



## E-BULLETIN #51

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*"Let the holiness of God shine forth" (cf. Mt 5,16)*

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item 98

### New Evangelization challenge... Pallottine response! [part I]



In recent times, one of the most discussed topics in the Catholic Church is that of "New Evangelization". People are asking about the real meaning of "New Evangelization" and the nature of our response to it. Numerous Church documents, books and articles have already been written on this topic. During this seminar, we are going to hear from distinguished Cardinals and other experts on the real meaning, importance and challenges involved in this new challenge placed before us by the Universal Church.

I welcome each one of you to this significant seminar of the Pallottine Family. Thanks for responding to my invitation to be here today to reflect on the theme: ***"To revive faith and rekindle charity: Apostles of Jesus in a changing world. The Pallottine response to the challenge of New Evangelization"***. The Pallottine Family too wants to participate in this initiative of Mother Church, and we wish to see how we can offer our charism as a response to it.

Right at the beginning, I express my gratitude to the two distinguished Cardinals who will be addressing us – His Eminence **Cardinal Kurt Koch**, President of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity and His Eminence **Cardinal Walter Kasper**, President Emeritus of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity. We are honoured and privileged to have these two eminent Church representatives. Special thanks to Fr George Augustin, Director of the Cardinal Kasper Institute and Professor in our Hochschule in Vallendar (PTHV), Germany who made the request on my behalf to the Cardinals to participate in this event. My gratitude to Sr Serena Cambiaghi, Superior General of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Catholic Apostolate and the members of her Council, to Sr Izabela Świerad, Superior General of the Missionary Sisters of the Catholic Apostolate and the members of her Council as well as to the members of my own Council for their interest and support in organizing this seminar. Our special gratitude to Fr Derry Murphy, President of the Union of Catholic Apostolate for giving every support in this new effort of the Union. Thanks to all the Major Superiors of our Society present here, to all the speakers and to every participant. Our gratitude to Fr Antonio Lotti, the Provincial Rector of the Italian Province of the Queen of Apostles, to the Rector of this house, Fr Nicola Gallucci for providing us with this excellent Centre for conducting the seminar. Likewise, thanks to all Moderators, Translators, Secretaries and all others. Finally we gratefully remember Mary Queen of

Apostles and our holy Founder, St Vincent Pallotti who will be accompanying us and blessing us in these days as we are gathered together for this noble cause.



Cardinal Walter Kasper



Cardinal Kurt Koch

## I a short introduction into the history and understanding of “New Evangelization”

This is a theme which will be dealt with in detail by Cardinal Walter Kasper. However, here is a short introduction to it. In Pope John Paul II's encyclicals, speeches and other writings he used frequently the term New Evangelization. According to the pope, the expression “New Evangelization” was popularized in the Encyclical of Pope Paul VI, “Evangelization in the Modern World”, as a response to the new challenges that the contemporary world creates for the mission of the Church". Pope John Paul II hence saw the need for a "great re-launching" of evangelization in the present life of the Church in a variety of ways. In *Redemptoris Missio*, John Paul II presented a new synthesis of the Church's teaching about evangelization in modern times.

The pope's call to a new evangelization was a prophetic and revolutionary calling to the Roman Catholic Church. As we have entered the third millennium, Pope John Paul II was re-directing and re-focusing the Church's priorities. John Paul II proclaimed: "*The moment has come to commit all of the Church's energies to a new evangelization and to the mission ad gentes. No believer in Christ, no institution of the Church can avoid this supreme duty: to proclaim Christ to all peoples.*" The Catholic Church, thus committing all of its energies to a new evangelization and mission to the nations is a radical change in emphasis.

Number 5 of the Lineamenta for the XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on “The New Evangelization for the transmission of Christian faith, tries to understand the expression “New Evangelization” in the following way.

Though well-known, the meaning of the term "new evangelization" not always clear and precise. Initially introduced by Pope John Paul II during his apostolic visit to Poland, the "new evangelization" was used again and given new life in the Holy Father's Magisterium to the Churches in Latin America. Pope John Paul II used the term to reawaken and elicit renewed efforts in a new missionary and evangelizing undertaking on the continent. In this regard, he said to the bishops in Latin America: "The commemoration of this half millennium of evangelization will have full significance if, as bishops, with your priests and faithful, you accept it as your commitment; a commitment not of re-evangelization, but rather of a new evangelization; new in its ardour, methods and expression." Consequently, the new evangelization is not a matter of redoing something which has been inadequately done or has not achieved its purpose, as if the new activity were an implicit judgment on the failure of the first evangelization. Nor is the new evangelization taking up the first evangelization again, or simply repeating the past. Instead, it is the courage to forge new paths in responding to the changing circumstances and conditions facing the Church in her call to proclaim and live the Gospel today.

At a later date, Pope John Paul II clarified his idea of a new evangelization: "The Church today ought to take a giant step forward in her evangelization effort, and enter into a new stage of history in her missionary dynamism. In a world where the lessening of distance makes the world increasingly smaller, the Church community ought to strengthen the bonds among its members, exchange vital energies and means, and commit itself as a group to a unique and common mission of proclaiming and living the Gospel. 'So-called younger Churches have need of the strength of the older Churches and the older ones need the witness and impulse of the younger, so that individual Churches receive the riches of other Churches'.

Presently, the expression "new evangelization", can be applied to 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. In facing these challenges, 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.

Understood in this manner, the idea of a "new evangelization" was again taken up and proposed in the continental synodal assemblies, celebrated in preparation for the Jubilee of the Year 2000. At that time, it became an accepted expression in the pastoral and ecclesial thought of the local Churches. A "new evangelization" is synonymous with renewed spiritual efforts in the life of faith within the local Churches, starting with a process to discern the changes in various cultural and social settings and their impact on Christian life, to reread the memory of faith and to undertake new responsibilities and generate new energies to joyously and convincingly proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. [15] In this regard, the words of Pope John Paul II to the Church in Europe are particularly indicative and concise: "...an urgent need [has arisen] for a 'new evangelization', in the awareness that 'Europe today must not simply appeal to its former Christian heritage: it needs to be able to decide about its future in conformity with the person and message of Jesus Christ'."

As we know, in October 2011, a Congress was held at the Vatican to look at the topic of the New Evangelization. Participants came from around the world and shared many ideas, hopes and dreams for a renewed commitment to evangelization.

For this reason, His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI, after consulting the members of the episcopate, decided to convoke the XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops from 7 to 28 October 2012 to discuss the topic: *The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith*. The aim of the approaching synodal assembly will be to examine the present situation in the particular Churches and to trace, in communion with the Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, the new methods and means for transmitting the Good News to people in our world today with a renewed enthusiasm proper to the saints, who were joyous witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ "who is and who was and who is to come" (Rev 4:8).

Evangelization is rooted in the mission of God. It is the work of God. When we evangelize we partake in the missionary activities of God. That is to say, every baptized Christian - the Pope, Cardinals, Bishops, Priests, Religious and laity - has the bounden duty to proclaim the Good News to the ends of the earth. Through the common priesthood of Jesus Christ, every baptized Christian has the responsibility to proclaim the message around the world among the believers and non-believers and bear witness to Christ through words and deeds. The Vatican II document on the Church, clearly expresses the view that the Church is the 'people of God' and the Church by its very nature is missionary. It speaks of a participatory Church and the equality of all members by virtue of their baptism. So, evangelization is part and parcel of every Christian's life, and evangelizing all people is the essential mission of the

Church. Before we go to evangelize we need to be evangelized. Pastors are called to be good shepherds. The ordained ministers, must go in search of the lost sheep. In doing so, love must be the driving force of our mission. All these and many other aspects of this theme will be the material for our reflection in these days.



**chapel – SAC International Centre for Formation**

## **II situation of crisis of faith in the Church**

Church leaders today are seeing a great loss of members in the Catholic Church around the world, especially in the so-called Western world. People are moving away from the church and from their faith or seeking new expressions of their faith. This trend is especially noticeable among young people, and often a small number attend church services on a weekly basis. They are still searching and hoping for a firm spiritual base that they can relate to, as well as some meaningful ways to reach out to the poor and needy ones. They are also looking for meaning in their lives and for a more humane future. Youth are also seeking meaningful dialogue about their spiritual and religious issues. Deep listening is needed to hear their concerns and to invite their ideas on ways to enliven their faith. We can demonstrate for them what it means to live our faith by working together for the good of all people and sharing our compassion with those most in need. Families and Catechists will also play an important role in the evangelization program. All these issues will be authoritatively presented by speakers of this seminar like Fr George Augustin, Fr Frank Donio, Fr Zenon Hanas and Fr Martin Manus.

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