



“Evangelization should enable people to say wholeheartedly: ‘It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me!’ (Ga. 2:20)” With these emphatic words, Pope Francis encourages us to profoundly evaluate our evangelization activities. He says that the initial proclamation of the Gospel must give place to a journey of ongoing formation and maturation and that evangelization should aim at a process of growth, which entails taking seriously each person and God’s plan for his or her life because every human being needs Christ (cf. EG 160).

These very important and meaningful words should not leave us indifferent. Everyone knows that the Church exists to proclaim the Gospel, but perhaps not everyone knows that this is not enough. It is not enough to speak about Jesus Christ—that would be too little! It is not enough to make beautiful speeches about the Gospel. It is not enough to proclaim Christ via television or the social media. It is not enough!

Evangelization—that is, the clear and decisive public proclamation of the crucified and risen Christ—lives up to its name to the degree that we “take seriously each person and God’s plan for his or her life.” More than ever today, the proclamation of the Gospel means alerting the people of our time to their fundamental vocation, namely: to become Jesus. It means not only announcing this message to them, but also accompanying them in the transformation process. Going a step further, it means not only accompanying them but giving one’s life so that at least some will reach the point of being able to say with the Apostle Paul: “Christ lives in me!” This is the true challenge of evangelization. Jesus is not only God’s “only-begotten Son”: he is also the eldest of many brothers and sisters, all of whom are called by the Gospel to be conformed to his image (cf. Rm. 8:29). God is the Father of us all because we are all

called to become his children in Christ. A fundamental characteristic of Christianity is to experience the same feelings as Jesus, to make his mission visible by allowing one’s life to be transformed into bread that is broken and wine that is poured out for the salvation of the world.

A vocation—the element that binds the God who calls to the person called by means of a vibrant relationship—is the heart of the new evangelization. It is God’s invitation to human beings to enter a new season of truth and freedom—a time of giving a renewed ethical foundation to culture and cultures. But how can the evangelization efforts of the Church bring her sons and daughters to the point of being able to say wholeheartedly: “It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me”? By making the Word of God the unifying and motivating center of every ecclesial activity (cf. EG 174).

All evangelization is based on the Word, which we must listen to, meditate on, live, celebrate and witness to. This means that the whole ecclesial community must become always more familiar with the Word of God according to the principle formulated by Gregory the Great: “*Divina eloquia cum le gente crescunt*,” that is to say: the Word of God keeps pace with the growth of the persons who read it. Those who want to deepen their relationship with God by assiduously reading the Scriptures will see changes in their lives: they will grow and their experiences will become decisive elements in their understanding of the Word.

Every word of Scripture shines with many lights that, like stars, illuminate our journey through a dark world. This is what happened to the two sad and disillusioned disciples on the road to Emmaus: their hearts burned with new ardor and joy thanks to the words of a stranger who revealed to them the meaning of the Scriptures.