

New Evangelization - By Sebastiaan Benders.

Pope John Paul II (1995) writes in his book *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*: “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” (p. 114).

However, it really is not Paul VI who should be viewed as the engine behind the new evangelization, but John Paul II himself. His legacy of encyclicals, speeches and writings attest to that. His call for the new movements to promote this new evangelization – a phenomenon a lot less tangible in Canada than in Europe – has spurred on countless faithful to unite in Catholic associations as the *Focolare* movement, *Communauté Emmenuel* or religious orders such as the *Frères de Saint Jean*.

In *Redemptoris Missio*, John Paul II (1987) writes: “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” (n. 3). It is therefore that we ought not to be ashamed to speak about the new evangelization in the context of pastoral theology. The theme of re-evangelization of the postmodern world was much at the centre of Pope John Paul II's apostolate and has already yielded many fruits.

However, the ‘lofty ideals’ of the new evangelization are sometimes just that, ideals that guide us like a compass guided St. Columbus across the seas to discover a new world. The question, however, remains: how can we apply these ideals and these directions in a concrete way in the parishes and faith communities in Canada today?

This article is about the new evangelization. In the next chapters we will analyse our current society (chapter 1) both from a religious as well as a philosophical point of view, in order to understand the situation in which the new evangelization is to take place. We will also attempt to give a definition of the new evangelization and describe its characteristics (chapter 2) based on some papal documents. Finally we will present some concrete ideas on how to apply the ideals and goals of the new evangelization in our parish life (chapter 3).

1 | The world of today

Before speaking about the new evangelization, it would be wise to give an impression of today's world. This will be done from a religious and a secular-philosophical point of view.

In their letter about the new evangelization of October 6, 1985 the Belgian bishops attempt to describe the changes in society as they see it. Even though this letter predates the advent of the Internet, their impressions from a religious point of view are eerily adequate even today. They note that we may see many positive developments in society and they acknowledge and respect people's contribution. They are not denying the good that has been achieved: "We have worked – and are still working – to create a good welfare state.¹" However, they see several challenges for the new evangelization that are still very actual for us today. Godfried Cardinal Danneels mentions:

¹ "Wij hebben werk gemaakt – en doen het nog – van de uitbouw van een goede "verzorgingsmaatschappij."

1. In Europe, we find ourselves in a post-Christian situation in which God is both theoretically and practically ignored. We could call this first sign of our times an increasing *atheism*. Cardinal Danneels distinguishes between a *scientific atheism*, which puts its faith completely in the progress of science and technology and is propelled by an unshakable faith in reason and education, and *humanistic atheism*, which works according to the principle of ‘homo hominis Deus’, meaning that God is nothing more than the projection of human vision and dreams. Man is entrusted with the freedom and responsibility to shape the world as they see fit.
2. A second distinction that the cardinal makes, is that between *atheism as a reaction* and *practical atheism*. Here he makes the distinction about why people have chosen atheism as their default mode of encountering reality. The first happens to people who are upset with the Church and who are at heart anticlerical. They have been hurt by the Church or find so much injustice in her ranks. This view is as real today as it was 25 years ago. Even in the Church itself we find priests and lay people who, although they haven’t turned atheist, have certainly distanced themselves from the Church. A very recent example can be found in the gay riots in Dutch churches². Many homosexual people have turned their back on the Church and on faith and endorse atheism by means of a reaction against what the Church stands for. The second reason for the spread of atheism is *practical*. With this, the cardinal means that it has nothing to do with a deliberate choice that people come to through long deliberation, but that it is a choice

² For a more complete view of the situation, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8542285.stm> may be consulted.

based on laziness and indifference regarding fundamental life questions. This is perhaps even more applicable in our increasing consumption society than it was at the time cardinal Danneels wrote this. We escape these fundamental questions by consumption and by entertaining ourselves.

3. Cardinal Danneels makes a third observation, which he calls *toxic Christian values*³.

What he means is that our society has been founded on Christian principles, but now that our culture has been secularized, it does not have an inkling as to why things are the way things are. To illustrate this point as well as its relevance today, we could for instance take the institute of marriage. Marriage was based on the Christian principle of one man marrying one woman. While our society has not (yet?) embraced polygamy, homosexual partners want to get married and there are also people who do not wish to get married but still have some social contract binding them together. As a body rejecting toxins poisoning the system, secular society rejects the once Christian principles it has been founded on. We find ourselves in a time of individualism, narcissism and anarchy. We only invest in ourselves and “it is no wonder that such a man sinks into deeper existential loneliness and experiences an inability to really communicate.”⁴ We can well imagine that the cardinal is talking about the slogan of our contemporary society: “everything and everything at once”.

³ “Christelijke warden en hun toxines”

⁴ “Het is dan ook niet te verwonderen dat dergelijke mens wegzingt in een existentiële eenzaamheid en de onmogelijkheid ervaart tot elke communicatie.”

4. The fourth point that is made is the *religious fever* that has spread through Europe. As a reaction to the Enlightenment, reason and science, people are looking for the spiritual. The cardinal, however, also notices sentiments of disappointment, disillusion, boredom, sadness and loneliness. He notes that this creates a fertile soil for sects. This soil is the same soil on which the new evangelization of the world needs to sow its seeds. We are at a disadvantage as a Church, due to our sometimes simplistic answers, abstract liturgy and a lack of eschatology as well as a true sense of community.

In short, from a religious perspective, we have shown that the world today is open for symbolism and spiritual values, while on the other hand we strive for technological efficiency, which goes hand in hand with widespread atheism.

From a more secular-philosophical point of view, we should try and understand what it truly means to live in a post-modern society. Many of the points made earlier by Cardinal Danneels will be reinforced or reinterpreted.

One of the most humoristic (but very realistic) attempts to describe today's world was made by Pulitzer prize winner Thomas L. Friedman (2005) in his book *The World Is Flat*. In it, he analyzes the concept of globalization. Five hundred years after St. Columbus had 'proven' that the world was not flat, Friedman says it is, because he sees the world as a level playing field in terms of commerce, where all competitors have an equal opportunity. He calls on companies and countries to make a shift in perception when they wish to compete in a global market where divisions along the lines of time (history) and space (geography) are becoming progressively more irrelevant.

University of Virginia scholar John Milbank (2002) agrees. As he examines our current culture in search for leads on how to evangelize in postmodern times, he notices four distinctions that are being crossed:

1. The distinction between *nature* and *culture*. In modernity, man already felt that he could shape his own cultural universe, but still against the backdrop of a fixed nature with its own laws, limiting human freedom. Now, however, “no longer is human auto-creation operating within essential parameters” (p. 2). What Milbank is trying to say is that we feel we can make anything of ourselves, take any shape. We are no longer governed by natural laws.
2. The distinction between the *interior* and the *exterior*. In modernity, man went home and there engaged in his own private life. This private self, guarding the boundaries between nature and culture, is no longer in his safe ‘sanctum’. Our private houses are invaded by modern media. Television and the Internet are full of advertisements. In fact, when we log on, we find ourselves in a global public space where we share our feelings on blogs and our daily activities on our Facebook accounts. There is an immediate proximity both in space and time, as was already mentioned in Friedman’s book
3. The distinction between all *traditional modern economic categories*. Milbank’s main concerns are with the age of information that has replaced the age of manufacturing and the age of agriculture before it as the main engine of our economies. Some of the effects of time and space ought to be considered once again, but also something as concrete as the relation between a worker and his manager. It is easy to imagine the development of a different relation when we picture a factory worker and his boss on

one hand and a information technology designer in Taiwan and his boss in the United States on the other. Not just relations are different, but also the knowledge needed.

4. The distinction between the *economic* and the *political* realm, which leads to globalization. With the free flow of both financial means and workers, national boundaries fade and ethnic and national unity slowly dissipates. Through the dogma of capitalism, all other factors become subordinate to profit, including the ordering of the state.

Professor Reno (2002), chair of the department of theology at Creighton University can corroborate Milbank's findings: "We can buy and sell Eurobonds on our cell phones while watching Monday Night Football at a Mexican theme sports bar owned by a partnership of German orthodontists" (p. 55). This is but one of many examples that Reno gives and he, too, examines postmodern culture to examine how we can preach and teach effectively. He names two pillars for today's society: a zeal for freedom (this pillar is headed by philosopher Ralph Emerson) and a cool empiricism (headed by empiricist John Locke). So whereas Christians would feel that in order to attain freedom, God comes first, not us, we find ourselves crossing swords with these two dogmas of modern humanism.

The first point Reno makes is that we have brought this partly on ourselves, because we have not always (strongly) opposed it as Christians, and for good reasons. Often modern values have some common ground with Christian values. Although Reno does not mention it, we can even go so far as to say that since our contemporary western society has its roots in Christianity, these modern values are Christian values taken to an extreme. As an example, Reno mentions

individuality. As Christians, we feel that God has called us by name and loves us. Take this too far and our egos take a flight and we are suddenly all that matters in the world. Emerson suggests shedding the cruel weight of the past, which is, in a way, what Christians do in baptism. Locke's close reasoning and rigorous argument is an extreme of Christian doctrines as claims of truth.

Reno continues by noticing that as a professor he has increasing problems trying to teach young people 'truths', something very relevant when we're talking about catechesis, for instance. He notices what he calls a "postmodern horror of obedience" (p. 63). This has made power of truth itself a threat. Debate is now called sharing and we are careful not to marginalize the experience of others. Even simple truths as $2 + 2 = 4$ are now subject to the meta-view of people criticising mathematical views being only valid within the mathematical context, claiming all systems of thought are closed and self-referential. Even if this can be called in question by noting we can say a lot of worthwhile non-mathematical claims about mathematics, this does not necessarily mean people are ready to let go of their 'truth'.

Fr. Marie-Dominique Philippe (1991), founder of the Brothers of Saint John, states that we are confusing the terms authority and power. It is in our human nature to resist tyranny, but when people revolt against abuse of power, they do not only eliminate power but authority also. When authority is lost – as it is today – we also become insensitive towards obedience. This obedience is necessary, because it is the only way for us in which we can practise the virtue of hope. Fr. Philippe calls this lack obedience an attack against the heart of the Church, because it is focused against the authority of the Holy Father and the Church as institution. Again, these are all very real concerns for the proclamation of the Gospel in our day and age.

The last major claim that Reno makes is that our postmodern age is Petronian. What he means is that it is based on the Roman character Petronius, who lived in the time of Nero. Petronius is a participant who stands at one remove, which means he can observe, mock and satirize. Petronius, according to Reno, “exemplifies the spiritual ideal that now dominates postmodern western culture” (p. 67). What he means by that is that our culture is penetrated by an atmosphere of superficiality, which leaves everything around us bereft from any spiritual significance. Like the characters in the books of Petronius, we are spectral, soulless creatures, gravity.

Having made all these observations on postmodern culture, we are almost ready to suggest a few ways we can actually proclaim the Good News in order to re-evangelize the world. However, before we do so, the next chapter will first examine what this new evangelization is. Knowing what the Church’s view on new evangelization is, will greatly help in suggesting positive ideas for evangelization in order to establish renewed life giving and flourishing Christian communities.

2 | The new evangelization

The term new evangelization was first used by Pope John Paul II early on in his pontificate and he kept inspiring new movements and using this term until several weeks before he passed away. In 1983, he told the Latin American bishops: “Evangelization cannot be new in its content, since its very theme is always the one gospel given in Jesus Christ.” In other words, the

pope believes that new evangelization isn't a new message. The pope often speaks about not just evangelizing the individual unbelievers, but non-practising Christians and entire cultures as well, both in ways adapted to today's society.

The main Vatican document in which John Paul II expresses in a very personal way his views on this mission of new evangelization is *Redemptoris Missio*, published in 1990. Apart from current day missionary work, the document speaks about the new evangelization in western culture.

Nodar (2000) lists six characteristics of this new evangelization. They will be examined below, along with an added reference to the encyclical itself.

1. The new evangelization is *Christocentric*. As we already saw from the speech to the Latin American bishops, the pope is very clear regarding the message: the message is the same as the one that the first apostles preached. The message is Jesus Christ. It is of no surprise that the pope stresses the Christocentric heart of our message, as it is not always easy in our day and age of relativism to preach a particular person in a particular time in a particular culture. It is much easier to speak on a 'hot' topic such as social justice now that our living rooms are flooded with images from the earthquake in Haiti or the war in Afghanistan. Or it is very easy to focus on other visual signs of the Church as institute, her liturgy and the saints, her tradition and apostolic succession. In the encyclical John Paul II writes: "If we go back to the beginnings of the Church, we find a clear affirmation that Christ is the one Savior of all, the only one able to reveal God and lead to God. [...] Although participated forms of mediation of different kinds and degrees are not excluded, they acquire meaning and value only from Christ's own mediation, and they cannot be understood as parallel or complementary to his" (RM, 5).

2. The new evangelization is the *responsibility of all the people of God*. This characteristic should certainly not be seen separate from the developments of the Second Vatican Council. This responsibility (and in fact, right) of the faithful is made very clear in *Lumen Gentium*. Pope Benedict XVI (2010) recently underlined this point in his homily on March 8: “We all need a change of mentality in the Church, especially regarding the lay faithful. We can no longer see them as co-workers of the clergy, but we should acknowledge them as people who are co-responsible for the being and actions of the Church.”⁵ What both popes are trying to say is that the new evangelization is not just the work of people with a special vocation, nor is it the work that only missionaries in Third World countries do. In *Christifideles Laici*, Pope John Paul II (1988) writes: “I spoke explicitly of the Church's permanent mission of bringing the gospel to the multitudes [...] who as yet do not know Christ [...] and of the responsibility of the lay faithful in this regard. The mission *ad gentes* is incumbent upon the entire People of God [...] missionary activity which is carried out in a wide variety of ways, is the task of all the Christian faithful.” In *Redemptoris Missio* he makes a distinction in tasks for the laity and the priests and bishops. The bishops as successors of the apostles are primarily responsible for the work of evangelization. The priests are responsible for stirring up the missionary spirit in the hearts of the laity. Religious are to give testimony to God

⁵ “We hebben een mentaliteitsverandering nodig in de Kerk, bovenal met het oog op de leken. Wij moeten hen niet langer beschouwen als medewerkers van de clerus, maar hen daadwerkelijk erkennen als mensen die medeverantwoordelijk zijn voor het wezen en het handelen van de Kerk.”

through their consecrated lives. The laity should be trained and empowered as missionaries of the new evangelization.

3. The new evangelization is *not just for foreign missions*. The pope distinguishes three situations, which must be approached in their own way: first is what he calls the *missio ad gentes*, which means 'to the gentiles', or those who do not yet believe. They are the people and societies that have never heard of Christ. The second are healthy Christian communities. Whereas the first group should receive the Gospel, this second group should receive a renewed fervour in their faith and an awareness of their mission. The last group is an 'intermediate situation'. He speaks about large parts of Europe and North America where people have been baptized but have no living sense of their faith. As tasks for this third group the pope suggests an emersion into vibrant groups of faithful, a renewal and enlivenment of their faith and emphasize on catechesis. Pope John Paul II writes: "Nor are difficulties lacking within the People of God; indeed these difficulties are the most painful of all. As the first of these difficulties Pope Paul VI pointed to 'the lack of fervor [which] is all the more serious because it comes from within. It is manifested in fatigue, disenchantment, compromise, lack of interest and above all lack of joy and hope'" (RM, 36). The threefold distinction tells us whether we should evangelize, re-evangelize or give pastoral care and encouragement. The pope makes it clear that evangelization should not just stop with the *missio ad gentes*. He calls for orthodoxy and orthopraxy, so living out our faith conform the Gospel and living our lives in a Christian manner, whatever situation we may find ourselves in.

4. The new evangelization is *directed to individuals* as well as to *entire cultures*. This means we are not just trying to influence groups of individuals, but we ought to permeate the entire culture with Christian values. In *Redemptoris Missio* 51 the pope calls for the transformation of entire cultures by integrating authentic Christian attitudes and dispositions into it. The new evangelization should lead to, "a civilization of love" (RM, 52).
5. The new evangelization is not just about the *kerigma*, but about the *comprehensive process of Christianity*. It means we should go beyond the basic message of the Gospel, as important as it is. Catechesis is a lifelong endeavour.
6. Finally, the new evangelization calls for a *missionary spirit*. Our life in Christ is the same as sharing that life. We cannot just keep it to ourselves. In order to do this properly, we need to be disposed to follow the Holy Spirit. The pope does not only link our life in Christ with sharing that life, but also he connects our call to holiness with this call to mission. Part of what he means by that is that our missionary zeal is only as good as our prayer is: "the future of mission depends to a great extent on contemplation. Unless the missionary is a contemplative he cannot proclaim Christ in a credible way" (RM, 91).
Another part is what John Paul II calls an inner joy. This inner joy that comes from faith is our testimony to those around us regarding the salvific message of the Gospel.

Now that we have analyzed our own postmodern society, both from a religious and secular-philosophical point of view, and now that we have seen how John Paul II defined the new evangelization, we must wonder how all of this can be practically applied in the next chapter.

3 | The new evangelization in our own parish

The main reason that Church documents and pastoral letters of bishops do not list some concrete ways of applying the new evangelization in our parishes is because each and every parish is different. The documents can only say something about the general direction, because the life in each parish comes from the same source: Jesus Christ. The source is the same, but the streams flowing from it can flow in different directions.

It is not the intention of this article therefore to give an exhaustive list of ways to implement the new evangelization in any parish, or even an adequate list for a particular parish. It could, however, be seen as an educated and faithful attempt to combine the two previous chapters in meaningful and life-giving suggestions for parish life throughout parishes in Europe and North America.

Awareness as the starting point of the new evangelization

It has become very clear in the course of this article that a strong identification is made between the Christian and his missionary spirit. We can no longer afford to be content keeping our faith life confined to the Sunday. Especially in a world where an increasing number of our friends, family and co-workers do not go to Church, do not believe and in fact, know very little about the Christian faith, traditions and heritage.

It is important that this awareness is stirred by the leaders of the Church. Through means of social communication (even if it is just the parish bulletin or a poster in the Church) we can simply challenge people: “have you been a missionary today?” A multitude of examples abound

in each and every parish where someone has done something in the realm of new evangelization, or where someone was touched by someone else's missionary attitude and statement. Why not get a testimony of these people printed in the weekly bulletin or on the Internet page of the parish?

In order to encourage awareness, perhaps some sort of missionary award could be instated. The award could even be part of a whole parish feast day of re-evangelization. The feast day could include an encouraging lecture, testimonies as well as a social event afterwards.

Catechesis as the heart of the new evangelization

A prerequisite, I think, for the new evangelization is what the Belgian bishops (1985) call "evangelists". We are in need of people whose preaching abruptly and profoundly touches the heart of others and turns it around. Therefore it is important to empower people to do that. We need to give people the tools to know their faith. How little continued catechesis is available in parishes today? Serious (inter-)diocesan programs for formation are sometimes filled with people who do not require official pastoral accreditation but are merely seeking to understand their faith better. They cannot find good catechesis at their parish or deanery level. The catechesis that is offered (outside the regular sacramental catechesis) is often haphazard, irregular and at a very low level.

Parishes can launch regular catechesis programs (e.g. two days a month) with a strong theme or program to it. Our Sunday masses or our parish meetings could be followed by a catechetical session. The Belgian bishops consider basic themes for the first three years: "what do we believe?" (the Creed), "how should we pray?" (the Our Father) and "where can we find the

strength for evangelization?" (the sacraments). They have since launched several editions of a book, which treats all these things in an understandable yet thorough way.

Unity: binding people together for the right cause

A crucial factor in the process of new evangelization is that of community. As mentioned earlier, we find ourselves in a society where Christians become ever more absorbed in the world. Whether we look upon it in the sense of Cardinal Danneels' practical atheism or Milbank's fading distinction between the interior and the exterior, we have to acknowledge that many of our friends, fellow co-workers and even members of our own family are non-Christian.

In the past our families were Catholic, the children were sent to Catholic schools and our social time was spent with fellow Catholics in Catholic sports clubs or unions. However much Vatican II might have emphasized the 'Church as communion' and we have attempted to construct our parishes in such a way that we can all celebrate as one communion round the Altar of the Lord, we seem to be fighting an uphill battle.

If we are to live as Christians in the world and if we are truly 'bread for one another', we ought to be together to talk about our faith, grow in our faith, grow in understanding and love. It is not enough to come together to go to class and learn about how to evangelize. Nothing is more uplifting for the heart and little is more inviting to speak about Christ than knowing we are not alone in our mission. As Jesus sent out his disciples two-by-two and as he sent Peter to strengthen his brothers, we are meant to be together to be truly effective in our evangelization.

This means that there is a renewed role waiting the Catholic groups and societies that have

been formed in those days where community might not have been a very much talked about subject, but certainly a very much practised subject. We can think of the Knights of Columbus and Catholic Women's League, but also of Catholic schools and hospitals. As identity is fading in our postmodern society, we need to work in order to attain it. These groups need to be inspired by the leaders of our faith to find the flame of renewal, the flame of the Holy Spirit, in order to find out how they can serve the Church in our time.

Secondly, at a parish level it means that we need to help people in finding 'Catholic friends', people you can simply hang out with and have fun with. Perhaps it would go too far to say that the Church should become a more social place – that would have its own dangers attached to it – but how come there are many Churches where there is no opportunity to meet each other after Mass? As fertile as it may be to take for instance the Sunday as a day of catechesis (I suggested two Sundays a month), why can we not use the other two Sundays as means to increase fellowship? It could be as simple as a pick nick for families, games for the youth and other enjoyable activities for the adults. Are we giving our youth groups enough space to hang out? Are we focusing only on catechesis and not on being together? If so, we are undermining our evangelization, because we cannot do the work by ourselves!

Caring for those who are hurt

Cardinal Danneels talked about the atheism that is the result of some bad experience with the Church. There are many who have turned their back on the Church because a pastor said something insulting, because they were disappointed about grandmother's funeral, because

they know a friend of the family who was once abused at the residential school or simply because no one from the Church visited them when they were sick. People get hurt for many reasons and sometimes the only thing we need to do to re-engage them is to invite them and extend a hand.

Again, the role of social communication can be very useful here. Sometimes an ad “hurt by the Church and want to talk about it?” or “baptized, but you don’t know what that means anymore?” can elicit reactions of these hurt people. We can have systems in place, such as trained catechists or pastoral assistants who are empowered to work with people who come with their story. Sometimes a sympathetic ear is all that is needed.

Another possibility is something we could call a parish missionary week (or weeks). This is an especially good way to reach out to those who do not come to Church but are baptized. It involved volunteers for the parish who are trained and sent out to just visit people. This week or these weeks can be preceded by or closed with the parish missionary day that was spoken of above. In this week, people get a social visit from two fellow parishioners. Attempts should be made to pray at the end of this visit, in order to place the visit in light of the faith. During such a visit, miraculous healing can occur for those who feel abandoned by the Church for whatever reason. People could be invited to come to Mass. There could be a special ‘welcome home’ Mass following this week or the start of an RCIA or Alpha course, so that those who do decide to come back have options to integrate themselves in the existing community.

Exploit the dissipation of boundaries and the religious fever

As we have seen with Milbank (2002), boundaries are fading. We see an influx of new ethnic groups and values in our countries. Often these groups are traditionally Catholic (e.g. those coming from Poland and the Philippines). Every effort should be made to accommodate them. Where we find large groups of these people in our parishes, we ought to allow them to show some of their faith and religious values and share it with the rest of the community. It is not about changing one parish into a Polish or Filipino national parish or to force new values on existing parishioners, but we find ourselves in the living flow of tradition. If another stream enters the flow of our parish, we should allow that to enrich us, rather than just force our own (sometimes quite petered out) spirituality on them.

The fading of boundaries of nature and culture, as well as the one between interior and exterior is precisely what makes us able to approach people anew. As Cardinal Danneels noted, many are suffering from a religious fever and they do not know what medicine to use. They grab what they can find, and often Easter quasi-spiritualities with sometimes commercial motives are the first thing that people come across. What do we offer? When is the last time we asked a passerby to light a candle in our Church? When is the last time we invited people in the neighbourhood to an open house day?

Evenings of prayer, with or without exposition of the Blessed Sacrament are a great way for people to enter a Church where an atmosphere of prayer touches their hearts.

A festival of faith

By no means is the list above exhaustive. We could mention things like emphasizing the strength of obedience in response to Reno's (2002) call to bring relativism to a halt, or we can stress the importance of the exterior religious signs, such as processions, the wearing of the

habit by religious and so on. One thing that ought to be mentioned at the end of this article is that new evangelization cannot succeed without feeling that profound joy that Pope John Paul II spoke about in *Redemptoris Missio*. Therefore it stands to reason we should use every way possible to celebrate our faith. If there is an upcoming major anniversary of our parish or diocese, why not organize a weeklong festival of faith, inviting neighbouring parishes and investing in community, activities for all the different groups in our parish, possibly around the bishop?

Only the Holy Spirit is the one, who can help us read the signs of our times and to help us decide what works where. When it comes to the new evangelization, however, the moment has indeed come to commit all our energies to it. We can no longer afford to avoid our supreme duty: to proclaim Christ to all peoples.

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