

---

## **Pope at audience: “If a person believes himself to be a master, he is not an evangelizer”**

“Evangelization is always carried out 'in ecclesia,' that is in a community, and without proselytism, because that is not evangelization”, Pope Francis said in today's general audience - the first in St. Peter's Square after the winter break in the Paul VI Hall - focusing in particular on the Second Vatican Council, "to discover that evangelizing is always an ecclesial service, never solitary, never isolated, never individualistic." The Pope concluded the Wednesday general audience with a round of applause for women, marking International Women's Day: "I thank them for their commitment to building a more humane society, through their ability to grasp reality with a creative eye and a tender heart. This is a privilege of women alone."

“There is a bridge between the first and last Council, under the banner of evangelization, a bridge whose architect is the Holy Spirit.”

Francis said: "Indeed, the evangelizer always transmits what he or she or he has received. St. Paul was the first to write this: the Gospel that he proclaimed and the communities received, and in which they remained steadfast, is the same Gospel that the Apostle had in turn received. Faith is received and transmitted." "This ecclesial dynamism of the transmission of the Message is binding and guarantees the authenticity of Christian proclamation," the Pope pointed out, quoting St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians: "Even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we preached to you, let him be accursed." "This is beautiful, and this is good for many fashionable views," he added off test. "The ecclesial dimension of evangelization constitutes, however, a criterion for confirmation of apostolic zeal."

“God's love is not only for a little group, no, it is for everyone. Keep that word firmly in mind and in the heart: everyone, everyone, no-one excluded.”

The Pope remarked commenting on the Council document *Ad Gentes*: "the love of the Father is destined for every human being. And this love for every human being is a love that reaches every man and woman through the mission of Jesus, mediator of salvation and our redeemer, and through the mission of the Holy Spirit, who works in everyone, both in the baptized and the non-baptized." "The temptation to proceed alone is always lurking, especially when the path becomes impassable and we feel the burden of the commitment," Francis reminded the faithful. He said:

"Equally dangerous is the temptation to follow easier pseudo-ecclesial paths, or adopt the worldly logic of numbers and polls, to rely on the strength of our ideas, programmes, structures, "relationships that count."

“This will not do; this should help a little but the fundamental thing is the strength that the Spirit gives you to proclaim the truth of Jesus Christ, to proclaim the Gospel. The other things are secondary.”

Evangelization is a service. If a person says that he is an evangelizer, and does not have that

---

attitude, that servant's heart, and believes himself to be a master, he is not an evangelizer, no ... he is wretched."

the Pope said off text referring to apostolic zeal, which "is not enthusiasm, it is another thing, it is a grace of God, that we must preserve." "In the pilgrim and evangelizing People of God, there are no active or passive individuals. There are not those who preach, those who proclaim the Gospel in one way or another, and those who remain silent," Francis explained. "All the baptized, whatever their position in the Church or their level of instruction in the faith, are agents of evangelization" the Pope remarked, quoting from the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii gaudium*. "'Are you Christian? Yes, I have received Baptism'. If you do not evangelize, if you do not bear witness, if you do not give that witness of the Baptism you have received, of the faith that the Lord gave you, you are not a good Christian."

"By virtue of the Baptism received and the consequent incorporation into the Church, every baptized person participates in the mission of the Church and, therein, in the mission of Christ the King, Priest and Prophet," the Pope recalled: "This task is one and the same everywhere and in every condition, even though it may be carried out differently according to circumstances" "This invites us not to become rigid or fossilized" the Pope's exhortation: "The missionary zeal of the believer also expresses itself as a creative search for new ways of proclaiming and witnessing, new ways of encountering the wounded humanity that Christ took on. In short, of new ways of serving the Gospel and serving humanity." "Returning to the fountainhead of the love of the Father and to the missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit does not close us up in spaces of static personal tranquility." On the contrary, "it leads us to recognize the gratuitousness of the gift of the fullness of life to which we are called, a gift for which we praise and thank God. This gift is not only for us, but rather it is to be given to others. And it also leads us to live ever more fully what we have received, by sharing it with others, with a sense of responsibility and travelling together along the roads, very often the tortuous and difficult ones of history, in vigilant and industrious expectation of its fulfilment." "Let us ask the Lord for this grace", is the Pope's final appeal in unscripted remarks, "to take in hand this Christian vocation and to give thanks to the Lord for what he has given us, this treasure. And to try to communicate it to others."

M.Michela Nicolais