

Biblical Orientations for the New Evangelization

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Abstract: *As the Church embarks on a new evangelization it is essential to reflect on the biblical paradigm of the Church's evangelizing mission. This article first draws on the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles to shed light on the task, message, and goal of evangelization. The task includes Jesus' imperative to wait for divine empowerment and then to go where the unevangelized can be found. The message (kerygma) is the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ, which should be distinguished from other aspects of the Church's teaching and pastoral mission. The goal is to form not merely converts but disciples who "observe all that [Jesus has] commanded..." (Matt 28:20). The article then examines Paul's mission as depicted in Acts and the Epistles to learn from the Apostle's reliance on the Holy Spirit to persuade his bearers (1 Cor 2:5) and his missionary methods, which include establishing communities, collaborating with coworkers, mentoring younger leaders, and prioritizing the reading and interpreting of Scripture.*

What does Scripture itself teach and model regarding evangelization? This question merits careful attention as the universal Church pursues the call to a new evangelization.¹ In his apostolic exhortation *Verbum Domini* Pope Benedict XVI calls for Catholic theology, preaching, catechesis, spirituality, and pastoral outreach to become more biblical, while simultaneously calling for Catholic biblical scholarship to become more ecclesial. He urges pastors and the faithful alike to make the Bible "the inspiration of every ordinary and extraordinary pastoral outreach" and "to recognize the importance of this emphasis on the Bible."² He repeatedly insists on the necessity of direct contact with the biblical

1. The new evangelization as a summons for the church was first articulated by Pope John Paul II in an address to Latin American bishops in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, on May 9, 1983 (*Origins* 12 [March 24, 1983], 659-62), although he had used the term "new evangelization" in an earlier homily in Mogila, Poland (June 9, 1979). He subsequently repeated the call numerous times, particularly in his encyclical *Redemptoris missio* (1990), 3, and his apostolic letter *Novo millennio ineunte* (2001), 40.
2. *Verbum Domini* 73.

texts themselves and of greater familiarity with the content of Scripture on the part of all Catholics.

This insistence recalls an important but neglected statement of Vatican Council II: “All the preaching of the Church, like *the Christian religion itself, must be nourished and regulated* by Sacred Scripture.”³ Because Scripture, as inspired by God, “contains the divine word (cf. 2 Tim 3:16) in an altogether singular way”⁴ it has a uniquely normative role in Christian life. It also has a unique power to touch and change the human heart, as *Verbum Domini* frequently stresses.⁵ Its authority is distinct from and more foundational than that of ecclesial documents, which are in essence authoritative interpretations of Scripture in light of Tradition.⁶ The unique status of Scripture suggests that in every endeavor the Church should *begin* with Scripture and remain rooted in it, rather than first formulating plans and then searching for suitable biblical texts to adorn them, as we are often tempted to do.⁷

This article will explore the implications for evangelization of Pope Benedict’s call for a return to Scripture by considering what the New Testament teaches and models regarding the proclamation of the gospel. As Paul VI stated in his apostolic letter on evangelization, “The whole of the New Testament, and in a special way the Acts of the Apostles, bears witness to a privileged and in a sense exemplary moment of this missionary effort which will subsequently leave its mark on the whole history of the Church.”⁸ The New Testament writings are not only a source of theological doctrine or of historical data about early Christianity, but also a blueprint for the life and mission of the Church today. The apostolic church contains the DNA, so to speak, for the church in every age. Although the church learns from other great missionaries and evangelists in her tradition – such as Patrick, Boniface, Cyril and Methodius, Francis and Dominic, Francis Xavier and Matteo Ricci, Frances Xavier Cabrini and Katherine Drexel – all these looked in turn to the preaching of Jesus, the Acts of the Apostles and the writings of Paul as the paradigm for their missionary endeavors. Of course this does not mean rigid duplication of biblical patterns. Within the New Testament itself there is considerable flexibility of method as well as adaptation of the message for diverse audiences.⁹

This article is intended as a work of biblical theology directed to the situation of the Church today, a kind of pastoral actualization. We will consider what the New Testament reveals about the task, message, goal, means, and methods of evangelization and reflect on its relevance to the present situation. Space permits only an

3. *Dei Verbum* 21; emphasis added.

4. *Verbum Domini* 17.

5. See especially 13, 61.

6. Cf. CCC 85-86. The Pontifical Biblical Commission, in its *Instruction on Scripture and Christology* (1984), distinguishes between the “auxiliary” language of ordinary Church discourse and the “referential” language of the Scriptures (1.2.2.1).

7. See Raniero Cantalamessa, Lenten Sermon to Benedict XVI and the Roman Curia (Feb. 29, 2008), 4.

8. *Evangelii nuntiandi* 51.

9. For example, Paul presupposes acceptance of the Torah and Prophets when addressing Jewish audiences in Pisidian Antioch and Thessalonica (Acts 13, 17), whereas he begins with the doctrine of God when addressing Gentile audiences in Lystra and Athens (Acts 14, 17).

overview, touching on many points that merit more extensive biblical analysis and pastoral reflection.¹⁰

1. The Task of Evangelization

The church's task of evangelization, as Luke-Acts presents it, is commissioned by Jesus in a directive with two distinct elements: the command to "wait" and the command to "go." We will consider each of these in turn.

Awaiting Divine Empowerment

In Luke's version of the great commission, given at the end of his Gospel and again at the beginning of Acts, there is a strong emphasis on the fact that the apostles' mission does not begin immediately. After assigning the apostles the momentous task of being his witnesses "to all nations" (Lk 24:47-48), Jesus' first instruction is to wait: "Stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high" (Lk 24:49). "He charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father," namely, that they would be "baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:4-5).¹¹ Paradoxically, the first imperative of the Christian mission is to *wait* for empowerment from on high.

The promise of divine empowerment is fulfilled at Pentecost when the disciples are "filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:4) with the immediate consequence that they begin to "speak... the mighty works of God," that is, to evangelize, Jews representing the nations of the known world (Acts 2:5-11). They are overflowing with joy and are now able to proclaim the good news of Christ with clarity, boldness and conviction. The Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit is, as Luke presents it, the absolute prerequisite for carrying out the church's daunting mission.

Luke expects that some of his readers will catch the irony in the accusation of the bystanders at Pentecost, "They are filled with new wine (*gleukos*)" (Acts 2:13). In the prophetic literature, new wine (or sweet wine) is an image of the abundance of life promised by God in the messianic age. "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when... the mountains shall drip sweet wine (*glukasmon*), and all the hills shall flow with it" (Amos 9:13 LXX; cf. Joel 3:18). In the Synoptic Gospels Jesus indicates that he came to bring new wine, which must be put into fresh wineskins (Lk 5:37-38). Read in light of Acts, the new wine is the Spirit; the fresh wineskins are transformed human hearts.

10. We hope that other scholars will take this study further and serve the new evangelization by considering in more detail these and other aspects of evangelization in the New Testament. A systematic study of evangelization in the Synoptics, the Gospel of John, Acts, and Paul's letters in view of contemporary culture and the new evangelization could be of great value.

11. In a biblical context, Jesus' command to wait for the Spirit sets the stage for a transmission of his prophetic Spirit to his successors, just as Moses' spirit was transmitted to Joshua (Deut 34:9) and Elijah's to Elisha (2 Kings 2:9). See Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Sacra Pagina (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical 1992), 30-31.

This experience of the “sweet wine” of divine life is what imbues the disciples with compelling dynamism to proclaim the good news of salvation in Christ.¹² Like Jeremiah, who felt the word of God as a fire burning in his bones (Jer 20:9), they cannot keep the word of God to themselves. The transformation wrought by the Spirit is particularly evident in Peter. The Peter who had found the idea of a suffering Messiah incomprehensible and had denied his Lord (Lk 9:45; 22:56-61) now recognizes the paschal mystery as the fulfillment of God’s gracious plan of salvation (Acts 2:14-36) and confidently proclaims this good news to a crowd of thousands. He heals a cripple with a word, boldly defies the Sanhedrin, and endures beating and imprisonment joyfully. Peter’s conduct exemplifies the fact that the church is now characterized by the divine “power” Jesus had promised (Lk 24:48; Acts 1:8).¹³

Following the descent of the Spirit, Luke reports an explosion of missionary activity and the consequent prodigious growth of the church. Throughout the remainder of Acts the Holy Spirit is the initiator, guide and dynamic force that propels the church’s mission. Although Pentecost is a unique, once-for-all event, renewed outpourings of the Spirit occur on numerous occasions and are continually interwoven with the story (8:14-17; 10:44-46; 19:6). Even the Jerusalem church needs a new filling with the Spirit to face new challenges (Acts 4:31).

We would do well to consider whether the church today has sufficiently taken into account this link between Pentecost and evangelization. Although all acknowledge that “the Holy Spirit is the principal agent of evangelization,”¹⁴ it is common to presume that since the first Pentecost the Church enjoys the fullness of the Spirit, and can get on with the job of proclaiming the gospel. But a fresh outpouring of power from on high is as necessary today as it was in the early church. To take the New Testament witness seriously is to conclude that *there can be no new evangelization without a new Pentecost*.

In his visit to the United States, Pope Benedict gave voice to this truth when in St. Patrick’s Cathedral he said, “Let us implore from God the grace of a new Pentecost for the church in America. May tongues of fire, combining burning love of God and neighbor with zeal for the spread of Christ’s kingdom, descend on all present!”

12. Whereas Paul in his letters reflects theologically on the gift of the Spirit and its interior effects, Luke *shows* these effects through the visible activity of the church. For Paul, to be filled with the Holy Spirit is to be filled with the love of God (cf. Rom 5:5) and an interior revelation of Christ (cf. 1 Cor 2:9-12). For Luke, both these effects are manifest in the dramatic transformation that takes place in the apostles following Pentecost. For theological studies of the Spirit’s work as presented in Acts see George Montague, *The Holy Spirit: Growth of a Biblical Tradition* (New York: Paulist, 1976), 134-36, 205-206; and Craig Keener, *The Spirit in the Gospels and Acts: Divine Purity and Power* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1997), 190-213. For an examination of the Spirit’s revelatory work in Paul, see Mary Healy, “Knowledge of the Mystery: A Study of Pauline Epistemology,” in Mary Healy and Robin Parry (eds.), *The Bible and Epistemology: Biblical Soundings on the Knowledge of God* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2007), 134-58.

13. Divine power (*dynamis*) is a distinguishing feature of the Christian mission throughout Acts (3:12; 4:7, 33; 6:8; 8:19; 19:11), as it was of Jesus’ ministry (Lk 4:14; Acts 10:38).

14. Paul VI, *Evangelii nuntiandi* 75.

Although there are many indications that such a new Pentecost has begun,¹⁵ the grace of the Spirit cannot be presumed, but must be continuously sought in faith (Luke 11:9-13). The command for Christ's disciples to "stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high," needs to be relived in every generation. Otherwise we risk attempting to carry out a divine task with human resources.

Going to the Lost

The three Synoptic versions of the great commission are equally emphatic that the task of evangelization consists in a dynamic outward movement that has no geographical limits. Jesus commands his disciples, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation" (Mk 16:15); "Go make disciples of all nations" (Matt 28:20). In Acts, the mission is to be carried out in increasingly widening circles: "you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Jesus' instruction is not to sit and wait for seekers to knock at the church's door, but to go to where the unevangelized can be found, as he himself did in the Gospels.¹⁶ Thus the second imperative of the new evangelization is to **go**.

Other biblical texts such as the parables of the lost sheep, lost coin, and lost sons (Luke 15) and the command to "go out to the highways and hedges" to invite guests to the banquet (Lk 14:23) add a further dimension to this truth. They suggest that God has a preferential option for the lost. "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim 1:15), "to seek and to save the lost" (Lk 19:10; see Lk 5:31-32; Rom 5:6-8; Eph 2:4-5). Lost sinners must, therefore, be the priority of Jesus' disciples as well.

While not all are called to foreign missions, all are called to go beyond the sheepfold where the 99 may be found to look for the lost.¹⁷ However, it must be acknowledged that after twenty centuries of Christianity, the culture and habits of the Church today are largely directed toward maintenance rather than mission, toward ministering to those inside the church rather than seeking those outside it.¹⁸ As Raniero Cantalamessa points out, "We are more prepared by our past to be 'shepherds' than to be 'fishers' of men; that is, better prepared to nourish people that come to the Church than to bring new people to the Church, or to catch again those who have fallen away and live outside of her."¹⁹ By far most of the formation given to

15. See, for example, Pope John Paul II, Address to New Communities and Lay Movements, May 30, 1998; Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *The Ratzinger Report* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1985), 43-44.

16. Cf. especially Lk 5:29-30; 7:34; 19:5.

17. "Why have so many left the Church? While this is an important question, the more important question is why are we sitting around tending the ninety-nine and not going after the one who has been lost (Matthew 18:12-14)? ... One sheep wanders away, then another, then another! Soon we are forced to ask why we are tending the fifty sheep and not going after the other fifty who have been lost" (Bishop Earl Boyea, Pastoral Letter "Go and Announce the Gospel of the Lord," April 5, 2012, p. 20).

18. See Robert S. Rivers, *From Maintenance to Mission. Evangelization and the Revitalization of the Parish* (New York: Paulist, 2005).

19. Cantalamessa, Advent homily, Dec. 2, 2005, available at <http://www.zenit.org/article-14735?l=english> (accessed Nov. 27, 2012).

future priests and pastoral ministers focuses on those who already practice their faith. To succeed at the new evangelization the church must reorient her culture, institutions, and formation toward proclamation and mission. Both clergy and laity must reject an attitude of passivity and take an active responsibility for going out and making disciples.

Jesus' use of the word "lost" (*apolōtos*, literally "perished, destroyed") for those who have not yet repented (Lk 19:10) also points to a recognition that nothing less than the eternal salvation or loss of human beings is at stake in the proclamation of the gospel.²⁰ In the version of the great commission found in the longer ending of Mark, Jesus warns, "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned" (Mk 16:16). The idea of two ways, two ultimate destinations for human existence, is one of the most consistent themes of the New Testament: there are the weeds and the wheat (Mt 13:30), the sheep and the goats (Mt 25:31-35), the foolish and the wise (Mt 7:24-27; 25:1-12), the branches that bear fruit and those that are cut off and thrown in the fire (Jn 15:1-6), the wide gate that leads to destruction and the narrow gate that leads to life (Mt 7:13-14), those who hear the word and those who ignore it (Mk 4:13-20), those who come to the light and those who love the darkness (Jn 3:19-21), those who receive Jesus and those who do not (Jn 1:11-12), the repentant believing thief and the mocking unbelieving thief (Lk 23:39-32).

A presumption of universal salvation that is not grounded in Scripture has seeped into some theology and the mentality of many Catholics.²¹ Sometimes this is due to misunderstanding of *Lumen Gentium* 16 which affirms the possibility of eternal salvation for "those who, through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ or his Church, but who nevertheless seek God with a sincere heart, and moved by grace, try... to do his will as they know it through the dictates of their conscience." While this teaching offers an important corrective to the idea that those who do not know Christ are *ipso facto* condemned, *Lumen Gentium* 16 goes on to make clear that the outcome is not always positive:

But very often, deceived by the Evil One, people have lost their way in their thinking, have exchanged the truth of God for a lie and served the creature rather than the Creator (see Rom 1:21 and 25). Or else, living and dying in this world without God, they are exposed to ultimate despair.

Biblical texts such as Rom 5:18; 1 Tim 2:4; Titus 2:11; 2 Pet 3:9 are sometimes used as proof texts to support the idea that all will be saved. However, an examination of these texts in their literary contexts and in the context of all the New Testa-

20. This theme is ubiquitous in the New Testament: Mt 11:20-24; 12:41-42; Jn 3:18, 36; 12:48; Acts 13:46; Rom 2:7-8; 11:14; 1 Cor 9:22; 2 Thes 2:12; 1 Tim 1:16; Heb 2:3; 12:25; 1 Jn 5:12. Cf. CCC 161, 678-79.

This paragraph and the next are indebted to Ralph Martin, *Will Many Be Saved?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012).

21. See *ibid.*, especially 195-208.

ment writings demonstrates that the authors consider salvation to depend on faith, baptism, and repentance manifest in changed conduct (Luke 3:8; John 3:18-20; 1 Cor 6:9-11). The authors give no indication that they expect that everyone will make that response. After preaching in Pisidian Antioch, Paul and Barnabas tell those who reject their message that by rejecting the gospel, “you... judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life” (Acts 13:46). Two verses later Luke summarizes the outcome of Paul’s preaching in that city: “as many as were appointed to eternal life believed” (Acts 13:48).

Scripture thus presents the preaching of the gospel and people’s response to it as having the greatest consequences imaginable, a fact that inspired the zeal of St. Paul and of missionaries throughout the history of the Church (cf. 1 Cor 9:22; 2 Cor 5:10-15). Conversely, when the necessity of proclaiming and accepting the gospel is obscured, zeal for evangelization recedes.

2. The Message of Evangelization

Recent ecclesial documents, including the *Instrumentum laboris* for the 2012 Synod, have tended to speak of two distinct senses of the term “evangelize.”

In its precise sense, evangelization is the *missio ad gentes* directed to those who do not know Christ. In a wider sense, it is used to describe ordinary pastoral work.²²

In the wider sense, evangelization comprises the entirety of Christian mission and pastoral care, including the proclamation of the gospel, catechesis, the sacraments, mystagogy, ongoing faith formation, and even the transformation of communities, institutions, the culture, and society as a whole. The New Testament, however, helps us recognize the importance of retaining the primary focus on evangelization in the strict sense, that is, *the announcement of the kerygma, the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ, with the goal of leading people to faith and conversion*. This is the meaning of *euangelizomai* in the New Testament.²³ As Pope Paul VI insisted,

Evangelization will also always contain—as the foundation, center and... summit of its dynamism—a clear proclamation that, in Jesus Christ, the Son of God made man, who died and rose from the dead, salvation is offered to all men, as a gift of God’s grace and mercy.²⁴

This proclamation of the kerygma, however, is precisely the step that Catholics often tend to skip. When the primary focus on proclamation of the kerygma becomes obscured, the risk is that “evangelization” becomes a vague and diffuse term

22. *Instrumentum* 85.

23. Cf. Acts 5:42; 8:4, 12, 35; 1 Cor 1:17; Gal 1:16; Eph 3:8. The term *kerygma* (the “message,” or essential content of the gospel) appears in Rom 16:25; 1 Cor 1:21; 2:4, 15:14; 2 Tim 4:17; Titus 1:3.

24. *Evangelii nuntiandi* 27; cf. *Redemptoris missio* 44.

that means nothing more than “everything we’re already doing,” and new evangelization means “more of the same.” The New Testament, in contrast, makes a clear distinction between the preaching of the kerygma and the teaching or catechesis that follows conversion (cf. Rom 15:20; 1 Cor 2:1-4; 3:6-10). As Fio Mascarenhas puts it,

[T]he kerygma... had, so to speak, an explosive or germinating character; it was more like the seed that gives origin to the tree than the ripe fruit that is at the top of the tree. The kerygma was not obtained at all by summary, as if it was the core of the tradition; but it was at the beginning of everything. From it all the rest was developed....²⁵

The Spirit-anointed preaching of the kerygma has an intrinsic power to awaken faith in the hearers. “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ” (Rom 10:17). The church’s joyful exclamation, “*Jesus is Lord!*” (cf. Rom 10:9; 2 Cor 4:5) has its own self-authenticating power; it makes present and operative that which it signifies. “Faith is born through the sudden and astonished recognition of the truth contained in the kerygma.”²⁶

For the new evangelization to succeed, ministers of the word (and as much as possible, all the faithful) need to be able to proclaim the kerygma in a concise and convincing way. Surprisingly, this skill is often overlooked in ministerial formation. The Church’s experience for many centuries has been that of catechizing members who were baptized as infants in social settings that fostered Christian faith. Today those environments have largely disappeared, and many baptized Catholics, like most non-Christians, have never heard the gospel proclaimed or made a deliberate choice to follow Christ as his disciple. As Pope John Paul II candidly observed, many Catholics have been baptized and catechized without ever having been *evangelized*—that is, without having heard the gospel in a way that led them to a personal encounter with Jesus Christ and a joyful surrender of their lives to him.²⁷ The absence of this step leads to what is by New Testament standards a sub-Christian life that is often unable to withstand the pressures of today’s post-Christian culture.

What exactly is the gospel message that Christians are called to proclaim? The Protestant Reformation identified the gospel with the doctrine of justification by faith. Catholics often focus on *living* the gospel, that is, the ethical elements of Christ’s teaching, especially the Sermon on the Mount and service to the poor and marginalized. Catholics also use “gospel” to refer to the whole of the Church’s faith. All of these are valid uses of the term, but in the New Testament itself the meaning is more specific: it refers primarily to the gratuitous gift of salvation in Jesus Christ.²⁸

25. “The New Evangelization and Preaching the Kerygma,” *Bulletin Dei Verbum*, English Edition, 2012, no. 2-3, p. 24.

26. Ibid.

27. John Paul II, *Catechesi tradendae* 19.

28. Cesclas Spicq notes that in both secular and biblical Greek *euangelizomai* and its cognate nouns express the gratuitousness of the gifts announced and the resulting joy (*Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*, trans. James Ernest [Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994], vol. 2, 86-87).

The word *euangelion* occurs first on the lips of Jesus: “Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel!’” (Mark 1:14-15). Matthew 4:23 summarizes Jesus’ early ministry as “teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease... among the people.” Similarly, in Luke’s account of Jesus’ inaugural sermon at Nazareth, Jesus summarizes his mission as “to proclaim gospel to [literally, *evangelize*] the poor” (Lk 4:18). In Jesus’ ministry, the essential content of the gospel is that in him, God has come to save his people and establish his victorious reign over the earth. Jesus’ healings, exorcisms, and forgiveness of sins reveal God’s decisive intervention in history, offering a foretaste of the future blessedness of the kingdom. They function as signs that disclose Jesus’ identity and confirm the truth of his message. From the beginning, the gospel was not mere information but a proclamation in power that demanded a personal response of faith and repentance.

After Jesus’ death and resurrection, and the fulfillment of his promise of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8; 2:33), the preaching of the gospel resumes. Now, however, its full content is revealed: it is the “good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 8:12; see 28:23, 31). The kingdom is fulfilled in the risen Jesus himself. What in Jesus’ public ministry was “preaching the kingdom” becomes in the church’s ministry “preaching the Lord Jesus” (Acts 11:20). Luke portrays seven sermons by Peter and Paul in Acts that make the content of the gospel message explicit.²⁹ They share a common core although they vary among themselves depending on the circumstances and on the audience the apostle is addressing.

It would be helpful if conferences of bishops, or those experienced in evangelization, could provide a summary of the kerygma drawn from Scripture, which evangelists today could learn and put to use. Such a summary might include elements like the following.³⁰

1. God’s infinite, unconditional, and personal love for every human being, and his desire that every person attain the fullness of life in communion with himself (Jn 3:16; 10:10; Eph 2:4-7).
2. The reason we do not experience this fullness of life: sin has separated us from God, introduced evil into the world, and left the human race in a desperate condition (Isa 59:2; Rom 3:23; Eph 2:1-3), ultimately leading to eternal death (Rom 5:12; 6:23).
3. The solution provided by God: God sent his Son Jesus to reveal the Father’s love, to forgive our sins and reconcile us with God through his death and res-

29. C. H. Dodd provides a classic analysis of these sermons in *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980).

30. These five points are present in an elegantly condensed form in paragraph 1 of the *Catechism*. The first four are also loosely similar to a popular Protestant evangelistic tool known as the “Four Spiritual Laws.” Finally, these points follow the movement of the biblical story of salvation considered as narrative: exposition, conflict, climax, resolution, denouement.

urrection (Jn 15:9; Rom 5:8-10) and to fill us with his Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38; Rom 5:5).

4. Our part: to receive the gift of God by repenting from sin, believing in Jesus, and being baptized into the communion of his body, the Church (Mk 16:16; Jn 3:5-6; Rev 3:20).
5. Jesus' coming in glory as judge, at which time the dead will be raised and all will receive the just recompense for their deeds and their acceptance or refusal of God's grace, either eternal life or eternal separation from God (Jn 5:28-30; Acts 17:31; 2 Cor 5:10).

Of course, no presentation of the gospel is perfect or includes everything that could be said. Even the best distillation of the gospel requires that the presenter be attentive to the Holy Spirit and to the person and circumstances, adapting it as needed. Often only a part of the message can be shared in a single conversation. Nevertheless, a gospel summary is a useful tool.

3. The Goal of Evangelization

Matthew's version of the great commission makes clear the goal of evangelization: "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" (Mt 28:19-20).

Three elements may be distinguished here. First, it is not sufficient to make converts or church members, but rather *disciples*. According to Matthew, disciples are those whose identity is founded in their relationship with Jesus and who make him the absolute priority of their lives (Matt 8:19-23; 10:37-39; 16:24-26).³¹ They share in Jesus' mission, his authority, his self-denial, his persecution, and his reward (Matt 10; 19:29-30).

Second, Jesus commands that disciples be baptized "into" (Greek *eis*) the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit – into a profound relationship with the Persons of the Trinity. The Gospel of John and the letters of Paul explain this relationship and the effects of baptism more fully (John 3; Rom 6); Luke depicts these effects in Acts. Throughout the New Testament it is clear that for the apostolic church, the divine life and adoptive sonship received through baptism (and the laying on of hands) was not an abstract doctrine but *a fact of experience* (see especially Acts 8:14-18; 10:44-46; 19:6).³² Christian initiation was a radically life-transforming event

31. The Catherine of Siena Institute, a program dedicated to equipping parishes for the formation of lay Catholics for evangelization, has adopted the term "intentional disciples" to emphasize the profound choice and commitment entailed in discipleship. See Sherry Weddell, *Forming Intentional Disciples: The Path to Knowing and Following Jesus* (Huntington, Ind.: Our Sunday Visitor, 2012).

32. That was the case in both the New Testament and the patristic era is demonstrated by Kilian McDonnell and George T. Montague, *Christian Initiation and Baptism in the Spirit: Evidence from the First Eight Centuries*, 2nd ed. (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1994).

with perceptible outward effects, including an experiential awareness of the Father's love and the lordship of Christ (Rom 5:5; 8:15-16; 1 Cor 12:3b), joy in his salvation (Acts 8:5-8; Rom 15:13; 1 Pet 1:8), overflowing praise (Acts 2:11, 46-47), an eagerness to know the apostles' teaching (Acts 2:42), zeal to boldly proclaim Christ (Acts 4:31; 9:20; 1 Cor 9:16), and service to others through various charisms of the Spirit (1 Cor 12:7-13).

Not surprisingly, today these effects are often missing in those baptized as infants and raised in a secular culture.³³ A closer study of the New Testament data can serve as an impetus for a revitalization of sacramental preparation, especially for Confirmation and the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults, to inculcate in candidates the dispositions of expectant faith and repentance from sin that will enable the fruits proper to the sacraments to be fully realized.³⁴ For Catholics already baptized and confirmed, reflection on the New Testament can awaken a new desire to acquire the needed dispositions and appropriate more deeply what they have already received in order to experience the full power of these sacraments.³⁵

Finally, Jesus says that his disciples must be taught to observe (or "keep") all that he taught the Twelve. Catechesis about Christian living must follow conversion. Evangelization culminates in a radically new way of life that conforms in every way ("to observe *all*") to the teaching of Christ.

Again it is crucial to preserve the order and distinctiveness of these steps. First comes the proclamation of the kerygma which seeks to elicit a response of faith and repentance, and which issues in baptism for those not already baptized. Catechesis and moral formation *follow* evangelization and conversion (Acts 2:41-42). It is very difficult to adequately catechize those who have not been evangelized and experienced conversion, since they lack the motivation and effective grace of the Spirit to practice what they learn.

33. For those baptized as infants and raised in an environment of vibrant faith (an increasingly rare situation today), a more organic and continuous growth toward full personal acceptance of the faith is possible.

34. The dispositions necessary for baptism and confirmation to bear fruit include a lively understanding of the gospel and the gifts God intends for his people, personal faith in Jesus, repentance, and the desire to do God's will. If someone who received the sacraments as an infant grows up in a vibrant community of faith, the effects of the sacraments unfold naturally as these dispositions develop. However, grace remains bound or dormant in Catholics to the degree that they do not acquire these dispositions. See Raniero Cantalamessa, *Sober Intoxication of the Spirit*, 41-43. In the part of his *Summa Theologica* devoted to baptism (III, Q. 66-71), Thomas Aquinas indicates the importance of adequate preparation and the proper dispositions for the efficacy of baptism, including repentance and faith, devotion, sincerity, instruction, exorcism, and responsible and knowledgeable godparents. See also Augustine, *Sermon* 269.2.

35. Various programs are available that have proven effective at helping people do so, such as Cursillo, Alpha, the Life in the Spirit Seminar, the Philip course, and Ignatian retreats.

4. Paul's Reliance on the Demonstration of the Holy Spirit

Paul is the Church's missionary *par excellence* and church tradition refers to him as "the Apostle." As such he provides the primary model for bishops, priests, and lay missionaries of subsequent generations insofar as they are called to evangelize.³⁶

The primary text in which Paul describes his method of convincing people of the truth of the gospel is 1 Corinthians 2:4-5. There he writes, "My speech and my proclamation were not with persuasive words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power."³⁷ The context of this remark is Paul's concern that the Corinthian Christians were placing excessive value on ministry that reflected the values of their culture: rhetorical excellence (1 Cor 1:17; 2:1), the "wisdom" of sophisticated philosophical discourse (1:21-25), and social status (1:26-28). This temptation remains today, especially for clergy and scholars educated in philosophy and theology. We, like the Corinthians, are tempted to recoil at simple presentations of the gospel, preferring more sophisticated and respectable engagement with the culture. We are tempted to place our hope in winning the world by the elegant form in which we clothe the truth.

Paul's response to the similar tendency of the Corinthians was that the message of the cross contradicts these priorities entirely. He reminds them that his own preaching that was the origin of their new life in Christ had a completely different basis. Paul preached about the Messiah who "died for our sins... [and] was raised on the third day according to the scriptures" (1 Cor 15:3-4).

Rather than persuade by words of "wisdom," Paul's proclamation of "Christ crucified" (1:23; 2:1) persuaded by reason of "a demonstration of the Spirit and power." The word translated "demonstration," *apodeixis*, means a "showing forth" or "proof."³⁸ The two words "Spirit and power" function together to refer to one reality (a figure of speech known as hendiadys), the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul chose to rely on the proof of the Spirit's power rather than clever philosophical arguments or eloquent oratory for an important reason: "so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God."

A contemporary example may help illustrate Paul's meaning. Some years ago when Peter Williamson was involved in evangelizing university students, he and the

36. When speaking of Paul we refer to the canonical Paul, i.e., the picture of Paul and his mission that emerges from considering Acts and all the letters that bear Paul's name. This part of our presentation is adapted from Peter Williamson's article "Effective Proclamation: Demonstration of the Spirit and Power" in *Soter* 34:62 (2010) available at http://vddb.laba.lt/fedora/get/LT-eLABa-0001:J.04~2010~ISSN_1392-7450.N_34_62.PG_71-79/DS.002.1.01.ARTIC (accessed 8 August 2012).

37. Our interpretation of this and the related texts mentioned primarily follows Gordon D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994). I also draw on David E. Garland, *First Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, Baker Academic, 2003), J.D.G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), and George Montague, *The Holy Spirit: The Growth of a Biblical Tradition* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2006).

38. For a good overview of the role of *apodeixis* in the context of Greco-Roman rhetoric, see E. J. Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008), 344-347.

group he belonged to tried to articulate the steps in the evangelization process. In addition to such stages as “Arousing Interest,” “Presenting the Message,” “Answering Objections” and “Inviting a Response,” they identified an important step they called “Making it Real,” which they recognized was outside their direct power to accomplish. They noticed that in order to believe, people seemed to need to *experience* something that convinced them of the reality of the gospel. Sometimes it was an external event. A Chinese student raised as an atheist was converted when someone prayed over him to be healed of a severe headache. When the pain vanished during the prayer, the student believed and subsequently sought baptism. At other times it was an interior event, for example, an experience of God’s love, or a sudden awareness of one’s sinfulness and need for forgiveness.

In *Evangelii nuntiandi* (par. 75) Pope Paul VI wrote that “the Holy Spirit is the principal agent of evangelization” and urged that “pastors and theologians—and... the faithful marked by the seal of the Spirit by Baptism—should study more thoroughly the nature and manner of the Holy Spirit’s action in evangelization today.” St. Paul understood the Spirit to demonstrate the truth of the gospel in at least four ways, which are equally important for effective evangelization today: in the message itself, in the character and demeanor of the evangelist, through signs and wonders, and in the hearts of the listeners.³⁹

The Spirit is at work in the message itself

“I am not ashamed of the gospel,” Paul declares, “for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes!”⁴⁰ As God’s message addressed to every person, the gospel is a kind of prophecy. Biblical prophets usually do not supply proofs or satisfy demands for signs (although they sometimes confirm their message by signs at God’s initiative). Rather, they speak a message in God’s name and, because it is God’s word, it bears an anointing, the testimony of God’s Spirit. Those who hear must decide at their own risk whether to believe and obey, or not.

Paul depicts the gospel as an active agent with a vitality of its own. The word of God is self-diffusing.⁴¹ Paul uses the terms “word of God” and “word of the Lord” almost exclusively to refer to the gospel, the *kerygma*.⁴² He tells the Thessalonians that the “word of the Lord has sounded forth” from them to the surrounding territories (1 Thess 1:8). He asks for prayers that “the word of the Lord may speed on and triumph (2 Thess 3:1). In 2 Timothy the Apostle Paul, a prisoner bound with chains, contrasts his situation to that of the gospel: “but the word of God is not bound!” (2 Tim 2:8-9).

39. For an overview of the role of the Spirit in the proclamation and hearing of the gospel and in conversion, see Gordon Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 846-864.

40. Rom 1:16. See the treatment of Paul’s understanding of the self-diffusing nature of the word in Robert L. Plummer, *Paul’s Understanding of the Church’s Mission* (Colorado Springs: Paternoster, 2006), 50-64.

41. Plummer, *Paul’s Understanding*, 61-67, 141-142

42. For the distinction between *kerygma* and *didache* and perspectives on recovering the *kerygma*, see Raniero Cantalamessa, *Remember Jesus Christ* (Ijamsville, Maryland: The Word Among Us, 2007), 16-25. For the various ways “word of God” is used in Scripture, see Carlo Martini, *La Parola di Dio alle origini della Chiesa* (Rome: 1980), 56-58.

The vitality of the *kerygma* comes from the Spirit. The word of God is the “sword of the Spirit” (Eph 6:17). Hebrews 4:12 depicts God’s word as “piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”

The powerful self-confirming word of God advances both through a proclamation of what Jesus did once and for all in the paschal mystery and through testimony of what Jesus has done in the life of the proclaimer. One of St. Paul’s means of giving “demonstration of the Spirit’s power” was to tell the story of his encounter with the risen Lord on the road to Damascus (Acts 22 and 26). To this day, one of the most effective ways the Spirit makes the gospel real to people is through testimony, the evangelizer telling how God has acted in his or her life.

The Spirit demonstrates the truth of the message in the character and demeanor of the evangelist

At the beginning of 1 Thessalonians Paul writes, “You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake” (1 Thess 1:5b). In the next chapter (1 Thess 2:1-12) he reminds the Thessalonians of the love, humility, patience, generosity, hard work, and total detachment from greed and self-interest that characterized the missionaries who preached to them. The fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23) testifies to the truth of the gospel.

How many people have been convinced by the Spirit through seeing the face of Christ in the *character* of the preacher. We see dramatic instances of this in the life of a Blessed Teresa of Calcutta or St. Francis of Assisi, but the Holy Spirit demonstrates the truth of the gospel through the character of many ordinary Christians, whether priests, parents, teachers or friends.⁴³

The Spirit of Christ is also manifest and convinces people through the *demeanor* of the evangelist—the courage, conviction, and joy of those who speak his message. The face of the first martyr Stephen, Acts tells us, shone “like the face of an angel” (6:15). To choose a contemporary example, countless millions who watched close-ups of the face of Pope John Paul II were fascinated by what they saw: “Even during the lengthy Masses, his face was not the face of someone presiding over a great public ceremony. It was the face of a man lost in prayer, living in a dimension beyond words.”⁴⁴

Acts also recalls the impression made by Peter and John when they stood before the Sanhedrin and proclaimed that “there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved”: “Now when they saw the *boldness (parrësia)* of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus” (Acts 4:12-13).⁴⁵

Thayer’s Lexicon defines *parrësia* as “freedom in speaking,” “fearless confidence, cheerful courage.” It is the opposite of fear, shame, embarrassment or ti-

43. See *Lineamenta* 22 on the role of witnesses.

44. George Weigel, *Witness to Hope* (New York: HarperCollins, 1999), 364.

45. Immediately after this event the Jerusalem church prays for more of the same grace of the Spirit; see Acts 4:29-31.

midity before powerful political or cultural authorities. Variations of *parrësia* occur eleven times in Acts to describe the preaching and testimony of the apostles. In Ephesians 6:18-20, Paul asks his readers to pray precisely for this Spirit-inspired boldness: “Pray at all times in the Spirit ...[Pray] also for me, that speech may be given me in opening my mouth *boldly* to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that I may declare it *boldly*, as I ought to speak.”⁴⁶

Christians today urgently need this grace in view of the scandal of the gospel’s claims regarding Christ as the only way of salvation and regarding Scripture’s counter-cultural teaching about marriage and family, sex, and wealth.

The Spirit demonstrates the truth of the message through signs and wonders

A prominent characteristic of Paul’s evangelization and that of the early Christians was the presence of “signs and wonders”⁴⁷ that confirmed the truth of his message. In Romans 15:18-19 he writes, “For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me to bring the Gentiles to obedience—by word and deed, by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God.” Acts of the Apostles reports some of Paul’s signs and wonders and their convincing effects:

- On the island of Cyprus Paul causes temporary blindness to descend on Elymas the magician, because he was opposing the gospel. The proconsul Sergius Paulus is converted (Acts 13:6-12).
- In Philippi, the first European city Paul evangelizes, he casts out a demon from a slave girl. Later, that night an earthquake frees Paul, Silas and the other prisoners from their chains (Acts 16). The jailer and his household believe and are baptized.
- In Ephesus God does extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, “so that handkerchiefs or aprons were carried away from his body to the sick, and diseases left them and the evil spirits came out of them” (Acts 19:11-12). The result? “All the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord..., the name of the Lord Jesus was extolled... and the word of the Lord grew and prevailed mightily” (Acts 19:10, 17, 20).

Paul regards signs and wonders as a credential given by Christ that confirms his apostolic office.⁴⁸ He reminds the Corinthians: “The signs of a true apostle were

46. To give another Pauline example, when Paul tells the Christians in Philippi that their boldness, unity and freedom from fear—gifts of the Spirit—are a *proof* (*endeixis*) to their persecutors of impending destruction and of the ultimate salvation of believers (Phil 1:14, 27-28; 2:1-2).

47. “Signs and wonders,” a biblical phrase that originally described the miracles God worked through Moses to deliver his people from Egypt also describes the miracles God works to confirm the preaching of the gospel (Deut 6:2, 26:28; Mk 16:17-20; Acts 4:30; 5:3; 14:3; 15:12; Heb 2:4).

48. It is nevertheless worth noting that in Acts, as in the Gospels, signs and wonders are never performed on demand. Rather, as in the ministry of Jesus, the miracles done by Paul

performed among you with utmost patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works” (2 Cor 12:12). It is likely that Paul understood these signs as a continuation of the authority to heal and cast out demons that Jesus gave to his disciples when he sent them to preach the kingdom during his earthly ministry and after the resurrection.⁴⁹ The special grace given to presbyters for physical healing attested in James 5:14-16, the biblical foundation of the sacrament of anointing, probably arises from the same apostolic authorization (Mark 6:13).

It is clear, however, that Paul, like the Gospel writers (Mark 16:17-18; John 14:12-14) did not regard signs and wonders as confined to apostles. The Holy Spirit gives charisms to those who believe, to each member of the body as the Spirit wills, including gifts of healing and miracles (1 Cor 12:9-10, 29-30). Paul’s letters, other NT writings, and extra-biblical texts all testify that healings, exorcisms, and other miracles were part of the normal experience of the early Church.⁵⁰

The Holy Spirit continues to “demonstrate” the truth of the gospel through signs and wonders in our day.

- In June 2012 Zenit reported on a bishop whose diocese in northeastern India that has grown more than 40% in thirty-five years. He attributes that growth to many supernatural healings his local church is experiencing.⁵¹
- A priest from the Caribbean who studied in the licentiate (STL) program in the New Evangelization at Sacred Heart Major Seminary reports frequent physical healings following administration of the sacrament of anointing in his hospital ministry. Many priests have similar stories.
- A priest student from India reports about the Divine Retreat Centre run by the Vincentian Congregation in southwest India at Potta-Muringoor. Since 1990 over 10 million people have come to hear preaching and to pray for their needs. Many miracles accompany the proclamation of the gospel and hundreds of thousands have been converted. At the Centre, week-long retreats are held year-round and the average number of participants is 15,000 people. (Testimonies of healing and conversion can be read online at <http://www.drsm.org/testimonies>)
- The Spirit uses lay people as well as priests. Damian Stayne, a layman and member of the *Cor et Lumen Christi* community in England, has witnessed thousands of remarkable healings in his ministry over the last few

and the other apostles are always in response to needs or requests, or spontaneously, at the initiative of the Spirit.

49. Matt 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-20; Luke 24:45-49; Acts 1:8.

50. One example suffices to show that Paul presupposes signs and wonders as the normal experience in the Church. In Galatians Paul argues for the superiority of faith over works of the law on the basis of his readers experience: “Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law, or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun with the Spirit, are you now ending with the flesh? Did you experience so many things in vain?... Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith?” (Galatians 3:2-5)

51. See “Indian Bishop Wonders If Miracles Are Happening” in ZENIT, June 22, 2012.

years. Video recordings of testimonies to miracles are available on the community's website (<http://www.coretlumenchristi.org/>).

- A few years ago a lay alumna of Sacred Heart Major Seminary visited a friend of hers in the intensive care unit of the hospital. The friend had been in a coma for two weeks, having suffered a massive infection. Because of multiple organ failure, the doctor considered her beyond help. She was scheduled to have the respirator removed in two days. The former student writes, "As I drove to the hospital I kept hearing the words 'Advent is a season of joyful expectation' so when I got to intensive care unit I [laid my hand on her shoulder and] prayed with the full expectation that God would heal her—not 'hope' that God would but 'expectation' that He would. They removed the respirator early on Monday morning and she immediately sat up straight, perfectly alert and lucid and breathing of her own accord. When I visited her a few weeks later she was filled with joy and recovering her strength."⁵²

In contemporary culture characterized by what recent popes have called "practical atheism," signs and wonders fulfill an important role in demonstrating the reality of a God who acts in history and desires to be at the center of our lives.

The Spirit confirms the truth of the gospel in the hearts of the listeners

Paul reminds the Christians in Thessalonica how they *experienced* this word when he evangelized them. "For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction" (1 Thess 1:4-5). When Paul preached his listeners experienced not just words, but power, a dynamism that made a deep impression on them. Their experience was like that of the disciples of Emmaus who said, "Were not our hearts burning within us as he spoke to us on the way and opened the Scriptures to us?" (Luke 24:32)

Paul explains, "faith comes from hearing, and hearing comes by the preaching of Christ" (Rom 10:17). When the gospel is proclaimed the Holy Spirit works in people's hearts, convinces them of the truth, and attracts them to Jesus. The Holy Spirit also convicts people of their sinfulness.⁵³ When Peter preached on Pentecost morning the crowd was "cut to the heart and said... What must we do?" (Acts 2:37).

52. Email message from Mrs. Carol Kean, 18 March 2009.

53. Paul reports this happening in the meetings of the early church: "But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all, the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you" (1 Corinthians 14:24-25).

Sometimes the Holy Spirit is at work, but the person refuses to respond. Acts reports 24:25 that as Paul spoke to the Roman governor Felix "about justice and self-control and future judgment, Felix was alarmed and said, 'Go away for the present; when I have an opportunity I will summon you.'"

The sign of the Spirit's presence is a joy that is sometimes otherwise inexplicable, as in the case of the Thessalonians to whom Paul wrote: "you received the word in much affliction, with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit" (1Thess 1:6).⁵⁴

Faith, prayer, spiritual warfare

If the Church today wishes to rely, like St. Paul, on the power of the Spirit to "make the gospel real" when she evangelizes, the keys are faith, prayer, and awareness of the spiritual combat that evangelization entails.

Like Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels, Paul stresses the primacy of faith (e.g., Gal 3:2-7).⁵⁵ Evangelizers must avoid putting their faith in human means—the endorsement of the rich or powerful, skillful use of new media, well-considered documents and programs, astute sociological or theological analysis. While human means are necessary, evangelizers who wish to imitate St. Paul must rather learn to exercise faith and to "pray constantly" (see 1 Thess 5:16-20). The influence of Enlightenment scientism and rationalism and the resulting "practical atheism" of western culture have weakened the faith of Christians, including that of Church leaders. All who have been raised or educated under this influence must make a conscious effort to discern and reject the habits of unbelief they have acquired. Jesus instructs Thomas: "Do not be unbelieving any more but believe" (John 20:27).

Paul directs the members of his churches toward prayer (Rom 12:11; Eph 5:18-20; 1 Thess 5:19; see Luke 11:9-13). Contemporary evangelizers seeking to imitate Paul (1 Cor 4:16; 11:1; Phil 3:17) will seek the guidance of the Spirit for their mission as Paul did (Acts 16:6-10). They will pray that the Spirit anoint the good news about Jesus, embolden their testimony (Acts 4:29-31; Eph 6:18-20), and move the hearts of those to whom they speak (Col 4:2-4; 1 Tim 2:1-4). Finally, they will learn to pray with confidence that God will answer, sometimes even with "signs and wonders" (Mark 11:22-24; 16:17-20). Even when God answers differently than they ask, that can be sure that if they ask the heavenly Father for bread, that he will never give them a stone (Matt 7:7-11).

Just as Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom entailed binding the strong man and taking what he previously held (Matt 12:28-29), Paul also understands Christian life and evangelization as a struggle not merely "against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" (Eph 6:12). To evangelize means to free people from the power of Satan (Acts 26:18) and to successfully transfer them to Christ's reign (Col 1:13). This requires awareness of the spiritual battle, familiarity with Satan's wiles (2 Cor 11:4), putting on the "whole armor of God" and standing firm (Eph 6:10-11, 13-17), and "prayer at all times in the Spirit"

54. Likewise 1 Peter 1:8-9 "Although you have not seen him you love him; even though you do not see him now yet believe in him, you rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, as you attain the goal of (your) faith, the salvation of your souls."

55. The first three paragraphs of the preface of the *Instrumentum Laboris* provide examples from the Gospels of this type of faith. For more on expectant faith and prayer, see unpublished paper by Peter S. Williamson, "Doing the Works of Jesus and Greater Works: A Theological Interpretation of John 14:12-14" (Available online).

(Eph 6:18-20). Many have observed that it is the devil's ploy either to exaggerate or conceal his activity. It is therefore not surprising that it is politically incorrect and intellectually unacceptable in our world to speak or act as though the devil were real. When, however, Catholics dare to pray, speak, and act with *parrësia* in light of the worldview taught by Jesus and Paul, they experience the "demonstration of the Spirit" and the advance of the gospel.

5. Paul's Missionary Practice

Besides his reliance on the Spirit, many other aspects of Paul's missionary approach hold promise for the new evangelization. We will briefly mention a few.

Building Christian communities

Rather than aim at the conversion of individuals, Paul sought to establish communities of believers who could support one another in living a way of life that differed from their pagan neighbors. He recognized that the Holy Spirit dwells in such communities, gifting the members to "edify" or build up one another in their relationship with Christ (1 Cor 12). The role of both itinerant ministers and the community's principal leaders ("apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers") was "to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ" (Eph 4:11-12). The central Pauline metaphor and model for ministry in the Church is the human body in which each member has its distinctive ability (charism) and function (Rom 12:4-8; 1 Cor 12:12-30). When each part is working properly the community "makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love" (Eph 4:16). Communities like this are self-sustaining.⁵⁶

In recent times some ecclesial movements are providing models for the new evangelization precisely in their recovery of the communal dimension of Christian life described in Acts and the Pauline letters. Many are also seeking and exercising charisms of the Spirit for building up Christ's body.

Collaboration and teamwork in ministry

Another respect in which Paul's example is instructive for the new evangelization is in the collaborative way that Paul worked with others in mission. Nearly 100 names are associated with Paul in the New Testament, thirty-six in fairly close collaboration.⁵⁷ Evangelizing and pastoring in teams, rather than as individuals, brings the advantages of spiritual support and protection, communal discernment, diverse charisms, and the testimony of multiple witnesses. Jesus himself established the precedent, sending out his disciples in pairs.

The implications of these biblical examples for the Church today include the importance of priests living and serving together, rather than as isolated individuals, and the collaboration of clergy and lay people in ministry teams.

56. See Michael J. Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 124-127.

57. See E.E. Ellis, "Coworkers, Paul and His" in Gerald F. Hawthorne, et al., eds., *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993)183-188.

Ministry formation through discipleship and mentoring

Paul's example is also instructive in regard to the formation of evangelizers and pastoral ministers. Paul's many coworkers learned by living with him, by observing his way of life and by watching him preach, teach and evangelize (Acts 20:18-21, 31-35 et passim; 2 Tim 3:10-11). From there they progressed to fulfilling ministry assignments from Paul and some eventually to governing churches on their own. This method both inculcates character traits through personal relationship and example⁵⁸ and effective ministry skills through observation and hands-on experience.

This New Testament paradigm for leadership formation is manifest in Jesus' training of the Twelve and implicit in his command, "Go and make disciples..." Analogously, Paul counsels Timothy, "what you heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will have the ability to teach others as well" (2 Tim 2:2).

Today the formation of pastoral ministers in the Catholic Church diverges greatly from the pattern followed by Jesus and by Paul. Contemporary formation of clergy and other pastoral ministers is largely academic and institutional, offering relatively little opportunity for practice in evangelization and pastoral skills or of learning directly from exemplary pastors and evangelizers. The community life of some institutes and ecclesial movements offer models of how such formation might be carried out today that could be adopted for the formation of diocesan clergy and lay leaders. The new evangelization calls for a creative rethinking of how the Church forms pastoral ministers at all levels. To the degree that it is possible, mentoring and hands-on training in evangelization and pastoral care under the supervision an experienced, gifted leader should be maximized.

The Role of Scripture in Church Life and Ministry Formation

Finally, Paul's emphasis on Scripture in the ministry and formation of evangelizers and pastoral ministers is noteworthy. The many allusions to the Old Testament Scriptures found in the New Testament suggest that communal reading and explanation of Scripture was far more characteristic of the life of the early Church than it is of the Church today.⁵⁹

Explicit indications, especially in the Pastoral Letters, show that this was a deliberate pastoral practice. Paul tells Timothy, "Till I come, attend to the public reading of scripture, to preaching, to teaching" (1 Tim 4:13). Paul exhorts Timothy, and by extension, all pastoral ministers, about honing their skills in communicating God's word: "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth" (2 Tim 2:15; cf. 1 Tim 4:16).

58. See *Lineamenta* for the 2012 Synod of Bishops on the New Evangelization 22.

59. In the middle of the second century, Justin Martyr describes the liturgy: "the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read for as long as time permits" (Apology, 67). If the liturgy today only allows very brief readings and explanation, other fora need to be found for this vital function.

Finally, in the text that we think of in relation to the *inspiration* of Scripture, Paul emphasizes rather the *usefulness* of Scripture and its virtual sufficiency for ministry formation:

All Scripture is inspired by God and *useful* for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, *so that* the man of God may be competent, fully equipped for every good work. (2 Tim 3:16-17)

As the inspired word of God, Scripture is efficacious (Isa 55:10-11). *Verbum Domini* speaks of the sacramentality of the word: it effects what it signifies.⁶⁰ Above all this is true in evangelization, since “faith comes from hearing and hearing through the word of Christ” (Rom 10:17).

In *Verbum Domini* the Holy Father echoes *Dei Verbum* 25 in recommending frequent Bible reading and the familiarity with Scripture that it engenders to bishops (79), priests (80), deacons (81), consecrated persons (83), lay people (84), and families (85). In at least eight places *Verbum Domini* speaks of the importance of being “familiar with the word of God.”⁶¹

Despite the emphasis on reading and studying Scripture in *Dei Verbum* and magisterial documents up to the present, this kind of familiarity with the word of God remains an elusive goal. Among seminarians preparing for priesthood—those for whom the standards are highest—familiarity with Scripture remains disturbingly low.⁶² Scripture formation in undergraduate seminary formation is negligible, and

60. Raniero Cantalamessa, the preacher to the papal court, explains that the Greek word translated “inspired” in 2 Tim 3:16, *theopneustos*, has, in addition to this passive sense, an active meaning. Having inspired the words of Scripture, “the Holy Spirit is, as it were, contained in it, lives in it, and enlivens it unceasingly with his own divine breath.... Once and for all time, the Holy Spirit inspired Scripture and now, each time we open the book, Scripture breathes the Holy Spirit!” See Raniero Cantalamessa, *The Mystery of God’s Word* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1994), 80.

61. He begins by speaking of Mary’s “familiarity with the word of God” (28), recommending the same for the faithful (62, 64, 84) and for clergy (80). He exhorts “all the People of God, pastors, consecrated persons and the laity, to become increasingly familiar with the sacred Scriptures” (121), and concludes his apostolic exhortation by “remind[ing] all Christians that our personal and communal relationship with God depends on our growing familiarity with the word of God” (124).

62. Biblical *lectio divina* ought not be limited to the Lectionary or to the Office of Readings, which despite their immense value, do not inculcate familiarity with the biblical books themselves. Peter Williamson learned this a few years ago when he gave his Pauline Literature class an anonymous pretest to ascertain their familiarity with Paul’s letters. The test listed sixteen well-known Pauline quotations or topics and the titles of the letters attributed to Paul, asking the students to indicate in which letter or letters the topic or quote is found. He then had the students exchange tests and grade them, taking a very generous view of what constituted a correct answer. Out of 16 possible points, the students averaged less than 4. When the highest scores were excluded the averages drop nearly a point for each group; the most common score was 1 out of 16! What was most surprising was how poorly the seminarians did. These were bright, highly-motivated second year theologians who had completed their college seminary and pre-theology, attended

graduate theology requirements in most U.S. seminaries do not include biblical languages and often fail to cover significant parts of the biblical canon.

Conclusion

As the Church considers how to promote a new evangelization, we would do well to recall and build upon the 2008 Synod on the Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church, summed up in *Verbum Domini*. More importantly, bishops, priests, and all who exercise leadership in the Church would benefit from studying what Scripture itself says about the task, message and goal of evangelization and reflect upon the perennial paradigm of evangelization set forth in the New Testament and in the life and writings of the Apostle to the Gentiles. ■

Mass and prayed the Office daily for a minimum of three years, yet were not familiar with Paul's letters at all.