

JOHN PAUL II AND THE NEW EVANGELIZATION

Presentation to the Friends of John Paul Foundation Members

John Paul II Institute for Studies of Marriage and Family

Rev. Raymond Studzinski, OSB, PhD

The Catholic University of America

May 5, 2013

1. Catholics and the Terms – **Evangelical and Evangelization**
 - a. Vatican II – use of term
 - b. Paul VI 1963-1978 dedicated his pontificate to task of evangelization
2. **John Paul II (1978-2005)** Pilgrim Pope of Evangelization – 105 trips including 6 to US
 - a. First used term “new evangelization” during his visit to Poland in 1979
 - b. *The Lay Members of Christ’s Faithful People* (1988) exhortation on laity – provides summary of ideas regarding new evangelization
 - c. *Mission of the Redeemer* (1990) “No believer, no institution of the Church, can avoid this supreme duty: to proclaim Christ to all peoples” (RM 3)
 - d. *The Church in America*, Apostolic Exhortation 1999: “The new and unique situation in which the world and the Church find themselves at the threshold of the Third Millennium, and the urgent needs which result, mean that the mission of evangelization today calls for a new program which can be defined overall as the ‘new evangelization.’” (EIA 66)
 - e. *At the Close of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000* -- apostolic letter -- called for a new apostolic outreach . . . lived as the everyday commitment of Christian communities and groups (NMI 40)
3. **JP II’s basic outline of the program of new evangelization** – centered on person of Jesus and on the one eternal Gospel
 - a. **Distinct from foreign missions**
 - b. **Holy Spirit is principal agent** of evangelization
 - c. **Participation of every Christian** – “Today in particular, the pressing pastoral task of the new evangelization calls for involvement of the **entire People of God, and requires a new fervor, new methods and new expression for the announcing and witnessing of the Gospel.** (Pastores Dabo Vobis 18)
 - i. **Parish** should be “the center of the new evangelization”
 - ii. **Family**, a “domestic church,” -- a powerful instrument of evangelization
 - d. **Goals of the New Evangelization**
 - i. First goal: **conversion** -- JPII: “The encounter with the living Jesus is the path to conversion, communion, and solidarity. To the extent that these goals are reached, there will emerge an ever increasing dedication to the new evangelization.” (EIA 7)

- ii. Second goal is the **transformation of culture** -- JPII: "The new evangelization calls for a clearly conceived, serious and well organized effort to evangelize culture" (ELA)

4. **Basic Methods of the New Evangelization**

- a. **Love** – most important method
 - i. JPII: "Sharing Christ's burning love for souls" takes "the form of concern, tenderness, compassion, openness, availability, and interest in people's problems" (RM 89)
- b. **Proclamation – preaching and teaching (catechesis)** -- proclaiming Gospel in word through personal contact, with hope of facilitating contact with Christ through sacraments
- c. **Authentic Christian Witness** – first and most fundamental method
 - i. JPII: "The first requirement of the new evangelization is the *actual witness of Christians who live by the Gospel.*"
 - ii. JPII: Evangelization teaches the art of living and this art can be communicated only by one "who is the Gospel personified"
 - iii. JPII: "It is important to recall that evangelization involves *conversion*, that is, interior change." (RM 42)

5. **An Ancient Practice in the Service of the New Evangelization**

- a. Call for the New Evangelization and the Message for the Year of Faith -- Call for re-immersing ourselves in the Gospels and the Scriptures
- b. What is being encouraged in particular is the ancient practice of *lectio divina* (*divine reading*) - a meditative, monastic way of reading the Scriptures
 - i. Illuminated books as a clue to an ancient way
 - ii. Written page regarded more like a musical score
 - iii. scriptures speak to the present moments of people's lives
 - iv. "Today if you hear God's voice, harden not your hearts" (Psalm 95)
- c. Scriptures -- Many Layers of Meaning -- Always more meaning to be discovered
- d. How to do it: 5 Simple Steps to Religious Reading –*Lectio Divina*
 - i. Prepare -- matter of quieting down
 - ii. hear (read) -- discern meanings – surface & deeper ones
 - iii. Make connections to your Christian faith and life
 - iv. Hear a personal invitation in the text
 - v. Respond to the moral challenge in the text

6. **Religious Reading as Larger Process**

- a. Reading -- receiving a word from the Lord; dialogue with the passage
- b. Meditation -- carrying and chewing over that word
- c. Prayer -- response to the Word in your words about feelings, concerns
- d. Contemplation -- resting in experience of God who has spoken to you