

THE THREE AREAS TO EVANGELIZE

In first place, we can mention the area of ordinary pastoral ministry, which is “animated by the fire of the Spirit, so as to inflame the hearts of the faithful who regularly take part in community worship and gather on the Lord’s day to be nourished by his word and by the bread of eternal life”. In this category we can also include those members of faithful who preserve a deep and sincere faith, expressing it in different ways, but seldom taking part in worship. Ordinary pastoral ministry seeks to help believers to grow spiritually so that they can respond to God’s love ever more fully in their lives. # 14

Questions:

1. The local parish church is a community of disciples who are being evangelized to follow Jesus in all things. How do you experience this evangelization this month?
2. How are you reaching out to the people who do not join us for the Sunday Eucharist?



A second area is that of “the baptized whose lives do not reflect the demands of Baptism”, who lack a meaningful relationship to the Church and no longer experience the consolation born of faith. The Church, in her maternal concern, tries to help them experience a conversion which will restore the joy of faith to their hearts and inspire a commitment to the Gospel. # 14

Question:

1. What has your parish community done to reach out to the people who have received almost nothing in their faith life?

THE THIRD GROUP

Lastly, we cannot forget that evangelization is first and foremost about preaching the Gospel to those who do not know Jesus Christ or who have always rejected him. Many of these are quietly seeking God, led by a yearning to see his face, even in countries of ancient Christian tradition. All of them have a right to receive the Gospel. Christians have the duty to proclaim the Gospel without excluding anyone. Instead of seeming to impose new obligations, they should appear as people who wish to share their joy, who point to a horizon of beauty and who invite others to a delicious banquet. It is not by proselytizing that the Church grows, but “by attraction”. # 14

Questions:

1. Are you aware of the great number of people in Canada who have never heard of Jesus Christ, who have never been taught how to pray and who are fearful of anything within the church building?
2. Everyone has a right to know Jesus Christ. Have you discussed your faith with friends and co-workers who do not know Christ?

THE CHURCH IS MISSIONARY TO THE CORE; IT IS WHO WE ARE!

Evangelization takes place in obedience to the missionary mandate of Jesus: “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” (Mt 28:19-20). In these verses we see how the risen Christ sent his followers to preach the Gospel in every time and place, so that faith in him might spread to every corner of the earth. #19



GOD'S WORD CHALLENGES US TO LEAVE OUR COMFORT ZONE

The word of God constantly shows us how God challenges those who believe in him "to go forth". Abraham received the call to set out for a new land (cf. Gen 12:1-3). Moses heard God's call: "Go, I send you" (Ex 3:10) and led the people towards the promised land (cf. Ex 3:17).

To Jeremiah, God says: "To all whom I send you, you shall go" (Jer 1:7). In our day Jesus' command to "go and make disciples" echoes in the changing scenarios and ever new challenges to the Church's mission of evangelization, and all of us are called to take part in this new missionary "going forth".

Each Christian and every community must discern the path that the Lord points out, but all of us are asked to obey his call to go forth from our own comfort zone in order to reach all the "peripheries" in need of the light of the Gospel. # 20

Questions:

1. How is the Holy Spirit challenging you to share the Word of God with others?
2. What are the forgotten corners of your town that need to have God planted among them?



God's word is unpredictable in its power. The Gospel speaks of a seed which, once sown, grows by itself, even as the farmer sleeps (Mk 4:26-29). The Church has to accept this unruly freedom of the word, which accomplishes what it wills in ways that surpass our calculations and ways of thinking. # 22

SUMMER WITH POPE FRANCIS

July 20, 2014

Slowly in the Church there is a growing awareness that our first responsibility is to make Christians of all peoples. It means bringing men and women to live with the same generosity of spirit as Jesus and to love others as Jesus does. *Google the full text at: APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION EVANGELII GAUDIUM*

THERE IS NO WEAKENING OF THE GOSPEL

John Paul II asked us to recognize that "there must be no lessening of the impetus to preach the Gospel" to those who are far from Christ, "because this is the first task of the Church". Indeed, "today missionary activity still represents the greatest challenge for the Church" and "the missionary task must remain foremost". What would happen if we were to take these words seriously? We would realize that missionary outreach is paradigmatic for all the Church's activity. Along these lines the Latin American bishops stated that we "cannot passively and calmly wait in our church buildings"; we need to move "from a pastoral ministry of mere conservation to a decidedly missionary pastoral ministry". This task continues to be a source of immense joy for the Church: "Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance" (Lk 15:7). # 15



Questions:

1. Do your fellow parishioners discuss our need to evangelize those who do not know about the works of God?
2. The Church should no be stuffed into the local building but rather should flow out onto the streets and spread the Good News that the Lord of God is working among us, today. How do you feel about that?