

# Gems for the New Evangelization: Shamelessly Pilfered from Various Treasuries of Church Teaching

*Collected by Carole Brown, Ph.D.*

whole • contemplation proclaimed  
communion catechesis others  
salvation authentic experience  
message believe  
relationship word Father  
personal world  
dialogue union  
become Joy man certain  
friendship able God led faith  
called sisters joy true time  
mystery enter life missionary  
kerygma sense order constantly  
truly Christ Jesus center people  
things level truth gift prayer moment  
meaning demands heart saint Spirit gives Gods initial  
activity Church papal-teaching path grace explicit  
mission human history place Jesus Christ  
conversion Gospel brothers  
encounter process community directed  
evangelization Faith Holy Spirit important  
different spiritual



Dear friends,

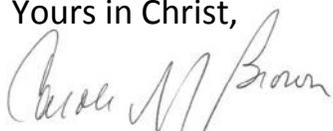
Ever since Vatican II, the Church has seen many changes, not least of which is a profound shift of emphasis broadly referred to as “The New Evangelization”. One of the most significant aspects of this new season of evangelization in the Church is a new emphasis on the personal conversion of the baptized, and the development of both personal and communal faith.

Each Pope since the Second Vatican Council has made his own contribution to the New Evangelization. Perhaps most importantly, St. John Paul II gave it a decisively “personalistic” thrust. Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis have continued to affirm St. John Paul’s personalism in the teaching documents of their respective magisteriums.

This little compendium contains some of the outstanding gems of wisdom that I’ve discovered in my work and study. It is by no means exhaustive. These gems can help you to understand what it means to have a personal relationship with Jesus in the Catholic Church, and how to foster it in those you serve. Take these gems and pray with them. Internalize them. Preach them. Share them. Be formed by them. Let these little gems tantalize you to go into the documents themselves, where you will find more food for thought, prayer and spiritual reading.

In the words of St. John Paul II, *Be not afraid! Open wide the doors for Christ.*

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carole M. Brown". The signature is written in a dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Carole Brown, PhD

## **CONTENTS**

Page 5	Quotes On the Personal Nature of Faith
Page 14	Kerygma
Page 16	Evangelization in a Catechetical Setting
Page 17	Evangelization and Morality
Page 18	Church as the Sacrament of Intimate Union with God
Page 20	Conversion in the Liturgical Setting

## QUOTES FROM ON THE PERSONAL NATURE OF FAITH

Today too, *people prefer to listen to witnesses*: they “thirst for authenticity” and “call for evangelizers to speak of a God whom they themselves know and are familiar with, as if they were seeing him”.

We are not asked to be flawless, but to keep growing and wanting to grow as we advance along the path of the Gospel; our arms must never grow slack. *What is essential is that the preacher be certain that God loves him, that Jesus Christ has saved him and that his love always has the last word.* Encountering such beauty, he will often feel that his life does not glorify God as it should, and he will sincerely desire to respond more fully to so great a love. *Yet if he does not take time to hear God’s word with an open heart, if he does not allow it to touch his life, to challenge him, to impel him, and if he does not devote time to pray with that word, then he will indeed be a false prophet, a fraud, a shallow impostor.* But by acknowledging his poverty and desiring to grow in his commitment, he will always be able to abandon himself to Christ, saying in the words of Peter: “I have no silver and gold, but what I have I give you” (Acts 3:6). The Lord wants to make use of us as living, free and creative beings who let his word enter their own hearts before then passing it on to others. Christ’s message must truly penetrate and possess the preacher, not just intellectually but *in his entire being*. The Holy Spirit, who inspired the word, “today, just as at the beginning of the Church, acts in every evangelizer who allows himself to be possessed and led by him. The Holy Spirit places on his lips the words which he could not find by himself”. Pope Francis, *Joy of the Gospel* 150-151

---

Wherever God opens a door of speech for proclaiming the mystery of Christ, there is announced to all men with confidence and constancy the living God, and He Whom He has sent for the salvation of all, Jesus, in order that non-Christians, when the Holy Spirit opens their heart, may believe and be freely converted to the Lord, that they may cleave sincerely to Him Who, being the "way, the truth, and the life", fulfills all their spiritual expectations, and even infinitely surpasses them.

This conversion must be taken as an initial one, yet sufficient to make a man realize that he has been snatched away from sin and led into the mystery of God's love, *who called him to enter into a personal relationship with Him in Christ*. For, by the workings of divine grace, the new convert sets out on a spiritual journey, by means of which, already sharing through faith in the mystery of Christ's Death and Resurrection, he passes from the old man to the new one, perfected in Christ. This bringing with it a progressive change of outlook and morals, must become evident with its social consequences, and must be gradually developed during the time of the catechumenate. Since the Lord he believes in is a sign of contradiction, the convert often experiences an abrupt breaking off of human ties, but he also tastes the joy which God gives without measure. Decree on Missionary Activity, §13. Vatican II

---

*“Jesus Christ loves you; he gave his life to save you; and now he is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen and free you.”* This first proclamation is called “first” not because it exists at the beginning and can then be forgotten or replaced by other more important things. It is first in a qualitative sense because it is the principal proclamation, the one which we must hear again and again in different ways, the one which we must announce one way or another throughout the process of catechesis, at every level and moment.” Pope Francis, *Joy of the Gospel* 164

---

“We have a treasure of life and love which cannot deceive, and a message which cannot mislead or disappoint. It penetrates to the depths of our hearts, sustaining and ennobling us. It is a truth which is never out of date because it reaches that part of us which nothing else can reach. Our infinite sadness can only be cured by an infinite love.[...] But this conviction has to be sustained by our own constantly

TODAY TOO, PEOPLE  
PREFER TO LISTEN TO  
WITNESSES: THEY "THIRST  
FOR AUTHENTICITY" AND  
"CALL FOR EVANGELIZERS  
TO SPEAK OF A GOD  
WHOM THEY THEMSELVES  
KNOW AND ARE FAMILIAR  
WITH, AS IF THEY WERE  
SEEING HIM.

renewed experience of savouring Christ's friendship and his message. It is *impossible to persevere in a fervent evangelization unless we are convinced from personal experience that it is not the same thing to have known Jesus as not to have known him, not the same thing to walk with him as to walk blindly, not the same thing to hear his word as not to know it, and not the same thing to contemplate him, to worship him, to find our peace in him, as not to.* It is not the same thing to try to build the world with his Gospel as to try to do so by our own lights. We know well that with Jesus life becomes richer and that with him it is easier to find meaning in everything. This is why we evangelize. A true missionary, who never ceases to be a disciple, knows that Jesus walks with him, speaks to him, breathes with him, works with him. He senses Jesus alive with him in the midst of the missionary enterprise. Unless we see him present at the heart of our missionary

commitment, our enthusiasm soon wanes and we are no longer sure of what it is that we are handing on; we lack vigour and passion. A person who is not convinced, enthusiastic, certain and in love, will convince nobody." Pope Francis, *Joy of the Gospel* 266

---

"Genuine forms of popular religiosity are incarnate, since they are born of the incarnation of Christian faith in popular culture. For this reason they entail a personal relationship, not with vague spiritual energies or powers, but with God, with Christ, with Mary, with the saints. These devotions are fleshy, they have a face." Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* 90

---

"The obedience of faith" (Rom. 13:26; see 1:5; 2 Cor 10:5-6) "is to be given to God who reveals, an obedience by which man commits his whole self freely to God, offering the full submission of intellect and will to God who reveals," and freely assenting to the truth revealed by Him. To make this act of faith, the grace of God and the interior help of the Holy Spirit must precede and assist, moving the heart and turning it to God, opening the eyes of the mind and giving "joy and ease to everyone in assenting to the truth and believing it." To bring about an ever deeper understanding of revelation the same Holy Spirit constantly brings faith to completion by His gifts. *Constitution on Divine Revelation* 5

---

"Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction." Pope Benedict "*Deus Caritas Est*" 1

---

"Many people perceive Christianity as something institutional -- rather than as an encounter with Christ -- which explains why they don't see it as a source of joy." Pope Benedict XVI, May 2004

---

"Let the risen Jesus enter your life, welcome him as a friend, with trust: he is life! If up till now you have kept him at a distance, step forward. He will receive you with open arms. If you have been indifferent, take a risk: you won't be disappointed. If following him seems difficult, don't be afraid, trust him, be confident that he is close to you, he is with you and he will give you the peace you are looking for and the strength to live as he would have you do." Pope Francis, Holy Saturday, 30 March 2013

---

"Every Sunday, the Risen Christ asks us to meet him as it were once more in the Upper Room where, on the evening of 'the first day of the week' (Jn 20:19) he appeared to his disciples in order to 'breathe' on

them his life-giving Spirit and launch them on the great adventure of proclaiming the Gospel.” St. John Paul II, *Novo Millennio Ineunte* 58

---

“This mystery (of faith), then, requires that the faithful believe in it, that they celebrate it, and that they live from it in a vital and personal relationship with the living and true God. This relationship is prayer.” CCC 2558

---

Anyone who loves God in the depths of his heart has already been loved by God. In fact, the measure of a man’s love for God depends upon how deeply aware he is of God’s love for him. Diadochus of Photiké, *On Spiritual Perfection*

---

"Conversion means accepting, by a personal decision, the saving sovereignty of Christ and becoming his disciple." St. John Paul II, *Mission of the Redeemer* 46

---

Mental prayer in my opinion is nothing else than an intimate sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with Him who we know loves us. The important thing is not to think much but to love much and so do that which best stirs you to love. Love is not great delight but desire to please God in everything. St. Teresa of Avila

---

Generally, the term conversion is used in reference to bringing pagans into the Church. However, conversion (metanoia), in its precisely Christian meaning, signifies *a change in thinking and in acting, as the expression of the new life in Christ proclaimed by faith: a continuous reform of thought and deeds directed at an ever more intense identification with Christ* (cf. Gal 2:20), *to which the baptized are called before all else*. This is, in the first place, the meaning of the call made by Jesus himself: “repent and believe in the Gospel” Mk 1:15; cf. Mt 4:17

---

The Christian spirit has always been animated by a passion to lead all humanity to Christ in the Church. The incorporation of new members into the Church is not the expansion of a power-group, but rather *entrance into the network of friendship with Christ* which connects heaven and earth, different continents and ages. It is entrance into the gift of communion with Christ, which is “new life” enlivened by charity and the commitment to justice. The Church is the instrument, “the seed and the beginning” of the Kingdom of God; she is not a political utopia. She is already the presence of God in history and she carries in herself the true future, the definitive future in which God will be “all in all” (1 Cor 15:28); she is a necessary presence, because only God can bring authentic peace and justice to the world. The Kingdom of God is not – as some maintain today – a generic reality above all religious experiences and traditions, to which they tend as a universal and indistinct communion of all those who seek God, but it is, before all else, a person with a name and a face: Jesus of Nazareth, the image of the unseen God. [...] Doctrinal Note on Aspects of Evangelization, 9; CDF

---

The new evangelization is directed to the Church herself: to the baptized who were never effectively evangelized before, to those who have never made a personal commitment to Christ and the Gospel, to those formed by the values of the secularized culture to those who have lost a sense of faith, and to those who are alienated. It is also directed to all human cultures so that they might be open to the Gospel and live in harmony with Christian values. The new evangelization is aimed at personal transformation through the development of a personal relationship with God, participation in sacramental worship, the development of a mature ethical and social conscience, ongoing catechesis, and a deepening integration of faith into all areas of life. The purpose of this evangelization is to bring about faith and conversion to Christ. Faith involves a profound change of mind and heart, a change of life, a “metanoia.” Such a change

can only arise from deep within the interior of one's being, where one faces the truly important question about human life. Such a change, engendered by the action of the Holy Spirit, shows itself in the transformation of one's life. National Directory for Catechesis 17

---

"For Bernard, in fact, true knowledge of God consisted in a personal, profound experience of Jesus Christ and of his love. And, dear brothers and sisters, this is true for every Christian: faith is first and foremost a personal, intimate encounter with Jesus, it is having an experience of his closeness, his friendship and his love. It is in this way that we learn to know him ever better, to love him and to follow him more and more. May this happen to each one of us!" Pope Benedict, Catechesis on St. Bernard of Clairvaux, 22 October 2009

---

"It is necessary to awaken again in believers a full relationship with Christ, mankind's only Savior. Only from a personal relationship with Jesus can an effective evangelization develop." Pope John Paul II, speech to bishops of Southern Germany, Dec. 4, 1992

---

"The Holy Spirit is awakening in the Church's members a longing for transcendence, stirring up in their hearts a desire for an intimate, personal relationship with the Triune God. People are increasingly asking: "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" (Mk. 10: 17)." St. John Paul II to American Bishops, 4 December 1993

---

"Man cannot live without love. He remains a being that is incomprehensible for himself, his life is senseless, if love is not revealed to him, if he does not encounter love, if he does not experience it and make it his own, if he does not participate intimately in it. This, as has already been said, is why Christ the Redeemer "fully reveals man to himself". [...] The man who wishes to understand himself thoroughly-and not just in accordance with immediate, partial, often superficial, and even illusory standards and measures of his being-he must with his unrest, uncertainty and even his weakness and sinfulness, with his life and death, draw near to Christ. He must, so to speak, enter into him with all his own self, he must "appropriate" and assimilate the whole of the reality of the Incarnation and Redemption in order to find himself. If this profound process takes place within him, he then bears fruit not only of adoration of God but also of deep wonder at himself. How precious must man be in the eyes of the Creator, if he "gained so great a Redeemer", and if God "gave his only Son" in order that man "should not perish but have eternal life". In reality, the name for that deep amazement at man's worth and dignity is the Gospel, that is to say: the Good News. It is also called Christianity." St. John Paul II, Redeemer of Man 10

---

"From him we draw our life. Without him, we cannot truly live. "God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son" (1 Jn 5:11). Jesus himself tells us that he is our life (cf. Jn 14:6). Consequently, Christian faith is not only a matter of believing that certain things are true, but above all a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. It is an encounter with the Son of God that gives new energy to the whole of our existence. When we enter into a personal relationship with him, Christ reveals our true identity and, in friendship with him, our life grows towards complete fulfilment." Pope Benedict XVI, 26<sup>th</sup> World Youth Day, 2011

---

"...by his Incarnation, he, the Son of God, in a certain way united himself with each man". The Church therefore sees its fundamental task in enabling that union to be brought about and renewed continually. The Church wishes to serve this single end: that each person may be able to find Christ, in order that Christ may walk with each person the path of life, with the power of the truth about man and the world that is contained in the mystery of the Incarnation and the Redemption and with the power of the love that is radiated by that truth." St. John Paul II, Redeemer of Man 13

---

"We are only Christians if we encounter Christ. Of course, he does not show himself to us in this overwhelming, luminous way, as he did to Paul to make him the Apostle to all peoples. But we too can encounter Christ in reading Sacred Scripture, in prayer, in the liturgical life of the Church. We can touch Christ's Heart and feel him touching ours. Only in this personal relationship with Christ, only in this encounter with the Risen One do we truly become Christians. " Pope Benedict XVI, 3 September 2008

---

"From the outset, conversion is expressed in faith which is total and radical, and which neither limits nor hinders God's gift. At the same time, it gives rise to a dynamic and lifelong process which demands a continual turning away from "life according to the flesh" to "life according to the Spirit" (cf. Rom 8:3-13). Conversion means accepting, by a personal decision, the saving sovereignty of Christ and becoming his disciple." St. John Paul II, Mission of the Redeemer 46

---

"What matters most is that you develop your personal relationship with God." Pope Benedict XVI, New York Address to the Youth, April 2008

---

Jesus does not in fact merely speak "in the name of God" like the Prophets, but he is God himself speaking in his Eternal Word made flesh. *Here we touch upon the essential point by which Christianity differs from all the other religions*, by which man's search for God has been expressed from earliest times. Christianity has its starting-point in the Incarnation of the Word. *Here, it is not simply a case of man seeking God, but of God who comes in Person to speak to man of himself and to show him the path by which he may be reached.* This is what is proclaimed in the Prologue of John's Gospel: "No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known" (1:18). The Incarnate Word is thus the fulfilment of the yearning present in all the religions of mankind: this fulfilment is brought about by God himself and transcends all human expectations. It is the mystery of grace.

In Christ, religion is no longer a "blind search for God" (cf. Acts 17:27) but the response of faith to God who reveals himself. It is a response in which man speaks to God as his Creator and Father, a response made possible by that one Man who is also the consubstantial Word in whom God speaks to each individual person and by whom each individual person is enabled to respond to God. [...]

*In Jesus Christ God not only speaks to man but also seeks him out.* The Incarnation of the Son of God attests that *God goes in search of man.* Jesus speaks of this search as the finding of a lost sheep (cf. Lk 15:1-7). It is a search which begins in the heart of God and culminates in the Incarnation of the Word. If God goes in search of man, created in his own image and likeness, he does so because he loves him eternally in the Word, and wishes to raise him in Christ to the dignity of an adoptive son. God therefore goes in search of man who is his special possession in a way unlike any other creature. Man is God's possession by virtue of a choice made in love: God seeks man out, moved by his fatherly heart.

Why does God seek man out? Because man has turned away from him, hiding himself as Adam did among the trees of the Garden of Eden (cf. Gen 3:8-10). Man allowed himself to be led astray by the enemy of God (cf. Gen 3:13). Satan deceived man, persuading him that he too was a god, that he, like God, was capable of knowing good and evil, ruling the world according to his own will without having to take into account the divine will (cf. Gen 3:5). Going in search of man through his Son, God wishes to persuade man to abandon the paths of evil which lead him farther and farther afield. "Making him abandon" those paths means making man understand that he is taking the

THE DEFINITIVE AIM OF  
CATECHESIS IS TO PUT  
PEOPLE NOT ONLY IN  
TOUCH BUT IN  
COMMUNION, IN  
INTIMACY, WITH JESUS  
CHRIST.

wrong path; it means overcoming the evil which is everywhere found in human history. Overcoming evil: this is the meaning of the Redemption. [...]

The religion which originates in the mystery of the Redemptive Incarnation, is the religion of "dwelling in the heart of God", of sharing in God's very life. Saint Paul speaks of this in the passage already quoted: "God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!' " (Gal 4:6). Man cries out like Christ himself, who turned to God "with loud cries and tears" (Heb 5:7), especially in Gethsemane and on the Cross: man cries out to God just as Christ cried out to him, and thus he bears witness that he shares in Christ's sonship through the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, whom the Father has sent in the name of the Son, enables man to share in the inmost life of God. He also enables man to be a son, in the likeness of Christ, and an heir of all that belongs to the Son (cf. Gal 4:7). In this consists the religion of "dwelling in the inmost life of God", which begins with the Incarnation of the Son of God. The Holy Spirit, who searches the depths of God (cf. 1 Cor 2:10), leads us, all mankind, into these depths by virtue of the sacrifice of Christ. St. John Paul II, *Tertio Millenio Inuente*

---

"Faith and conversion arise from the "heart", that is, they arise from the depth of the human person and they involve all that he is. By meeting Jesus Christ and by adhering to him the human being sees all of his deepest aspirations completely fulfilled. He finds what he had always been seeking and he finds it superabundantly." General Directory for Catechesis 55

---

"Our religion effectively establishes with God an authentic and living relationship" Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* 53

---

"This conversion must be taken as an initial one, yet sufficient to make a man realize that he has been snatched away from sin and led into the mystery of God's love, who called him to enter into a personal relationship with Him in Christ." Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church 13

---

"The Church as a whole and all her Pastors, like Christ, must set out to lead people out of the desert, towards the place of life, towards friendship with the Son of God, towards the One who gives us life, and life in abundance... There is nothing more beautiful than to be surprised by the Gospel, by the encounter with Christ. There is nothing more beautiful than to know Him and to speak to others of our friendship with Him... If we let Christ into our lives, we lose nothing, nothing, absolutely nothing of what makes life free, beautiful and great. No! Only in this friendship are the doors of life opened wide. Only in this friendship is the great potential of human existence truly revealed. Only in this friendship do we experience beauty and liberation" Pope Benedict XVI, 24 April 2005

---

"Man [has a] right to a more personal encounter with the crucified forgiving Christ" St. John Paul II, *Redemptoris Hominis* 20

---

"Rather, he [who prays] seeks an encounter with the Father of Jesus Christ, asking God to be present with the consolation of the Spirit to him and his work. A personal relationship with God and an abandonment to his will can prevent man from being demeaned and save him..." Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est* 37

---

"At such times, a living relationship with Christ is decisive if we are to keep on the right path, without falling .... Prayer, as a means of drawing ever new strength from Christ, is concretely and urgently needed." Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est* 36

---

"Jesus, who said that he had come so that we might have life and have it in its fullness, in abundance (cf. Jn 10:10), has also explained to us what "life" means: "this is eternal life, that they know you the only true

God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent” (Jn 17:3). Life in its true sense is not something we have exclusively in or from ourselves: it is a relationship. And life in its totality is a relationship with Him who is the source of life. If we are in relation with Him who does not die, who is Life itself and Love itself, then we are in life. Then we “live”.” Pope Benedict XVI, *Spe Salvi* 27

---

“Our relationship with God is established through communion with Jesus—we cannot achieve it alone or from our own resources alone. The relationship with Jesus, however, is a relationship with the one who gave himself as a ransom for all (cf. 1 Tim 2:6). Being in communion with Jesus Christ draws us into His “being for all”; it makes it our own way of being. He commits us to live for others, but only through communion with Him does it become possible truly to be there for others, for the whole.” Pope Benedict XVI, *Spe Salvi* 28

---

“Every responsibility and every commitment spelt out by that doctrine is derived from charity which, according to the teaching of Jesus, is the synthesis of the entire Law (cf. Mt 22:36- 40). It gives real substance to the personal relationship with God and with neighbor” Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas In Veritate* 2

---

“Only through an encounter with God are we able to see in the other something more than just another creature.” Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate* 11

---

“Accordingly, the definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch but in communion, in intimacy, with Jesus Christ: only He can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit and make us share in the life of the Holy Trinity.” St. John Paul II, *Catechesi Tradendae* 5

---

“The kingdom will grow insofar as every person learns to turn to God in the intimacy of prayer as to a Father (cf. Lk 11:2; Mt 23:9) and strives to do his will (cf. Mt 7:21).” St. John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio* 13

---

“Missionary cooperation is rooted and lived, above all, in personal union with Christ. Only if we are united to him as the branches to the vine (cf. Jn 15:5) can we produce good fruit.” St. John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio* 77

---

“The root reason for human dignity lies in man's call to communion with God. From the very circumstance of his origin man is already invited to converse with God. For man would not exist were he not created by God's love and constantly preserved by it; and he cannot live fully according to truth unless he freely acknowledges that love and devotes himself to His Creator.” *Gaudium Et Spes* 19

---

“The universe, created in and by the eternal Word, the “image of the invisible God”, is destined for and addressed to man, himself created in the “image of God” and called to a personal relationship with God.” CCC 299

---

“Great is the mystery of the faith!” This mystery, then, requires that the faithful believe in it, that they celebrate it, and that they live from it in a vital and personal relationship with the living and true God. This relationship is prayer.” CCC 2558

---

“Man's faculties make him capable of coming to a knowledge of the existence of a personal God. But for man to be able to enter into real intimacy with him, God willed both to reveal himself to man and to give him the grace of being able to welcome this revelation in faith.” CCC 35

---

---

"In the New Covenant, prayer is the living relationship of the children of God with their Father who is good beyond measure, with his Son Jesus Christ and with the Holy Spirit. The grace of the Kingdom is "the union of the entire holy and royal Trinity . . . with the whole human spirit." Thus, the life of prayer is the habit of being in the presence of the thrice-holy God and in communion with him. CCC 2565

---

"...prayer can progress, as a genuine dialogue of love, to the point of rendering the person wholly possessed by the divine Beloved, vibrating at the Spirit's touch, resting filially within the Father's heart. This is the lived experience of Christ's promise: "He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him, and manifest myself to him" (Jn 14:21). It is a journey totally sustained by grace, which nonetheless demands an intense spiritual commitment, and is no stranger to painful purifications (the "dark night"). But it leads, in various possible ways, to the ineffable joy experienced by the mystics as "nuptial union." How can we forget here, among the many shining examples, the teachings of St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa of Avila? (...) Yes, dear brothers and sisters, our Christian communities must become genuine "schools" of prayer, where the meeting with Christ is expressed, not just in imploring help, but also in thanksgiving, praise, adoration, contemplation, listening and ardent devotion, until the heart truly "falls in love"." St. John Paul II, At the Beginning of the New Millenium 33

---

"Acquire the habit of speaking to God as if you were alone with Him, familiarly and with confidence and ... Speak to Him often of your business, your plans, your troubles, your fears— of everything that concerns you. Converse with Him confidently and frankly; for God is not wont to speak to a soul that does not speak to Him." St. Alphonsus Ligouri

---

"God is not the god of a particular place, or a deity linked to specific sacred time, but the God of a person, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, capable of interacting with man and establishing a covenant with him. Faith is our response to a word which engages us personally, to a "Thou" who calls us by name. " Pope Francis, Lumen Fidei 8

---

"Those who choose not to put their trust in God must hear the din of countless idols crying out: "Put your trust in me!" Faith, tied as it is to conversion, is the opposite of idolatry; it breaks with idols to turn to the living God in a personal encounter. Believing means entrusting oneself to a merciful love which always accepts and pardons, which sustains and directs our lives, and which shows its power by its ability to make straight the crooked lines of our history. Faith consists in the willingness to let ourselves be constantly transformed and renewed by God's call. Herein lies the paradox: by constantly turning towards the Lord, we discover a sure path which liberates us from the dissolution imposed upon us by idols. " Pope Francis , Lumen Fidei 13

---

"In the Bible, the heart is the core of the human person, where all his or her different dimensions intersect: body and spirit, interiority and openness to the world and to others, intellect, will and affectivity. If the heart is capable of holding all these dimensions together, it is because it is where we become open to truth and love, where we let them touch us and deeply transform us. Faith transforms the whole person precisely to the extent that he or she becomes open to love. Through this blending of faith and love we come to see the kind of knowledge which faith entails, its power to convince and its ability to illumine our steps. Faith knows because it is tied to love, because love itself brings enlightenment. Faith's understanding is born when we receive the immense love of God which transforms us inwardly and enables us to see reality with new eyes." Pope Francis, Lumen Fidei 26

---

"Religious man is a wayfarer; he must be ready to let himself be led, to come out of himself and to find the God of perpetual surprises." Pope Francis, *Lumen Fidei* 35

---

"The truth which faith discloses to us is a truth centered on an encounter with Christ, on the contemplation of his life and on the awareness of his presence." Pope Francis, *Lumen Fidei* 30

---

...the decisive moment in Augustine's journey of faith, as he tells us in the Confessions, was not in the vision of a God above and beyond this world, but in an experience of hearing. In the garden, he heard a voice telling him: "Take and read". He then took up the book containing the epistles of Saint Paul and started to read the thirteenth chapter of the Letter to the Romans.[28] In this way, the personal God of the Bible appeared to him: a God who is able to speak to us, to come down to dwell in our midst and to accompany our journey through history, making himself known in the time of hearing and response." Pope Francis, *Lumen Fidei* 33

---

"Those who have opened their hearts to God's love, heard his voice and received his light, cannot keep this gift to themselves. Since faith is hearing and seeing, it is also handed on as word and light. Addressing the Corinthians, Saint Paul used these two very images. On the one hand he says: "But just as we have the same spirit of faith that is in accordance with scripture — 'I believed, and so I spoke' — we also believe, and so we speak" (2 Cor 4:13). The word, once accepted, becomes a response, a confession of faith, which spreads to others and invites them to believe." Pope Francis, *Lumen Fidei* 37

---

All of us are called to offer others an explicit witness to the saving love of the Lord, who despite our imperfections offers us his closeness, his word and his strength, and gives meaning to our lives. In your heart you know that it is not the same to live without him; what you have come to realize, what has helped you to live and given you hope, is what you also need to communicate to others. Our falling short of perfection should be no excuse; on the contrary, mission is a constant stimulus not to remain mired in mediocrity but to continue growing. The witness of faith that each Christian is called to offer leads us to say with Saint Paul: "Not that I have already obtained this, or am already perfect; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own" (Phil 3:12-13). Pope Francis, *Joy of the Gospel* 121

“... the initial, ardent proclamation, by which a person is one day overwhelmed and brought to the decision to entrust himself to Jesus Christ by faith.” St. John Paul II, *Catechesis in our Times* 25

“...the initial conversion-bringing proclamation of the Gospel...”  
St. John Paul II, *Catechesis in our Times* 19

---

Proclamation is the *permanent priority of mission*. The Church cannot elude Christ's explicit mandate, nor deprive men and women of the "Good News" about their being loved and saved by God. "*Evangelization will always contain-as the foundation, center and at the same time the summit of its dynamism-a clear proclamation that, in Jesus Christ...salvation is offered to all people, as a gift of God's grace and mercy.*" All forms of missionary activity are directed to this proclamation, which reveals and gives access to the mystery hidden for ages and made known in Christ (cf. Eph 3:3-9; Col 1:25-29), the mystery which lies at the heart of the Church's mission and life, as *the hinge on which all evangelization turns*.

In the complex reality of mission, *initial proclamation has a central and irreplaceable role, since it introduces man "into the mystery of the love of God, who invites him to enter into a personal relationship with himself in Christ"* and opens the way to conversion. Faith is born of preaching, and every ecclesial community draws its origin and life from the personal response of each believer to that preaching. Just as the whole economy of salvation has its center in Christ, so too all missionary activity is directed to the proclamation of his mystery.

The subject of proclamation is Christ who was crucified, died and is risen: through him is accomplished our full and authentic liberation from evil, sin and death; through him God bestows "new life" that is divine and eternal. This is the "Good News" which changes man and his history, and which all peoples have a right to hear. This proclamation is to be made within the context of the lives of the individuals and peoples who receive it. It is to be made with an attitude of love and esteem toward those who hear it, in language which is practical and adapted to the situation. *In this proclamation the Spirit is at work and establishes a communion between the missionary and his hearers, a communion which is possible inasmuch as both enter into communion with God the Father through Christ.* St. John Paul II, *Mission of the Redeemer* 44

---

This first proclamation is called "first" not because it exists at the beginning and can then be forgotten or replaced by other more important things. It is first in a qualitative sense because it is the principal proclamation, the one which we must hear again and again in different ways, the one which we must announce one way or another throughout the process of catechesis, at every level and moment. We must not think that in catechesis the kerygma gives way to a supposedly more "solid" formation. Nothing is more solid, profound, secure, meaningful and wisdom-filled than that initial proclamation. All Christian formation consists of entering more deeply into the kerygma, which is reflected in and constantly illumines, the work of catechesis, thereby enabling us to understand more fully the significance of every subject which the latter treats. Pope Francis, *Joy of the Gospel* 165

---

...[the kerygma] has to express God's saving love which precedes any moral and religious obligation on our part; it should not impose the truth but appeal to freedom; it should be marked by joy, encouragement,

*JESUS CHRIST LOVES YOU;  
HE GAVE HIS LIFE TO  
SAVE YOU; AND NOW HE  
IS LIVING AT YOUR SIDE  
EVERY DAY TO  
ENLIGHTEN, STRENGTHEN  
AND FREE YOU.*

liveliness and a harmonious balance which will not reduce preaching to a few doctrines which are at times more philosophical than evangelical. All this demands on the part of the evangelizer certain attitudes which foster openness to the message: approachability, readiness for dialogue, patience, a warmth and welcome which is non-judgmental." Pope Francis, *Joy of the Gospel* 165

---

The Lord's missionary mandate includes a call to growth in faith: "Teach them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Mt 28:20). Hence it is clear that the first proclamation also calls for ongoing formation and maturation. *Evangelization aims at a process of growth which entails taking seriously each person and God's plan for his or her life. All of us need to grow in Christ. Evangelization should stimulate a desire for this growth, so that each of us can say wholeheartedly: "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Gal 2:20).* Pope Francis, *Joy of the Gospel* 160

---

In and among families, the Gospel message should always resound; the core of that message, the kerygma, is what is "most beautiful, most excellent, most appealing and at the same time most necessary". This message "has to occupy the center of all evangelizing activity". It is the first and most important proclamation, "which we must hear again and again in different ways, and which we must always announce in one form or another".

Indeed, "nothing is more solid, profound, secure, meaningful and wise than that message". In effect, "all Christian formation consists of entering more deeply into the kerygma". Pope Francis, *The Joy of Love* 58

---

"In the complex reality of mission, initial proclamation has a central and irreplaceable role, since it introduces man "into the mystery of the love of God, who invites him to enter into a personal relationship with himself in Christ" and opens the way to conversion. Faith is born of preaching, and every ecclesial community draws its origin and life from the personal response of each believer to that preaching. Just as the whole economy of salvation has its center in Christ, so too all missionary activity is directed to the proclamation of his mystery." St. John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio* 44

### Definition of Discipleship

In proclaiming the Good News of Revelation to the world, evangelization invites men and women to conversion and faith. The call of Jesus, "Repent and believe in the Gospel", (Mk 1,15) continues to resound today by means of the Church's work of evangelization. The Christian faith is, above all, conversion to Jesus Christ, (141) full and sincere adherence to his person and the decision to walk in his footsteps. Faith is a personal encounter with Jesus Christ making, of oneself a disciple of him. This demands a permanent commitment to think like him, to judge like him and to live as he lived. In this way the believer unites himself to the community of disciples and appropriates the faith of the Church. This "Yes" to Jesus Christ, who is the fullness of the revelation of the Father is twofold: a trustful abandonment to God and a loving assent to all that he has revealed to us. This is possible only by means of the action of the Holy Spirit. "By faith man freely commits his entire self completely to God, making the full submission of his intellect and will to God who reveals, and willingly assenting to the Revelation given by him".

"To believe has thus a double reference: to the person and to the truth; to the truth, by trust in the person who bears witness to it". Faith involves a change of life, a "metanoia", that is a profound transformation of mind and heart; it causes the believer to live that conversion. This transformation of life manifests itself at all levels of the Christian's existence: in his interior life of adoration and acceptance of the divine will, in his action, participation in the mission of the Church, in his married and family life; in his professional life; in fulfilling economic and social responsibilities.

Faith and conversion arise from the "heart", that is, they arise from the depth of the human person and they involve all that he is. By meeting Jesus Christ and by adhering to him the human being sees all of his deepest aspirations completely fulfilled. He finds what he had always been seeking and he finds it super-abundantly. General Directory for Catechesis 53-55

---

The specific character of catechesis, *as distinct from* the initial conversion - bringing proclamation of the Gospel, has the twofold objective of maturing the initial faith and of educating the true disciple of Christ by means of a deeper and more systematic knowledge of the person and the message of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But in catechetical practice, this model order must allow for the fact that *the initial evangelization has often not taken place*. A certain number of children baptized in infancy come for catechesis in the parish without receiving any other initiation into the faith and *still without any explicit personal attachment to Jesus Christ*; they only have the capacity to believe placed within them by Baptism and the presence of the Holy Spirit..... This means that "catechesis" must often concern itself not only with nourishing and teaching the faith, *but also with arousing it* unceasingly with the help of grace, with opening the heart, with converting, and with preparing total adherence to Jesus Christ on the part of those who *are still on the threshold* of faith. St. John Paul II, Catechesis in Our Times 19

---

"...within the whole process of evangelization, the aim of catechesis is to be the teaching and maturation stage, that is to say, the period in which the Christian, *having accepted by faith the person of Jesus Christ* as the one Lord and having given Him complete adherence by sincere conversion of heart, *endeavors to know better this Jesus to whom he has entrusted himself*: to know His "mystery," the kingdom of God proclaimed by Him, the requirements and promises contained in His Gospel message, and the paths that He has laid down for anyone who wishes to follow Him.

It is true that being a Christian means saying "yes" to Jesus Christ, but let us remember that this "yes" has two levels: It consists in surrendering to the word of God and relying on it, but it also means, at a later stage, endeavoring to know better - and better the profound meaning of this word." St. John Paul II, Catechesis in Our Times 20

---

In catechesis too, we have *rediscovered the fundamental role of the first announcement or kerygma, which needs to be the center of all evangelizing activity and all efforts at Church renewal.* [...] On the lips of the catechist the first proclamation must ring out over and over: **"Jesus Christ loves you; he gave his life to save you; and now he is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen and free you."** This first proclamation is called "first" not because it exists at the beginning and can then be forgotten or replaced by other more important things. It is first in a qualitative sense because it is the principal proclamation, the one which we must hear again and again in different ways, the one which we must announce one way or another throughout the process of catechesis, at every level and moment. Pope Francis, Joy of the Gospel 164-165

## EVANGELIZATION AND MORALITY

"Those who live 'by the flesh' experience God's Law as a burden and, indeed, as a denial or, at least, a restriction of their own freedom. On the other hand, those who are impelled by love and 'walk by the Spirit' (Gal 5:16), and who desire to serve others, find in God's Law the fundamental and necessary way in which to practice love as something freely chosen, and freely lived out. Indeed, they feel an interior urge—a genuine 'necessity' and no longer a form of coercion—not to stop at the minimum demands of the Law, but to live them in their 'fullness.'" St. John Paul II, Splendor of Truth 18

---

"Following Christ is, thus, the essential and primordial foundation of Christian morality: just as the people of Israel followed God, who led them through the desert towards the Promised Land (cf. Ex 13:21), so every disciple must follow Jesus, towards whom he is drawn by the Father himself (cf. Jn 6:44). This is not a matter only of disposing oneself to hear a teaching, and obediently accepting a commandment. More radically, it involves holding fast to the very person of Jesus, partaking of his life, and his destiny, sharing in his free and loving obedience to the will of the Father. By responding in faith, and following the one who is Incarnate Wisdom, the disciple of Jesus truly becomes a disciple of God (cf. Jn 6:45)" St. John Paul II, Splendor of Truth 22

---

It is urgent to rediscover and to set forth once more the authentic reality of the Christian faith, which is not simply a set of propositions to be accepted with intellectual assent. Rather, faith is a lived knowledge of Christ, a living remembrance of His commandments, and a truth to be lived out. A word, in any event, is not truly received until it passes into action... Faith is a decision involving one's whole existence. It is an encounter, a dialogue, a communion of love and of life between the believer and Jesus Christ, the Way, and the Truth, and the Life (cf. Jn 14:6)." St. John Paul II, Veritatis Splendor 88

*I UNDERSTOOD THAT THE  
CHURCH HAD A HEART  
AND THAT THIS HEART  
WAS AFLAME WITH LOVE.  
I UNDERSTOOD THAT  
LOVE ALONE STIRRED THE  
MEMBERS OF THE  
CHURCH TO ACT... I  
UNDERSTOOD THAT LOVE  
ENCOMPASSED ALL  
VOCATIONS, THAT LOVE  
WAS EVERYTHING.*

*From Novo Millennio Inuente, St. John Paul II*

42. "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (Jn 13:35). If we have truly contemplated the face of Christ, dear Brothers and Sisters, our pastoral planning will necessarily be inspired by the "new commandment" which he gave us: "Love one another, as I have loved you" (Jn 13:34).

This is the other important area in which there has to be commitment and planning on the part of the universal Church and the particular Churches: the domain of communion (koinonia), which embodies and reveals the very essence of the mystery of the Church. Communion is the fruit and demonstration of that love which springs from the heart of the Eternal Father and is poured out upon us through the Spirit which Jesus gives us (cf. Rom 5:5), to make us all "one heart and one soul" (Acts 4:32). *It is in building this communion of love that*

*the Church appears as "sacrament", as the "sign and instrument of intimate union with God and of the unity of the human race".*

The Lord's words on this point are too precise for us to diminish their import. Many things are necessary for the Church's journey through history, not least in this new century; but without charity (agape), all will be in vain. It is again the Apostle Paul who in the hymn to love reminds us: even if we speak the tongues of men and of angels, and if we have faith "to move mountains", but are without love, all will come to "nothing" (cf. 1 Cor 13:2). Love is truly the "heart" of the Church, as was well understood by Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, whom I proclaimed a Doctor of the Church precisely because she is an expert in the scientia amoris: "I understood that the Church had a Heart and that this Heart was aflame with Love. I understood that Love alone stirred the members of the Church to act... I understood that Love encompassed all vocations, that Love was everything".

#### *A spirituality of communion*

43. To make the Church the home and the school of communion: that is the great challenge facing us in the millennium which is now beginning, if we wish to be faithful to God's plan and respond to the world's deepest yearnings.

But what does this mean in practice? Here too, our thoughts could run immediately to the action to be undertaken, but that would not be the right impulse to follow. Before making practical plans, we need to promote a spirituality of communion, making it the guiding principle of education wherever individuals and Christians are formed, wherever ministers of the altar, consecrated persons, and pastoral workers are trained, wherever families and communities are being built up. A spirituality of communion indicates above all the heart's contemplation of the mystery of the Trinity dwelling in us, and whose light we must also be able to see shining on the face of the brothers and sisters around us. A spirituality of communion also means an ability to think of our brothers and sisters in faith within the profound unity of the Mystical Body, and therefore as "those who are a part of me". This makes us able to share their joys and sufferings,

to sense their desires and attend to their needs, to offer them deep and genuine friendship. A spirituality of communion implies also the ability to see what is positive in others, to welcome it and prize it as a gift from God: not only as a gift for the brother or sister who has received it directly, but also as a "gift for me". A spirituality of communion means, finally, to know how to "make room" for our brothers and sisters, bearing "each other's burdens" (Gal 6:2) and resisting the selfish temptations which constantly beset us and provoke competition, careerism, distrust and jealousy. Let us have no illusions: unless we follow this spiritual path, external structures of communion will serve very little purpose. They would become mechanisms without a soul, "masks" of communion rather than its means of expression and growth.

---

The more the Christian community is rooted in the experience of God which flows from a living faith, the more credibly it will be able to proclaim to others the fulfilment of God's Kingdom in Jesus Christ. This will result from faithfully listening to the word of God, from prayer and contemplation, from celebrating the mystery of Jesus in the sacraments, above all in the Eucharist, and from giving example of true communion of life and integrity of love. The heart of the particular Church must be set on the contemplation of Jesus Christ, God-made-Man, and strive constantly for a more intimate union with him whose mission she continues. Mission is contemplative action and active contemplation. Therefore, a missionary who has no deep experience of God in prayer and contemplation will have little spiritual influence or missionary success. St. John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Asia* 23

## CONVERSION IN THE LITURGICAL SETTING

It should also be borne in mind that the liturgical proclamation of the word of God, especially in the Eucharistic assembly, is not so much a time for meditation and catechesis as *a dialogue between God and his People, a dialogue in which the wonders of salvation are proclaimed and the demands of the Covenant are continually restated. On their part, the People of God are drawn to respond to this dialogue of love by giving thanks and praise, also by demonstrating their fidelity to the task of continual "conversion"*. The Sunday assembly commits us therefore to an inner renewal of our baptismal promises, which are in a sense implicit in the recitation of the Creed, and are an explicit part of the liturgy of the Easter Vigil and whenever Baptism is celebrated during Mass. In this context, the proclamation of the word in the Sunday Eucharistic celebration takes on the solemn tone found in the Old Testament at moments when the Covenant was renewed, when the Law was proclaimed and the community of Israel was called — like the People in the desert at the foot of Sinai (cf. Ex 19:7-8; 24:3,7) — *to repeats its "yes", renewing its decision to be faithful to God and to obey his commandments*. In speaking his word, God awaits our response: a response which Christ has already made for us with his "Amen" (cf. 2 Cor 1:20-22), and which echoes in us through the Holy Spirit so that what we hear may involve us at the deepest level." St. John Paul II, *Dies Domini* 15

Young people are ready to commit themselves to the Gospel message if it is presented in all its nobility and liberating force. They will continue to take an active part in the liturgy *if they experience it as capable of leading them to a deep personal relationship with God*; and it is from this experience that there will come priestly and religious vocations marked by true evangelical and missionary energy. In this sense the young are summoning the whole Church to take the next step in implementing the vision of worship which the Council has bequeathed to us. Unburdened by the ideological agenda of an earlier time, *they are able to speak simply and directly of their desire to experience God*, especially in prayer both public and private. In listening to them, dear Brothers, we may well hear what the Spirit is saying to the Churches (Rev 2:11). St. John Paul II, *On Active Participation in the Liturgy: Ad Limina Address to US Bishops 1998*

Every form of community prayer presupposes individual prayer. Between the individual and God there arises that true converse which finds expression in praise, thanksgiving and petition addressed to the Father through Jesus Christ and in the Holy Spirit. Personal prayer, which is as it were the very breath of the Christian, should never be neglected. There is also a need to help the faithful to rediscover the link between this personal prayer and liturgical prayer. St. John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Europa* 78

"Humanity is loved by God! *This very simple yet profound proclamation is owed to humanity by the Church*. Each Christian's words and life must make this proclamation resound: God loves you, Christ came for you, Christ is for you "the Way, the Truth and the Life!" (Jn 14:6).

This re-evangelization is directed not only to individual persons but also to entire portions of populations in the variety of their situations, surroundings and cultures. *Its purpose is the formation of mature ecclesial communities, in which the faith might radiate and fulfill the basic meaning of adherence to the person of Christ and his Gospel, of an encounter and sacramental communion with him, and of an existence lived in charity and in service.*" St. John Paul II, *Christifidelis Laici* 34

**HUMANITY IS LOVED BY GOD!  
THIS VERY SIMPLE YET PROFOUND  
PROCLAMATION IS OWED TO  
HUMANITY BY THE CHURCH.**