

## **Archbishop Rowan Williams Address to the Synod of Bishops**

**"To be Fully Human is to be Recreated in the Image of Christ's Humanity"**

VATICAN CITY, OCT. 11, 2012 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Here is the text of His Grace Dr. Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury and Primate of All England and the Anglican Communion, during his address to the Synod of Bishops.

\* \* \*

Your Holiness, Reverend Fathers,

brothers and sisters in Christ - dear Friends

1. I am deeply honored by the Holy Father's invitation to speak in this gathering: as the Psalmist says, "Ecce quam bonum et quam jucundum habitare fratres in unum". The gathering of bishops in Synod for the good of all Christ's people is one of those disciplines that sustain the health of Christ's Church. And today especially we cannot forget that great gathering of "fratres in unum" that was the Second Vatican Council, which did so much for the health of the Church and helped the Church to recover so much of the energy needed to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ effectively in our age. For so many of my own generation, even beyond the boundaries of the Roman Catholic Church, that Council was a sign of great promise, a sign that the Church was strong enough to ask itself some demanding questions about whether its culture and structures were adequate to the task of sharing the Gospel with the complex, often rebellious, always restless mind of the modern world.

2. The Council was, in so many ways, a rediscovery of evangelistic concern and passion, focused not only on the renewal of the Church's own life but on its credibility in the world. Texts such as *Lumen gentium* and *Gaudium et spes* laid out a fresh and joyful vision of how the unchanging reality of Christ living in his Body on earth through the gift of the Holy Spirit might speak in new words to the society of our age and even to those of other faiths. It is not surprising that we are still, fifty years later, struggling with many of the same questions and with the implications of the Council; and I take it that this Synod's concern with the new evangelization is part of that continuing exploration of the Council's legacy.

3. But one of the most important aspects of the theology of the second Vaticanum was a renewal of Christian anthropology. In place of an often strained and artificial neo-scholastic account of how grace and nature were related in the constitution of human beings, the Council built on the greatest insights of a theology that had returned to earlier and richer sources - the theology of

spiritual geniuses like Henri de Lubac, who reminded us of what it meant for early and mediaeval Christianity to speak of humanity as made in God's image and of grace as perfecting and transfiguring that image so long overlaid by our habitual 'inhumanity'. In such a light, to proclaim the Gospel is to proclaim that it is at last possible to be properly human: the Catholic and Christian faith is a 'true humanism', to borrow a phrase from another genius of the last century, Jacques Maritain.

4. Yet de Lubac is clear what this does not mean. We do not replace the evangelistic task by a campaign of 'humanization'. 'Humanize before Christianizing?' he asks - 'If the enterprise succeeds, Christianity will come too late: its place will be taken. And who thinks that Christianity has no humanizing value?' So de Lubac writes in his wonderful collection of aphorisms, *Paradoxes of Faith*. It is the faith itself that shapes the work of humanizing and the humanizing enterprise will be empty without the definition of humanity given in the Second Adam. Evangelization, old or new, must be rooted in a profound confidence that we have a distinctive human destiny to show and share with the world. There are many ways of spelling this out, but in these brief remarks I want to concentrate on one aspect in particular.

5. To be fully human is to be recreated in the image of Christ's humanity; and that humanity is the perfect human 'translation' of the relationship of the eternal Son to the eternal Father, a relationship of loving and adoring self-giving, a pouring out of life towards the Other. Thus the humanity we are growing into in the Spirit, the humanity that we seek to share with the world as the fruit of Christ's redeeming work, is a contemplative humanity. St Edith Stein observed that we begin to understand theology when we see God as the 'First Theologian', the first to speak out the reality of divine life, because 'all speaking about God presupposes God's own speaking'; in an analogous way we could say that we begin to understand contemplation when we see God as the first contemplative, the eternal paradigm of that selfless attention to the Other that brings not death but life to the self. All contemplating of God presupposes God's own absorbed and joyful knowing of himself and gazing upon himself in the trinitarian life.

6. To be contemplative as Christ is contemplative is to be open to all the fullness that the Father wishes to pour into our hearts. With our minds made still and ready to receive, with our self-generated fantasies about God and ourselves reduced to silence, we are at last at the point where we may begin to grow. And the face we need to show to our world is the face of a humanity in endless growth towards love, a humanity so delighted and engaged by the glory of what we look towards that we are prepared to embark on a journey without end to find our way more deeply into it, into the heart of the trinitarian life. St Paul speaks (in II Cor 3.18) of how 'with our unveiled faces reflecting the glory of the Lord', we are transfigured with a greater and greater radiance. That is the face we seek to show to our fellow-human beings.

7. And we seek this not because we are in search of some private 'religious experience' that will make us feel secure or holy. We seek it because in this self-forgetting gazing towards the light of God in Christ we learn how to look at one another and at the whole of God's creation. In the early Church, there was a clear understanding that we needed to advance from the self-understanding or self-contemplation that taught us to discipline our greedy instincts and cravings to the 'natural contemplation' that perceived and venerated the wisdom of God in the order of the world and allowed us to see created reality for what it truly was in the sight of God - rather than what it was in terms of how we might use it or dominate it. And from there grace would lead us forward into true 'theology', the silent gazing upon God that is the goal of all our discipleship.

8. In this perspective, contemplation is very far from being just one kind of thing that Christians do: it is the key to prayer, liturgy, art and ethics, the key to the essence of a renewed humanity that is capable of seeing the world and other subjects in the world with freedom - freedom from self-oriented, acquisitive habits and the distorted understanding that comes from them. To put it boldly, contemplation is the only ultimate answer to the unreal and insane world that our financial systems and our advertising culture and our chaotic and unexamined emotions encourage us to inhabit. To learn contemplative practice is to learn what we need so as to live truthfully and honestly and lovingly. It is a deeply revolutionary matter.

9. In his autobiography Thomas Merton describes an experience not long after he had entered the monastery where he was to spend the rest of his life (*Elected Silence*, p.303). He had contracted flu, and was confined to the infirmary for a few days, and, he says, he felt a 'secret joy' at the opportunity this gave him for prayer - and 'to do everything that I want to do, without having to run all over the place answering bells.' He is forced to recognize that this attitude reveals that 'All my bad habits...had sneaked into the monastery with me and had received the religious vesture along with me: spiritual gluttony, spiritual sensuality, spiritual pride.' In other words, he is trying to live the Christian life with the emotional equipment of someone still deeply wedded to the search for individual satisfaction. It is a powerful warning: we have to be very careful in our evangelization not simply to persuade people to apply to God and the life of the spirit all the longings for drama, excitement and self-congratulation that we so often indulge in our daily lives. It was expressed even more forcefully some decades ago by the American scholar of religion, Jacob Needleman, in a controversial and challenging book called *Lost Christianity: the words of the Gospel*, he says, are addressed to human beings who 'do not yet exist'. That is to say, responding in a life-giving way to what the Gospel requires of us means a transforming of our whole self, our feelings and thoughts and imaginings. To be converted to the faith does not mean simply acquiring a new set of beliefs, but becoming a new person, a person in communion with God and others through Jesus Christ.

10. Contemplation is an intrinsic element in this transforming process. To learn to look to God without regard to my own instant satisfaction, to learn to scrutinize and to relativize the cravings and fantasies that arise in me - this is to allow God to be God, and thus to allow the prayer of Christ, God's own relation to God, to come alive in me. Invoking the Holy Spirit is a matter of asking the third person of the Trinity to enter my spirit and bring the clarity I need to see where I am in slavery to cravings and fantasies and to give me patience and stillness as God's light and love penetrate my inner life. Only as this begins to happen will I be delivered from treating the gifts of God as yet another set of things I may acquire to make me happy, or to dominate other people. And as this process unfolds, I become more free-to borrow a phrase of St Augustine (Confessions IV.7)-to 'love human beings in a human way', to love them not for what they may promise me, to love them not as if they were there to provide me with lasting safety and comfort, but as fragile fellow-creatures held in the love of God. I discover (as we noted earlier) how to see other persons and things for what they are in relation to God, not to me. And it is here that true justice as well as true love has its roots.

11. The human face that Christians want to show to the world is a face marked by such justice and love, and thus a face formed by contemplation, by the disciplines of silence and the detaching of the self from the objects that enslave it and the unexamined instincts that can deceive it. If evangelization is a matter of showing the world the 'unveiled' human face that reflects the face of the Son turned towards the Father, it must carry with it a serious commitment to promoting and nurturing such prayer and practice. It should not need saying that this is not at all to argue that 'internal' transformation is more important than action for justice; rather, it is to insist that the clarity and energy we need for doing justice requires us to make space for the truth, for God's reality to come through. Otherwise our search for justice or for peace becomes another exercise of human will, undermined by human self-deception. The two callings are inseparable, the calling to 'prayer and righteous action', as the Protestant martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer put it, writing from his prison cell in 1944. True prayer purifies the motive, true justice is the necessary work of sharing and liberating in others the humanity we have discovered in our contemplative encounter.

12. Those who know little and care less about the institutions and hierarchies of the Church these days are often attracted and challenged by lives that exhibit something of this. It is the new and renewed religious communities that most effectively reach out to those who have never known belief or who have abandoned it as empty and stale. When the Christian history of our age is written especially, though not only, as regards Europe and North America-we shall see how central and vital was the witness of places like Taizé or Bose, but also of more traditional communities that have become focal points for the exploration of a humanity broader and deeper than social habit encourages. And the great spiritual networks, Sant' Egidio, the Focolare,

Comunione e Liberazione, these too show the same phenomenon; they make space for a profounder human vision because in their various ways all of them offer a discipline of personal and common life that is about letting the reality of Jesus come alive in us.

13. And, as these examples show, the attraction and challenge we are talking about can generate commitments and enthusiasms across historic confessional lines. We have become used to talking about the imperative importance of 'spiritual ecumenism' these days; but this must not be a matter of somehow opposing the spiritual and the institutional, nor replacing specific commitments with a general sense of Christian fellow-feeling. If we have a robust and rich account of what the word 'spiritual' itself means, grounded in scriptural insights like those in the passages from II Corinthians that we noted earlier, we shall understand spiritual ecumenism as the shared search to nourish and sustain disciplines of contemplation in the hope of unveiling the face of the new humanity. And the more we keep apart from each other as Christians of different confessions, the less convincing that face will seem. I mentioned the Focolare movement a moment ago: you will recall that the basic imperative in the spirituality of Chiara Lubich was 'to make yourself one' - one with the crucified and abandoned Christ, one through him with the Father, one with all those called to this unity and so one with the deepest needs of the world. 'Those who live unity ... live by allowing themselves to penetrate always more into God. They grow always closer to God ... and the closer they get to him, the closer they get to the hearts of their brothers and sisters' (Chiara Lubich: *Essential Writings*, p.37). The contemplative habit strips away an unthinking superiority towards other baptized believers and the assumption that I have nothing to learn from them. Insofar as the habit of contemplation helps us approach all experience as gift, we shall always be asking what it is that the brother or sister has to share with us - even the brother or sister who is in one way or another separated from us or from what we supposed to be the fullness of communion. "Quam bonum et quam jucundum...".

14. In practice, this might suggest that wherever initiatives are being taken to reach out in new ways to a lapsed Christian or post-Christian public, there should be serious work done on how such outreach can be grounded in some ecumenically shared contemplative practice. In addition to the striking way in which Taizé has developed an international liturgical 'culture' accessible to a great variety of people, a network like the World Community for Christian Meditation, with its strong Benedictine roots and affiliations, has opened up fresh possibilities here. What is more, this community has worked hard at making contemplative practice accessible to children and young people, and this needs the strongest possible encouragement. Having seen at first hand in Anglican schools in Britain-how warmly young children can respond to the invitation offered by meditation in this tradition, I believe its potential for introducing young people to the depths of our faith to be very great indeed. And for those who have drifted away from the regular practice

of sacramental faith, the rhythms and practices of Taizé or the WCCM are often a way back to this sacramental heart and hearth.

15. What people of all ages recognize in these practices is the possibility, quite simply, of living more humanly - living with less frantic acquisitiveness, living with space for stillness, living in the expectation of learning, and most of all, living with an awareness that there is a solid and durable joy to be discovered in the disciplines of self-forgetfulness that is quite different from the gratification of this or that impulse of the moment. Unless our evangelization can open the door to all this, it will run the risk of trying to sustain faith on the basis of an un-transformed set of human habits - with the all too familiar result that the Church comes to look unhappily like so many purely human institutions, anxious, busy, competitive and controlling. In a very important sense, a true enterprise of evangelization will always be a re-evangelization of ourselves as Christians also, a rediscovery of why our faith is different, transfiguring - a recovery of our own new humanity.

16. And of course it happens most effectively when we are not planning or struggling for it. To turn to de Lubac once again, 'He who will best answer the needs of his time will be someone who will not have first sought to answer them' (op. cit. pp.111-2); and 'The man who seeks sincerity, instead of seeking truth in self-forgetfulness, is like the man who seeks to be detached instead of laying himself open in love' (p.114). The enemy of all proclamation of the Gospel is self-consciousness, and, by definition, we cannot overcome this by being more self-conscious. We have to return to St Paul and ask, "Where are we looking?" Do we look anxiously to the problems of our day, the varieties of unfaithfulness or of threat to faith and morals, the weakness of the institution? Or are we seeking to look to Jesus, to the unveiled face of God's image in the light of which we see the image further reflected in ourselves and our neighbors?

17. That simply reminds us that evangelization is always an overflow of something else - the disciple's journey to maturity in Christ, a journey not organized by the ambitious ego but the result of the prompting and drawing of the Spirit in us. In our considerations of how we are once again to make the Gospel of Christ compellingly attractive to men and women of our age, I hope we never lose sight of what makes it compelling to ourselves, to each one of us in our diverse ministries. So I wish you joy in these discussions - not simply clarity or effectiveness in planning, but joy in the promise of the vision of Christ's face, and in the foreshadowing of that fulfillment in the joy of communion with each other here and now.

[email this article](#) | [print this article](#) | [comment this article](#)

[top](#)

---

## VATICAN DOSSIER

---

### **Pope Benedict XVI Commences Year of Faith in Saint Peter's Square**

**Year of Faith "linked harmoniously with the Church's whole path over the last fifty years" says Pontiff**

By Ann Schneible

ROME, OCTOBER 11, 2012 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Pope Benedict XVI, in his homily for the opening Mass of the Year of Faith, recalled how the Second Vatican Council was "animated by a desire... to immerse itself anew in the Christian mystery so as to re-propose it fruitfully to contemporary man."

The Year of Faith, which the Holy Father commenced today with Mass in Saint Peter's Square, coincides with the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council. To commemorate these two occasions together, Pope Benedict said in his homily, the celebrations were reminiscent of the Council through a variety of signs, such as the enthronement of a copy of the Book of the Gospels used at the Council, and the consignment of the seven final Messages of the Council. "These signs," Pope Benedict "help us not only to remember, they also offer us the possibility of going beyond commemorating. They invite us to enter more deeply into the spiritual movement which characterized Vatican II, to make it ours and to develop it according to its true meaning. And its true meaning was and remains faith in Christ, the apostolic faith, animated by the inner desire to communicate Christ to individuals and all people, in the Church's pilgrimage along the pathways of history."

Today's commencement of the Year of faith is "linked harmoniously with the Church's whole path over the last fifty years: from the Council, through the Magisterium of the Servant of God Paul VI, who proclaimed a Year of Faith in 1967, up to the Great Jubilee of the year 2000, with which Blessed John Paul II re-proposed to all humanity Jesus Christ as the one Savior, yesterday, today and forever. Between these two Popes, Paul VI and John Paul II, there was a deep and profound convergence, precisely upon Christ as the centre of the cosmos and of history, and upon the apostolic eagerness to announce him to the world."

The Council, Pope Benedict recalled, was "animated by a desire, as it were, to immerse itself anew in the Christian mystery so as to re-propose it fruitfully to contemporary man. The Servant of God Paul VI, two years after the end of the Council session, expressed it in this way: 'Even if the Council does not deal expressly with the faith, it talks about it on every page, it recognizes its vital and supernatural character, it assumes it to be whole and strong, and it builds upon its

teachings. We need only recall some of the Council's statements in order to realize the essential importance that the Council, consistent with the doctrinal tradition of the Church, attributes to the faith, the true faith, which has Christ for its source and the Church's Magisterium for its channel.'" (General Audience, 8 March 1967)

At the time of the Council, the Holy Father continued, "there was an emotional tension as we faced the common task of making the truth and beauty of the faith shine out in our time, without sacrificing it to the demands of the present or leaving it tied to the past: the eternal presence of God resounds in the faith, transcending time."

Pope Benedict said that he believed that the most important thing "is to revive in the whole Church that positive tension, that yearning to announce Christ again to contemporary man. But, so that this interior thrust towards the new evangelization neither remain just an idea nor be lost in confusion, it needs to be built on a concrete and precise basis, and this basis is the documents of the Second Vatican Council, the place where it found expression."

"If today the Church proposes a new Year of Faith and a new evangelization," the Holy Father continued, "it is not to honor an anniversary, but because there is more need of it, even more than there was fifty years ago! And the reply to be given to this need is the one desired by the Popes, by the Council Fathers, and contained in its documents."

Pope Benedict referred to the first reading of Mass today, which "spoke to us of the wisdom of the wayfarer (cf. Sir34:9-13): the journey is a metaphor for life, and the wise wayfarer is one who has learned the art of living, and can share it with his brethren – as happens to pilgrims along the Way of Saint James or similar routes which, not by chance, have again become popular in recent years."

"How come so many people today feel the need to make these journeys?" the Pope asked. "Is it not because they find there, or at least intuit, the meaning of our existence in the world? This, then, is how we can picture the Year of Faith: a pilgrimage in the deserts of today's world, taking with us only what is necessary: neither staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money, nor two tunics – as the Lord said to those he was sending out on mission (cf. Lk 9:3), but the Gospel and the faith of the Church, of which the Council documents are a luminous expression, as is the Catechism of the Catholic Church, published twenty years ago."

[email this article](#) | [print this article](#) | [comment this article](#)

[top](#)



---

## NEWS BRIEFS

---

### **General Director of Legion of Christ to Go On Sabbatical**

#### **Current Vicar General Will Assume Functions Temporarily**

ROME, OCT. 11, 2012 (Zenit.org).- Today, the Legion of Christ issued a press release regarding the current General Director of the Legion of Christ, Fr. Alvaro Corcuera, LC, who has requested a sabbatical to bolster his health and energy. Cardinal Velasio De Paolis has temporarily relieved him from his functions as General Director. These functions will be assumed by the current Vicar General, Fr. Sylvester Heereman, LC, until the upcoming General Chapter is convoked, expected to be at the end of 2013 or the beginning of 2014.

Cardinal De Paolis, the Delegate of the Pope for Regnum Christi and the Legion of Christ, explains in his letter that Fr. Alvaro's health was worrying him: "His efforts," says the Cardinal, "carried out in a climate that was frequently one of suffering and misunderstanding, have weakened his energies to the point of causing us to fear that if he continued his efforts, especially in this year leading up to the General Chapter we might have compromised his health."

The Legion of Christ's spokesman, Fr. Benjamin Clariond, confirms that the General Director "is suffering from fatigue due to the wear and tear of these years. The Cardinal, noticing how his health has deteriorated, and to prevent it from being definitively compromised, suggested the idea that he could take some time off before the Chapter. Fr. Alvaro, after considering it, requested permission to set his functions aside until the Chapter. His request was granted," says Fr. Clariond.

Fr. Alvaro, who was named General Director seven years ago, explains in his letter, "I don't find it easy to admit, but ... I do not have the health and energy necessary to face responsibly the demands of the general governance in the present time of the history of the Legion and Regnum Christi. Though I am not gravely ill, we do need someone who is in full health. For this reason,... I have resolved before God to apply number 509 of our Constitutions and hand over to our Vicar General the exercise of my functions as General Director."

Cardinal Velasio De Paolis insisted that it needs to be clear that Fr. Alvaro continues being the General Director: "As you can see, this is not a resignation from his position nor are we designating a new, substitute General Director but simply something in the order of a sabbatical year that has been requested by and granted to the General Director. He remains in the position

but ceases to exercise its functions until the next General Chapter is convoked," attests De Paolis.

From October 15 until the General Chapter is convoked – which is usually several months before it takes place – Fr. Sylvester Heereman, currently the Vicar General, will exercise the faculties of General Director.

[email this article](#) | [print this article](#) | [comment this article](#)

[top](#)

---

## On The Road To Sainthood

---

### **Blessed Marianne Cope**

*As the Church prepares to welcome seven new saints this month, ZENIT will feature an article, from Oct. 11 -21, on each of these remarkable servants of God.*

By Fr. John Flynn

ROME, OCT. 11, 2012 ([Zenit.org](http://Zenit.org)).- Barbara Koob - now known as Cope was born on 23 January 1838 in SE Hessen, West Germany. She was one of 10 children born to Peter Koob, a farmer, and Barbara Witzzenbacher Koob. The year after Barbara's birth, the family moved to the United States.

The Koob family went to Utica, in the State of New York, where they became members of St Joseph's Parish.

Barbara felt called to religious life at an early age, but could not follow her vocation for a number of years due to family obligations. Being the oldest child at home, she went to work in a factory after completing eighth grade in order to support her family when her father became ill.

In 1862 at age 24, Barbara entered the Sisters of St Francis in Syracuse, N.Y. On 19 November 1862 she received the religious habit and the name "Sr. Marianne", and the following year she made her religious profession and began as a teacher and later principal in several elementary schools in New York State.

In 1883, Mother Marianne, now the Provincial Mother in Syracuse, received a letter from a Catholic priest asking for help in managing hospitals and schools in the Hawaiian Islands, to work with leprosy patients.

The letter touched Mother Marianne's heart and she replied: "I am hungry for the work and I wish with all my heart to be one of the chosen ones, whose privilege it will be to sacrifice themselves for the salvation of the souls of the poor Islanders.... I am not afraid of any disease, hence, it would be my greatest delight even to minister to the abandoned "lepers".

#### Working with lepers

She and six other Sisters of St Francis arrived in Honolulu in November 1883. With Mother Marianne as supervisor, their main task was to manage the Kaka'ako Branch Hospital on Oahu, which served as a receiving station for patients with Hansen's disease gathered from all over the islands.

The Sisters quickly set to work cleaning the hospital and tending to its 200 patients. By 1885, they had made major improvements to the living conditions and treatment of the patients.

In November of that year, they also founded the Kapi'olani Home inside the hospital compound, established to care for the healthy daughters of Hansen's disease patients at Kaka'ako and Kalawao. The unusual decision to open a home for healthy children on leprosy hospital premises was made because only the Sisters would care for those so closely related to people with the dreaded disease.

#### St. Damien and Mother Marianne

Mother Marianne met Fr Damien de Veuster, now known as St. Damien of Molokai, who was canonized by Pope Benedict XVI on October 11, 2009, for the first time in January 1884. Two years later, in 1886, after he had been diagnosed with Hansen's disease, Mother Marianne alone gave hospitality to the outcast priest upon hearing that his illness made him an unwelcome visitor to Church and Government leaders in Honolulu.

In 1887, when a new Government took charge in Hawaii, its officials decided to close the Oahu Hospital and receiving station and to reinforce the former alienation policy. The unanswered question: Who would care for the sick, who once again would be sent to a settlement for exiles on the Kalaupapa Peninsula on the island of Molokai?

In 1888, Mother Marianne responded to the plea for help and said: "We will cheerfully accept the work...". She arrived in Kalaupapa several months before Fr Damien's death together with

Sr. Leopoldina Burns and Sr. Vincentia McCormick, and was able to console the ailing priest by assuring him that she would provide care for the patients at the Boys' Home at Kalawao that he had founded.

On April 15, 1889, just two weeks after the death of Father Damien, at a meeting of the board of health in Honolulu, Mother Marianne was officially chosen by the government leadership to be Father Damien's successor at Boy's Home.

Mother Marianne never returned to Syracuse. She died in Hawaii on 9 August 1918 of natural causes.

-- -- --

On the NET:

For more information on Blessed Marianne Cope, go to <http://blessedmariannecope.org/index.html>

[email this article](#) | [print this article](#) | [comment this article](#)

[top](#)

---

## ROME NOTES

---

### **The New Evangelization in the Modern World**

#### **The Post-Conciliar Church's Role in the Salvation of Souls is Crucial**

By Edward Pentin

ROME, OCT. 11, 2012 (Zenit.org).-This month is filled with significant anniversaries for the Church: not only does today mark 50 years since the opening of the Second Vatican Council, but another highly significant anniversary fast approaching is that of Emperor Constantine's victory at Milvian Bridge.

The Rome battle that took place on October 28th 1,700 years ago marked the beginning of Constantine's conversion, ending 300 years of Christian persecution – a time when Christians had been subjected to violence and murder for refusing to worship the god of the state.

"Constantine's victory led to an edict of toleration that resulted in the birth of Christian civilization as we came to know it: churches, universities, hospitals, orphanages and other legacies" that would take root in the high Middle Ages, says Edmund Mazza, a professor of history and political science at Azusa Pacific University in Los Angeles.

But he argues "we've now come full circle." The modern world, he says, "has forgotten its Christian origins, those of tolerance, the university, the Christian foundations of art and science." Instead of erecting triumphal crosses and cathedrals like St. Peter's and St. John Lateran "we see Christian symbols are being torn down or not permitted."

Speaking to ZENIT on the side lines of an international Rome conference he had organized, titled: "Mary, Sign of Faith (and Only Hope)," Mazza highlighted the main error of our times: that we've lost the sense of transcendent. "People are concerned about saving the planet, global warming, and so forth, and there's certain legitimate concerns here, but what we've lost is an awareness of the salvation of the soul," he says.

"Without getting too dramatic about it, one could say we're either nearing the End Times or we're in the End Times, because what we have is the disintegration of Christian civilization." He draws comparisons with the year 312 A.D., the date of Constantine's victory, which led to an era of unprecedented culture and peace for the Church (though not of course without its problems), and the apparitions at Our Lady of Fatima at the beginning of the 20th century.

Mazza also notes that this month is also the 95th anniversary of the Miracle of the Sun at Fatima, when tens of thousands of people witnessed extraordinary solar activity. The miracle, officially recognized by the Vatican in 1930, took place soon after the famous series of apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary to Lucia, Francisco, and Jacinta.

"It foretold the Bolsheviks would take over Russia, institute a secular socialism where government controls everything, tells everyone what to do, and where government contradicts the people's religion, Christianity in particular," says Mazza. "And what do we see today? In America, the Church is being persecuted now quite openly; individual Christians, let alone Church institutions, are going to be forced to pay for contraception and abortifacients, to go against their moral principles." He adds: "It's Diocletian's persecution all over again: if you refuse to follow the norms of state, you're going to suffer."

During the apparitions, Our Lady of Fatima talks about the "errors of Russia", meaning the errors of atheism and socialism which would lead to the deaths of 60 million people in the 20th century. "Russia will spread her errors throughout the world," she warned, "raising up wars and

persecutions against the Church, the good will be martyred, the Holy Father will have much to suffer, various nations will be annihilated. "

But even though Communism has ended, the remnants of it are still very much alive. Speaking at the same Rome conference was Edward Lucas, a correspondent for The Economist and author of a new book "Deception: The Untold Story of East-West Espionage Today."

Lucas explained that instead of spending millions of dollars on weapons as it did during the Cold War, Russia is now a state of espionage and deception, with a former KGB agent as its president – a remarkable reality if one imagines the Nazis had won World War II and then, after it had collapsed, they remained in power. For this reason, Mazza compares the errors of Russia to a vampire that refuses to die. "If you want to kill a vampire, you can't shoot it, you've got to use a wooden stake," he says, "and here, Jesus and Mary gave us the solution: the consecration of Russia."

He recalls that Blessed Pope John Paul II consecrated the whole world in 1984, but Russia has still not been singled out for consecration. "The only thing that will kill the errors of socialism and the dictatorship of relativism that the Pope has talked about is this," says Mazza. "We need the Pope and the bishops to take five minutes of a public ceremony in which they consecrate Russia to Mary's Immaculate Heart."

The Year of Faith may be the perfect time to do so.

\*\*\*

One of the perennial concerns about the post-conciliar Church is the weakening of an awareness of the Church's vital role in the salvation of souls. For the vast majority of people, salvation is pretty much a given: the broad way is to Heaven, they believe, but the narrow way leads to Hell.

"Many of our fellow Catholics look at the world like this," says Professor Ralph Martin, author of a fascinating new book "Will Many Be Saved? What Vatican II Actually Teaches and Its Implications for the New Evangelization, "and it is hugely problematic."

Martin stresses that of course, the truth is the exact opposite. Jesus says in Matthew 7:13-14: "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it."

He therefore strongly believes this significant teaching in Vatican II “hasn’t been paid sufficient attention to” and that clarification of this “amazing doctrinal confusion” is vital if the new evangelization is to have any effect at all.

He notes that in the council decree *Lumen Gentium*, it explains how those who are not Christian but are inculpably ignorant, seeking God seriously, trying to live their life according to their conscience assisted by Grace, can be saved. But he argues that “almost everyone” ignores the next few words which says “Often men, deceived by the Evil One, have become vain in their reasonings and have exchanged the truth of God for a lie, serving the creature rather than the Creator.”

For this reason, the urgency for evangelization remains, Martin says, because “we’re not talking about a neutral environment, we’re talking about where the world of flesh and the Devil are doing their best to put people on the broad way or keep them there.”

He adds: “Lots of people aren’t seeking God and really do need to hear the Gospel, and be called to repentance, faith, baptism and conversion in order to be saved.” Christianity, he continues, “isn’t just about enriching somebody’s life. For many people, it’s a matter of Heaven or Hell.”

He stresses that simply saying one believes in God or that one is a good person isn’t salvific, but rather some kind of surrender to God and a change of life. “Nobody pays any attention to that,” he says. “They just think it’s as easy as walking down the street to be saved because we’re all good people and God’s merciful. But that’s not what’s being taught there. The reality of the world, the flesh and the Devil is being reaffirmed.”

“This truth needs to be brought forward at this time because all our exhortations to be more enthusiastic about evangelisation, more zealous, are going to fall on semi-deaf ears unless people really believe [the Gospel] will make a significant difference to people’s lives – not just for this life, but for eternity.”

[email this article](#) | [print this article](#) | [comment this article](#)

[top](#)

---

## DOCUMENTS

---

**Full Text of Interventions at Synod of Bishops**

VATICAN CITY, OCT. 11, 2012 (Zenit.org).- Here is the Official Summary and Full Texts of yesterday's Interventions at the Synod of Bishops on the New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Faith.

\* \* \*

### **FIFTH GENERAL CONGREGATION (WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 10 2012 - AFTERNOON)**

- LIST OF MODERATORS AND RELATORS OF THE WORKING GROUPS
- INTERVENTIONS IN THE HALL (CONTINUATION)

Yesterday, Wednesday, October 10, 2012, at 16:30, with the recitation of Psalm 22 (23), the Fifth General Congregation began, with the continuation of the interventions by the Synodal Fathers in the Hall on the theme of the Synod «The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith».

The President Delegate on duty was H. Em. Card. Laurent MONSENGWO PASINYA, Archbishop of Kinshasa (DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO).

At 18:00, in the presence of the Holy Father, the President Delegate gave the floor to H. G. Rowan Douglas WILLIAMS, Archbishop of Canterbury, Primate of all England and the Anglican Communion (GREAT BRITAIN).

At the end of the Congregation, the Archbishop of Canterbury was received by the Holy Father in an audience in the study of the Synodal Hall.

A time for free interventions followed.

At this General Congregation, which ended at 07:00 p.m. with the prayer of Angelus Domini, 250 Fathers were present.

#### LIST OF MODERATORS AND RELATORS OF THE WORKING GROUPS

At the opening of the Fifth General Congregation the Secretary General of the Synod of Bishops H. Exc. Mons. Nikola ETEROVIĆ, Tit. Archbishop of Cibale (VATICAN CITY) read the List of Moderators and Relators of the Working Groups, elected in the First Session this morning.

Moderators

Anglicus A

- H. Em. Rev. Card. Wilfrid Matthew NAPIER, O.F.M., Archbishop of Durban (SOUTH AFRICA)



#### Anglicus B

- H. Exc. Rev. Mons. Diarmuid MARTIN, Archbishop of Dublin (IRELAND)

#### Anglicus C

- H. Em. Rev. Card. Oswald GRACIAS, Archbishop of Bombay, General Secretary of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) (INDIA)

#### Anglicus D

- H. Em. Rev. Card. George PELL, Archbishop of Sydney (AUSTRALIA)

#### Gallicus A

- H. Em. Rev. Card. Jean-Louis TAURAN, President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (VATICAN CITY)

#### Gallicus B

- H. Exc. Rev. Mons. Yves PATENÔTRE, Archbishop of Sens (FRANCE)

#### Germanicus

- H. Exc. Rev. Mons. Ägidius Johann ZSIFKOVICS, Bishop of Eisenstadt (AUSTRIA)

#### Hispanicus A

- H. Exc. Rev. Mons. Carlos AGUIAR RETES, Archbishop of Tlalnepantla, President of the Episcopal Conference, President of the Latin American Episcopal Council (C.E.L.A.M.) (MEXICO)

#### Hispanicus B

- H. Exc. Rev. Mons. Julio César TERÁN DUTARI, S.I., Bishop of Ibarra (ECUADOR)

#### Italicus A

- H. Em. Rev. Card. Leonardo SANDRI, Prefect of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches (VATICAN CITY)

#### Italicus B

- H. Em. Rev. Card. Angelo BAGNASCO, Archbishop of Genoa, President of the Episcopal Conference (ITALY)

#### Italicus C

- H. Em. Rev. Card. Fernando FILONI, Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples (VATICAN CITY)

#### Relators

Anglicus A

- H. Exc. Rev. Mons. Joseph Edward KURTZ, Archbishop of Louisville, Vice President of the Episcopal Conference (UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)

Anglicus B

- H. Exc. Rev. Mons. Bernard LONGLEY, Archbishop of Birmingham (GREAT BRITAIN (ENGLAND AND WALES))

Anglicus C

- H. Exc. Rev. Mons. Philip TARTAGLIA, Archbishop of Glasgow (SCOTLAND)

Anglicus D

- H. Exc. Rev. Mons. Kieran O'REILLY, S.M.A., Bishop of Killaloe (IRELAND)

Gallicus A

- H. Exc. Rev. Mons. Dominique REY, Bishop of Fréjus-Toulon (FRANCE)

Gallicus B

- H. Exc. Rev. Mons. Claude DAGENS, Archbishop of Angoulême (FRANCE)

Germanicus

- H. Exc. Rev. Mons. Ladislav NEMET, S.V.D., Bishop of Zrenjanin (SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO)

Hispanicus A

- H. Exc. Rev. Mons. Ricardo BLÁZQUEZ PÉREZ, Archbishop of Valladolid (SPAIN)

Hispanicus B

- H. Exc. Rev. Mons. Santiago Jaime SILVA RETAMALES, Titular Bishop of Bela, Auxiliary Bishop of Valparaíso, General Secretary of the Latin American Episcopal Council (C.E.L.A.M.) (COLOMBIA)

Italicus A

- H. Exc. Rev. Mons. Salvatore FISICHELLA, Titular Archbishop of Voghenza, President of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of New Evangelization (VATICAN CITY)

Italicus B

- H. Exc. Rev. Mons. Bruno FORTE, Archbishop of Chieti-Vasto (ITALY)

Italicus C

- Rev. F. Renato SALVATORE, M.I., Superior General of the Clerks Regular of the Ministers of the Sick (Camillians) (ITALY)

The following Fathers intervened:

- H. Em. Rev. Card. Jean-Louis TAURAN, President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (VATICAN CITY)
- H. Exc. Rev. Mons. Pascal WINTZER, Archbishop of Poitiers (FRANCE)
- H. Exc. Rev. Mons. Louis PELÂTRE, A.A., Titular Bishop of Sasima, Apostolic Vicar of Istanbul, Apostolic Administrator of the Apostolic Exarchate of Istanbul (TURKEY)
- H. Exc. Rev. Mons. Luis Augusto CASTRO QUIROGA, I.M.C., Archbishop of Tunja (COLOMBIA)
- H. Exc. Rev. Mons. Christopher Charles PROWSE, Bishop of Sale (AUSTRALIA)
- Rev. F. Adolfo NICOLÁS PACHÓN, S.I., Superior General of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits)
- H. Exc. Rev. Mons. Joseph KALLARANGATT, Bishop of Palai of Syro-Malabars (INDIA)
- H. Em. Rev. Card. Vinko PULJIĆ, Archbishop of Vrhbosna (BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA)
- H. Exc. Rev. Mons. Joseph ATANGA, S.I., Archbishop of Bertoua, President of the Episcopal Conference (CAMEROON)
- H. Exc. Rev. Mons. Sérgio DA ROCHA, Archbishop of Brasília (BRAZIL)
- H. Exc. Rev. Mons. Ricardo BLÁZQUEZ PÉREZ, Archbishop of Valladolid (SPAIN)
- H. Exc. Rev. Mons. Héctor Rubén AGUER, Archbishop of La Plata (ARGENTINA)
- H. Exc. Rev. Mons. Benedito Beni DOS SANTOS, Bishop of Lorena (BRAZIL)
- H. Exc. Rev. Mons. William Charles SKURLA, Archbishop of Pittsburg of the Byzantines, President of the Council of the Ruthenian Church (UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)
- Rev. F. Josep María ABELLA BATLLE, C.M.F., Superior General of the Missionary Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (Claretians)
- H. Em. Rev. Card. Stanisław DZIWIŚ, Archbishop of Kraków (POLAND)

The summaries of the interventions are published below:

- H. Em. Rev. Card. Jean-Louis TAURAN, President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (VATICAN CITY)

I am referring to no. 73 of the Instrumentum laboris.

We find there: "interreligious dialogue and discussion with the great religions of the East can be an opportunity for our Christian communities to deepen their understanding of our faith, in virtue of the questions that such a discussion inspires in us".

Christians, often ignorant of the content of their own faith and incapable because of this of living of and for it, are not capable of interreligious dialogue that always begins with the assertion of

one's own convictions: there is no room for syncretism or relativism! Faced with adepts from other religions with a strong religious identity, it is necessary to present motivated and doctrinally equipped Christians. This makes the new evangelization a priority to form coherent Christians, capable of demonstrating their faith, with simple words and without fear.

Interreligious dialogue thus becomes an occasion for deepening and witnessing one's faith. It seems to me that today the faithful must take up three challenges:

The challenge of identity: who is my God? Is my life in harmony with my convictions?

The challenge of alterity: those practicing a religion that is not mine are not necessarily an enemy, but instead a pilgrim of truth;

The challenge of pluralism: God is at work in each person, through ways known only to Him (AG 7).

Of course, this does not mean putting our faith in parentheses, bending before persecutions and discriminations, where so many of our brothers and sisters are the victims, especially Christians. Quite the contrary, one must denounce with great vigor the violence that wounds and kills. It is all the more unjustifiable when it bears the shield of a religion.

However, we must evoke the positive aspects just as much, such as daily amity which is expressed through the gestures of fraternity and proximity. The harmony between believers often contributes a spiritual dimension of life to the societies they are members of, the antidote to dehumanization and conflicts.

I think about, for example, the days we have lived in Lebanon. Most Holy Father, you recalled there that living together presupposes trust in others, the refusal of vengeance, the recognition of wrongdoings and the courage of forgiveness. Therefore, I quote, "Only in this way can there be growth in understanding and harmony between cultures and religions, and in genuine mutual esteem and respect for the rights of all" (Presidential Palace of Baabda 15.IX.12). And we heard the Mufti of the Republic state: "For us, Muslims, Christians are a treasure". We must also mention that the television Al Jazeera broadcast practically live the various meetings of this apostolic journey, so the message could thus extend to millions of Muslim families.

Amidst so many apprehensions, it would be healthy to mention these positive signs that pave the long way that leads to serene and fruitful dialogue.

On October 28th 1965, the Council Fathers, referring to the Eastern religious traditions, did not hesitate in stating that: "The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions... which nonetheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men" (Nostra Aetate, 2). We can without a doubt apply this principle to other religions.

In any case, despite the difficulties, the ambiguities and the drawbacks, none of the partners engaged in this dialogue between believers has ever questioned it! Perhaps because here or there, men and women have had the courage to persevere, thus showing that religious belief inspires peace, encourages solidarity, promotes justice and defends freedom.

[00102-02.02] [IN079] [Original text: French]

- H. Exc. Rev. Mons. Pascal WINTZER, Archbishop of Poitiers (FRANCE)

The Church in today's world has the mission of proclaiming the Gospel to the men of our times. In 50 years, the notion of "world" has gone from the singular to the plural: we are most certainly in a globalized but shattered world. From this the essential stake, that of unity, of communion, of societies, of individuals and of course of the one Church of Jesus Christ.

In 2012, at least in the West, the Catholic Church is distinct from society; present in it, however without totally covering it.

Just as the Lord listens to what is said about him: "Who do people say the Son of man is?" (Mt 16:13), the Church must also hear what is said of her; she is less one that gives of herself than the one who receives: of her Lord before all else, but also of what the people say about her.

I think that the term community should not be used in an exclusive way. Among those that follow the Lord, in the Gospel, there are disciples, but there are also crowds.

The bishops can only address a small first group, in following the Lord's example, they speak to all, especially to the others.

Community speaking seems dangerous to me and false if it is the only one in which we place ourselves.

The world has changed, and so has the Church's place in the world; to dream of a return of Christianity is a decoy, an illusion, and rests on the sacralization of a historical form of the presence of the Catholic Church.

The Church must not fear showing herself to the world, to show expose herself to the eyes of society. She must therefore, in her institutions, finances, manner of speaking clearly, be an audible and credible witness.

This means turning forwards, to live and say what is the Church's joy: her Lord.

[00063-02.04] [IN040] [Original text: French]

- H. Exc. Rev. Mons. Louis PELÂTRE, A.A., Titular Bishop of Sasima, Apostolic Vicar of Istanbul, Apostolic Administrator of the Apostolic Exarchate of Istanbul (TURKEY)

The Church of Turkey is in the continuity of the first evangelization of Asia Minor by the Apostles. After periods of prosperity, the fate of history at the beginning of the 20th century decreased the number of Christians to less than 1% of the population.

The recipients of evangelization today are: the small flock of practicing faithful, the mass of non-practicing Catholics, the other Christian faiths and almost the whole of the country's inhabitants, the practicing or sociological Muslims.

For these last ones, we are concerned by no. 74 of the Instrumentum laboris "These Churches

rightly serve as a reminder that evangelization cannot be measured in quantitative terms of success". The Redemptoris Missio no 55 and 56 clearly states that "dialogue is the path towards the Kingdom". This is what we can see when we see inter-religious activities taking place, so that the chorale that is made up of the 5 confessions play each other's religious chants together. In certain circumstances, the proclamation of Jesus Christ is also possible. The Catechism of the Catholic Church was translated into Turkish as well as other publications. The young generation learns about the faith through the internet. Having practically no access to public radios or televisions, we can however use these private networks used more by the evangelical Protestants than by the Catholics.

From this the need for well-prepared and qualified workers for the harvest that awaits us. This specific apostolate cannot be satisfied by good will and improvisation alone.

[00064-02.04] [IN041] [Original text: French]

- H. Exc. Rev. Mons. Luis Augusto CASTRO QUIROGA, I.M.C., Archbishop of Tunja (COLOMBIA)

Heart speaks to heart. The first annunciation comes from a heart that has lived in the first person the experience of Jesus and, in different ways, reaches another heart, for whom it is a novelty and a challenge. In this process there are three indispensable steps that can be summed up in the acronym MBS.

M: the Meeting of the disciple with Jesus, a meeting of love that is surprising, transforming and personal.

B: Being like Jesus. Origen observed that the mission of the Holy Spirit is that of making us like Jesus.

S: Showing others, as good witnesses, this experience of Jesus. That is, making the private public. Communicating what is lived. Living the experience, but to describe it, to sow it not on fertile ground but arid ground, where faith in Jesus is missing.

It is up to the Holy Spirit to ensure that this first announcement is transformed into the door of faith.

This simple formula: MBS - meeting - being - showing, must be accompanied by another one: GMD - Go and Make Disciples. This is a commandment of Jesus. I have referred only to the beginning of the new evangelization, the most overlooked aspects, the most forgotten ones, to the fact that we have to turn back and listen hard. It is like the first call before anything else. It is like what Jesus said to Zacchaeus: "I am to stay at your house today".

The first Christians, thanks to the power of the first announcement, took Jesus everywhere, but without being able to count on the support of culture, the state, religions or public opinion. This is the situation the Church finds itself in in many places throughout the world. We are called to invent, to build roads and new forms that help to sow the seed of the first announcement of Jesus in the lives of those who no longer believe in him.

[00065-02.03] [IN042] [Original text: Spanish]

- H. Exc. Rev. Mons. Christopher Charles PROWSE, Bishop of Sale (AUSTRALIA)

Both the Lineamenta (n.19) and the Instrumentum Laboris (n.139, 140), make the distinction between the INITIAL PROCLAMATION of the Gospel and CATECHESIS. The kerygmatic proclamation calls for conversion to the Risen Lord Jesus Christ through Baptism. Catechesis, in a distinct but not separate manner, promotes growth and instruction in the Christian Life. Both constitute one pastoral action in two aspects.

Clearly, with the magna carta document of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, much has been done over the last 20 years to express in compendium form the teachings of the Catholic Church. This has been a particular grace of the Holy Spirit. It continues to inspire catechesis throughout the Church.

Is it time now to attempt a similar kind of compilation on the initial proclamation of the Catholic Church? Over the centuries, how has the initial proclamation of the Gospel been expressed? What have been examples of the outpourings of the Holy Spirit in our Catholic history? What have been the great approaches to the initial proclamation expressed by the Saints and missionaries? In our own time, what examples are there of the "new" evangelization?

On this last point, the Instrumentum Laboris (n.141-146) lists, for example, World Youth Days, the Pope's Apostolic journeys, national and local popular missions and devotional gatherings, preaching, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and so on. Also, there is a great gift of the Holy Spirit in the New Ecclesial Movements. They assist in developing a "Culture of Pentecost". Both initial proclamation and catechesis together are to sing, in perfect harmony to the world, a duet that responds afresh to the Lord Jesus' command; "Go into the world and proclaim the Good News to the whole creation." (Mark 16:15)

[00066-02.04] [IN043] [Original text: English]

- Rev. F. Adolfo NICOLÁS PACHÓN, S.I., Superior General of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits)

A New Evangelization has to learn from the good and not-so-good points of the First Evangelization. I come from a tradition of Evangelization and Spirituality that encourages "Finding God in all things".

I am afraid that we, missionaries, have not done it with sufficient depth and, thus, have not enriched the Universal Church as the Church could expect from us. We have looked for Western signs of Faith and Sanctity and have not discovered how God had been at work in other peoples. This impoverishes all. We miss important clues, insights and discoveries.

We have learnt from the past as effective for communicating the Gospel: the way of humility, the awareness of human limitation when it comes to expressing the Spirit, the simplicity of the

message, generosity and joy in acknowledging goodness and holiness, our life as a factor of credibility, forgiveness and reconciliation, the message of the Cross in our own self-denial.

[00067-02.04] [IN044] [Original text: English]

- H. Exc. Rev. Mons. Joseph KALLARANGATT, Bishop of Palai of Syro-Malabars (INDIA)

The mission of the apostles and its continuation in the primitive Church remain the basic model for evangelization at all times as a mission often marked by martyrdom ... (IL 35). While speaking about the new evangelization, the Syriac Church Fathers have a unique role as they represent an extraordinary world of evangelization. From the historical and cultural point of view, the Syriac Orient is directly linked to the spiritual atmosphere of the biblical world. In the formative period of Christianity they had a dynamic and creative record of service to the Gospel and to the human culture. The Syriac Fathers had a great passion for the Bible and its interpretations. Aphrahat, Ephrem, Cyrillona, etc .. have produced a mosaic of patterns in the field of evangelization. Their commentaries are genuine faith interpretations of Bible which use a wealth of symbols for conveying various levels of meaning. Their biblical commentaries are mystical, holistic, mystagogical, symbolic and allegorical. They are mainly catechetical homilies. They also made use of poetry as the best tool for evangelization.

In the Lineamenta a few Fathers are mentioned (notes 7, and 19) whereas in the IL, there is only a passing remark "Church Fathers" (IL no. 40). It is true that the Fathers are not perennial categories but they are models. Among the Orientals there is even a saying that the Church is apostolic because it is patristic. The sense is that it is the Fathers of the Church who had revealed the real nature of the apostolic character of the Church. Without a strong patristic basis, the new methods of evangelization may de-generate into mere ploys for modernization. Our world view has a determining role in our theological positions. For a new evangelization a re-capturing of the philosophy and world vision of the Fathers of the Church is an imperative. That will help us to go forward and prepare the future.

[00068-02.04] [IN045] [Original text: English]

- H. Em. Rev. Card. Vinko PULJIĆ, Archbishop of Vrhbosna (BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA)

We have today painful experiences of war, where half of Catholics are literally thrown out of their homes and off their lands. After the war, thanks to the games of local and international politicians, Catholics were unable to go back, and then we were inundated by European democracy and relativism, which weakened family values, to the extent that we too, today, feel a great need for a New Evangelization.

All teachings and the proclamation of the Gospel truth regularly coincide with the way of the



conscience, while the family transmits the faith with its heart, life and practice. This leads along the road of faith the one who accepts with love and knows with reason.

I maintain, however, that the first success of the New Evangelization will be the return of dignity to the family, incorporating in it those values which make it a true nest of love, solidarity and unity. Here the strongest sense of evangelization will be seen. As pastor I experienced that my pastoral work is simply an addition to what the family has already built. I had success there with both the youth and children. This held true as well for the increase in new vocations, because the family was the first school of faith and truly encouraged personal encounter with Christ. The family was also the first seminary, I would say that this is my personal experience that I bring along from my life.

The New Evangelization will succeed if it manages to restore the sanctity of marriage, which is the family nest of love, in such a way that it becomes a little Church. Then, the parochial community will become a powerful motor of evangelization, because it will have strong drivers leading it toward God.

The most powerful thing in evangelization is the encounter with Christ, knowing how to love and accept Christ. This occurs by means of the deepest witness of faith. The family is the strongest witness to the faith, which it transmits with its heart. After the family, the priest is witness to faith. I can say that faith is communicated much more with that which it is than with that which it states. The truth of life is that that which is loved for itself is sacrificed and if necessary, dies. That for which one is ready to give one's life will never die, because the power of love is stronger than death.

[00078-02.05] [IN046] [Original text: Italian]

- H. Exc. Rev. Mons. Joseph ATANGA, S.I., Archbishop of Bertoua, President of the Episcopal Conference (CAMEROON)

A great stage of evangelization was inaugurated for our local church by the event of grace constituted by Vatican Council II and the ecclesial and pastoral horizon drafted and put into practice by the Popes John XXIII, Paul VI, John Paul I, John Paul II up until today with Benedict XVI.

Taking on the heritage of this great Council of post-modern times, the contributions of the teachings of the Popes in the past 50 years on the urgency and permanence of the Christian mission *ad intra et ad extra* (*Ad Gentes, Evangelii Nutiandi*), on the actuality of the redemptive mission of Christ (*Redemptoris Missio Christi*), on the witness and demonstration of God's love (*Deus caritas est*) and the works of faith (*Caritas in veritate*), wished to bear in mind the challenges and the trials of the gesture of this Christian faith during the Ecclesia in Africa. These challenges and stakes describe the new spaces of the mission and of new evangelization today and for the future, in Cameroon and in Africa. It must be understood, this New Evangelization

carrying the concern for the transmission of the Christian faith, taking on since then the aspects and the concrete face in this precise context of ours. This can be characterized by the indissoluble bond between the destiny of African man in the situation and adventure of the Christian faith for the one embracing it. This bond existentially corresponds to this fundamental search for life and the extreme concern on its subject in all its forms: religious, cultural, socio-economic and ethical ones.

Based on paragraphs no. 130 and 131, among others, of the *Instrumentum laboris*, we would like to emphasize today, in the African context of New Evangelization, where Christian faith is required to make its tests as the dynamic of a life in fullness in Jesus Christ, through a proclaimed, celebrated and lived faith.

[00074-02.03] [IN047] [Original text: French]

- H. Exc. Rev. Mons. Sérgio DA ROCHA, Archbishop of Brasília (BRAZIL)

Catechists occupy a place of particular importance in the task of transmitting the faith and educating in the Christian life, in a way that is very special in the context of the New Evangelization. We praise the Lord for the precious "gift" that the catechists represent for the Church. At the same time we recognize with the *Instrumentum Laboris* (108), the need to reflect "more deeply on their task and provide them with more stable living conditions and greater training and visibility in their service". Various factors that emerge from the present socio-cultural and ecclesial context lead us to recognize and promote, with particular attention, the value of catechesis and the pastoral service generously offered by innumerable catechists throughout the Church. We need to develop with a greater undertaking the Christian initiation as an authentic evangelizing process, underlined in the *Instrumentum Laboris* (131-137). Following the reflection that has developed over the last few decades, in a special way in the light of the post-Council Magisterium, it is important to find ways "of giving the catechist an instituted, stable ministry within the Church", as suggested in the same *Instrumentum Laboris* (108).

[00075-02.03] [IN048] [Original text: Italian]

- H. Exc. Rev. Mons. Ricardo BLÁZQUEZ PÉREZ, Archbishop of Valladolid (SPAIN)

Catechumens unite the personal and ecclesial dimensions of the Christian faith in a profound and clear way. In communal and assiduous participation they discover the meaning of the Church. A profound brotherhood is created which has an impact on human and social relations as well. A person feels supported by their brothers so as to live as a Christian in the midst of a society that is often indifferent and even hostile to the Christian faith and the Church.

Through the catechumenate, participants discover the fundamental reality of the Christian faith:

the Creed, God's Commandments, and with the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount, the prayer of the Our Father and the Psalms, the sacraments and, in particular, the Eucharist and Penance, the apostolic dimension of the Christian life. It does not depart from any special, complementary or devotional aspect but from the fundamental reality of the faith, which we can not presently consider learned. For most participants, it involves a post-baptismal catechumenate, thanks to which they rediscover the sense of the baptism already received.

The liturgical celebration is reinforced in each person through the knowledge and prayerful reading of Sacred Scripture. For a great deal of time the extraneousness of Latin concealed the ignorance of Sacred Scripture while now this lack is rising to the surface. Evangelization requires the unification of the Bible, Sacraments and Christian life.

[00076-02.04] [IN049] [Original text: Spanish]

- H. Exc. Rev. Mons. Héctor Rubén AGUER, Archbishop of La Plata (ARGENTINA)

The theological and philosophical errors which circulate in academic centers, seminaries and novitiates and which are spread through preaching and catechesis, give rise to confusion among the people of God, and are included among the causes of the present situation of faith. The New Evangelization requires the overcoming of these defects which weaken the certitude of the faith; for this reason, the formation of pastoral agents must correspond to the Magisterium of the Church.

Faced with the urgency of this anthropological question, it is important to underline the mediation of philosophy, of a metaphysical consideration of the person which gathers and overcomes valid scientific contributions. From that point forward, through participation, access to the absolute foundation, God, is opened. In Christian thought, theocentrism and the centrality of man are blended, as an alternative to the radical anthropocentrism promoted by some contemporary currents.

It is necessary to develop a new apologetic, a discussion in favor of the Christian faith, both at an academic as well as a popular catechetical level, which may be an itinerary proposed to the intelligence and the heart of men and women of today.

[00077-02.05] [IN050] [Original text: Spanish]

- H. Exc. Rev. Mons. Benedito Beni DOS SANTOS, Bishop of Lorena (BRAZIL)

Pope Paul VI, in his post-synodal letter *Evangelii Nutiandi*, said that evangelization is to proclaim the event of Jesus Christ, Son of God: his life, his Word, the manifestation of the Kingdom, his death and resurrection (cf. no.22). This is the permanent content of evangelization. The method varies according to the challenges posed by cultural contexts and changing realities. The

evangelical mission of the Church always meets with obstacles and is faced with challenges. In the time of the Apostles - the first missionaries - the obstacles and challenges were idolatry, witchcraft, long distances and, above all, persecution. Today, the culture of the change of the age presents other challenges: the difficulty in accepting God as the foundation for human conduct, as the basis for justice, peace, fraternity; the difficulty of reconciling democratic experience and respect for moral values.

In the cultural substratum of the Latin-American peoples, in whom the values of evangelization, even the first evangelization, remain, certain unacceptable ideas have been introduced: rationalism and subjectivism which strip down natural ethics and justify the worst attacks on the dignity of the person and human life and claim to establish moral order over social consensus, without a single reference to the nature of the person and his acts. Based on this position, one finds the tarnishing of the transcendent nature of man, which is to say the exclusion of God and religion, which are consequences of secularization.

Faced with these cultural challenges, Blessed John Paul II referred to the New Evangelization as synonymous with the new missionary spirit, which is not the duty of a small circle of specialists but of all the baptized.

The New Evangelization is in the developmental phase in Latin America from the projects of permanent missions. In Brazil, from movements and new communities such as Canção Nova and Heralds of the Gospel. In the task of evangelization, lay Christians are protagonists and have an important role. Many of them dedicate their lives to the evangelical mission of the Church. In addition to using modern means of social communication, they also make direct contact with people from different backgrounds, most of all youth. They use, in addition to music, kerygmatic preaching and visits to schools and family prayer groups.

[00079-02.04] [IN051] [Original text: Italian]

- H. Exc. Rev. Mons. William Charles SKURLA, Archbishop of Pittsburg of the Byzantines, President of the Council of the Ruthenian Church (UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)

The intervention reflects on the process of evangelization in the individual. There are stages of life before becoming a committed adult Catholic.

[00080-02.05] [IN052] [Original text: English]

- Rev. F. Josep María ABELLA BATLLE, C.M.F., Superior General of the Missionary Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (Claretians)

The call to the New Evangelization is above all an appeal to be joyful and responsible Christians of the 21st century, in a great fidelity to the Gospel and the people of our time as well as with a

new style for the mission. We are not talking therefore about a punctual action or a series of activities but rather a "process" in which various elements play a role.

The New Evangelization always sets out from reality, observed with the compassionate heart of Jesus, since it is from the constant dialectic between the Spirit and reality that the novelty and guidelines that will direct it will emerge.

It is concentrated in the announcement of the integral mystery proclaimed by Christ, with his life and his word, that is, the Gospel of the Kingdom to all, in particular to the poor, as the integral liberation of man.

It has as its active and responsible subject the People of God, men and women, with their various charisms and ministries.

It requires, to be carried out, evangelizers who are completely centered on God the Father, called by the charity of Christ, guided by his Spirit and passionate about their brothers.

It implies therefore a powerful appeal to personal, community and institutional conversion, in the context of the signs of our times.

It requires more attention to be paid to quality rather than to quantity; to what is essential, rather than what is accidental; and it promotes a tireless dialogue.

It pushes for the renewal of the missionary dimension in the announcement of the Gospel, teaching dialogue with the cultures and religious traditions of the nations.

It makes an effort to work in networks with other people and groups who, in turn, seek the transformation of the world, according to God's plan, that which, for us, means building the kingdom.

For all these reasons, the New Evangelization is a "spiritual adventure" that will find its expression in different apostolic choices depending on the various contexts. All the same, without a profound "evangelical sensitivity", it will be very difficult to read the signs of the times and find suitable and credible apostolic initiatives.

[00081-02.03] [IN053] [Original text: Spanish]

- H. Em. Rev. Card. Stanisław DZIWIŚ, Archbishop of Kraków (POLAND)

The Instrumentum Laboris presents the state of today's man as that of a "prisoner of a world that has virtually eliminated from view any question of God". The new evangelization - the document affirms - should dare to restore this question of God and help man to emerge from this "interior desert" (cf. n. 86).

Thus is born the question of how to lead man out of this desert. One thing is certain. Science is not enough. Documents are not enough. Our Church structures are not enough. These do not quite reach the heart of man.

A characteristic sign of our times is that the Church today speaks much more effectively when she expresses herself with the message of Divine Mercy. It seems that this discussion touches

more effectively the heart of the man closed in himself, enmeshed in sin and in outward self-sufficiency but in reality searching for meaning in his life and reasons to hope.

The Church of Krakow is the place and privileged center in which in the past century - marked by the dominion of totalitarian atheistic and, as such, inhuman systems -enabled the plea for mercy to be heard. God used a humble religious, Saint Faustina Kowalska, as he did a wise and holy shepherd, Cardinal Karol Wojtyla - John Paul II, so that the eternal truth of God "rich in faithful love" (Eph 2:4) would resound in a more revealing way in today's restless world. "Humanity will not find peace until it returns to the source of mercy", which is in Jesus (Sister Faustina, Diary, no.699). It seems that man today has managed to preserve within himself a sensitivity toward a disinterested mercy. And this itself - God's mercy which influences his fate - makes itself heard and touches the deepest chords of the human heart.

Devotion to the Divine Mercy has become a means of formation for zealous and responsible Christians.

I speak of it and witness it in order to point out one of the proven ways of our times by which we can undertake the new evangelization. Cor ad cor loquitur. The heart of merciful God speaks to the heart of man.

[00082-02.06] [IN054] [Original text: Italian]

[email this article](#) | [print this article](#) | [comment this article](#)

[top](#)

---

## **Greeting by Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I**

**"We Join in the Hope that the Barrier Dividing the Eastern Church and the Western Church Will be Removed"**

VATICAN CITY, OCT. 11, 2012 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Here is the translation of the greeting given by His All Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople, at the Opening Mass of the Year of Faith and on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council. The mass was celebrated in St. Peter's Square.

\*\*\*

Beloved brother in the Lord, Your Holiness Pope Benedict; Brothers and Sisters;

As Christ prepared for His Gethsemane experience, He prayed a prayer for unity which is recorded in the Gospel of Saint John Chapter 17 verse 11: " ... keep through Your name those

whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are”(All scripture from English translation of the Holy Bible, New King James Version, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1982.). Through the centuries we have, indeed, been kept in the power and love of Christ, and in the proper moment in history the Holy Spirit moved upon us and we began the long journey towards the visible unity that Christ desires. This has been confirmed in Unitatis Redintegratio § 1:

Everywhere large numbers have felt the impulse of this grace, and among our separated brethren also there increases from day to day the movement, fostered by the grace of the Holy Spirit, for the restoration of unity among all Christians.

Fifty years ago in this very square, a powerful and pivotal celebration captured the heart and mind of the Roman Catholic Church, transporting it across the centuries into the contemporary world. This transforming milestone, the opening of the Second Vatican Council, was inspired by the fundamental reality that the Son and incarnate Logos of God is “ ... where two or three are gathered in his name” (Matt.18.20) and that the Spirit, who proceeds from the Father, “ ... will guide us into the whole truth” (John 16.13).

In the 50 years that have intervened, we recall with vividness and tenderness, but also with elation and enthusiasm, our personal discussions with episcopal members and theological periti during our formative time - then as a young student - at the Pontifical Oriental Institute, as well as our personal attendance at some special sessions of the Council. We witnessed firsthand how the bishops experienced a renewed awareness of the validity - and a reinforced sense of the continuity - of the tradition and faith “once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 1.3). It was a period of promise and hope for your Church both internally and externally.

For the Orthodox Church, we have observed a time of exchange and expectation. For example, the convocation of the first Pan-Orthodox Conferences in Rhodes led to the Pre-Conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conferences in preparation for the Great Council of the Orthodox Churches. These exchanges will demonstrate the unified witness of the Orthodox Church in the modern world. Moreover, it coincided with the “dialogue of love” and heralded the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic and the Orthodox Church, which was established by our venerable predecessors Pope John Paul II and Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios.

Over the last five decades, the achievements of this assembly have been diverse as evidenced through the series of important and influential constitutions, declarations, and decrees. We have contemplated the renewal of the spirit and “return to the sources” through liturgical study, biblical research, and patristic scholarship. We have appreciated the struggle toward gradual liberation from the limitation of rigid scholasticism to the openness of ecumenical encounter,

which has led to the mutual rescinding of the excommunications of the year 1054, the exchange of greetings, returning of relics, entering into important dialogues, and visiting each other in our respective Sees.

Our journey has not always been easy or without pain and challenge, for as we know "narrow is the gate and difficult is the way" (Matthew 7.14). The essential theology and principal themes of the Second Vatican Council - the mystery of the Church, the sacredness of the liturgy, and the authority of the bishop - are difficult to apply in earnest practice, and constitute a life-long and church-wide labor to assimilate. The door, then, must remain open for deeper reception, pastoral engagement, and ecclesial interpretation of the Second Vatican Council.

As we move forward together, we offer thanks and glory to the living God Father, Son and Holy Spirit - that the same assembly of bishops has recognized the importance of reflection and sincere dialogue between our "sister churches" . We join in the "...hope that the barrier dividing the Eastern Church and the Western Church will be removed, and that - at last - there may be but the one dwelling, firmly established on Christ Jesus, the cornerstone, who will make both one" (Unitatis Redintegratio § 18).

With Christ as our cornerstone and the tradition we share, we shall be able or, rather, we shall be enabled by the gift and grace of God - to reach a better appreciation and fuller expression of the Body of Christ. With our continued efforts in accordance with the spirit of the tradition of the early Church, and in the light of the Church of the Councils of the first millennium, we will experience the visible unity that lies just beyond us today.

The Church always excels in its uniquely prophetic and pastoral dimension, embraces its characteristic meekness and spirituality, and serves with humble sensitivity the "least of these My brethren" (Matt. 25.40).

Beloved brother, our presence here signifies and seals our commitment to witness together to the Gospel message of salvation and healing for the least of our brethren: the poor, the oppressed, the forgotten in God's world. Let us begin with prayers for peace and healing for our Christian brothers and sisters living in the Middle East. In the current turmoil of violence, separation, and brokenness that is escalating between peoples and nations, may the love and desire for harmony we profess here, and the understanding we seek through dialogue and mutual respect, serve as a model for our world. Indeed, may all humanity reach out to 'the other' and work together to overcome the suffering of people everywhere, particularly in the face of famine, natural disasters, disease, and war that ultimately touches all of our lives.



In light of all that has yet to be accomplished by the Church on earth, and with great appreciation for all the progress we have shared, we are, therefore, honored to be invited to attend - and humbled to be called to address - this solemn and festive commemoration of the Second Vatican Council. It is fitting that this occasion also marks for your Church the formal inauguration of the "Year of Faith", as it is faith that provides a visible sign of the journey we have traveled together along the path of reconciliation and visible unity.

In closing, Your Holiness, Beloved Brother, we wholeheartedly congratulate you - together with the blessed multitude assembled here today - and we fraternally embrace you on the joyous occasion of this anniversary celebration. May God bless you all.

[email this article](#) | [print this article](#) | [comment this article](#)

[top](#)

---

## **Pope Benedict's Homily at Opening Mass of the Year of Faith**

**"Through Christ, God is the Principal Subject of Evangelization in the World"**

VATICAN CITY, OCT. 11, 2012 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Here is the translation of the Holy Father's homily given , at the Opening Mass of the Year of Faith and on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council. The mass was celebrated in St. Peter's Square.

\* \* \*

Dear Brother Bishops,

Dear brothers and sisters!

Today, fifty years from the opening of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, we begin with great joy the Year of Faith. I am delighted to greet all of you, particularly His Holiness Bartholomew I, Patriarch of Constantinople, and His Grace Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury. A special greeting goes to the Patriarchs and Major Archbishops of the Eastern Catholic Churches, and to the Presidents of the Bishops' Conferences. In order to evoke the Council, which some present had the grace to experience for themselves - and I greet them with particular affection - this celebration has been enriched by several special signs: the opening procession, intended to recall the memorable one of the Council Fathers when they entered this Basilica; the enthronement of a copy of the Book of the Gospels used at the Council; the

consignment of the seven final Messages of the Council, and of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, which I will do before the final blessing. These signs help us not only to remember, they also offer us the possibility of going beyond commemorating. They invite us to enter more deeply into the spiritual movement which characterized Vatican II, to make it ours and to develop it according to its true meaning. And its true meaning was and remains faith in Christ, the apostolic faith, animated by the inner desire to communicate Christ to individuals and all people, in the Church's pilgrimage along the pathways of history.

The Year of Faith which we launch today is linked harmoniously with the Church's whole path over the last fifty years: from the Council, through the Magisterium of the Servant of God Paul VI, who proclaimed a Year of Faith in 1967, up to the Great Jubilee of the year 2000, with which Blessed John Paul II re-proposed to all humanity Jesus Christ as the one Savior, yesterday, today and forever. Between these two Popes, Paul VI and John Paul II, there was a deep and profound convergence, precisely upon Christ as the center of the cosmos and of history, and upon the apostolic eagerness to announce him to the world. Jesus is the center of the Christian faith. The Christian believes in God whose face was revealed by Jesus Christ. He is the fulfillment of the Scriptures and their definitive interpreter. Jesus Christ is not only the object of the faith but, as it says in the *Letter to the Hebrews*, he is "the pioneer and the perfecter of our faith" (12:2).

Today's Gospel tells us that Jesus Christ, consecrated by the Father in the Holy Spirit, is the true and perennial subject of evangelization. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the good news to the poor" (*Lk* 4:18). This mission of Christ, this movement of his continues in space and time, over centuries and continents. It is a movement which starts with the Father and, in the power of the Spirit, goes forth to bring the good news to the poor, in both a material and a spiritual sense. The Church is the first and necessary instrument of this work of Christ because it is united to him as a body to its head. "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you" (*Jn* 20:21), says the Risen One to his disciples, and breathing upon them, adds, "Receive the Holy Spirit" (v.22). Through Christ, God is the principal subject of evangelization in the world; but Christ himself wished to pass on his own mission to the Church; he did so, and continues to do so, until the end of time pouring out his Spirit upon the disciples, the same Spirit who came upon him and remained in him during all his earthly life, giving him the strength "to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed" and "to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" (*Lk* 4:18-19).

The Second Vatican Council did not wish to deal with the theme of faith in one specific document. It was, however, animated by a desire, as it were, to immerse itself anew in the Christian mystery so as to re-propose it fruitfully to contemporary man. The Servant of God Paul VI, two years after the end of the Council session, expressed it in this way: "Even if the Council does not

deal expressly with the faith, it talks about it on every page, it recognizes its vital and supernatural character, it assumes it to be whole and strong, and it builds upon its teachings. We need only recall some of the Council's statements in order to realize the essential importance that the Council, consistent with the doctrinal tradition of the Church, attributes to the faith, the true faith, which has Christ for its source and the Church's Magisterium for its channel" (*General Audience*, 8 March 1967); thus said Paul VI.

We now turn to the one who convoked the Second Vatican Council and inaugurated it: Blessed John XXIII. In his opening speech, he presented the principal purpose of the Council in this way: "What above all concerns the Ecumenical Council is this: that the sacred deposit of Christian doctrine be safeguarded and taught more effectively [...] Therefore, the principal purpose of this Council is not the discussion of this or that doctrinal theme... a Council is not required for that... [but] this certain and immutable doctrine, which is to be faithfully respected, needs to be explored and presented in a way which responds to the needs of our time" (AAS 54 [1962], 790,791-792).

In the light of these words, we can understand what I myself felt at the time: during the Council there was an emotional tension as we faced the common task of making the truth and beauty of the faith shine out in our time, without sacrificing it to the demands of the present or leaving it tied to the past: the eternal presence of God resounds in the faith, transcending time, yet it can only be welcomed by us in our own unrepeatable today. Therefore I believe that the most important thing, especially on such a significant occasion as this, is to revive in the whole Church that positive tension, that yearning to announce Christ again to contemporary man. But, so that this interior thrust towards the new evangelization neither remain just an idea nor be lost in confusion, it needs to be built on a concrete and precise basis, and this basis is the documents of the Second Vatican Council, the place where it found expression. This is why I have often insisted on the need to return, as it were, to the "letter" of the Council – that is to its texts – also to draw from them its authentic spirit, and why I have repeated that the true legacy of Vatican II is to be found in them. Reference to the documents saves us from extremes of anachronistic nostalgia and running too far ahead, and allows what is new to be welcomed in a context of continuity. The Council did not formulate anything new in matters of faith, nor did it wish to replace what was ancient. Rather, it concerned itself with seeing that the same faith might continue to be lived in the present day, that it might remain a living faith in a world of change. If we place ourselves in harmony with the authentic approach which Blessed John XXIII wished to give to Vatican II, we will be able to realize it during this Year of Faith, following the same path of the Church as she continuously endeavors to deepen the deposit of faith entrusted to her by Christ. The Council Fathers wished to present the faith in a meaningful way; and if they opened themselves trustingly to dialogue with the modern world it is because they were certain of their

faith, of the solid rock on which they stood. In the years following, however, many embraced uncritically the dominant mentality, placing in doubt the very foundations of the deposit of faith, which they sadly no longer felt able to accept as truths.

If today the Church proposes a new Year of Faith and a new evangelization, it is not to honor an anniversary, but because there is more need of it, even more than there was fifty years ago! And the reply to be given to this need is the one desired by the Popes, by the Council Fathers and contained in its documents. Even the initiative to create a Pontifical Council for the promotion of the new evangelization, which I thank for its special effort for the Year of Faith, is to be understood in this context. Recent decades have seen the advance of a spiritual "desertification". In the Council's time it was already possible from a few tragic pages of history to know what a life or a world without God looked like, but now we see it every day around us. This void has spread. But it is in starting from the experience of this desert, from this void, that we can again discover the joy of believing, its vital importance for us, men and women. In the desert we rediscover the value of what is essential for living; thus in today's world there are innumerable signs, often expressed implicitly or negatively, of the thirst for God, for the ultimate meaning of life. And in the desert people of faith are needed who, with their own lives, point out the way to the Promised Land and keep hope alive. Living faith opens the heart to the grace of God which frees us from pessimism. Today, more than ever, evangelizing means witnessing to the new life, transformed by God, and thus showing the path. The first reading spoke to us of the wisdom of the wayfarer (cf. *Sir* 34:9-13): the journey is a metaphor for life, and the wise wayfarer is one who has learned the art of living, and can share it with his brethren – as happens to pilgrims along the Way of Saint James or similar routes which, not by chance, have again become popular in recent years. How come so many people today feel the need to make these journeys? Is it not because they find there, or at least intuit, the meaning of our existence in the world? This, then, is how we can picture the Year of Faith: a pilgrimage in the deserts of today's world, taking with us only what is necessary: neither staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money, nor two tunics – as the Lord said to those he was sending out on mission (cf. *Lk* 9:3), but the Gospel and the faith of the Church, of which the Council documents are a luminous expression, as is the Catechism of the Catholic Church, published twenty years ago.

Venerable and dear Brothers, 11 October 1962 was the Feast of Mary Most Holy, Mother of God. Let us entrust to her the Year of Faith, as I did last week when I went on pilgrimage to Loreto. May the Virgin Mary always shine out as a star along the way of the new evangelization. May she help us to put into practice the Apostle Paul's exhortation, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teach and admonish one another in all wisdom [...] And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him" (*Col* 3:16-17). Amen.

[email this article](#) | [print this article](#) | [comment this article](#)

[top](#)

---

**ZENIT is an International News Agency.**

For reprint permission: <http://www.zenit.org/english/permissions.html>

Visit our web page at <http://www.zenit.org>

To subscribe or unsubscribe: <http://www.zenit.org/english/subscribe.html>

To give a ZENIT gift subscription: <http://www.zenit.org/english/gift.html>

To make a donation to support ZENIT: <http://www.zenit.org/english/donation.html>

SEND US YOUR NEWS.

Please send press releases using: <http://www.zenit.org/english/news.html>

Copyright, Innovative Media, Inc.