

SYNOD OF BISHOPS - OCTOBER 2012

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

A DISCUSSION PAPER

What is the “new evangelization”?

The Church is “missionary by nature”. Founded by Christ who commissioned his disciples to “go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you” (*Matt 28:19-20*), the Church as the People of God (*cf Lumen Gentium, Chapter 2*) knows that it has an extraordinary gift given by God to be shared with the whole of humanity. It has the gift of abundant life (*cf John 10:10*), the gift who is “the Way, the Truth and the Life” (*John 14:6*).

In every age the Church’s privilege and duty, *our* privilege and duty, is to share this gift with the world and all its peoples. This is “evangelization”. But in our present world there is need of a ***new evangelization*** as the expression of “the Church’s renewed efforts to meet the challenges which today’s society and cultures, in view of the significant changes taking place, are posing to the Christian faith, its proclamation and its witness” (*Lineamenta 5*).

In the understanding of the pre-Synodal document (the *Lineamenta*) this urgent privilege and duty to proclaim Jesus Christ as the source of true life calls for:

- A discernment of the changes in various cultural and social settings and their impact on the Christian life;
- A re-reading of the memory of faith;
- The undertaking of new responsibilities in the proclamation of the Gospel;
- The generation of new energies which will allow for the joyous and convincing proclamation of the Gospel.

We, the Church in Australia, are in a “new situation”. The urgent question raised by the “new evangelization” is this: how can we proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ faithfully and fully in such a way as to lead people to see it as the extraordinary gift of God through which God offers to everyone the gift of the fullness of life?

Another way of asking the question is this: How can we proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the people of our own time and culture(s) in ways that are fully faithful to that Gospel and able to be understood and appreciated by those with whom we seek to share this gift?

The new cultural and social situation: for reflection, prayer and discussion.....

What are the dominant features of today's society and culture, as you experience it locally, which might dispose people to hear and accept the gift of the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

What are the dominant features of today's society and culture, as you experience it locally, which make the proclamation of the Gospel particularly difficult?

What elements of today's society and culture are in harmony with the Gospel?

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What elements of today's society and culture are in need of challenge by the values of the Gospel?

"Modern man (sic) listens more readily to witnesses than to teachers." (Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi*, 170.) In your local experience, and more generally, what are the strengths of the Church in this area?

"Modern man (sic) listens more readily to witnesses than to teachers." (Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi*, 170.) In your local experience, and more generally, what more needs to be done in this area?

Re-reading the Memory of Faith: for reflection, prayer and discussion

In facing the new challenges of our time “the Church does not give up or retreat into herself; instead she undertakes a project to revitalize herself. She makes the Person of Jesus Christ and a personal encounter with him central to her thinking, knowing that he will give his Spirit and provide the force to announce and proclaim the Gospel in new ways which can speak to today’s cultures (Lineamenta 5).

In your experience where is the Person of Jesus most powerfully encountered and his message most clearly proclaimed in the Church today? What is working really well?

What are we not doing, but could be doing, to help people encounter Jesus present and at work in their lives and in our world? What are we presently doing, but could be doing better?

In seeking to proclaim the Gospel in ways that are relevant and understandable in today's context, what do we need to do to ensure that we remain faithful to the Person and message of Jesus Christ as it come to us in the Scriptures and in the Tradition of the Church?

In seeking to remain faithful to the Scriptures and to the Church's Tradition, what do we need to do to ensure that the message is proclaimed in a way that makes it accessible to people in our contemporary context?

New Responsibilities in the Proclamation of the Gospel: for reflection, prayer and discussion.....

A new evangelization is synonymous with mission, requiring the capacity to set out anew, go beyond boundaries and broaden horizons. The new evangelization is the opposite of self-sufficiency, a withdrawal into oneself, a status quo mentality and an idea that pastoral programmes are simply to proceed as they did in the past (Lineamenta 10).

“The Pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature” (*Ad Gentes* 2). If the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist) commission and empower every Christian to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world, what are the implications of this for your parish, your diocese, your community? For yourself?

How is the “missionary mandate” (to make disciples of all nations) being expressed in your local Catholic community? What are the signs of hope? Who are the great examples of commitment to the gospel in your community, parish or diocese?

What are the obstacles to more and more members of the Catholic community taking up more vigorously and enthusiastically their fundamental vocation to be witnesses to Christ?

What practical suggestions would you make to help enliven our people's sense of mission?

Generating new energies to allow for the joyous and convincing proclamation of the Gospel: for reflection, prayer and discussion

As Christians we live immersed in the realities of our own time and place. What gives you a sense of hope and optimism as you consider the situation of the world, of Australia and of your own local area?

What are the areas of contemporary culture and society which are a source of discouragement for you?

In what ways does the Gospel offer a way forward in the midst of disappointments and discouragement?

What aspects of the life of the Church as you experience it are a source of joy and hope for you?