

PROCLAMATION REQUIRES RENUNCIATION



The beginning of the month dedicated to the Divine Master coincides with important ecclesial events: the opening of the Synod on the New Evangelization and the beginning of the Year of Faith. In these days, the Holy Father will also be proclaiming two new Doctors of the Church: John of Avila and Hildegard of Bingen.

What can we ask the Divine Master at the beginning of this Synod on the New Evangelization—an event close to the heart of the Pauline Family, which is dedicated to evangelization in different ways through its different charisms?

I think that the Lord is giving us a very special lesson, namely, that the first thing Jesus did to evangelize each one of us was to empty himself. As St. Paul says in his Letter to the Philippians: “Though he was in the form of God, Christ Jesus emptied himself.” Confronted with the needs of evangelization, we should not so much ask ourselves what we should say or do; instead we should empty ourselves, that is, recognize what we should not do, what we don’t want to do. To put it simply, the first thing required of us in proclaiming Christ is to recognize what we must give up.

To proclaim the Father, Jesus gave up his divine privileges. And what must we give up in order to proclaim Jesus? We cannot expect to proclaim the Gospel and remain as we are. We cannot proclaim the Word without changing our life, our ways of thinking and living. The most pressing solicitation posed by the needs of the new evangelization is to discover the things in our lives that are worthless, that should be thrown out. If we don’t do this, if we worry exclusively about the situations of those to whom we want to proclaim the message of Christ without examining our own lives, then our evangelization is meaningless.

We have to be concerned about who we are. We have to be concerned about letting the Lord Jesus remove all the personal and communitarian elements we have accumulated that don’t serve the Gospel. In our religious life, there are too many filters between us and the Gospel, between us and the Gospel we proclaim to others. It is very, very important to re-member that *proclamation requires renunciation*. To proclaim the Gospel afresh, we must renounce afresh. This is the vital lesson each of us can learn from the Divine Master, who taught us through the example of his Incarnation.

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