

Final List Of Propositions From The 2012 Synod On The New Evangelization

Introduction

Proposition 1 : The Documentation Submitted To The Holy Father

In addition to the entire documentation on The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith related to this synod, submitted to the Holy Father for his consideration, namely, the Lineamenta, the Instrumentum laboris, the Relatio ante disceptationem, the Relatio post disceptationem, the presentations, both given in the synod hall and those in scriptis, the Message to the People of God, the Reports of the Small Groups and their discussions, the synod fathers have given a certain importance to the following propositions.

The Synod Fathers also humbly request the Holy Father to consider the opportuneness of issuing a document on transmitting the Christian faith through a new evangelization.

Proposition 2 : Synod Expresses Gratitude

The Synod Fathers recognize with gratitude the heritage of Papal teaching, often enriching the fruits of earlier Synodal assemblies, that is foundational to the work during these sessions of the Synod for the New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith. The reflections of the Synod draw upon documents such as Evangelii nuntiandi of Pope Paul VI, Catechesi tradendae, Redemptoris missio and Novo millennio ineunte of Blessed John Paul II and Deus caritas est, Sacramentum caritatis and Verbum Domini of Pope Benedict XVI. The most recent example of this guidance is the Year of Faith, proclaimed by our Holy Father at the beginning of this Synod. For this prophetic ministry we are most grateful.

Proposition 3 : Oriental Catholic Churches

The Oriental Catholic Churches sui juris, which are enlightened by the Tradition that has been handed down from the Apostles through the Fathers, are the patrimony of the whole Church of Christ (cf. Orientalium Ecclesiarum, 2, Codex Canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium, 39). These Churches are part of the Apostolic heritage through which the Good News was brought to far-off lands (cf. Ecclesia in Medio Oriente, 88).

They are thankful for the possibility offered to them to carry out their pastoral duties towards their migrant faithful in countries with Latin Church traditions. They also hope that their tradition might be more fully known and respected among the faithful and clergy of particular Churches around the world.

1) The Nature of the New Evangelization

Proposition 4 : The Holy Trinity Source Of The New Evangelization

The Church and her evangelizing mission have their origin and source in the Most Holy Trinity according to the plan of the Father, the work of the Son, which culminated in his death and glorious Resurrection, and the mission of the Holy Spirit. The Church continues this mission of God's love in our world.

Evangelization has to be understood in a broad and profound theological-doctrinal framework as an activity of word and sacrament which, especially through the Eucharist, admits us to participation in the life of the Trinity, and this then arouses through the grace of the Holy Spirit the power to evangelize and to give witness to the Word of God with enthusiasm and courage.

The New Evangelization recognizes the primacy of God's grace and how in baptism one comes to live in Christ. This emphasis on divine filiation should bring the baptized to a life of faith that clearly manifests their Christian identity in all aspects of their personal activity.

Proposition 5 : The New Evangelization And Inculturation

Jesus offers the gift of the Holy Spirit and reveals to us the love of the Father.

The New Evangelization is a time of awakening, of new encouragement and new witness that Jesus Christ is the center of our faith and daily life. It calls on every member of the Church to a renewal of faith and an actual effort to share it.

It also requires discerning the signs of the times in the world that impacts the ministry of the Church and in the different particular Churches in their proper territories. Among these signs one needs to recognize certainly a growing awareness of people to the changing circumstances of life today.

Furthermore it calls the Church to reach out to those who are far from God and the Christian community to invite them to once again hear the Word of God in order to encounter the Lord Jesus in a new and profound way.

The New Evangelization calls for particular attention to the inculturation of the faith that can transmit the Gospel in its capacity to value what is positive in every culture, at the same time, purifying it from elements that are contrary to the full realization of the person according to the design of God revealed in Christ. Inculturation involves the effort to have the Gospel take flesh in each people's culture" (CCC, 854).

Proposition 6 : Proclamation Of The Gospel

God, our savior, wills everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (cf. 1 Tim2: 4). Since the Church believes in this divine plan of universal salvation she must be missionary (cf. *Evangelii nuntiandi*, 14, CCC, 851). She also knows that "those also can attain to salvation who through no fault of their own do not know the Gospel of Christ or His Church, yet sincerely seek God and moved by grace strive by their deeds to do His will as it is known to them through the dictates of conscience." (*Lumen gentium*, 16). The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the proclamation of his life and of the paschal mystery of his passion, death, resurrection and glorification.

The Council reminds us, however, that evangelization is necessary for the salvation of all since “But 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 (cf. Rm 1: 21, 25). Or some there are who, living and dying in this world without God, are exposed to final despair. Wherefore to promote the glory of God and procure the salvation of all of these, and mindful of the command of the Lord, ‘Preach the Gospel to every creature’ (Mk 16:15), the Church fosters the missions with care and attention” (Lumen gentium, 16).

Proposition 7 : New Evangelization As A Permanent Missionary Dimension Of The Church

It is proposed that the Church proclaim the permanent world-wide missionary dimension of her mission in order to encourage all the particular Churches to evangelize.

Evangelization can be understood in three aspects. Firstly, evangelization *ad gentes* is the announcement of the Gospel to those who do not know Jesus Christ. Secondly, it also includes the continuing growth in faith that is the ordinary life of the Church. Finally, the New Evangelization is directed especially to those who have become distant from the Church.

In so doing, all the particular Churches will be encouraged to value and integrate all their various agents and capabilities. At the same time, each particular Church must have the freedom to evangelize according to her own traits and traditions, always in unity with the proper Bishops’ Conference or the Synod of the Eastern Catholic Church. Such a world-wide mission will respond to the action of the Holy Spirit, as in a new Pentecost, through a call issued by the Roman Pontiff, who invites all faithful to visit all families and bring the life of Christ to all human situations.

Proposition 8 : Witnessing In A Secularized World

We are Christians living in a secularized world. Whereas the world is and remains God’s creation, secularization falls within the sphere of human culture. As Christians we cannot remain indifferent to the process of secularization. We are in fact in a situation similar to that of the first Christians and as such we should see this both as a challenge and a possibility. We live in this world, but are not of this world (cf. Jn 15:19; 17:11, 16). The world is God’s creation and manifests his love. In and through Jesus Christ we receive God’s salvation and are able to discern the progress of his creation. Jesus opens the doors for us anew so that, without fear, we can lovingly embrace the wounds of the Church and of the world (cf. Benedict XVI).

In our present age, that manifests aspects more difficult than the past, even if we are like “the little flock” (Lk 12:32), we bear witness to the Gospel message of salvation and we are called to be salt and light of a new world (cf. Mt 5:13-16).

Proposition 9 : New Evangelization And Initial Proclamation

The foundation of all initial proclamation, the kerygmatic dimension, the Good News, makes prominent an explicit announcement of salvation. “For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on

the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve” (1 Cor 15:3-5).

The ‘first proclamation’ is where the kerygma, the message of salvation of the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ, is proclaimed with great spiritual power to the point of bringing about repentance of sin, conversion of hearts and a decision of faith. At the same time there has to be continuity between first proclamation and catechesis which instructs us in the deposit of the faith.

We consider it necessary that there be a Pastoral Plan of Initial Proclamation, teaching a living encounter with Jesus Christ. This pastoral document would provide the first elements for the catechetical process, enabling its insertion into the lives of the parish communities.

The Synod Fathers propose that guidelines of the initial proclamation of the kerygma be written. This compendium would include:

- Systematic teaching on the kerygma in Scripture and Tradition of the Catholic Church;
- Teachings and quotations from the missionary saints and martyrs in our Catholic history that would assist us in our pastoral challenges of today; and
- Qualities and guidelines for the formation of Catholic evangelizers today.

Proposition 10 : Right To Proclaim And To Hear The Gospel

To proclaim the Good News and the person of Jesus is an obligation for each Christian, founded in the Gospel: “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” (Mt 28: 19).

At the same time, it is an inalienable right for each person, whatever one’s religion or lack of religion, to be able to know Jesus Christ and the Gospel. This proclamation, given with integrity, must be offered with a total respect for each person, without any form of proselytizing.

Proposition 11 : New Evangelization And The Prayerful Reading Of Sacred Scripture

God has communicated himself to us in his Word made flesh. This divine Word, heard and celebrated in the Liturgy of the Church, particularly in the Eucharist, strengthens interiorly the faithful and renders them capable of authentic evangelical witness in daily life. The Synod Fathers desire that the divine word “be ever more fully at the heart of every ecclesial activity” (Verbum Domini, 1).

The gate to Sacred Scripture should be open to all believers. In the context of the New Evangelization every opportunity for the study of Sacred Scripture should be made available. The Scripture should permeate homilies, catechesis and every effort to pass on the faith.

In consideration of the necessity of familiarity with the Word of God for the New Evangelization and for the spiritual growth of the faithful, the Synod encourages dioceses, parishes, small Christian communities to continue serious study of the Bible and Lectio Divina, the — the prayerful reading of the Scriptures (cf. Dei Verbum, 21-22).

Proposition 12 : Documents Of Vatican II

The Synod Fathers recognize the teaching of Vatican II as a vital instrument for transmitting the faith in the context of the New Evangelization. At the same time, they consider that the documents of the Council should be properly read and interpreted. Therefore, they wish to manifest their adherence to the thought of our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, who has indicated the hermeneutical principle of reform within continuity so as to be able to discover in those texts the authentic spirit of the Council. “There is the “hermeneutic of reform”, of renewal in the continuity of the one subject-Church which the Lord has given to us. She is a subject which increases in time and develops, yet always remaining the same, the one subject of the journeying People of God. [...] However, wherever this interpretation guided the implementation of the Council, new life developed and new fruit ripened” (Benedict XVI, Address to the Roman Curia, 22 December 2005). In this way it will be possible to respond to the need for renewal required by the modern world and, at the same time, faithfully preserve the identity of the Church’s nature and mission.

2) The Context of the Church’s Ministry Today

Proposition 13 : Challenges Of Our Time

The proclamation of the good news in different contexts of the world — marked by the processes of globalization and secularism — places different challenges before the Church: at times in an outright religious persecution, at other times in a widespread indifference, interference, restriction or harassment.

The Gospel offers a vision of life and of the world that cannot be imposed, but only proposed, as the good news of the gratuitous love of God and of peace. The message of truth and of beauty can help people escape from the loneliness and lack of meaning to which the conditions of post-modern society often relegate them.

Therefore, believers must strive to show to the world the splendor of a humanity grounded in the mystery of Christ. Popular religiosity is important but not sufficient; more is needed to help recognize the duty to proclaim to the world the reason for Christian hope, to those Catholics estranged from the Church, to those who do not follow Christ, to the sects and those experimenting with different kinds of spiritualities.

Proposition 14 : The New Evangelization And Reconciliation

In a world that is broken by wars and violence, a world hurt by a widespread individualism which separates human beings among themselves, and pits one against the other, the Church must exercise her ministry of reconciliation in a calm and resolute way. The Church in the spirit of the New Evangelization undertakes the task of reconciliation. Faithful to Jesus’ message, (“...he has broken down the dividing wall of hostility” Eph 2:14), the Church has to make an effort to break down the walls that separate human beings. With the message of love, she has to preach the newness of the salvific Gospel of Our Lord, who came to free us from our sins and to invite us to build harmony, peace and justice among all peoples.

Proposition 15 : New Evangelization And Human Rights

Consistent with the emphasis placed on human dignity by the New Evangelization, this Synod urges legislators, teachers and others who work in the human sciences to grant full respect to the human person both in public policy and practice.

At the same time, every opportunity must be taken in various local situations and associations to articulate, uphold and guard, both in theory and in practice, those rights flowing from an adequate understanding of the human person as set forth in the natural law.

Proposition 16 : Religious Liberty

The Synod Fathers reaffirm that religious freedom is a basic human right. This includes the freedom of conscience and also the liberty to freely choose one's religion. We are in solidarity with our brothers and sisters, in different parts of the world, who are suffering from lack of religious freedom and even persecution.

In light of the recognition of the Second Vatican Council as an instrument for the New Evangelization and the growing need to protect the religious liberty of Christians throughout the world, the Synod Fathers propose a renewed commitment to and wider diffusion of the teachings of *Dignitatis Humanae*. This renewal seeks to affirm and promote freedom in religious matters for individuals, families and institutions to protect the common good of all. Such a freedom includes the right to teach the Christian faith without compromise of its tenets to children in the family and/or school.

The Synod Fathers propose that the Holy Father consider the opportuneness of establishing a commission of Church leaders representing various parts of the Church throughout the world or entrusting this task to the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, to address attacks on religious liberty, and to obtain accurate information for public witness to the fundamental right to religious freedom and freedom of conscience.

Proposition 17 : Preambles Of Faith And Theology Of Credibility

In the contemporary context of a global Culture, many doubts and obstacles cause an extended skepticism and introduce new paradigms of thought and life. It is of paramount importance, for a New Evangelization, to underline the role of the Preambles of Faith. It is necessary not only to show that faith does not oppose reason, but also to highlight a number of truths and realities which pertain to a correct anthropology, that is enlightened by natural reason. Among them, is the value of the Natural Law, and the consequences it has for the whole human society. The notions of "Natural Law" and "human nature" are capable of rational demonstrations, both at the academic and popular levels. Such an intellectual development and enterprise will help the dialogue between Christian faithful and people of good will, opening a way to recognize the existence of a God the Creator and the message of Jesus Christ the Redeemer. The Synodal Fathers ask theologians to develop a new apologetics of Christian thought, that is a theology of credibility adequate for a New Evangelization.

The Synod calls on theologians to accept and respond to the intellectual challenges of the New Evangelization by participating in the mission of the Church to proclaim to all the Gospel of Christ.

Proposition 18 : New Evangelization And The Means Of Social Communication

The use of means of social communication has an important role to play in order to reach every person with the message of salvation. In this field, especially in the world of electronic communications, it is necessary that convinced Christians be formed, prepared and made capable to transmit faithfully the content of the faith and of Christian morality. They should have the ability to use well the languages and the instruments of today that are available for communication in the global village. The most effective form of this communication of the faith remains the sharing of the testimony of life, without which none of the “media” efforts will result in an effective transmission of the Gospel. Education in the wise and constructive use of social media is an important means to be utilized in the New Evangelization.

Proposition 19 : New Evangelization And Human Development

The Papal Magisterium in its social teaching demonstrated the theological, anthropological and educational bonds between evangelization and the development and freedom of both the person and society.

Today it is not possible to think of the New Evangelization without the proclamation of full freedom from everything that oppresses the human person, i.e. sin and its consequences. Without a serious commitment for life and justice and the change of the situations that generate poverty and exclusion (cf. *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, 36) there can be no progress. This is particularly true in the face of challenges of globalization.

Proposition 20 : The New Evangelization And The Way Of Beauty

In the New Evangelization, there should be a particular attention paid to the way of beauty: Christ, the “Good Shepherd” (cf. Jn 10:11) is the Truth in person, the beautiful revelation in sign, pouring himself out without measure. It is important to give testimony to the young who follow Jesus, not only of his goodness and truth, but also of the fullness of his beauty. As Augustine affirmed, “it is not possible to love what is not beautiful” (*Confessions*, Bk IV, 13.20). Beauty attracts us to love, through which God reveals to us his face in which we believe. In this light artists feel themselves both spoken to and privileged communicators of the New Evangelization.

In the formation of seminarians, education in beauty should not be neglected nor education in the sacred arts as we are reminded in the teaching of the Second Vatican Council (cf. *Sacrosanctum concilium*, 129). Beauty should always be a special dimension of the new evangelization.

It is necessary that the Church be vigilant in caring for and promoting the quality of the art that is permitted in the sacred spaces reserved for liturgical celebrations, guarding both its beauty and the truthfulness of its expression.

It is important for the New Evangelization that the Church be present in all fields of art, so as to support with her spiritual and pastoral presence the artists in their search for creativity and to foster a living and true spiritual experience of salvation that becomes present in their work.

Proposition 21 : Migrants

Just as many countries have greatly benefitted from the presence of people coming from other countries, so too the Church is nourished in a significant way with the witness and the evangelizing work of many of those engaged with the missionary mandate: “Go out into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to all creation” (Mk 16: 15).

Given the risks and threats to the faith of the migrating peoples, it is important that the Church gives her support through a pastoral plan that includes them and their families, and reminds them of their important place as the living cell of society and the domestic Church. Parishes should help the migrants integrate themselves into society and the Christian community.

The Church’s pastoral plan for migrants should not only welcome migrants and promote their human dignity, but should above all help them be integrated into the life of the Church, respecting their own ritual tradition; this plan should also help them avoid becoming lost to the Catholic Church.

Immigrants are not only recipients, but also protagonists of the proclamation of the Gospel in the modern world.

In the face of the great migratory movements, it is important to insist on the centrality and dignity of the person, in particular in light of the grave phenomena of a new slavery connected to the shameful trafficking of human beings, especially children, and the selling of organs. This awareness must increase when dealing with refugees, the displaced, those on the sea, nomads and people without a fixed home.

Proposition 22 : Conversion

The drama and intensity of the age old clash between good and evil, between faith and fear should be presented as the essential background, a constituent element of the call to conversion in Christ. This struggle continues at a natural and supernatural level. “For the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few” (Mt 7: 14). Many bishops spoke of the need for renewal in holiness in their own lives, if they are to be true and effective agents of the New Evangelization.

The New Evangelization requires personal and communal conversion, new methods of evangelization and renewal of the pastoral structures, to be able to move from a pastoral strategy of maintenance to a pastoral position that is truly missionary. The New Evangelization guides us to an authentic pastoral conversion which moves us to attitudes and initiatives which leads to evaluations and changes in the dynamics of pastoral structures which no longer respond to the evangelical demands of the current time.

Proposition 23 : Holiness And The New Evangelizers

The universal call to holiness is constitutive of the New Evangelization that sees the Saints as effective models of the variety and forms in which this vocation can be realized. What is common in the varied stories of holiness is the following of Christ expressed in a life of faith active in charity which is a privileged proclamation of the Gospel.

We recognize Mary as the model of holiness that is manifest in acts of love including the supreme gift of self.

Holiness is a significant part of every evangelizing commitment for the one who evangelizes and for the good of those evangelized.

Proposition 24 : The Social Teaching Of The Church

In order to advance a New Evangelization in society, greater attention should be given to the Church's social doctrine, understanding that it is a proclamation and witness of faith, an irreplaceable means of education in the faith (cf. *Caritas in veritate*, 15). This embrace of the Church's social doctrine should permeate the content of catechesis, Christian education, formation of seminarians and religious, the continuing formation of bishops and priests and most especially the formation of the laity. The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church is a precious resource in accomplishing this continuing formation.

Proposition 25 : Urban Scenarios Of the New Evangelization

The Church acknowledges that human cities and the culture they express, as well as the transformations that take place in them, are a privileged place of the New Evangelization. Understanding herself at the service of the salvific plan of God, the Church recognizes that the "Holy City, the New Jerusalem" (cf. Rev 21, 2-4) is in a certain way already present in human realities. Putting in practice an urban pastoral plan, the Church wants to identify and understand those experiences, languages and styles of life, that are typical of urban societies. She intends to render her liturgical celebrations, her experiences of communitarian life, and her exercise of charity, relevant to the urban context, in order to incarnate the Gospel in the life of all citizens.

The Church also knows that in many cities one sees the absence of God, in the many attacks on human dignity. Among them: violence related to drug trafficking, corruption of various kinds, and many other crimes. We are convinced that the proclamation of the Gospel can be the basis to restore the dignity of human life in these urban contexts. It is the Gospel of Jesus, who "came that they may have life and have it abundantly" (Jn 10: 10).

3) Pastoral Responses to the Circumstances of Our Day

Proposition 26 : Parishes And Other Ecclesial Realities

The bishops gathered in Synod affirm that the parish continues to be the primary presence of the Church in neighborhoods, the place and instrument of Christian life, which is able to offer opportunities for dialogue among men, for listening to and announcing the Word of God, for organic catechesis, for training in charity, for prayer, adoration and joyous eucharistic celebrations. In addition the Synod Fathers would like to encourage parishes to find ways to orient themselves to a greater emphasis on evangelization which could include parish missions, parish renewal programs and parish retreats. The presence and evangelizing action of associations, movements and of other ecclesial realities are useful stimuli for the realization of this pastoral conversion. Parishes as well as traditional and new ecclesial

realities are called to make visible together the communion of the particular Church united around the Bishop.

In order to bring to all people the Good News of Jesus, as required by a New Evangelization, all the parishes and their small communities should be living cells, places to promote the personal and communitarian encounter with Christ, experience the richness of liturgy, to give initial and permanent Christian formation, and to educate all the faithful in fraternity and charity especially towards the poor.

Proposition 27 : Education

“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, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Mt28:19-20).

Education is a constitutive dimension of evangelization. To proclaim the Risen Jesus Christ is to accompany all human beings in their personal story, in their development and in their spiritual vocation. Education needs, at the same time, to promote everything that is true, good and beautiful that is a part of the human person, that is to say, to educate the mind and the emotions to appreciate reality.

Children, teenagers and young people have a right to be evangelized and educated. The schools and Catholic universities respond in this way to this need. Public institutions should recognize and support this right.

Schools should assist families in introducing children into the beauty of the faith. Schools offer a great opportunity to transmit the faith or at least to make it known.

The Synod Fathers are grateful for the work of education carried out by thousands of teachers, male and female, in Catholic educational institutions in the five continents.

Because of the singular role of teachers, it is important that they receive ongoing formation in carrying out their responsibilities.

Schools must be free to teach. This freedom is an inalienable right.

For this reason in order to ensure that our institutions are agents of evangelization and not just products of evangelization, the Synod:

- Encourages Catholic educational institutions to do all that is possible to preserve their identity as ecclesial institutions;
- Invites all teachers to embrace the leadership which is theirs as baptized disciples of Jesus, giving witness through their vocation as educators; and
- Urges particular Churches, religious families, and all those who have responsibility in the educational institutions, to facilitate the co-responsibility of lay people, offering adequate formation and accompaniment for this.

Proposition 28 : Adult Catechesis

One cannot speak of the New Evangelization if the catechesis of adults is non-existent, fragmented, weak or neglected. When these defects are present, pastoral ministry faces a very serious challenge.

The phases and levels of the catechumenate of the Church show how biblically, catechetically, spiritually and liturgically a person's history and faith-journey can be understood as a vocation through a relationship with God (cf. *Evangelii nuntiandi*, 18; *Instrumentum laboris*, 92).

In all these things, the public character of the decision of faith which the catechumen makes, which gradually grows in the community and the diocese, has a positive impact on all the faithful.

Proposition 29 : Catechesis, Catechists And The Catechism

Good Catechesis is essential for the New Evangelization. The Synod calls attention to the indispensable service that catechists provide the ecclesial communities and expresses profound gratitude for their dedication. All catechists, who are at the same time evangelizers, need to be well prepared. Every effort should be made within the possibilities of the local situation to provide catechists with strong ecclesial formation, that is spiritual, biblical, doctrinal and pedagogical. Personal witness to the faith is itself a powerful form of catechesis.

The "Catechism of the Catholic Church" and its Compendium are, above all, a resource for teaching the faith and supporting adults in the Church in their evangelizing and catechizing mission.

According to the Apostolic Letter *Ministeria quaedam* of Pope Paul VI, Episcopal Conferences have the possibility to request from the Holy See the institution of the Ministry of Catechist.

Proposition 30 : Theology

Theology as the science of faith has an importance for the New Evangelization. Priests, teachers and catechists must be formed in institutions of higher education. The Church appreciates and promotes research and the teaching of theology. Scientific theology has its own proper place in the university where it must carry out dialogue between faith and the other disciplines and the secular world. Theologians are called to carry out this service as a part of the salvific mission of the Church. It is necessary that they think and feel with the Church (*sentire cum Ecclesia*).

The Synod proposes that the New Evangelization be considered as an integral dimension of the mission of every theological faculty and that a department of New Evangelization studies be established in Catholic Universities.

Proposition 31 : New Evangelization And The Option For The Poor

Pope Benedict XVI teaches: "Jesus identifies himself with those in need, with the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick and those in prison. 'As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me' (Mt 25: 40). Love of God and love of neighbour have become one: in the least of the brethren we find Jesus himself, and in Jesus we find God" (*Deus caritas est*, 15).

Today there are new poor and new faces of poverty: the hungry, the homeless, the sick and abandoned, drug addicts, migrants and the marginalized, political and environmental refugees, the indigenous peoples. The current economic crisis seriously affects the poor. Among the poorest in contemporary society are the victims of grievous loss of respect for the inviolable dignity of innocent human life.

The preferential option for the poor leads us to seek out the poor and to work on their behalf so that they may feel at home in the Church. They are both recipients and actors in the New Evangelization.

Proposition 32 : The Sick

The New Evangelization must be ever aware of the Paschal Mystery of the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. This mystery sheds light on the suffering of people who can find in the Cross of Christ understanding and acceptance of the mystery of suffering that gives them hope in the life to come.

In the sick, the suffering, persons with disabilities and those with special needs, Christ's suffering is present and has a missionary force. For Christians, there must always be place for the suffering and the sick. They need our care, but we receive even more from their faith.

Through the sick, Christ enlightens His Church, so that everyone who enters into contact with them will find reflected the light of Christ. This is why the sick are very important participants in the New Evangelization.

All those in contact with the sick need to be aware of their mission. We cannot forget when we build new hospitals to pay attention so that we do not lack a consoling and supportive environment and a place for prayer.

Proposition 33 : The Sacrament Of Penance And The New Evangelization

The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation is the privileged place to receive God's mercy and forgiveness. It is a place for both personal and communal healing. In this sacrament, all the baptized have a new and **personal encounter** with Jesus Christ, as well as a new encounter with the Church, facilitating a full reconciliation through the forgiveness of sins. Here the penitent encounters Jesus, and at the same time he or she experiences a deeper appreciation of himself and herself. The Synod Fathers ask that this sacrament be put again at the center of the pastoral activity of the Church.

In every diocese, at least one place should be especially dedicated in a permanent way for the celebration of this sacrament, where priests are always present, allowing God's mercy to be experienced by all the faithful. The sacrament should be especially available, even on a daily basis, at places of pilgrimage and specially designated churches. Fidelity to the specific norms which rule the administration of this sacrament is necessary. Every priest should consider the Sacrament of Penance an essential part of his ministry and of the New Evangelization, and in every parish community a suitable time should be set apart for hearing confessions.

Proposition 34 : Sundays And Feast Days

The Eucharist must be the source and summit of the New Evangelization. The Synod Fathers urge all Christ's faithful to renew their understanding and love for the Eucharistic celebration, in which their

lives are transformed and joined to Christ's offering of his own life to the glory of God the Father for the salvation of the whole world.

Even though there is a tension between the Christian Sunday and the secular Sunday, Sunday needs to be recovered for the New Evangelization according to Blessed John Paul II's teaching in "Dies Domini". Sunday with its sacred and special character together with Sunday Mass should be the center of Catholic life. Full, active and conscious participation in the liturgy on the part of the whole community is the goal. The liturgical year with its feasts should be followed by a true program of evangelization, especially at Christmas and Easter.

Proposition 35 : Liturgy

The worthy celebration of the Sacred Liturgy, God's most treasured gift to us, is the source of the highest expression of our life in Christ (cf. Sacrosanctum concilium, 10). It is, therefore, the primary and most powerful expression of the new evangelization. God desires to manifest the incomparable beauty of his immeasurable and unceasing love for us through the Sacred Liturgy, and we, for our part, desire to employ what is most beautiful in our worship of God in response to his gift. In the marvelous exchange of the Sacred Liturgy, by which heaven descends to earth, salvation is at hand, calling forth repentance and conversion of heart (cf. Mt 4:17; Mk 1:15).

Evangelization in the Church calls for a liturgy that lifts the hearts of men and women to God. The liturgy is not just a human action but an encounter with God which leads to contemplation and deepening friendship with God. In this sense, the liturgy of the Church is the best school of the faith.

Proposition 36 : Spiritual Dimension Of The New Evangelization

The principal agent of evangelization is the Holy Spirit, who opens hearts and converts them to God. The experience of encountering the Lord Jesus, made possible by the Spirit, which introduces one into the Trinitarian life, welcomed in a spirit of adoration, supplication and of praise, must be fundamental to every aspect of the New Evangelization. This is the "contemplative dimension" of the New Evangelization which is nourished continually through prayer, beginning with the liturgy, especially the Eucharist, source and summit of the life of the Church.

Therefore, we propose that prayer be encouraged and taught from infancy. Children and youth should be educated in the family and in schools to recognize the presence of God in their lives, to praise Him, to give thanks for the gifts received from Him, and to ask that the Holy Spirit guide them.

Proposition 37 : The Sacrament Of Confirmation In The New Evangelization

All the Christian faithful are entrusted with the mission to evangelize, due to the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation. Here the faithful are sealed by the anointing of the Holy Spirit and are called to participate in the mystery of Pentecost. Through Confirmation, all the baptized receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit, his charisms, and the power to give witness to the Gospel openly and with courage.

It is important that mystagogical catechesis accompany the grace of filial adoption received at Baptism, underlining the importance of the gift of the Holy Spirit which enables one to fully participate in the Eucharistic witness of the Church and its influence in all the spheres of life and human activity.

Hence proper and systematic catechesis prior to the reception of these sacraments is of prime importance.

Proposition 38 : Christian Initiation And The New Evangelization

The Synod wishes to state that Christian initiation is a crucial element in the New Evangelization and is the means by which the Church, as a mother, brings forth children and regenerates herself. Therefore we propose that the traditional process of Christian initiation, that has often become simply a proximate preparation for the sacraments, be everywhere considered in a catechumenal prospective, giving more relevance to permanent mystagogy, and thus becoming true initiation to Christian life through the sacraments. (cf. General Directory of Catechesis, 91).

In this perspective it is not without consequences that the situation today concerning the three sacraments of Christian initiation, despite their theological unity, are pastorally diverse. These differences in the ecclesial communities are not of a doctrinal nature but differences of pastoral judgment. This Synod however requests that what the Holy Father has affirmed in *Sacramentum caritatis*, 18, become a stimulus for dioceses and episcopal conferences to review their practices of Christian initiation: “Concretely, it needs to be seen which practice better enables the faithful to put the sacrament of the Eucharist at the center, as the goal of the whole process of initiation” (*Sacramentum caritatis*, 18).

Proposition 39 : Popular Piety And The New Evangelization

Popular piety is a true place to encounter Christ, and also express the faith of the Christian people in the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Saints. The New Evangelization recognizes the value of these faith experiences and encourages them as ways to grow in Christian virtue.

Pilgrimages to shrines and sanctuaries are an important aspect of the new evangelization. Not only because of the millions of people who continue to make these pilgrimages but because this form of popular piety at this time is an especially promising opportunity for conversion and the growth of faith. It is important therefore that a pastoral plan be developed that properly welcomes the pilgrims and, in response to the deep desire of the pilgrims, opportunities be offered so that the time of the pilgrimage can be lived as a true moment of grace.

Proposition 40 : The Pontifical Council For The Promotion Of The New Evangelization

The Synod is grateful to the Holy Father for establishing the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization as an instrument at the service of the particular Churches, and asks that this Dicastery carry on the synodal discussions in further study and in the development and promotion of the New Evangelization.

It also requests that consideration be given in each episcopal conference to the establishment of a commission in order to promote the study and diffusion of the pontifical Magisterium relative to the themes that are a part of the New Evangelization. In this way, there can be created a strong

collaboration among the particular Churches and therefore greater effectiveness in implementing the New Evangelization.

4) Agents / Participants of the New Evangelization

Proposition 41 : New Evangelization And The Particular Church

The particular church, led by the bishop, who is helped by priests and deacons, with the collaboration of consecrated persons and the laity, is the subject of the New Evangelization. This is so because in each place, the particular church is the concrete manifestation of the Church of Christ and as such initiates, coordinates and accomplishes the pastoral actions through which the New Evangelization is carried out.

In the Church the call to holiness, directed to all the baptized, rings out, inviting them to follow Christ and turn with love and goodwill towards all people, in order to discern the action of the Holy Spirit in them. "As I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (Jn 13:34-35). For the first Christian communities, communion was a constitutive element of the life of faith and necessary to evangelization: they had one heart and mind. The Church is communion, that is to say, the Church is the Family of God.

The Church enables each of her members to be aware of their responsibility to be like leaven in the dough. In this way, "faith working through love" (Gal 5: 6) will become a contagious witness for the world in all her dimensions, offering to every person the possibility of meeting Christ and becoming evangelizers in their turn.

It would be desirable if each particular church, whatever difficulties occur, developed a sense of mission among her faithful by cooperating with other particular churches.

Proposition 42 : Integrated Pastoral Activity

Each particular Church is the primary community of the Church's mission. It must animate and lead a renewed pastoral activity able to integrate the variety of charisms, ministries, states of life and resources. All these realities must be coordinated within an organic missionary project, capable of communicating the fullness of Christian life to everyone, especially to those who feel themselves far from the Church's care. Such an endeavor must arise from the dialogue and cooperation of all diocesan components, including: parishes, small Christian communities, educational communities, communities of consecrated life, associations, movements and individual faithful. Every pastoral program must transmit the true novelty of the Gospel, and be centered on a personal and living encounter with Jesus. It should also be ordered to eliciting in all people a generous embrace of the faith, and a willingness to accept the call to be witnesses.

Proposition 43 : Hierarchical And Charismatic Gifts

The Holy Spirit directs the Church in her missionary evangelization "with various hierarchical and charismatic gifts" (Lumen gentium, 4). In fact the dioceses are "a portion of the people of God under the pastoral care of the bishop, helped by his presbyterate" (Christus Dominus, 11), where the diverse charismatic realities recognize the authority of the bishop as integral to their own proper action in service of the ecclesial mission. The Bishop has the responsibility for "judging the genuineness of these

gifts and guiding their ordinary use” (Lumen gentium, 12), as an authentic resource for the life and mission of the Church. The hierarchical gifts and the charismatic gifts, flowing from the one Spirit of God, are not in competition but rather co-essential to the life of the Church and to the effectiveness of her missionary action (cf. John Paul II, Message to Participants at the World Congress of Ecclesial movements, May 27, 1998). The consecrated life occupies a special place in the charismatic dimension of the Church (cf. Mutuae relationes, 34, Rispartire da Cristo, 32); as such, fully inserted into the ecclesial communion, they contribute with their own proper gifts to missionary evangelization. Studies should be undertaken at both diocesan and interdiocesan levels to see how both the charismatic and hierarchical gifts are able to cooperate in the pastoral action and in the spiritual life of the Church.

Since Vatican II, the New Evangelization has greatly benefited from the dynamism of the new ecclesial movements and new communities. Their ideal of holiness and unity has been the source of many vocations and remarkable missionary initiatives. The Synod recognizes these new realities and encourages them to utilise their charisms in close collaboration with the dioceses and the parish communities, who in turn, will benefit from their missionary spirit.

Proposition 44 : New Evangelization In The Parish

The parish, in and through all of its activities, should animate its members to become agents of the New Evangelization, witnessing through both their words and their lives. For this reason, it is important to remember that the parish remains the usual environment for the spiritual life of the parishioners. The Synod therefore encourages parish visits to families as a way of parish renewal. It sometimes happens that the parish is seen as only a place for important events or even as a tourist center.

Along the same line, “pastoral agents” in hospitals, youth centres, factories, prisons, etc., have to bear in mind that the New Evangelization should find a home in these places. The Church should in fact be present in such places, since Christ showed his preference for the persons found there. As much as lies within their power, all Churches are therefore exhorted to be open to this mission, wherever they are.

Proposition 45 : The Role Of The Lay Faithful In The New Evangelization

The vocation and the mission proper to lay faithful is the transformation of worldly structures, to let all human behavior and activities be informed by the Gospel. This is the reason why it is so important to guide the Christian laity into an intimate knowledge of Christ in order to form their moral conscience through their life in Christ. The Second Vatican Council identifies four main aspects of the mission of the baptized: the witness of their lives, works of charity and mercy, renewing the temporal order and direct evangelization (cf. Lumen gentium, Apostolicam actuositatem). In this way, they will be able to give witness of a life truly coherent with their Christian faith, as individual persons and as a community.

The laity cooperate in the Church’s work of evangelization, as witnesses and at the same time as living instruments they share in her saving mission (cf. Ad gentes, 41). Therefore the Church values the gifts that the Spirit is making to every baptized for the construction of the body, and should provide adequate encouragement and training to foster their apostolic zeal in the transmission of the faith.

Proposition 46 : Collaboration Of Men And Women In The Church

The Church appreciates the equal dignity of women and men in society as made in the image of God, and in the Church based on their common vocation as baptized into Christ.

The Church's Pastors have recognized the special capacities of women, such as their attention to others and their gifts for nurture and compassion, most especially in their vocation as mothers.

Women together with men witness to the Gospel of life through their dedication to transmission of life in the family. Together they help to keep the faith alive.

The Synod acknowledges that today, women (lay and religious) together with men contribute to theological reflection at all levels and share pastoral responsibilities in new ways, thus carrying forward the New Evangelization for the transmission of the faith.

Proposition 47 : Formation For Evangelizers

This Synod considers that it is necessary to establish formation centers for the New Evangelization, where lay people learn how to speak of the person of Christ in a persuasive manner adapted to our time and to specific groups of people (young people, agnostics, the elderly and so forth).

Trinitarian Christocentricity (cf. General Directory of Catechesis, 98-100) is the most essential and fundamental criterion for presenting the Gospel message in all three moments of evangelization, whether for initial proclamation, catechesis or on-going formation (cf. GDC, 60-72). All teaching and resources are to be evaluated in this light.

Proposition 48 : The Christian Family

Established by the sacrament of matrimony, the Christian family as the domestic Church is the locus and first agent in the giving of life and love, the transmission of faith and the formation of the human person according to the values of the gospel. In imitating Christ, the whole Church must dedicate herself to supporting families in the catechesis of children and youth. In many cases the grandparents will have a very important role.

At the same time the New Evangelization should strive to address significant pastoral problems around marriage, the case of divorced and remarried, the situation of their children, the fate of abandoned spouses, the couples who live together without marriage and the trend in society to redefine marriage.

The Church with maternal care and evangelical spirit should seek appropriate responses for these situations, as an important aspect of the new evangelization.

Every pastoral plan of evangelization should also include a respectful invitation to all those who live alone, to experience God in the family of the Church.

It is necessary to educate people in how to live human sexuality according to Christian anthropology, both before marriage as well as in marriage itself.

The Synod notes with appreciation those families who leave their homes in order to be evangelizers for Christ in other countries and cultures.

Proposition 49 : Pastoral Dimension Of The Ordained Ministry

The Synod Fathers encourage bishops and priests to know the lives of the people they serve in a more personal way. People are looking for authentic and credible witnesses in their bishops and priests who live and model the faith and the New Evangelization. The bishop is an evangelizer who leads by example and shares with all the baptized the blessings of being called to evangelization.

Ongoing formation for clergy on the New Evangelization and methods for evangelization in the diocese and parish are needed in order to learn effective means to mobilize the laity to engage in the New Evangelization. We invite the Bishops, those principally responsible for the whole pastoral work of the Church, to develop a plan that animates and accompanies in a direct and personal manner the pastoral work of the presbyterate, the decisive leadership core of the New Evangelization.

Confronted with the scandals affecting priestly life and ministry, which we deeply regret, we propose nevertheless that thanks and encouragement be given to the faithful service of so many priests and that pastoral orientations be given to the particular churches on a presbyteral pastoral plan that is systematic and organized, that supports the genuine renewal of the life and ministry of the priests, who are the primary agents of the New Evangelization (cf. *Pastores dabo vobis*, 2).

So that priests will be adequately prepared for the work of the New Evangelization, the Synod wishes that in their formation, care is taken to form them in a deep spirituality, solid doctrine, the capacity to communicate in catechesis and an awareness of modern cultural phenomena.

Seminaries should take as their focus the New Evangelization so that it becomes the recurring and unifying theme in programs of human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral formation in the *ars celebrandi*, in homiletics and in the celebration of the sacrament of Reconciliation, all very important parts of the New Evangelization. The Synod recognizes and encourages the work of deacons whose ministry provides the Church great service. Ongoing formation programs within the diocese should also be available for deacons.

Proposition 50 : Consecrated Life

The Consecrated life, of both men and women, has made a very important contribution to the Church's work of evangelization throughout history.

In this moment of new evangelization, the Synod asks all men and women religious and members of secular institutes to live their identity as consecrated persons radically and with joy. The witness of a life which manifests the primacy of God and which, by means of the common life, expresses the humanizing force of the Gospel is a powerful proclamation of the Reign of God.

Consecrated life, fully evangelical and evangelizing, in profound communion with the pastors of the Church and in co-responsibility with the laity, faithful to the respective charisms, will offer a significant contribution to the New Evangelization.

The Synod asks Religious Orders and Congregations to be fully available to go to the geographical, social and cultural frontiers of evangelization. The Synod invites religious to move toward the new horizons of mission.

Because the New Evangelization is essentially a spiritual matter, the Synod also underlines the great importance of the contemplative life in the transmission of the faith.

The age-old tradition of the consecrated contemplative life in its previous forms of stable community life of prayer and work continues to be a powerful source of grace in the life and mission of the Church. The Synod hopes that the New Evangelization will move many more faithful to embrace this form of life.

Proposition 51 : Youth And The New Evangelization

In the New Evangelization, the youth are not only the future but also the present (and gift) in the Church. They are not only the recipients but also agents of evangelization, especially with their peers. The youth are in the stage of searching for truth and meaning in life that Jesus who is the Truth and their Friend can provide.

Through exemplary Christian adults, the saints, especially the young saints, and through committed youth ministers, the Church is visible and credible for the youth. Wherever they are, at home, in school, or in the Christian community, it is necessary that evangelizers meet the young and spend time with them; propose to them and accompany them in following Jesus, guide them to discover their vocation in life and in the Church.

As the media greatly influence the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual well-being of the youth, the Church through catechesis and youth ministry strives to enable and equip them to discern between good and evil, to choose Gospel values over worldly values, and to form firm faith convictions.

The World Youth Day celebrations and YOUCAT are special instruments of the New Evangelization.

Proposition 52 : Ecumenical Dialogue

The ecumenical dimension of the engagement for the New Evangelization should be highlighted. This corresponds to the prayer of the Lord Jesus "so that they may all be one" (Jn 17, 23). The credibility of our service to the Gospel will be much greater if we can overcome our divisions. While upholding Catholic identity and communion, the New Evangelization promotes ecumenical collaboration, which demonstrates how much the faith given in Baptism unites us.

The Synod Fathers are grateful for the progress in ecumenical dialogue since the Second Vatican Council. Despite past difficulties, this dialogue was particularly shown in this Synod by the participation of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Rowan Williams and of the fraternal delegates. The Synod Fathers express their desire that the Church continues her efforts in this path of unity and charity.

Proposition 53 : Interreligious Dialogue

The dialogue with all believers is a part of the New Evangelization. In particular, the Church invites Christians to persevere and to intensify their relations with Muslims according to the teaching of the Declaration *Nostra aetate*. Despite difficulties, this dialogue must continue. It always depends on the partners having an adequate formation, an authentic ecclesial foundation as Christians and an attitude of respect for the conscience of people and for religious liberty for all.

Faithful to the teaching of Vatican II, the Church respects the other religions and their adherents and is happy to collaborate with them in the defense and promotion of the inviolable dignity of every person.

Proposition 54 : The Dialogue Between Science And Faith

The dialogue between science and faith is a vital field in the New Evangelization. On the one hand, this dialogue requires the openness of reason to the mystery which transcends it and an awareness of the fundamental limits of scientific knowledge. On the other hand, it also requires a faith that is open to reason and to the results of scientific research.

Proposition 55 : Courtyard Of The Gentiles

The ecclesial communities open a kind of Courtyard of the Gentiles where believers and non-believers can dialogue about fundamental themes: the great values of ethics, art and science, and the search for the transcendent. This dialogue is directed in particular to “those to whom religion is something foreign, to whom God is unknown and who nevertheless do not want to be left merely Godless, but rather to draw near to him, albeit as the Unknown” (Benedict XVI, Address to the Members of the Roman Curia, 21 December 2009). In a particular way, Catholic educational institutions could promote such a dialogue which is never separated from the “initial proclamation”.

Proposition 56 : Stewardship Of Creation

The Stewardship of creation also serves evangelization in many ways. It is a witness to our faith in the goodness of God’s creation. It demonstrates a sense of solidarity with all those who depend for their life and sustenance on the goods of creation. It shows inter-generational solidarity with those who come after us, and is a clear witness to the responsible and equitable use of the goods of the earth, our common home.

Conclusion

Proposition 57 : The Transmission Of The Christian Faith

“You will be my witnesses” (Acts 1:8). From the very beginning the Church has understood her responsibility to pass on the Good News. The task of the New Evangelization, following in this apostolic tradition, is the transmission of the faith. The Second Vatican Council reminds us that this task is a complex process which involves the faith and life of every Christian.

This faith cannot be transmitted in a life which is not modeled after the Gospel or a life which does not find its meaning, truth and future based on the Gospel.

For this reason, the New Evangelization for the transmission of the Christian faith calls all believers to renew their faith and their **personal encounter** with Jesus in the Church, to deepen their appreciation of the truth of the faith and joyfully to share it.

Proposition 58 : Mary, The Star Of The New Evangelization

Vatican Council II presented Mary in the context of the Mystery of Christ and of the Church (cf. Lumen gentium, 52-68). Pope Paul VI declared her the “Star of Evangelization.” She is therefore the model of faith, hope and love. She is the first helper who brings disciples to the Master (cf. Jn2). In the Upper Room she is the Mother of the believers (cf. Acts 1:14).

As Mother of the Redeemer, Mary becomes a witness of God’s love. She freely fulfills God’s will. She is the strong woman, who along with John, remains at the foot of the Cross. She always intercedes for us and accompanies the faithful in their journey as far as the cross of the Lord.

As Mother and Queen she is a sign of hope for suffering and needy peoples. Today she is the “Missionary” who will aid us in the difficulties of our time and with her nearness open the hearts of men and women to the faith.

We fix our gaze on Mary. She will help us to proclaim the message of salvation to all men and women, so that they too may become agents of Evangelization. Mary is the Mother of the Church. Through her presence, may the Church become a home for many and Mother of all peoples.