stated: "Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction. [...] Since God has first loved us (cf. *1 Jn* 4:10), love is now no longer a mere 'command'; it is the response to the gift of love with which God draws near to us."^[36] The Church realizes herself precisely from carrying out her task of proclaiming the Gospel and transmitting the Christian faith.

This personal encounter allows individuals to share in the Son's relationship with his Father and to experience the power of the Spirit. The aim of transmitting the faith and the goal of evangelization is to bring us "through him [Christ] in one Spirit to the Father" (*Eph* 2:18).^[37] This is the newness of the Christian God. From this perspective, transmitting the faith in Christ means to create the conditions for a faith which is thought-out, celebrated, lived and prayed; in short, this means participating in the life of the Church.^[38] This way of transmitting the faith is very much grounded in Church Tradition. Reference to it is found in [The Catechism of the Catholic Church](#) and its [Compendium](#), both of which take up the subject of the new evangelization so as to encourage, explain and repropose it.^[39]

The Church Transmits the Faith Which She Herself Lives

12. The transmission of the faith is a very complex, dynamic process which totally involves the faith of Christians and the life of the Church. What is not believed or lived cannot be transmitted. The sign of a well-founded, mature faith is the natural way we communicate it to others. Christ "called to him those whom he desired; and they came to him. And he appointed twelve, to be with him, and to be sent out to preach" (*Mk* 3:13,14). The Gospel can only be transmitted on the basis of "being" with Jesus and living with Jesus the experience of the Father, in the Spirit; and, in a corresponding way, of "feeling" compelled to proclaim and share what is lived as a good and something positive and beautiful.

The responsibility of announcing and proclaiming is not the work of a single person or a select few, but a gift given to every person who confidently responds to the call of faith. Nor is transmitting the faith a specialized work assigned to a group of people or specifically designated individuals, but an experience of every Christian and the entire Church. Through this work, the Church continually rediscovers her identity as a People united by the call of the Spirit, who brings us together from the countless areas of everyday living to experience Christ's presence among us and, thereby, to discover God as Father. "The lay faithful, in virtue of their participation in the prophetic mission of Christ, are fully part of this work of the Church. Their responsibility, in particular, is to testify how the Christian faith constitutes the only fully valid response - consciously perceived and stated by all in varying degrees - to the problems and hopes that life poses to every person and society. This will be possible if the lay faithful will know how to overcome in themselves the separation of the Gospel from life, to again take up in their daily activities in family, work and society, an integrated approach to life that is fully brought about by the inspiration and strength of the Gospel."^[40]

The Church's fundamental activity of transmitting the faith is the foundation of the model and activity of Christian communities.^[41] Proclaiming and spreading the Gospel requires that the Church do everything possible to ensure that Christian communities are capable of intensely manifesting the basic elements of a life of faith, namely, charity, witness, proclamation, celebration, listening and sharing. Evangelization needs to be seen as the process through which the Church, moved by the Spirit, proclaims and spreads the Gospel

in the whole world, in conformity with magisterial teaching which has been summarized in the following manner: "urged on by charity [evangelization] penetrates and transforms the entire temporal order, acquiring and renewing cultures, and is a witness among peoples of the new way of being and living, which is basic to the Christian identity. Evangelization openly proclaims the Gospel, through an initial proclamation which calls persons to conversion; then, through catechesis and the Sacraments of Initiation, it initiates in the faith and the Christian life not only those who are converted to Christ but also those who have returned to the path of following him, incorporating both into the Christian community. Likewise, evangelization continually nourishes in the faithful their gift of communion, through ongoing instruction in the faith (homilies and other forms of catechesis), through the sacraments and through works of charity, and always leads them to undertake the Church's mission which sends all Christ's disciples to announce the Gospel to the entire world through their words and deeds." [42]

The Word of God and Transmitting the Faith

13. Since the celebration of the [Second Vatican Council](#), the Catholic Church has rediscovered that transmitting the faith is a personal encounter with Christ, which is done by means of the Sacred Scripture and Church's living Tradition, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. [43] In this way, the Church is continually regenerated by the Spirit. In the same manner, new generations receive sustenance in each moment of their personal encounter with Christ in his Body, an encounter which finds its full expression in the celebration of the Eucharist. The centrality of this work of transmitting the faith was reevaluated and highlighted in the two, most recent ordinary general assemblies, one on the Eucharist and the other dedicated to the Word of God in the life and mission of the Church. In these two synodal assemblies, the Church was asked to reflect on and become fully aware of the profound dynamic process which sustains her identity: The Church transmits the faith which she herself lives, celebrates and professes and to which she bears witness. [44]

Such an awareness implies real responsibilities and challenges which the Church must meet in her work of transmitting the faith. The Church, as the People of God, must develop a greater awareness among her members of the role of the Word of God and its power to reveal and manifest God's will for humanity and his plan of salvation. [45] Greater care needs to be exercised in proclaiming the Word of God in liturgical assemblies and greater conviction and dedication given to the task of preaching. [46] More attentiveness, conviction and trust is required in viewing the role of the Word of God in the Church's mission, in both the actual time allotted to proclaiming the message of salvation as well to the more reflective moments of listening and dialogue with cultures. [47]

The synod fathers gave particular attention to proclaiming the Word of God to future generations. "Often we encounter in them a spontaneous openness to hearing the Word of God and a sincere desire to know Jesus [...] Concern for young people calls for courage and clarity in the message we proclaim; we need to help young people to gain confidence and familiarity with Sacred Scripture, so it can become a compass pointing out the path to follow. Young people need witnesses and teachers who can walk with them, teaching them to love the Gospel and to share it, especially with their peers, and thus to become authentic and credible messengers." [48] In the same manner, the synod fathers called upon Christian communities to "devise approaches to Christian initiation which, through listening to the Word, celebrating the Eucharist and the communal living of love and fellowship, will lead to a growth in faith. Consideration also needs to be given to the new questions arising from the greater mobility of peoples and the phenomenon of migration which are opening new horizons in evangelization. Migrants must not simply be evangelized but be trained themselves to be evangelizing agents." [49]

The synodal assembly emphatically called upon Christian communities to evaluate the degree to which the proclamation of the Word of God is the foundation of their work of transmitting the faith. "We need, then, to discover ever anew the urgency and the beauty of the proclamation of the Word for the coming of the Kingdom of God which Christ himself preached. [...] All of us recognize how much the light of Christ needs

to illumine every area of human life: the family, schools, culture, work, leisure and the other aspects of social life. It is not a matter of preaching a word of consolation, but rather a Word which disrupts, which calls to conversion and which opens the way to an encounter with the one through whom a new humanity flowers."[\[50\]](#)

The Pedagogy of the Faith

14. Transmitting the faith is not done in words only; it requires a relationship in prayer with God, which is faith-in-action. The liturgy, with its proper pedagogical elements, plays a decisive role in the formation of this relationship in prayer, because the one who instructs is God himself and the true teacher in the ways of prayer is the Holy Spirit.

The IV Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on the topic of catechesis acknowledged, in addition to the rise in number and increased dedication of catechists, that catechesis is a gift of the Spirit and that the Church has devised methods in transmitting the faith which lead people to a personal encounter with Christ.[\[51\]](#) In various ways, these many methods involve the faculties of individuals, their association in a social group, their attitudes, their questions and their searching. Such methods are the proper instruments of inculturation.[\[52\]](#) To avoid distraction and confusion in its increasing, multi-directional development, Pope John Paul II took an observation of the synod fathers and made it a principle: the plurality of methods in catechesis can be a sign of vitality and complementarity, if each one of these methods knows how to interiorize and follow a fundamental law, that of a two-fold faithfulness to God and to the person, in one approach of love.[\[53\]](#)

At the same time, the synod on catechesis was intent on not losing past benefits and values which sought to guarantee a systematic, integral, organic and hierarchical transmission of the faith.[\[54\]](#) Consequently, the synod re-proposed two basic instruments for transmitting the faith: catechesis and the catechumenate. In this manner, the Church actively transmits the faith, sowing it in the hearts of catechumens and the catechized so as to make their experiences particularly fruitful. The profession of the faith received by the Church (*traditio*), which sprouts and grows in the catechetical process, is, in turn, re-given (*redditio*), after being enriched with the values of different cultures. In this way, the catechumenate essentially becomes a centre of growth in catholicity and the seed-bed of ecclesial renewal.[\[55\]](#)

The renewed emphasis on these two instruments - catechesis and the catechumenate - must give form to what is termed the "pedagogy of faith",[\[56\]](#) whose goal is to expand the idea of catechesis to include the transmission of the faith. Since the synod on catechesis, catechesis has now become nothing more than the process of transmitting the Gospel in the same manner as the Christian community has received it, understands it, celebrates it, lives it and communicates it.[\[57\]](#) "The catechesis involved in initiation, which is both comprehensive and systematic, cannot simply be limited to this occasion and circumstance, because, in reality, such catechesis is formation for the Christian life. Though including the element of instruction, it goes beyond it, by essentially looking to the 'basic elements' of being a Christian, while avoiding disputed subjects or becoming a form of theological investigation. Finally, because of its part in initiation, this catechesis leads to incorporation into the community which lives, celebrates and bears witness to the faith, thereby, accomplishing, at one and the same time, the work of initiation, education and instruction. This inherent richness of the catechumenate of non-baptized adults should serve to inspire other forms of catechesis."[\[58\]](#)

Consequently, the catechumenate has become the model which the Church has recently adopted to give form to transmitting the faith. After having received renewed emphasis in the Second Vatican Council,[\[59\]](#) the catechumenate was used in the reorganization and renewal of many programmes of catechesis in delineating the work of evangelization. *The General Directory for Catechesis*, while summarizing the important elements entailed in this task, leaves the onlooker to intuit the underlying reasons why so many local Churches have made use of this model in restructuring their activity of proclaiming and generating the

faith and, indeed, arriving at a new model called the "post-baptismal catechumenate", [60] which is a continual reminder for the entire Church of the process of initiation into the faith and the responsibility of the entire Christian community. As a result, this new model puts Christ's Paschal Mystery at the centre of all the Church's programmes; makes inculturation the first step in pedagogy; and shows itself to be a true and proper formation process. [61]

The Local Churches: Agents of Transmission

15. The agent for transmitting the faith is the entire Church which manifests itself in the local Churches, where proclamation, transmission and the lived experience of the Gospel are realized. Furthermore, the local Churches, in addition to performing this task, are also the fruit of this activity of proclaiming the Gospel and transmitting the faith, as seen in the experience of the first Christian communities (cf. *Acts* 2: 42-47). The Spirit gathers believers into communities that fervently live their faith, a faith which is nourished through listening to the teaching of the apostles, through the Eucharist and through the communities' life of unselfish service to proclaiming the Kingdom of God. The [Second Vatican Council](#) used the same terms in describing the fundamental identity of each Christian community: "This Church of Christ is truly present in all legitimate local congregations of the faithful which, united with their pastors, are themselves called Churches in the New Testament. For in their locality, these are the new People called by God, in the Holy Spirit and in much fullness (cf. *1 Titus* 1:5). In these communities, the faithful are gathered together by the preaching of the Gospel of Christ, and the celebration of the mystery of the Lord's Supper, so that 'by the food and blood of the Lord's body the whole brotherhood may be joined together'." [62]

Life in our Churches can benefit from viewing the transmission of faith, and proclamation in general, as a concrete expression and ideal realization of this statement from the Council. In recent decades, a noteworthy number of Christians have naturally and freely undertaken the proclamation and transmission of the faith, an experience which has been a true gift of the Spirit to the Christian communities in our local Churches. The pastoral activity involved in transmitting the faith allows the Church to take part in various local, social settings and displays the richness and variety of her composite roles and services which enliven her daily life. Gathered around the bishop, priests, parents, consecrated persons, catechists and entire communities have a role, each with a proper task and competence. [63]

However, in recounting these gifts and positive expectations, we must also note the challenges which many local Churches face as a result of new situations and various developments. The scarcity of priests makes their activity less incisive than desired. The general state of weariness and fatigue of many families undermines the role of parents. The lack in a common sharing in this evangelizing task limits the influence of the Christian community and contributes to the danger that the full weight of fulfilling such an important and fundamental activity might fall exclusively upon catechists, who are already feeling the burden of the task entrusted to them and the loneliness in doing it.

As stated initially, the cultural climate and the general state of fatigue in many Christian communities in our local Churches is endangering the proclamation of the faith, its transmission to others and instruction in the faith. The question of St. Paul the Apostle - "how are they to believe [...] without a preacher?" (*Rom* 10:14) - is truly relevant today. In such a situation, however, we also witness the generosity of the Holy Spirit in the newness and vitality which groups and ecclesial movements have contributed to this task of transmitting the faith. At the same time, each of them is called upon to make sure that these fruits become more widespread and to lend their efforts to those forms of catechesis and transmission of the faith which may have lost their original enthusiasm.

Rendering an Account: The Manner of Proclamation

16. In light of the present situation, therefore, the local Churches are called to make renewed efforts and again put their trust in the Spirit who guides them, so that the local Churches might once again undertake,

joyously and vigorously, the fundamental mission which Jesus entrusts to his disciples: to proclaim the Gospel (cf. *Mk* 16:15) and to preach the Kingdom (cf. *Mk* 3:15). Christians as a whole need to sense a real responsibility to respond to Jesus' command and allow themselves to be guided by the Spirit in their response, each according to one's vocation. At a time when choosing the faith and following Christ are difficult and little understood, if not indeed openly questioned and contradicted, the task of the community and every Christian must be undertaken with greater intensity, namely, to be witnesses and heralds of the Gospel, after the example of Jesus Christ.

This manner of acting is also recommended to us by St. Peter the Apostle, when he invites us to give an account and provide reasons, "for the hope that is in you" (*1 Pt* 3:15). The Spirit is indicating ways that our Christian communities can embark on a new season of witnessing to our faith and devise new forms of response (*apo-logia*) to those who ask the *logos*, that is, the reasons for our faith. Personal renewal will give greater incisiveness to our presence in the world, where we live-out the hope and salvation given us by Jesus Christ. As Christians, we are to learn a new manner of responding in "gentleness and reverence and a clear conscience" (*1 Pt* 3:15, 16) with the gentle strength which comes from union with Christ in the Spirit and with the conviction that our goal is a personal encounter with God the Father in his Kingdom.^[64]

This manner of acting ought to be all-encompassing, including our way of thinking and our deeds, individual conduct and public witness, the interior life of our communities and their efforts at being missionary, their attention to education and their concerned dedication for the poor, and the capacity of every Christian actively to take part in the conversations taking place within real-life situations and the workplace, so as to bring to these situations the Christian gift of hope. This manner of acting must reflect the zeal, trust and freedom in speaking out (*parresia*) as displayed in the preaching of the Apostles (cf. *Acts* 4:32; 9: 27, 28) and in the experience of King Agrippa in listening to St. Paul: "In a short time, you might convince me to become a Christian!" (*Acts* 26:28).

In times when many people are living lives which are truly and properly an experience of "the desert of God's darkness, the emptiness of souls no longer aware of their dignity or the goal of human life", Pope Benedict XVI reminds us that "the Church as a whole and all her Pastors, like Christ, must set out to lead people out of the desert, towards the place of life, towards friendship with the Son of God, towards the One who gives us life, and life in abundance."^[65]

According to the logic of our faith, the world has every right to witness this manner of acting in our Church and in our Christian communities,^[66] a manner of acting as a community and on a person-to-person basis, one which requires self-evaluation by communities as a whole and each baptized person individually, as noted by Pope Paul VI: "side by side with the collective proclamation of the Gospel, the other form of transmission, the person-to-person one, remains valid and important. [...] It must not happen that the pressing need to proclaim the Good News to the multitudes should cause us to forget this form of proclamation whereby an individual's personal conscience is reached and touched by an entirely unique world that he receives from someone else."^[67]

The Fruits of Transmitting the Faith

17. The goal of the entire process of transmitting the faith is to make the Church a community of witnesses of the Gospel. Pope Paul VI states: "She is the community of believers, the community of hope lived and communicated, the community of brotherly love, and she needs to listen unceasingly to what she must believe, to her reasons for hoping, to the new commandment of love. She is the People of God immersed in the world, and often tempted by idols, and she always needs to hear the proclamation of the 'mighty works of God' which converted her to the Lord; she always needs to be called together afresh by Him and reunited. In brief, this means that she has a constant need of being evangelized, if she wishes to retain freshness, vigour and strength in order to proclaim the Gospel."^[68]

The results of this ongoing project of evangelization, which are generated in the Church as a sign of the life-giving power of the Gospel, take concrete form in the responses given to the challenges of our times. Families need to become true and real signs of love and sharing, with a capacity to hope in virtue of their openness to life. Forces are needed in building communities which have a true ecumenical spirit and are capable of dialogue with other religions. Courage is needed to sustain initiatives of social justice and solidarity, which put the poor at the centre of the Church's concern. Joy needs to be more evident in the dedication of one's life to a vocation to the priesthood or the consecrated life. A Church which transmits her faith, a Church of the "new evangelization", is capable in every situation of demonstrating that the Spirit guides her and transforms the history of the Church, of individual Christians and of entire peoples and their culture.

Another fruit of transmitting the faith is the courage to speak out against infidelity and scandal which arise in Christian communities as a sign and consequence of moments of fatigue and weariness in the work of proclamation. Other fruits include: the courage to recognize and admit faults; the capacity to continue to witness to Jesus Christ, while recounting our continual need to be saved, knowing that - as St. Paul the Apostle teaches - we can look at our weakness so that in this way we can acknowledge the power of Christ who saves us (cf. *2 Cor 12:9; Rom 7:14ff.*); the exercise of penance, a commitment to the work of purification and the will to make atonement for the consequences of our errors; and an unflinching trust that the hope which has been given us "does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us" (*Rom 5:5*). All these fruits result from the process of transmitting the faith and proclaiming the Gospel, a process which first brings renewal to Christians and their communities, as it brings to the world the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Questions

So that others might experience Christ is the goal of transmitting a faith intended to be shared with all, near and far. This goal is an incentive for mission.

1. How are our Christian communities places in the Church which provide people with a spiritual experience?
2. To what extent do our faith programmes have as an objective not only the intellectual adherence to Christian truth, but also the creation of an experience of a personal encounter, communion and "living" the mystery of Christ?
3. What solutions and responses have individual Churches made regarding creating spiritual experiences, which even younger generations are seeking today?

The Word of God and the Eucharist are the principal means and the privileged instruments for providing people with a spiritual experience of the Christian faith.

4. How have the two preceding ordinary general assemblies of the Synod of Bishops helped Christian communities increase the quality of their listening to the Word of God in our Churches? How have they helped to increase the quality of our Eucharistic celebrations?
5. What elements have received greater acceptance? What reflections and suggestions are still awaiting reception?
6. How have listening and discussion groups on the Word of God becoming common tools in the Christian life of our communities? How do our communities express the centrality of the Eucharist (celebrated and adored), and, based on this, programme their life and activity?

After decades of significant activity, catechesis is showing signs of fatigue and weariness, above all, in persons called to plan and sustain the Church's activity in this field.

7. What is the practical experience in our Churches?

8. What efforts are being made to recognize and give a soundness to catechesis within our Christian communities? What efforts are being made to give concreteness and effectiveness to recognizing the active roles of others in their responsibility to transmit the faith (parents, godparents, the Christian community)?

9. What initiatives have been planned to support parents and encourage them in the task (in transmission and, consequently, the transmission of the faith), which culture sees less and less as their role?

In response to the Second Vatican Council, many episcopal conferences, in recent decades, have undertaken the work of reorganizing the programming of catechesis and the revision of catechetical texts.

10. What is the state-of-affairs in this regard?

11. What benefits have resulted in the process of transmitting the faith? What work was entailed and what obstacles have been encountered?

12. What role has *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* played in this replanning?

13. How do individual Christian communities (parishes) and various groups and movements work to guarantee that catechesis is as ecclesial as possible and co-ordinated and shared with others in the Church?

14. In the wake of significant cultural changes, what "teachable moments" are lacking or left untreated in our Church's catechetical activity?

15. How has the catechumenate been employed by our Christian communities as a basis for planning programmes of catechesis and instruction in the faith?

Our times call upon the Church to renew her manner of evangelizing and display a new readiness to render an account of our faith and the hope which is ours.

16. How have the local Churches been able to communicate these new demands to Christian communities? What are the results? What work was needed and what obstacles were encountered?

17. Has the urgency of a new missionary proclamation become a habitual component of the pastoral activity of communities? Or has there been a decline in the conviction that this mission is also to be done in our local Christian communities and the everyday situations of our lives?

18. Besides communities as a whole, what individuals are bringing the gift of life to societies through the proclamation of the Gospel? What are their methods and activity? What are the results?

19. How have the baptized grown in the consciousness that they are being called in the first person to make this proclamation? What experiences can be recounted in this regard?

Proclamation and the transmission of the faith regenerate the Christian community.

20. What major fruits have been produced in our Churches through the transmission of the faith?

21. How much are individual Christian communities prepared to acknowledge these fruits, to sustain them and to nourish them? What fruits are greatly lacking?

22. What obstacles, trials and scandals impede this proclamation? How have communities learned to live these moments by drawing from them opportunities for spiritual and missionary renewal?

CHAPTER III

INITIATION INTO THE CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age" (Mt 28:19,20).

Christian Initiation, the Evangelizing Process

18. Transmitting the faith amidst the changes in society and culture are posing challenges to Christianity today. Within the Church, the situation has caused an extensive process of reflection and rethinking in the approaches to be taken in initiating people into the faith and in access to the sacraments. Statements made during the Second Vatican Council,^[69] which at the time reflected the desire of many Christian communities, have become a reality in many local Churches today. Many of the elements listed by the Council are now a part of our everyday experience, beginning with an almost universal awareness of the intrinsic bond uniting the Sacraments of Christian Initiation. Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist are no longer seen as three separate sacraments but rather as stages in a growth process, from birth to adulthood in the Christian life, which is a part of the general programme of initiation into the faith. By now, Christian initiation is a well-known and well-founded idea and a pastoral instrument in our local Churches.

In this process, local Churches, which can boast of a centuries-old tradition of initiation into the faith, owe much to the younger Churches. Both have learned to use in their programmes of Christian initiation an adult model which is not limited to infants.^[70] The Sacrament of Baptism has assumed greater importance through the adoption of the ancient ritual of the catechumenate as a way of devising a pastoral programme which, in the context of our cultures, provides for a more conscious celebration of the Sacrament, a more in-depth preparation and a greater possibility that the newly baptized will more actively participate in the Christian life in the future. Many Christian communities have embarked on making significant changes in their baptismal practices by reevaluating ways to involve parents, in the case of infant baptism, and by more clearly indicating the occasion as a moment in evangelization and an opportunity explicitly to proclaim the faith. They have also sought to plan celebrations of the Sacrament of Baptism which allow for the greater involvement of the community and show more clearly the support parents have in the task which is theirs, including Christian instruction, a task becoming increasingly more difficult. Taking into account the experience of the Eastern Catholic Churches has also led to an emphasis on mystagogy, namely, considering the process of initiation as not being completed at the celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism but as an ongoing formative experience, thereby serving as a reminder that the goal of instruction is an adult, Christian faith.^[71]

This initial dialogue has prompted theological and pastoral reflection, which, taking into account the special character of the various rites, could assist the Church in finding a reformulation which shares in specific elements of these practices of initiation and instruction in the faith. An example in this regard is the question of the order of the Sacraments of Initiation. Different traditions exist within the Church. This diversity is clearly seen in the ecclesial customs of the East and the practice in the West for the initiation of

adults and the procedure adopted for infants. Such diversity is further accentuated in the way the Sacrament of Confirmation is celebrated and experienced.

Clearly, the features of Western Christianity in the future and the capacity of the Christian faith to speak to western cultures will very much depend on how the Church in the West will deal with examining baptismal practice. This process of self-evaluation, however has not always brought positive results. Some misunderstood this evaluation process, or, still more, used it to make changes which were a real break with the past. From this vantage point, some saw the new practices as an opportunity to render a negative judgment on the Church's recent past and, at the same time, to introduce unprecedented sociological models for speaking about and living Christianity today. Oftentimes, this thinking inevitably led to abandoning the practice of infant baptism. On the opposite extreme, a serious obstacle to the evaluation which was taking place at the time, was the inertia of some Christian communities, who were convinced that simply adhering to the routine activity of the past would guarantee goodness and success in the Church's activity.

In this present process of evaluation, the Church is facing very important challenges in certain places and situations, which are forcing Christian communities to undertake the work of discernment and, subsequently, to adopt a new pastoral approach. Certainly, one of the Church's challenges in these times is finding a commonly agreed-upon time for the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation. This topic arose during the [XI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops](#) on the Eucharist and later treated by Pope Benedict XVI in the subsequent Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation.^[72] Recently, episcopal conferences have made various choices in this regard, based on different views (pedagogical, sacramental and ecclesial). Another challenge for the Church is her capacity to consider again the content and dynamic of mystagogy in re-planning the programme of initiation, without which an essential element in the process of engendering the faith would be lacking. Still another challenge is strongly to resist the temptation to relinquish, to certain academic or religious education programmes, the Church's proper task to proclaim the Gospel and engender the faith, especially in the case of children and adolescents. Practices in this area vary nation-to-nation and, thus, do not allow for the formulation of a single, tailored response. Nonetheless, each local Church is called to make an evaluation.

We can easily see that initiation in the faith is an essential part of the task of evangelizing. The "new evangelization" has much to say on the subject. In fact, the Church needs to continue, in a significant and determined manner, the activity of discernment already done, and, at the same time, seek interior forces to reawaken individuals and communities who are displaying signs of fatigue and resignation. The features of our communities in the future will greatly depend on the energy expended in this area of pastoral concern and the concrete initiatives to be proposed and undertaken in its reassessment and efforts at starting afresh.

Initial Proclamation and the Need for New Forms of Discourse on God

19. Today's world oftentimes poses another challenge in the work of evaluating the programme of initiating people in the faith, namely, the increasing difficulty of men and women today to listen to others speaking about God and to encounter places and experiences which open them to the subject of God. The Church has been dealing with this question for some time by not only pointing out the difficulty but also providing various ways of responding. In fact, Pope Paul VI, taking this challenge into account, urgently proposed that the Church search for new ways to present the Christian faith.^[73] This gave rise to the idea of "initial proclamation",^[74] understood to be an explicit statement, or more precisely, a proclamation of the fundamental content of our faith.

At the time, the expression "initial proclamation" was taken over and utilized in restructuring the process of introduction to the faith. Intended to be addressed to non-believers, namely, those who are indifferent to religion, initial proclamation has, generally speaking, the function of both proclaiming the Gospel and

calling to conversion those who until now do not know Jesus Christ. Catechesis, distinct from the initial proclamation of the Gospel, promotes growth in this initial conversion and provides instruction in the faith to those who have converted, thus incorporating them into the Christian community. The relation between these two forms of the ministry of the Word is not, however, always easy to discover; nor is it easily done; nor should it necessarily be stated emphatically. Instead, the relation can be perceived as a two-fold action which is found united in the same pastoral activity. In fact, frequently people who come for catechesis need to live more truly converted lives. Therefore, the programmes of catechesis and introduction in the faith might benefit from putting greater emphasis on the proclamation of the Gospel, which is a call to this conversion and which fosters and sustains it. In this way, the new evangelization can reinvigorate the present programmes of instruction in the faith by accentuating the kerygmatic character of proclamation.[\[75\]](#)

An initial response to this challenge, then, has already been done. However, in addition to this response, the discernment which we are undertaking requires a deeper understanding of the reasons why a discourse on God in our culture is so foreign. The question might initially call for seeing how much this concerns Christian communities themselves,[\[76\]](#) who need to devise the forms and means for speaking about God, which can then equip them to respond to the anxieties and expectations of people today, showing them how the newness of Christ is the gift which all of us await and for which each of us yearns as the unexpressed desire in our search for meaning and our thirst for the truth. Consequently, the absence of this discourse on God provides an occasion for missionary proclamation. Everyday life will help us to identify those "Courtyards of the Gentiles"[\[77\]](#) in which our words become not only heard but also meaningful and a remedy for the ills of humanity. The task of the "new evangelization" is to lead both practicing Christians as well as those who have questions about God and are in search of him, to perceive his personal call in their conscience. The new evangelization is an invitation to Christian communities to place greater trust in the Spirit who guides them in the course of history. In this way, they can overcome the temptation to fear and more clearly see the places and programmes where the question of God can be raised amidst people's lives today.

Initiation in the Faith; Education in the Truth

20. A consequence of the necessity to speak about God is the possibility and necessity of a similar discourse on man, which is demanded of evangelization and is directly linked to it, since a strong bond exists between initiation in the faith and education, as stated by the Second Vatican Council.[\[78\]](#) This has been recently reconfirmed by Pope Benedict XVI: "Some today question the Church's involvement in education, wondering whether her resources might be better placed elsewhere. [...] The Church's primary mission of evangelization, in which educational institutions play a crucial role, is consonant with a nation's fundamental aspiration to develop a society truly worthy of the human person's dignity. At times, however, the value of the Church's contribution to the public forum is questioned. It is important therefore to recall that the truths of faith and reason never contradict one another."[\[79\]](#) With revealed truth, the Church purifies reason and assists humanity to recognize the ultimate truth as the foundation of morality and human ethics. By her nature, the Church sustains essential moral categories, keeping hope alive in humanity.

Pope Benedict XVI lists the reasons why it is natural that evangelization and initiation in the faith include educational activity, a work which the Church undertakes as a service to the world. These times and today's cultural settings seem to be making every form of educational activity so difficult and open to criticism that the Pope himself speaks of an "educational emergency".[\[80\]](#)

In employing the term "educational emergency", the Pope intends to refer to the increasing difficulty which is encountered today by not only Christian educational activity but also educational activity in general. Transmitting to new generations the basic values for living and right conduct is becoming more arduous. Such is the case with not only parents, who witness a steady erosion of their ability to influence the

educational process, but also those professionally engaged in educational activity, beginning with the school.

Such a situation was somewhat predictable in societies and cultures that are oftentimes dominated by relativism, which lacks the light of truth. Many consider speaking of truth as too onerous and too "authoritarian". Such thinking leads to doubting the goodness of life - "Is it good to be a human being?" "Is it good to be alive?"- and the validity of relationships and commitments which make up life. In such a context, how is it possible to propose to young people and transmit to generation-after-generation - both as individuals and communities - even the most basic elements of stability and certitude, rules for living, the authentic meaning of human existence and goals to be pursued? As a result, education increasingly tends to be reduced to simply communicating to persons determined skills and teaching succeeding generations to gratify their desire for happiness through the products of consumerism or through a short-lived self-gratification. In light of this, parents and teachers are easily tempted to relinquish their proper educational task and, no longer understanding what their role might be, the mission entrusted to them.

This constitutes the "educational emergency": we are no longer able to offer to the young and new generations all that we are supposed to transmit to them. We are also debtors in their regard concerning the true values which serve as the foundation for living. In this way, the essential purpose of education ends up unfulfilled and forgotten, namely, forming individuals capable of living life to the full and of making their unique contribution to the common good. In various places, the question of authentic education is increasingly being raised as well as the need for those who are truly educators. Parents (concerned and oftentimes in anguish about the future of their children) are requesting the same of teachers (who live the sad experience of the degradation of school) and society itself, where the very basis for living together is being threatened.

In this situation, the Church's duty in instruction in the faith, in discipleship and witness to the Lord becomes, more than ever, a real contribution, which permits our society to emerge from the affliction caused by the educational crisis, by dispelling mistrust and the alienating "hatred of self", not to mention other forms of self-degradation so characteristic of certain cultures. The Church's duty in this regard can provide Christians with the opportunity to venture forth into the public spaces of our societies and, in these places, speak again about God and bring the Church's gift of a tradition of proper educational activity, which Christian communities, guided by the Spirit, have exercised for centuries.

The Church, therefore, has an age-old tradition in education, namely pedagogical resources, studies and research, institutions, personnel - consecrated and non-consecrated from religious orders and congregations - in a position to provide a significant Church presence in academic institutions and educational activity, in general. Moreover, concerned about the social and cultural developments taking place in our times, this tradition has itself undergone significant changes. Consequently, a process of discernment in this area would be beneficial not simply to distinguish discussion points about these changes but also to recognize the spiritual resources and future challenges in education which need to be adequately addressed. At the same time, we must be fully aware that the Church's basic task is education in the faith, discipleship and a life of witness and helping people enter into a personal relationship with Christ and the Father.

The Goal of an "Ecology of the Human Person"

21. The goal of the Church's entire educational commitment is easily identified, namely, working to construct what Pope Benedict XVI calls an "ecology of the human person". "There is need for what might be called a human ecology, correctly understood. [...] The decisive issue is the overall moral tenor of society. If there is a lack of respect for the right to life and to a natural death, if human conception, gestation and birth are made artificial, if human embryos are sacrificed to research, the conscience of society ends up losing the concept of human ecology and, along with it, that of environmental ecology. It is contradictory to

insist that future generations respect the natural environment when our educational systems and laws do not help them to respect themselves. The book of nature is one and indivisible: it takes in not only the environment but also life, sexuality, marriage, the family, social relations: in a word, integral human development. Our duties towards the environment are linked to our duties towards the human person, considered in himself and in relation to others. It would be wrong to uphold one set of duties while trampling on the other. Herein lies a grave contradiction in our mentality and practice today: one which demeans the person, disrupts the environment and damages society." [\[81\]](#)

The Christian faith assists the intelligence in understanding the profound underlying equilibrium of history and all-existence. It accomplishes this not in a general or external way but by sharing with reason a thirst for knowledge and inquiry, directing reason towards the well-being of man and the cosmos. The Christian faith helps us understand the profound content of basic human experiences, as the above text shows. This critical and focussed discussion has been the work of Catholicism for a long time. The Church becomes increasingly better equipped in this work by establishing institutions, centres of research and universities, which are the fruit of the intuition and charisms of some institutes or of the concern of local Churches for education. These institutions fulfill their role in collaborative efforts in research and the development of knowledge in various cultures and societies. The social and cultural changes presented thus far are raising questions and posing challenges to these institutions. Because of her commitment to education and culture, the Church is called to undertake a process of discernment, which is the first step in the "new evangelization", so as to be able to distinguish the critical aspects of these challenges and forces and adopt the strategies which will be a guarantee in the future of not only the Church but also the individual and humanity.

Surely, a "new evangelization" considers these areas of culture as "Courtyards of the Gentiles", helping them live up to their basic purpose or "vocation" in the changes they are experiencing, namely, bringing the question of God and the Christian faith to the conversations of our times and making these areas a place where persons can be formed to be free and mature and, in turn, capable of bringing the question of God into their own lives, families and workplace.

Evangelizers and Educators as Witnesses

22. The present "educational emergency" gives particular meaning to the words of Pope Paul VI: "'Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses.' [...] It is therefore primarily by her conduct and by her life that the Church will evangelize the world, in other words, by her living witness of fidelity to the Lord Jesus - the witness of poverty and detachment, of freedom in the face of the powers of this world, in short, the witness of sanctity." [\[82\]](#) No matter what the proposal in the "new evangelization" and no matter what the pastoral project of proclamation and transmission of the faith, there is no escaping the fact that people's lives give force to their efforts at evangelization. Precisely in this manner, their life has an exemplary character, confirming the authenticity of their selfless dedication and of the truth of what they teach and call upon others to live. Today's "educational emergency" calls upon educators to know how to be credible witnesses of this reality and of the values which can serve as the basis for personal existence and the shared projects of living together in society. In this regard, it is sufficient to recall the exemplary lives of St. Paul, St. Patrick, St. Boniface, St. Francis Xavier, Saints Cyril and Methodius, St. Turibius of Mongrovejo, St. Damien de Veuster and Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta.

For the Church today, this means providing support and formation for the many people who have long been engaged in the work of evangelization and education (bishops, priests, catechists, educators, teachers and parents). The same is also true for Christian communities, who are called to show a greater consciousness of this responsibility and to commit more resources to this essential task for the future of the Church and humanity. The centrality of the work of evangelization, proclamation and transmission

needs to be clearly stated in our Churches. Its priority in the activities of individual communities also needs to be reassessed so as to consolidate energy and forces in the shared project of a "new evangelization".

Sustaining and nourishing the faith necessarily begins in the family, the basic unit of society and the prime place for learning to pray.^[83] Teaching the faith essentially takes place in the family in the form of teaching children how to pray. In praying together with their children, parents accustom them to be conscious of the loving presence of the Lord and, at the same time, they themselves become credible witnesses to their children.

The formation and concern needed to sustain those already engaged in evangelization and recruiting new forces should not be limited simply to practical preparation, albeit necessary. Instead, formation and pastoral care is predominantly to be spiritual in nature, namely, a school of faith, enlightened by the Gospel of Jesus Christ and under the guidance of the Spirit, which teaches people the implications of experiencing the Fatherhood of God. People are able to evangelize only when they have been evangelized and allow themselves to be evangelized, that is, renewed spiritually through a personal encounter and lived communion with Jesus Christ. Such people have the power to transmit the faith, as St. Paul the Apostle testifies: "I believed, and so I spoke" (2 Cor 4:13).

The new evangelization, then, which is primarily a task-to-be-done and a spiritual challenge, is the responsibility of all Christians who are in serious pursuit of holiness. In this context and with this understanding of formation, it will be useful to dedicate space and time to considering the institutions and means available to local Churches to make baptized persons more conscious of their duty in missionary work and evangelization. For our witness to be credible, as we respond to each of these areas requiring the new evangelization, we must know how to speak in ways that are intelligible to our times and proclaim, inside these areas, the reasons for our hope which bolsters our witness (cf. 1 Pt 3:15). Such a task is not accomplished without effort, but requires attentiveness, education and concern.

Questions

The new evangelization is proposed as an exercise in evaluating every area and activity in the Church so that the Gospel might be proclaimed to the world.

1. Are our Christian communities well-aware of the practice of "initial proclamation"? Is it generally taking place in our Christian communities?
2. Do Christian communities plan pastoral activity with the specific aim of preaching conformity to the Gospel and conversion to Christianity?
3. Generally speaking, how are individual Christian communities meeting the demands of devising new forms of raising the question of God in society and in the communities themselves? What meaningful experiences deserve to be shared with other particular Churches?
4. How has the idea of the "Courtyard of the Gentiles" been taken up and developed in our various local Churches?
5. What priority have individuals Christian communities placed on the commitment to attempt bold new ways of evangelization? What initiatives have been most successful in opening Christian communities to missionary work?

6. What experiences, institutions and new associations or groups were formed or developed to proclaim the Gospel to humanity in a joyous and transmissible manner?

7. What has resulted from collaborative endeavours among the above groups and parish communities?

The Church has devoted much energy to reformulating the programmes of initiation and instruction in the faith.

8. How much has the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults been a model in reevaluating the programme of initiation in the faith in our communities?

9. To what extent was it used in Christian initiation? In what way? How has it helped in reevaluating the pastoral programme for Baptism and in emphasizing the bonds between the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist?

10. The Eastern Catholic Churches administer to infants all three Sacraments of Christian Initiation. How is this experience rich yet different? How has this practice affected the thinking and changes taking place in Christian initiation in the Catholic Churches?

11. How has the "Baptismal catechumenate" inspired a reevaluation of the programme of preparation for the sacraments, transforming them into a spiritual journey in Christian initiation and actively involving not simply the recipients but the various members of the community (particularly adults)? How are Christian communities supporting parents in their increasingly difficult task of transmitting the faith?

12. What developments have taken place in scheduling the Sacrament of Confirmation within this spiritual journey? What are the reasons?

13. How have elements from mystagogy been incorporated in this process?

14. How successful have Christian communities been able to adapt the process of instruction in the faith to adults, thereby avoiding the danger of limiting it to infants only?

15. How do the local Churches view the role of proclamation and the necessity of giving greater importance to the genesis of faith and the pastoral programme for Baptism?

16. How have parish communities avoided the temptation of leaving the work of instruction in the faith to other agents of religious education (for example, their passing the responsibility to schools, thus confusing instruction in the faith with possible cultural forms of religiously-oriented education)?

In our Churches, the challenge of education is a true and proper emergency.

17. To what degree has this challenge been noticed and addressed? What means are available in this regard?

18. Is the presence of Catholic institutions in the academic world an assistance in responding to this challenge? What changes in these institutions are of interest? What resources are available to respond to this challenge?

19. What bond exists between these institutions and other ecclesial institutions? Among these institutions and parish life?

20. In what way are these institutions able to participate in culture and society by contributing the Christian faith-experience to public discussion and mentalities oftentimes determined by culture today?

21. What is the relation between Catholic institutions and other educational institutions? What is the relation between them and society in general?

22. How can the great cultural institutions (Catholic universities, cultural centres, research centres), left to us as a historical legacy, have a voice in the present-day discussion on the basic values of the person (defence of life, family, peace, justice solidarity, creation)?

23. How can they assist people to broaden their minds and seek truth so as to recognize the traces of God's plan which gives meaning to our history? And in a corresponding way, how do they help Christian communities discern and promote listening to the inquiries and deep expectations of culture today?

24. Which Church institutions can be said to be included in the so-called experience of the "Courtyard of the Gentiles"? Which ones are places where Christians can show a boldness in devising forms of dialogue, which meet the deeply-felt expectations of humanity and its thirst for God? Which ones are places where Christians can show a boldness in raising the question of God in these discussions? Which ones are places where Christians can show a boldness in sharing their experiences of their search for God and give their account of personally encountering him in the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

The project of the new evangelization requires formation in view of proclamation and witness.

25. How are Christian communities displaying their awareness of the urgency of recruiting, forming and supporting persons to be evangelizers and educators through the witness of their lives?

26. What services - institutionalized ministries or otherwise (which is more often the case) - have arisen (or been encouraged) in the local Church which clearly have evangelization as a goal?

27. How do parishes show an openness to the vitality of certain movements and charismatic groups?

28. In recent decades, many episcopal conferences have made missionary work and evangelization central components and a priority in their pastoral planning. What are the results? How have they been able to make Christian communities aware of the "spiritual" aspect of this missionary challenge?

29. How has emphasis on the "new evangelization" assisted in the reevaluation and reorganization of formation programmes for candidates to the priesthood? How have the various institutions responsible for this formation (diocesan seminaries, regional seminaries, seminaries staffed by religious orders) been able to reevaluate and adapt their rule of life to this priority?

30. How has the ministry of the permanent diaconate been included in the Church's mandate to evangelize?

CONCLUSION

"You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you"(Acts 1:8).

Pentecost: The Basis of the "New Evangelization"

23. In his coming among us, Jesus Christ made us sharers in his divine life which renews the face of the earth and makes all things new (cf. *Rev 21:5*). His revelation made us not only recipients of the gift of salvation but also its proclaimers and witnesses. In order to fulfill this task, the Spirit of the Risen Christ brings effectiveness to our proclamation of the Gospel in every part of the world. This was the experience of the first Christian community which saw the Word of God spread through preaching and witness (cf. *Acts 6:7*).

Chronologically speaking, the first evangelization began on the day of Pentecost, when the Apostles, gathered together in prayer with the Mother of Christ, received the Holy Spirit. In this way, Mary, who according to the words of the Archangel is "full of grace", was present during apostolic evangelization and continues to be present in those places where the successors of the Apostles strive to proclaim the Gospel.

The new evangelization does not mean a "new Gospel", because "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever" (*Heb 13:8*), but rather, a new response to the needs of humanity and people today in a manner adapted to the signs of the times and to the new situations in cultures, which are the basis of our personal identity and the places where we seek the meaning of our existence. Consequently, a "new evangelization" means to promote a culture more deeply grounded in the Gospel and to discover the new man who is in us through the Spirit given us by Jesus Christ and the Father. The preparatory programme for the XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops sets the stage for the new evangelization. For the Church, its celebration could be likened to a new Cenacle, in which the successors of the Apostles will gather together in prayer with the Mother of Christ, who has been called the Star of the New Evangelization.[\[84\]](#)

The "New Evangelization": A Vision for the Church of Today and Tomorrow

24. In these pages, we have spoken many times of a new evangelization. In closing, we can better understand the profound meaning of the expression and its inherent appeal by turning to Pope John Paul II, who greatly supported and propagated this idea. He insisted that a "new evangelization" means "to rekindle in ourselves the impetus of the Church's beginnings and allow ourselves to be filled with the ardour of the apostolic preaching which followed Pentecost. We must revive in ourselves the burning conviction of Paul, who cried out: 'Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel' (*1 Cor 9:16*). This passion will not fail to stir in the Church a new sense of mission, which cannot be left to a group of 'specialists' but must involve the responsibility of all the members of the People of God. Those who have come into genuine contact with Christ cannot keep him for themselves, they must proclaim him. A new apostolic outreach is needed, which will be lived as the everyday commitment of Christian communities and groups."[\[85\]](#)

The present text also made reference to changes and developments. We are facing situations which are signs of massive changes, often causing apprehension and fear. These situations require a new vision, which allows us to look to the future with eyes full of hope and not with tears of despair. As "Church", we already have this vision, namely, the Kingdom to come, which was announced to us by Christ and described in his parables. This Kingdom is already communicated to us through his preaching and, above all, through his death and resurrection. Nevertheless, we oftentimes feel unable to enfold this vision, in other words, to "make it our own" and to "bring it to life" for ourselves and the people we meet everyday, and to make it the basis for the Church's life and all her pastoral activities.

In this regard, the Second Vatican Council and the Popes since its celebration have clearly set down a priority in the Church's pastoral project for the present and the future - a "new evangelization", namely, a new proclamation of Jesus' message, which brings joy and sets people free. This priority can be the basis of this much needed vision; the vision of an evangelizing Church which was the point of departure of the

present text and is now the task assigned to us at its conclusion. The entire process of the discernment required of us is aimed at instilling that vision deep in our hearts, in the heart of each of us and in the hearts of our Churches, for the sake of serving the world.

The Joy of Evangelizing

25. A new evangelization means to share the world's deep desire for salvation and render our faith intelligible by communicating the *logos* of hope (cf. *1 Pt* 3:15). Humanity needs hope to live in these present times. The content of this hope is "God, who has a human face and who 'has loved us to the end'." [86] For this reason, the Church is, by her very nature, missionary. We cannot selfishly keep for ourselves the words of eternal life, which we received in our personally encountering Jesus Christ. They are destined for each and every person. Each person today, whether he knows it or not, needs this proclamation.

To be unaware of this need creates a desert and an emptiness. In fact, the obstacles to the new evangelization are precisely a lack of joy and hope among people, caused and spread by various situations in our world today. Oftentimes, this lack of joy and hope is so strong that it affects the very tenor of our Christian communities. This is the reason for renewing the appeal for a new evangelization, not simply as an added responsibility but as a way to restore joy and life to situations imprisoned in fear.

We therefore approach the new evangelization with a sense of enthusiasm. We will learn the sweet and comforting joy of evangelizing, even at times when proclamation might seem like a seed sown among tears (cf. *Ps* 126:6). "May it mean for us - as it did for John the Baptist, for Peter and Paul, for the other apostles and for a multitude of splendid evangelizers all through the Church's history - an interior enthusiasm that nobody and nothing can quench. May it be the great joy of our consecrated lives. And may the world of our time, which is searching, sometimes with anguish, sometimes with hope, be enabled to receive the Good News not from evangelizers who are dejected, discouraged, impatient or anxious, but from ministers of the Gospel whose lives glow with fervor, who have first received the joy of Christ, and who are willing to risk their lives so that the Kingdom may be proclaimed and the Church established in the midst of the world." [87]

[1] BENEDICT XVI, *Homily at the Conclusion of the Special Assembly for the Middle East of the Synod of Bishops*, *L'Osservatore Romano: Weekly Edition in English*, 27 October 2010, p. 4.

[2] BENEDICT XVI, Apostolic Letter *motu proprio Ubicumque et semper*, establishing the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization (21 September 2010), *L'Osservatore Romano: Weekly Edition in English*, 20 October 2010, p. 6.

[3] BENEDICT XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Verbum Domini* (30 September 2010: 96, 122: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_ben-xvi_exh_20100930_verbum-domini_en.html).

[4] PAUL VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi* (8 December 1975), 80: *AAS* 68 (1976) 74.

[5] SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church *Ad Gentes*, 2.

[6] Cf. SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen gentium*, 2.

[7] Cf. ST HILARY OF PORTIERS, *In Ps. 14: PL* 9, 301; ST EUSEBIUS OF CAESAREA, *In Isaiam* 54, 2-3: *PG* 24, 462-463; ST CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA, *In Isaiam* V, cap. 54, 1-3: *PG* 70, 1193.

[8] PAUL VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi* (8 December 1975), 14: AAS 68 (1976) 13.

[9] Cf. *ibid.*, 15: AAS 68 (1976) 13, 14.

[10] SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et spes*, 4.

[11] Cf. JOHN PAUL II, *Homily at the Sanctuary of the Holy Cross*, Mogila, Poland (9 June 1979), 1; *L'Osservatore Romano: Weekly Edition in English*, 16 July 1979, p. 11: AAS 71 (1979) 865. "Where the Cross is raised, there is raised the sign that that place has now been reached by the Good News of Man's salvation through Love. [...] The new wooden Cross was raised not far from here at the very time we were celebrating the Millennium. With it we were given a sign that on the threshold of the new millennium, in these new times, these new conditions of life, the Gospel is again being proclaimed. A new evangelization has begun, as if it were a new proclamation, even if in reality it is the same as ever."

[12] JOHN PAUL II, *Discourse to the XIX Assembly of C.E.L.A.M.* (9 March 1983), 3: *L'Osservatore Romano: Weekly Edition in English*, 18 April 1983, p. 9: AAS 75 (1983) 778.

[13] JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris missio* (7 December 1990), 30: AAS 83 (1991)276; cf. Also *ibid.*, 1-3: AAS 83 (1991) 249-252.

[14] JOHN PAUL II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles laici* (30 December 1988), 35: AAS 81 (1989) 458.

[15] Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa* (14 September 1995) 57, 63: AAS 85 (1996) 35, 36, 39, 40; Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in America* (22 January 1999), 6, 66: AAS 91 (1999) 10, 11, 56; Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Asia* (6 November 1999), 2: AAS 92 (2000) 450, 451; Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Oceania* (22 November 2001) 18: AAS 94 (2002) 386-389.

[16] JOHN PAUL II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Europa* (28 June 2003), 2: AAS 95 (2003) 650, which refers to n. 2 of the Final Declaration of the First Special Assembly for Europe of the Synod of Bishops, 1991; cf. also *ibid.*, 45: AAS 95 (2003) 677.

[17] Cf. *ibid.*, 32, AAS 95 (2003) 670: "At the same time I wish to assure once more the pastors and our brothers and sisters of the Orthodox Churches that the new evangelization is in no way to be confused with proselytism, without prejudice to the duty of respect for truth, for freedom and for the dignity of every person."; A treatment of the necessity of evangelization, the difference between evangelization and proselytism and the subject of evangelization in ecumenism can be found in the document of the CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, *Doctrinal Notes on Certain Aspects of Evangelization* (3 December 2007), 10-12: AAS 100 (2008) 498-503.

[18] BENEDICT XVI, *Discourse at Christmastime to the Roman Curia and Papal Representatives* (21 December 2009): *L'Osservatore Romano: Weekly Edition in English*, 23/30 December 2009), p. 18: AAS 102 (2010) 40. The image of the "Courtyard of the Gentiles" is again taken up by Pope Benedict XVI in the *Message for the World Day of Social Communications, 2010* (AAS 102 [2010] 117) in which the new "Courtyards of the Gentiles" are the areas in society created by the new *media* and which are increasingly engaging more people: the new evangelization means to devise ways to proclaim the Gospel, even in these technologically advanced areas.

[19] Cf., for example, ST. CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA, *Protreptico* IX, 87, 3-4 (SC, 2, 154); ST. AUGUSTINE, *Sermo* 14, D[352 A], 3 (Nuova Biblioteca Agostiniana, XXXV/1, 269-271).

[20] Cf., for example, JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris missio* (7 December 1990), 37: AAS 83 (1991) 282-286.

[21] Cf. BENEDICT XVI, *Discourse to the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for Culture* (8 March 2008), *L'Osservatore Romano: Weekly Edition in English*, 19 March 2008, p. 2.

[22] BENEDICT XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Verbum Domini* (30 September 2010), 102: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_ben-xvi_exh_20100930_verbum-domini_en.html.

[23] Cf. BENEDICT XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in veritate* (29 June 2009), 42: AAS101 (2009) 677-678.

[24] Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris missio* (7 December 1990), 37, AAS 83 (1991) 282-286; BENEDICT XVI, *Message for the World Day of Social Communications, 2010*: AAS 102 (2010) 117.

[25] Cf. BENEDICT XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in veritate* (29 June 2009), 42: AAS101 (2009) 678: "For a long time it was thought that poor peoples should remain at a fixed stage of development, and should be content to receive assistance from the philanthropy of developed peoples. Paul VI strongly opposed this mentality in *Populorum Progressio*. Today the material resources available for rescuing these peoples from poverty are potentially greater than before, but they have ended up largely in the hands of people from developed countries, who have benefitted more from the liberalization that has occurred in the mobility of capital and labour. The world-wide diffusion of forms of prosperity should not therefore be held up by projects that are self-centred, protectionist or at the service of private interests. Indeed the involvement of emerging or developing countries allows us to manage the crisis better today. The transition inherent in the process of globalization presents great difficulties and dangers that can only be overcome if we are able to appropriate the underlying anthropological and ethical spirit that drives globalization towards the humanizing goal of solidarity. Unfortunately this spirit is often overwhelmed or suppressed by ethical and cultural considerations of an individualistic and utilitarian nature."

[26] Cf. BENEDICT XVI, Encyclical Letter *Spe salvi* (30 November 2007), 22: AAS 99 (2007) 1003-1004.

[27] Cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Some Aspects of Christian Meditation* Orationis formas (15 October 1989): AAS 82 (1990) 362-379; *DeS* 13 (1991).

[28] Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles laici* (30 December 1988), 34: AAS 81 (1989) 455.

[29] *Ibid.*, 26: AAS 81 (1989) 438.

[30] *Ibid.*, 34: AAS 81 (1989) 455, referred to in the Apostolic Letter *motu proprio Ubicumque et semper*, establishing the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization (21 September 2010).

[31] JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris missio* (7 December 1990), 34: AAS 83 (1991) 279, 280.

[32] Cf. V General Conference of Latin American and Caribbean Bishops, *Final Document*, Aparecida (Brazil), May, 2007, 365-370: <http://www.celam.org/nueva/Celam/aparecida/Ingles.pdf>, p. 87.

[33] Cf. ORIGIN, *In Evangelium secundum Matthaeum* 17, 7: PG 13, 1197 B; ST. JEROME, *Translatio homiliarum Origenis in Lucam*, 36: PL 26, 324-325.

[34] As mentioned in SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Dei Verbum*, 4: "To see Jesus Christ is to see his Father (cf. *Jn* 14:9). For this reason, Jesus perfected revelation by fulfilling it through his whole work of making himself present and manifesting himself: through his words and deeds, his signs and wonders, but especially through his death and glorious resurrection from the dead and final sending of the Spirit of truth. Moreover, he confirmed with divine testimony what revelation proclaimed, that God is with us to free us from the darkness of sin and death, and to raise us up to life eternal."

[35] Cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, *Doctrinal Notes on Certain Aspects of Evangelization* (3 December 2007), 2: AAS 100 (2008) 490.

[36] BENEDICT XVI, Encyclical Letter *Deus caritas est* (25 December 2005), 1: AAS 98 (2006) 217.

[37] Cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *General Directory for Catechesis* (15 August 1997), 100: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_17041998_directory-for-catechesis_en.html.

[38] Cf. *ibid.*, 141: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_17041998_directory-for-catechesis_en.html.

[39] Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Constitution *Fidei depositum* (11 October 1992): AAS 86 (1994) 113-118; referred to in CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *General Directory for Catechesis* (15 August 1997), 122: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_17041998_directory-for-catechesis_en.html.

[40] JOHN PAUL II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles laici* (30 December 1988), 34: AAS 81 (1989) 455; cf. JOHN PAUL II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in America* (22 January 1999), 66: AAS 91 (1999) 801; BENEDICT XVI Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Verbum Domini* (30 September 2010), 94: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_ben-xvi_exh_20100930_verbum-domini_en.html.

[41] Cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *General Directory for Catechesis* (15 August 1997), 47: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_17041998_directory-for-catechesis_en.html.

"The conciliar decree *Ad Gentes* clarifies well the dynamic of the process of evangelization: Christian witness, dialogue and presence in charity (11-12), the proclamation of the Gospel and the call to conversion (13), the catechumenate and Christian Initiation (14), the formation of the Christian communities through and by means of the sacraments and their ministers (15-18) This is the dynamic for establishing and building up the Church."

[42] *Ibid.*, 48. The *Directory* gives a clear, precise summary of the elements contained in the conciliar decree *Ad gentes*, Pope Paul VI's Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi* and the Encyclical letter of Pope John Paul II, *Redemptoris missio*.

[43] Cf. SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum*, 7ff.

[44] Cf. XII ORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS, *Message to the People of God* (24 October 2008), part III.

[45] Cf. BENEDICT XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation [Verbum Domini](#) (30 September 2010), 10, 75: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_ben-xvi_exh_20100930_verbum-domini_en.html.

[46] Cf. *ibid.*, 58-60: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_ben-xvi_exh_20100930_verbum-domini_en.html.

[47] Cf. *ibid.*, 90-98, 110: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_ben-xvi_exh_20100930_verbum-domini_en.html.

[48] *Ibid.*, 104: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_ben-xvi_exh_20100930_verbum-domini_en.html.

[49] XII ORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS, *Final List of Propositions* (25 October 2008), Prop. 38; BENEDICT XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation [Verbum Domini](#) (30 September 2010), 74, 105: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_ben-xvi_exh_20100930_verbum-domini_en.html.

[50] BENEDICT XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation [Verbum Domini](#) (30 September 2010), 93: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_ben-xvi_exh_20100930_verbum-domini_en.html.

[51] Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Exhortation [Catechesi tradendae](#) (16 October 1979), 3: AAS 71 (1979) 1279: "This Synod worked in an exceptional atmosphere of thanksgiving and hope. It saw catechetical renewal as a precious gift from the Holy Spirit to the Church of today, a gift to which Christian communities at all levels throughout the world are responding with a generosity and inventive dedication that win admiration. The requisite discernment could then be brought to bear on a reality that is very much alive and it could benefit from great openness among the People of God to the grace of the Lord and the directives of the magisterium." An evaluation of the situation of catechesis, its progress and problems can be found in CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *General Directory for Catechesis* (15 August 1997), 29-30: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_17041998_directory-for-catechesis_en.html.

[52] A presentation of these methods can be found in CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *General Directory for Catechesis* (15 August 1997), part II, chapter II; part IV, chapters IV and V: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_17041998_directory-for-catechesis_en.html.

[53] Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Exhortation [Catechesi tradendae](#) (16 October 1979), 55: AAS 71 (1979) 1322. 1323.

[54] Cf. *ibid.*, 30, 31: AAS 71 (1979) 1302, 1304.

[55] Cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *General Directory for Catechesis* (15 August 1997), 78: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_17041998_directory-for-catechesis_en.html.

[56] JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi tradendae* (16 October 1979), 58: AAS.71 (1979) 1324. 1325: "There is also a pedagogy of faith, and the good that it can do for catechesis cannot be overstated. In fact, it is natural that techniques perfected and tested for education in general should be adapted for the service of education in the faith. However, account must always be taken of the absolute originality of faith. Pedagogy of faith is not a question of transmitting human knowledge, even of the highest kind; it is a question of communicating God's revelation in its entirety. Throughout sacred history, especially in the Gospel, God Himself used a pedagogy that must continue to be a model for the pedagogy of faith. A technique is of value in catechesis only to the extent that it serves the faith that is to be transmitted and learned; otherwise it is of no value."; This treatment was readdressed and reformulated in CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *General Directory for Catechesis* (15 August 1997), 143, 144: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_17041998_directory-for-catechesis_en.html.

[57] Cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *General Directory for Catechesis* (15 August 1997), 105: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_17041998_directory-for-catechesis_en.html; cf. Also CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, 4-10.

[58] *Ibid.*, 68: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_17041998_directory-for-catechesis_en.html.

[59] Cf. SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church *Ad gentes*, 14: "Those who, through the Church, have accepted from God a belief in Christ are admitted to the catechumenate by liturgical rites. The catechumenate is not a mere expounding of doctrines and precepts, but a training period in the whole Christian life, and an apprenticeship duty drawn out, during which disciples are joined to Christ their Teacher. Therefore, catechumens should be properly instructed in the mystery of salvation and in the practice of Gospel morality, and by sacred rites which are to be held at successive intervals, they should be introduced into the life of faith, of liturgy, and of love, which is led by the People of God. Then, when the sacraments of Christian initiation have freed them from the power of darkness, having died with Christ been buried with Him and risen together with him, they receive the Spirit of adoption of sons and celebrate the remembrance of the Lord's death and resurrection together with the whole People of God. [...] But this Christian initiation in the catechumenate should be taken care of not only by catechists or priests, but by the entire community of the faithful, so that right from the outset the catechumens may feel that they belong to the people of God. And since the life of the Church is an apostolic one, the catechumens also should learn to cooperate wholeheartedly, by the witness of their lives and by the profession of their faith, in the spread of the Gospel and in the building up of the Church."

[60] CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *General Directory for Catechesis* (15 August 1997), 91: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_17041998_directory-for-catechesis_en.html. "Post-baptismal catechesis, without slavishly imitating the structure of the baptismal catechumenate, and recognizing in those to be catechized the reality of their Baptism, does well, however, to draw inspiration from 'this preparatory school for the Christian life', and to allow itself to be enriched by those principal elements which characterize the catechumenate."

[61] Cf. *ibid.*, 90, 91: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_17041998_directory-for-catechesis_en.html.

[62] SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen gentium*, 26. This text is cited and incorporated in the *General Directory for Catechesis*, 217, initiating a treatment of those responsible for catechetical activity in the Church.

[63] A presentation on the role and responsibilities of each of these persons in proclaiming the faith can be found in CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *General Directory for Catechesis* (15 August 1997), 219-232: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_17041998_directory-for-catechesis_en.html.

[64] Cf. BENEDICT XVI, *Discourse to the IV National Ecclesial Convention in Italy* (19 October 2006), Verona: *L'Osservatore Romano: Weekly Edition in English*, 25 October 2006, pp. 6, 8: AAS 98 (2006) 804-817.

[65] BENEDICT XVI, *Homily at the Liturgy Inaugurating his Petrine Ministry* (24 April 2005): *L'Osservatore Romano: Weekly Edition in English*, 27 April 2005, p. 1, 8: AAS 97 (2005) 710.

[66] Cf. SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Declaration on Religious Freedom *Dignitatis humanae*, 6.

[67] PAUL VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi* (8 December 1975), 46: AAS 68 (1976) 36.

[68] *Ibid.*, 15: AAS 68 (1976) 14, 15.

[69] Cf. SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church *Ad gentes*, 14.

[70] The publication of the *Ordo Initiationis Christianae Adulorum* (typical edition 1972, revised and republished in 1974) greatly aided the process. In the revision of catechetical practice, this ritual very much reflected catechetical thinking at the time.

[71] All these topics are treated in the *General Directory for Catechesis* (15 August 1997), under the title "Baptismal catecheumenate": Cf. *ibid.*, 88-91: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_17041998_directory-for-catechesis_en.html.

[72] Cf. BENEDICT XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Sacramentum caritatis* (22 February 2007) 18: AAS 99 (2007) 119: "In this regard, attention needs to be given to the order of the Sacraments of Initiation. Different traditions exist within the Church. There is a clear variation between, on the one hand, the ecclesial customs of the East and the practice of the West regarding the initiation of adults, and, on the other hand, the procedure adopted for children. Yet these variations are not properly of the dogmatic order, but are pastoral in character. Concretely, it needs to be seen which practice better enables the faithful to put the sacrament of the Eucharist at the centre, as the goal of the whole process of initiation. In close collaboration with the competent offices of the Roman Curia, Bishops' Conferences should examine the effectiveness of current approaches to Christian initiation, so that the faithful can be helped both to mature through the formation received in our communities and to give their lives an authentically eucharistic direction, so that they can offer a reason for the hope within them in a way suited to our times (cf. *1 Pet* 3:15)."

[73] Cf. PAUL VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi* (8 December 1975), 51: AAS 68 (1976) 40.

[74] Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris missio* (7 December 1990), 44: AAS 83 (1991) 290-291.

[75] Cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *General Directory for Catechetics* (15 August 1997), 61, 62: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_17041998_directory-for-catechesis_en.html.

[76] Cf. BENEDICT XVI, *Discourse to the Brazilian Bishops on their ad limina Visit* (7 September 2009): *L'Osservatore Romano: Weekly Edition in English*, 16 September 2009, p. 5. "In the decades which followed the Second Vatican Council, some have interpreted openness to the world not as a requirement of the missionary zeal of the Heart of Christ, but rather as a passage to secularization, seeing in it several values of great Christian depth, such as equality, freedom and solidarity, and showing that they were ready to make concessions and to discover areas of cooperation. So it was that certain leading clerics took part in ethical debates in response to the expectations of public opinion, but people stopped speaking of certain fundamental truths of faith, such as sin, grace, theological life and the last things. They were unconsciously caught up in the self-secularization of many ecclesial communities; these, hoping to please those who did not come, saw the members they already had leave, deprived and disappointed. When they meet us, our contemporaries want to see what they see nowhere else, that is, the joy and hope that come from being with the Risen Lord."

[77] The reference comes from an initiative promoted by the Pontifical Council for Culture, at the suggestion of Pope Benedict XVI. The "Courtyards of the Gentiles" are places to initiate a mutually enriching and culturally stimulating encounter between Christians and those who do not profess any religion but wish to approach God, at least as something unknown in their lives.

[78] Cf. SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et spes*, 22.

[79] BENEDICT XVI, *Discourse to Catholic Educators* (17 April 2008), Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C.: *L'Osservatore Romano: Weekly Edition in English*, 23 April 2008, pp. 7-8.

[80] BENEDICT XVI, *Discourse at the Opening of the Convention of the Diocese of Rome* (11 June 2007); *L'Osservatore Romano: Weekly edition in English*, 20 June 2007, p. 3.

[81] BENEDICT XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in veritate* (29 June 2009), 51: AAS 101 (2009) 687, 688.

[82] PAULUS VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi* (8 December 1975), 41: AAS 68 (1976) 31, 32; cf. BENEDICT XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Sacramentum caritatis* (22 February 2007), 85: AAS 99 (2007) 170, 171.

[83] Cf. CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, 2685.

[84] Cf. JOHN PAUL II, *Discourse during the Wednesday General Audience* (21 October 1992); *L'Osservatore Romano: Weekly Edition in English*, 28 October 1992, p. 11.

[85] JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter *Novo millennio ineunte* (6 January 2001), 40; AAS 93 (2001) 294.

[86] BENEDICT XVI, Encyclical Letter *Spe salvi* (30 November 2007), 31: AAS 99 (2007) 1010.

[87] PAUL VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi* (8 December 1975), 80: AAS 68 (1976) 75.

