

called to give of themselves in the ordinary work of daily life in the world in order to become more and more human as Christ in Nazareth made human work sacred. Furthermore, partnerships in the Church are relationships of love that must lead to mutual service and greater solidarity. Thus, the New Evangelization begins with this "attitude of partnership" which is solidarity. It entails a welcoming spirit, a respect for others and a sacrificial love for others, especially those with whom we live and we wish to share our most prized possession – our faith. This attitude of solidarity and partnership must transform how we live and minister to each other among the members of individual parishes, within the clusters of our parishes and in between the diocesan agencies, parishes and clusters. Solidarity, which is partnership, and discipleship are one in the New Evangelization.

The second attitude that we must develop is that of inclusivity, or in theological terms, communion that celebrates our multi-ethnic and immigrant life. On a practical level, we must seek to understand and respect the religious customs and traditions of our new immigrants. The fundamental theme of the New Evangelization is to reaffirm the dignity and freedom of every human person as a subject who can never be treated as an object or used as a means to an end. The most recent instruction on migrants from the Holy See states, "Christians must in fact promote an authentic culture of welcome, capable of accepting the truly human values of the immigrants and above any difficulties caused by living together with persons who are different."¹⁵

We must prize immigrants' religiosity and piety as unique expressions of who they are as Catholics. As a welcoming Church, we must allow them to practice their faith in a way that is consistent with their traditions. To the greatest extent possible, we must also teach, preach and form immigrants in their own languages. For example, this pastoral letter must be translated into the major languages of the Diocese of Brooklyn, as well as being summarized for the other sizeable groups of immigrants of Brooklyn and Queens. Thus, we must practice what we preach in every way. On the spiritual level, we must strive to see that our ethnic diversity is a strength and that we will find greater unity in the diversity that characterizes us. Unity is not sameness. Unity is a reflection of the life of the Trinity, three Persons in one God, each separate and distinct, each having a different self-gift, and yet so united that they form the one Godhead. So, too, it must be with us.

This need to recognize our multi-cultural and ethnic

diversity is an essential part of our life and it must find its way into all of our pastoral work in the New Evangelization. We cannot be authentically Church without addressing the multi-cultural and multi-lingual needs of God's people in this Diocese. As a result, diocesan agencies must strive, to the best of their ability, to include and serve all our people in their programs and services. This, indeed, is a great challenge. It will require not solely the translation of a program or directive into another language, but rather inculturating these programs and directives, requiring at times a totally different approach with various immigrant groups. It is a challenge that we must face as part of the New Evangelization.

In *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (At the Beginning of the New Millennium), the Holy Father has defined what communion should be in the Church. "A spirituality of communion indicates above all the heart's contemplation of the mystery of the Trinity dwelling in us, and whose light we must also be able to see shining on the face of the brothers and sisters around us. A spirituality of communion also means an ability to think of our brothers and sisters in faith within the profound unity of the Mystical Body, and, therefore, as 'those who are a part of me.' This makes us able to share their joys and sufferings, to sense their desires and attend to their needs, to offer them deep and genuine friendship.

A spirituality of communion implies also the ability to see what is positive in others, to welcome it and prize it as a gift from God: not only as a gift for the brother or sister who has received it directly, but also as a 'gift for me.' A spirituality of communion means, finally, to know how to 'make room' for our brothers and sisters bearing 'each other's burdens' (Gal 6, 2) and resisting the selfish temptations which constantly beset us and provoke competition, careerism, distrust and jealousy. Let us have no illusions: unless we follow this spiritual path, external structures of communion will serve very little purpose. They would become mechanism without a soul, 'masks' of communion rather than its means of expression and growth." 16

A third attitude that must be learned is the collaborative spirit that should mark all pastoral ministry in the Church. Collaboration basically is the ability to work freely with one another. It presumes communication and cooperation, two of its essential elements. Perhaps a simple definition could be the ability to embrace jointly a common mission to address problems that far exceed the ability of one person or group to address alone.

On the diocesan level, we see how important clusters are to this collaborative effort. The three-year experience developing clusters as part of the diocesan pastoral planning mechanism is beginning to bear fruit. How important it is for the Diocese of Brooklyn to take what the clusters develop as serious responses to individual challenges.

On the parochial level, it is important that the spirit of collaboration is lived so that the local community utilizes all of the gifts and talents of its various members to effectively preach the Gospel. Practically, this means that each parish must have effective pastoral and finance councils where representatives of a parish can work together to accomplish the work of the New Evangelization.

Another real challenge is the spiritual collaboration that will force us to realize in a more deeply personal way the meaning of Saint Paul's vision that we are all members of the one Body of Christ" (Cor 12, 12-30). It was this Pauline insight that guided the work of our last Diocesan Synod held in 1996. The one Body of Christ has various members, all different, and yet all important, one to the other. Collaboration means that Christ's Body works together in a spirit of communion which comes from self-giving.

In a recent letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, entitled *The Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and in the World*, we read:

"Among the fundamental values linked to women's actual lives is what has been called 'a capacity for the other'...this interaction is linked to woman's physical capacity to give life. Whether lived out or remaining potential, this capacity is a reality that structures the female personality in a profound way. It allows her to acquire maturity very quickly, and gives a sense of the seriousness of life and of its responsibilities. A sense and a respect for what is concrete develop in her, opposed to abstractions which are so often fatal for the existence of individuals and society." 17

This is very important to recognize. The implementation of the New Evangelization must take into account improved working relationships and renewed respect for women in the Church. More than half of the active members of the Church are women and better collaboration with and among women in the work of the New Evangelization is critical.

A fourth characteristic that must define our common ministry is a willingness to pastorally plan our future

on the parochial, cluster and diocesan levels. The Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (At the Beginning of the New Millennium) identifies pastoral planning as essential to the life of the Church and the New Evangelization. "It is in the local Churches that the specific features of a detailed pastoral plan can be identified – goals and methods, formation and enrichment of the people involved, the search for the necessary resources – which will enable the proclamation of Christ to reach people, mold communities and have a deep and incisive influence in bringing Gospel values to bear in society and culture." 18 All such planning must respect the principle of subsidiarity which has been effective and useful in the life of the Church.

Subsidiarity means that a higher level of authority in the Church must never take to itself something that can be done by a more proximate level of responsibility. For example, the Diocese should never do something that a parish can do better for itself or on its own. At the same time, the diocese should do things that individual parishes or even clusters cannot do on their own. Concretely, diocesan agencies exist to serve the parishes, not the other way around. These agencies must make sure that all that they do promotes and supports the work of the parishes because it is in the parishes where the New Evangelization must take place. Thus, our diocesan agencies must ultimately strive to provide the resources and tools needed by parochial staffs to engage effectively in the New Evangelization.

Fifth, we must have an attitude of ongoing, honest and open dialogue on all levels in the Church. Dialogue means listening to the needs of our partners in faith, and to all who form part of the Catholic tradition, past and present. It also means finding room in our Church for all valid and legitimate expressions of the faith. Obviously, we must listen in a special way to the Magisterium and teaching authority of the Church. Nothing of what we do in the name of the New Evangelization can ever undermine our faith or what the Church teaches. Also, we must presume a willingness to share our Catholic tradition inside and outside our community of faith. Sharing and dialogue are not about compromise. Rather, it is about the exchange of ideas which leads us to a deeper knowledge of the truth.

Within the Church, we strengthen our common witness and commitment to the Gospel by becoming better listeners.

With other Christians in an ecumenical spirit, we share what we believe so that they and we might come to a more perfect knowledge of Christ.

There are our sisters and brothers in the Jewish faith, whom we see as people of the Covenant and to whom we owe a great debt as elder brothers and sisters in the faith of Abraham. We hope to develop new ways of respecting and protecting one another, to collaborate in understanding our biblical faith and to share common actions that flow from our faith.

The people of other religious traditions are numerous in Brooklyn and Queens, whether they are the people of Islam, followers of Buddha, or of other religious traditions. They, too, must be our partners in mutual respect and dialogue.

We must dialogue in a new way with our secularized culture and the media that form it. Our secularized culture is, perhaps, the greatest challenge to the New Evangelization. Culture can be defined as the values, beliefs and societal structures that organize and give meaning to our common life as a society. When a culture becomes secularized, it seeks to eliminate all religious beliefs and values from ordinary life. Secularization ultimately leads to the exaltation of self that disregards our relationship to God.

As Christians, we believe that secularized culture, devoid of Christ, is trying to do the impossible, since the power and love of Christ has blessed and transformed all human life with God's presence. Thus, our efforts to evangelize our culture must begin with our own witness of love, forgiveness and respect for human life that will manifest the true presence of Christ to all. If we cannot find language adequate to explain what the Gospel is about to those who have embraced the values of our secular culture, then we certainly have failed. We must identify the characteristics of our culture that make it impervious to the teachings of Jesus Christ. With patience and especially charity, we must, indeed, dialogue with and change the culture of which we also are a part.

The goal of the New Evangelization is the development of a new secular culture, through the transformative gift of self that is each Christian's gift to society. This self-gift occurs especially in the workplace.

If we understand culture to be the cultivation of each human person in freedom to realize a greater knowledge and mastery of self, then Christians in the workplace can help reverse the trend to secularism

and help create a truly secular and Christian culture. Again, secularity must be transformed into a Christian secularity which is essentially Christ-centered. It flows from Christ's free self-sacrifice for the world of the past, present and future. "All time belongs to Him," as we say in the Easter Vigil.

Culture is sacred as well as secular. There should be no conflict for the Christian to live in a secular culture while keeping it from becoming totally secularized, or devoid of faith and morality. We should not judge our secularized culture as something foreign to ourselves. Rather, we are part of our society's culture and we should be. This does not mean, however, that we do not seek to transform it in light of our faith, especially regarding the meaning and dignity of the human person as revealed in Jesus Christ. This is the burden of the New Evangelization at the beginning of the third millennium in the formation of a new global culture or the "globalization of solidarity,"¹⁹ as the Holy Father has suggested.

Finally, we must develop an attitude of prayer and openness to the grace of the Holy Spirit. The fact is that the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus Christ, is the primary evangelizer. We are mere instruments in the hands of the Holy Spirit, so that the centrality of Christ becomes the mark and the key of the New Evangelization. It is not our own work, but it is Christ working through us and through the power of the Holy Spirit that we rely upon. Our primary source of strength to do this work can only flow from a vibrant and prayerful relationship with Jesus Christ. Therefore, as we launch our efforts for the New Evangelization, we must redouble our efforts to develop our personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Only in this way can we hope to fulfill Christ's mandate to go forth to baptize all nations in His name.

Where Does the New Evangelization Lead Us?

In the end, where will the New Evangelization lead us as a Diocese? It will not lead us to create a master plan or new program. Rather, it will guide us to build the Kingdom of God in our midst. It is a Kingdom inseparable from the Person of Jesus Christ and His Church as Redemptoris Missio (The Mission of the Redeemer) tells us, "Above all... The kingdom is made manifest in the very person of Christ, Son of God and Son of Man, who came 'to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many' (Mk 10, 45). The Kingdom of God is not a concept, a doctrine, or a program subject to free interpretation, but it is before all else a person with the face and name of Jesus of

Nazareth, the image of the invisible God. If the Kingdom is separated from Jesus, it is no longer the Kingdom of God which He revealed. The result is a distortion of the meaning of the Kingdom..."²⁰ It is a Kingdom in which there is both new and old (Mt 13, 52), a Kingdom which has been compared to a dragnet which picks up good and bad fish (Mt 13, 47-48), a Kingdom that belongs not to this world but is within it and will reach its definitive fulfillment in the world to come.

Thus, our goals are principally spiritual, that the Church may mature as a community of faith on all levels, and that the faith may illuminate the basic meaning and commitment to the person of Christ in His Gospel. Without this, all of our evangelization efforts will fail and will have no real meaning. We must, however, develop a new zeal and shared purpose to preach the Gospel effectively in our contemporary world. Our zeal must overcome our fears, anxieties and even inadequacies. Our zeal is that for which we will be rewarded no matter how successful or unsuccessful our efforts.

We must have a united resolve to answer the problems that we face now as a Church. None of our efforts will bear fruit unless we undertake them in the name of the Lord and always seek His help. Ultimately, we must be a sign of hope to all people of good will who seek the truth revealed in Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

It is the Lord Himself who sustains us. It is through the help of the Lord that we will together "put out into the deep," and meet the challenge of the New Evangelization in our Diocese, our city and in the world.

With God's help, relying on the Holy Spirit, we entrust the mission of the New Evangelization to the Blessed Virgin Mary, under the title of Our Lady of Guadalupe. It was through her intercession and appearance to newly baptized Indian Saint Juan Diego over five centuries ago that the first evangelization of America took place. Through her intercession, the New Evangelization can be effective and bear fruit. To her we entrust with filial devotion the Church in the new millennium, as an instrument for the New Evangelization. It is she who is the Star of the Sea, our guide, as we "put out into the deep."

Nicholas DiMarzio, Ph.D., D.D.

October 3, 2004

First Anniversary of Episcopal Installation

Brooklyn, New York

Footnotes

1 Instruction Dominus Iesus, Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (August 6, 2000), par. 4.

"When the words and experience of evangelization are ungrounded in the experience of the Person of Christ, there is a danger of relativism. The Church's constant missionary proclamation is endangered by relativistic theories which seek to justify religious pluralism, not only de facto but also de iure (or in principle). As a consequence, it is held that certain truths have been superseded; for example, the definitive and complete character of the revelation of Jesus Christ, the nature of Christian faith as compared with that of belief in other religions, the inspired nature of the books of Sacred Scripture, the personal unity between the Eternal Word and Jesus of Nazareth, the universality of the mystery of Jesus Christ, the universal salvific mediation of the Church, the inseparability – while recognizing the distinction – of the kingdom of God, the kingdom of Christ, and the Church, and the subsistence of the one Church of Christ in the Catholic Church."

2 John Paul II, Encyclical Letter Redemptoris Missio (December 7, 1990), par. 5.4.

3 Ibid., par 10.1.

4 John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation Pastores Gregis (October 16, 2003), par. 27.

5 Karol Cardinal Wojtyla, Sources of Renewal, Harper and Row, 1980, p. 17.

6 John Paul II, Pastores Gregis, par. 3 and 27.

7 Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Nuntiandi (December 8, 1975), no. 14.

8 Theodore Cardinal McCarrick, "The Call to a New Evangelization," in Ministry Through the Lens of Evangelization, (Washington, DC : Secretariat for Evangelization, USCCB, 2003), p. 6.

9 John Paul II, Redemptoris Missio, par. 72.

10 John Paul II, Pastores Gregis, par. 5.

11 John Paul II, Encyclical Letter Dominum et

Vivificantem (May 18, 1986), par. 65 and Apostolic Letter Tertio Millennio Adveniente (November 10, 1994), par. 54.

12 Avery Dulles, "Evangelizing Theology," First Things Magazine, March 1996, p. 27-32.

13 Dominus Iesus, Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, par. 7.

14 Ibid.

15 Instruction Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi, Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People (May 14, 2004), par. 39.

16 John Paul II, Novo Millennio Ineunte, par. 43.

17 Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on "The Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and in the World," Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (July 31, 2004), par. 15.

18 John Paul II, Novo Millennio Ineunte (January 6, 2001), par. 29.

19 John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation Ecclesia in America (January 22, 1999), par. 55 and Pastores Gregis, par. 63.

20 John Paul II, Redemptoris Missio, par. 18.

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