

THE NEW EVANGELISATION: THE APOSTLES OF THE LAST TIMES / GO AND SHED LIGHT UPON THE EARTH

We will try to discuss this topic in a simple way, by quoting the Teachings of the Church and Our Lady's Messages. This is what She says to us: *"The Heavenly Mother is bringing you to live within the heart of the life of God and is making of you instruments of his peace. Thus you are ready for the task which I am entrusting to you: go and shed light upon the earth in these days of dense darkness. Then, by means of you, the great rainbow of the reconciliation of humanity with God will be able to arise and enfold the whole world in new light."* (1/1/88).

We are consecrated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary not only for our personal benefit. Our Mother has desired to establish this Movement through the Consecration to Her Immaculate Heart, first of all, in order to renew the Church from within, that is, in the hearts of Priests and the faithful and, secondly, in order to evangelize the whole world. At the beginning there was a time of preparation. She wanted everyone to go through this period of formation: *"The MMP must be my work alone. Through your weakness I will manifest my strength."*

And turning to Don Stefano she said: *"Through your nothingness I will manifest my power. I myself will be the Leader of this army. I am now forming it as my own in silence and in hiddenness just as, for nine months, I formed Jesus in my womb, and for many years in silence and hiddenness I brought Him up day by day. This is the way it is now for the MMP: like the little Jesus, I am forming it in silence and in hiddenness... What is needed now is much silence and humility, much confidence and prayer... The only thing that matters is that you let yourself be formed by me... And when the time comes, the Movement will then go out into the open."* (16/7/73).

About ten years later she will say that the time has come: *"Be my apostles, in living and spreading what I have told you during these years... I myself am leading forward my work of the MMP, by means of all that I have told you through the book of my messages and the little son whom I have chosen, as my instrument, to spread it in every part of the world. May you all be more and more united to this son of mine; only in this way are you sure of walking in the light which I give you."* (20/9/84).

If anyone has ceased being an apostle of Our Lady, it means that he hasn't followed her messages or the instrument chosen by Her. As the crown of all her messages, on 31 December 1997 she said: *"The moment has come for you to come out from your hiddenness in order to go and shed light upon the earth. Show yourselves to all as my children for I am with you always."*

Evangelization is based on Jesus' words: *"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. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the world"* (Mt 28:18-20). The Catechism of the Catholic Church speaks to us about the origin and purpose of the Church's mission: *"The Church on earth is by her nature missionary, since, according to the plan of the Father, she has as her origin the mission of the Son and the Holy Spirit"*. (#850).

Evangelizing and shedding light upon the earth with Our Lady

We, who belong to the MMP, are privileged to have our Heavenly Mother as our teacher and guide in our missionary work. For this reason she leads us to Jesus. She says: *"... I lead you to realize fully the mystery of love of your priesthood...to respond to such a great gift as that which has been given you by my Son Jesus. I bring you to be Priests according to his divine and merciful Heart. For this, I cause you to increase in a profound intimacy of life with me, in a simple and spontaneous way, in such a way that I am able to live with you, in the dwelling place of your priestly life, just as I lived in his home with the Apostle John. Accustom yourselves to doing everything with me: when you get up, pray, celebrate Holy Mass, recite the Liturgy of the Hours or are absorbed in your apostolic activity."* (31/3/88)

This is how Pope John Paul expressed himself in his homily at the conclusion of the Special Assembly for America of the Synod of Bishops (12 December 1997): "In those days Mary arose..." (Lk 1:39)... The Church is always "journeying", always on the move. She is sent and exists in order to move through time and space, announcing and witnessing to the Gospel to the ends of the earth...

The Christian community, following Mary's example, is journeying again, spurred by the love of Christ, to undertake the new evangelization... It is the beginning of a new mission, which has found its "upper room" and "Pentecost" in the Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, at the very beginning of a year totally dedicated to the Holy Spirit." On 27 March 1992 our Mother said to us: *"I am with you. I am joining you in your prayer, to obtain for you the gift of the Holy Spirit, that He may transform you into apostles of these last times. The moment of your public witness has come. Show yourselves to all as my little sons, as the apostles formed by me for the great task of the new evangelization which is awaiting you. As in the Cenacle of Jerusalem I opened the door so that the Apostles could go out and preach the Gospel, initiating the first evangelization, so also, in this Cenacle of yours, I am calling you all to be apostles of the second evangelization. Therefore, at the end of this extraordinary cenacle, I am entrusting to each one of you my motherly mandate: go and evangelize."* (27/3/92).

Thus we read at the end of John Paul II's Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (6 January 2001): "On this journey we are accompanied by the Blessed Virgin Mary to whom, a few months ago, in the presence of a great number of Bishops assembled in Rome from all parts of the world, I entrusted the Third Millennium. During this year I have often invoked her as the *"Star of the New Evangelization"*. Now I point to Mary once again as the radiant dawn and sure guide for our steps. Once more, echoing the words of Jesus himself and giving voice to the filial affection of the whole Church, I say to her: "Woman, behold your children" (cf. Jn 19:26)."

Proclaiming Christ with the Rosary

The apostolic letter on the Rosary says: "The Rosary is also a path of proclamation and increasing knowledge, in which the mystery of Christ is presented again and again at different levels of the Christian experience. In this way too Our Lady of the Rosary continues her work of proclaiming Christ. The history of the Rosary shows how this prayer was used in particular by the Dominicans at a difficult time for the Church due to the spread of heresy. Today we are facing new challenges. Why should we not once more have recourse to the Rosary, with

the same faith as those who have gone before us? The Rosary retains all its power and continues to be a valuable pastoral resource for every good evangelizer.” (#17)

In the message of 7 October 1983 we read: *“Prayer possesses a potent force and starts a chain reaction in good that is far more powerful than any atomic reaction. The prayer of my predilection is the Holy Rosary.”* If this is true when we pray according to our intentions, it will be all the more true when our evangelization is accompanied by the Holy Rosary. Then it is Our Lady herself who guides our work. This is what our mother says to us: *“With this prayer, you are able to obtain from the Lord the great grace of a change of hearts, of the conversion of souls, and of the return of all humanity to God, along the road of repentance, of love, of divine grace and of holiness.”* (7/10/86).

How do we proclaim Christ with the Rosary? One day, Saint Dominic, a great preacher against the Albigensian heresy, was in church, writing the sermon he planned to give in the cathedral that evening. Our Lady appeared to him, took away the notes he was writing, and told him to prepare himself for the sermon by praying the Holy Rosary: it was the best sermon he had given up to that day. Thus wrote Cardinal Montini, the future Paul VI: *“One can frame the historical context in which the Virgin taught Saint Dominic to recite the rosary: a strange remedy for great evils. It would seem that the remedy was meant to be political, warlike. Instead the remedy is the most tender babbling of a child in the name of its mother. The most simple, the most tender, the most childlike piety: this is the remedy for great social travails.”* (Notiziario n. 47, June 2004, printed by the Paul VI Institute)

Cardinal Albino Luciani, the future John Paul I, said of the Rosary in his booklet *“My Rosary”*: *“When I speak alone with God and the Virgin, rather than an adult, I prefer to feel young. When I am with God, even if it be for a short half hour, I prefer to be what I am in reality, with all my wretchedness and any merits. To feel like the child I once was, being reborn from the depths of my being, the child who wants to laugh, chatter, love the Lord, who sometimes feels the need to cry so that he may obtain forgiveness – all this helps me to pray. The Rosary, a simple and easy prayer as well, helps me to be a child and I am not ashamed of it... The Rosary expresses the faith without false complications, without evasion, without a lot of words; it helps us to abandon ourselves to God, to accept suffering with generosity. God also makes use of theologians but, in order to distribute His graces, He uses above all, the littleness of the humble and those who abandon themselves to His Will... A writer confessed that the origin of his conversion lay in seeing a Roman family recite the Rosary with faith.”*

The Eucharist and Evangelization

During the General Audience of 19 August 2009, the Pope said: *“The Lord Jesus, after calling the Apostles and before sending them out to preach, asks them to be with him (cf. Mk 3:14). When St Mark recounts the calling of the Twelve Apostles he says that Jesus had a twofold purpose: firstly that they should be with him, and secondly, that they should be sent out to preach. Yet, in being with him always, they really proclaim Christ and bring the reality of the Gospel to the world.”* What can be greater than Eucharistic Adoration, a true way of remaining with Jesus and learning his style, in order to bring it to others? Even during his countless missionary journeys, John Paul II spent entire nights with the Eucharistic Jesus. Before going to work among the poorest of the poor, Blessed Theresa of Calcutta, together with her sisters, used to spend 3 hours before Jesus in the Sacrament.

This is true for practically all great missionaries. On 8 August 1986, our Mother tells us: *“It is not your pastoral plans and your discussions, it is not the human means on which you put reliance and so much assurance, but it is only Jesus in the Eucharist who will give to the whole Church the strength of a complete renewal, which will lead her to be poor, evangelical, chaste, stripped of all those supports on which she relies, holy, beautiful and without spot or wrinkle, in imitation of your heavenly Mother.”*

In the Encyclical *Sacramentum Caritatis* we read: *“In my homily at the Eucharistic celebration solemnly inaugurating my Petrine ministry, I said that there is nothing more beautiful than to be surprised by the Gospel, by the encounter with Christ. There is nothing more beautiful than to know him and to speak to others of our friendship with him.”* These words are all the more significant if we think of the mystery of the Eucharist. The love that we celebrate in the sacrament is not something we can keep to ourselves.

By its very nature it demands to be shared with all. What the world needs is God’s love; it needs to encounter Christ and to believe in him. The Eucharist is thus the source and summit not only of the Church’s life, but also of her mission: *“An authentically Eucharistic Church is a missionary Church.”* We too must be able to tell our brothers and sisters with conviction: *“That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us”* (1 Jn 1:3). Truly, nothing is more beautiful than to know Christ and to make him known to others.

The institution of the Eucharist, for that matter, anticipates the very heart of Jesus’ mission: he is the one sent by the Father for the redemption of the world. At the Last Supper, Jesus entrusts to his disciples the Sacrament which makes present his self-sacrifice for the salvation of us all, in obedience to the Father’s will. We cannot approach the Eucharistic table without being drawn into the mission which, beginning in the very heart of God, is meant to reach all people. Missionary outreach is thus an essential part of the Eucharistic form of Christian life.” (#84).

On another occasion John Paul II, in his letter to the Bishops of Belgium on Eucharistic Adoration, writes: *“Divine intimacy with Christ in silence and contemplation does not distance us from our contemporaries but, on the contrary, makes us attentive and open to human joy and distress and broadens our heart on a global scale. It unites us with our brothers and sisters in humanity and particularly with children, who are the Lord’s dearly beloved. Through adoration, the Christian mysteriously contributes to the radical transformation of the world and to the spreading of the Gospel. Anyone who prays to the Saviour draws the whole world with him and raises it to God. Those who stand before the Lord are therefore fulfilling an eminent service. They are presenting to Christ all those who do not know him or are far from him; they keep watch in his presence on their behalf.”*

We all know Archbishop Fulton Sheen, who, for over 30 years, had tens of millions of listeners in the USA for his weekly Television talk. Someone asked him how he could be so good in proclaiming our Catholic message for so many years, he answered that every day he was spending at least one hour of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, and that he was composing his talk before the Tabernacle.

The Eucharist: witness and martyrdom

In Holy Mass Jesus is the victim immolated for our salvation. In the Tabernacle too, it is the risen Jesus who, with the signs of his passion, constantly intercedes for us to the Father. Our mother wants us to imitate our Saviour too, in order to cooperate in the salvation of our brothers: *“And He becomes present in order to continue the work of the Redemption and in order to accomplish, in mystery, the Sacrifice of Calvary, which He was able to offer to the Father because of His human nature, assumed with the body which I had given Him. Thus, in the Eucharist, Jesus becomes present with His divinity and with His glorious body, that body given to Him by your heavenly Mother, a true body, born of the Virgin Mary.”* (8/8/86).

And our Mother once again tells us: *“The Eucharistic Jesus becomes the new form of your priestly holiness which you attain by means of a daily and hidden immolation, of a continual presence of love toward your brothers, of a capacity to welcome in your own person the sufferings and the crosses of all, of a possibility to transform evil into good and to act profoundly so that souls, who have been entrusted to you, may be led by you to salvation.”* (21/8/87).

We read in the Document Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on the Eucharist: *“The witness even to the offering of one’s own life, to the point of martyrdom, throughout the history of the Church, has always been seen as the culmination of the new spiritual worship: “Offer your bodies” we read in the letter to the Romans (Rom 12:1). One thinks, for example, of the account of the martyrdom of Saint Polycarp of Smyrna, a disciple of Saint John: the entire drama is described as a liturgy, with the martyr himself becoming Eucharist. We might also recall the Eucharistic imagery with which Saint Ignatius of Antioch describes his own imminent martyrdom: he sees himself as “God’s wheat” and desires to become in martyrdom “Christ’s pure bread.”*

The Christian who offers his life in martyrdom enters into full communion with the Pasch of Jesus Christ and thus becomes Eucharist with him. Today too, the Church does not lack martyrs who offer the supreme witness to God’s love. Even if the test of martyrdom is not asked of us, we know that worship pleasing to God demands that we should be inwardly prepared for it. Such worship culminates in the joyful and convincing testimony of a consistent Christian life, wherever the Lord calls us to be his witnesses. (#85).

Emphasis on the intrinsic relationship between the Eucharist and mission also leads to a rediscovery of the ultimate content of our proclamation. The more ardent the love for the Eucharist in the hearts of the Christian people, the more clearly will they recognize the goal of all mission: to bring Christ to others. Not just a theory or a way of life inspired by Christ, but the gift of his very person.” (#86).

Speaking to the Bishops of Tuscany on their “ad limina visit”, John Paul II said: *“Your region is a land of missions too”*. (11-12 March 1991). Paul VI also speaks of a *“new evangelization” in countries with ancient Christian roots which have lost a living sense of the faith.* (Redemptoris Mission. 33).

Our Mother tells us: *“... The world is immersed in the deepest night, in the darkness of sin and of impurity, of egoism and of hatred, of avarice and of impiety and it now appears that there is no longer anything that can restrain it from falling into an endless abyss... for you, my beloved priests, who are called to be the light of the world, there now falls the duty of*

illuminating the earth in these days of dense darkness". (31/3/88). And during the Spiritual Exercises in Brazil: "Go to all my children, especially those furthest away, to the sinners, to the poor, to those who are victims of evil, of vice, of egoism, of hatred, of impurity. Go to every creature, with the power which is given you by this, my motherly mission. Go as apostles of the second evangelization, to which the first of my beloved sons, Pope John Paul II, is urgently calling you." (27/3/92).

What did John Paul II teach concerning this? He said we have to "rekindle faith in the Faithful". He put strong emphasis on "the need for evangelization, catechesis, education and ongoing education in the faith – biblical, theological, ecumenical – of the faithful, at the level of the local communities, and of the clergy and those involved in formation. There is a need to engage in a new evangelization and an updated catechesis, which aim to strengthen the faith" (Speech of 27 October 1989).

In the Document *Christifideles laici*, we read: In these times, "the whole Church, Pastors and lay faithful alike, standing on the threshold of the Third Millennium, ought to feel more strongly the Church's responsibility to obey the command of Christ, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation" (Mk 16:15), and take up anew the missionary endeavour. A great venture, both challenging and wonderful, is entrusted to the Church – that of a re-evangelization, which is so much needed by the present world." (*Christifideles laici* 64).

In the *Evangelium Nuntiandi*, as well, he responds to the new ideas which are growing prevalent among Catholic missionaries, who affirm that we must not do proselytism – as they call it – with those who belong to other religions: "Can we gain salvation if – says the Holy Father – through negligence or fear or shame – what St. Paul called "blushing for the Gospel" (Rom 1:16) – or as a result of false ideas, we fail to preach it? For that would be to betray the call of God, who wishes the seed to bear fruit through the voice of the ministers of the Gospel; and it will depend on us whether this grows into trees and produces its full fruit. Let us therefore preserve our fervor of spirit" (EN 80).

An evangelization new in its ardour. Evangelization will be new in its ardour, that is, in its holiness, in the measure in which it is actuated in a union with Christ which is always deeper, for He was the first evangelizer. The time of the new evangelization begins with the conversion of the heart. Therefore, there must be an awakening of the conscience to the Christian vocation which is a vocation of holiness, in living the Gospel to the letter. Our mother tells us: "*Let the Church once again believe in the Gospel of Jesus. Let the Gospel of Jesus, preached and lived to the letter, become the only light which guides it along its earthly journey. Then will the Church once again be humble, holy, beautiful, poor, evangelical, without spot or wrinkle, in imitation of its heavenly Mother, who is leading it each day toward its greatest renewal.*" (27/3/92).

In *Redemptoris Missio*, we read: "*Today there is a need for an evangelization that possesses the ardour of Pentecost*". (RM 11). It is sin that slows down evangelization! Therefore it is our duty to be profoundly converted to Christ, the one source of authentic communion and solidarity. This is how Jesus himself used to evangelize: "*This is the time of fulfillment – he said – and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent, and believe in the Gospel.*" The Father "has

anointed me to bring good news to the poor... I bless you, Father...for hiding these things from the wise and the learned and revealing them to little children.”

Our Heavenly mother gave us a very beautiful message while Don Stefano was in India: *“And the Gospel must be preached to every creature, just as Jesus preached it to you, as the Holy Spirit gave it to the Church. The Gospel must be kept today to the letter. The Gospel must be lived today to the letter. The Gospel must be preached today to the letter... The power of evangelization is in its fidelity and its authenticity. It is not in the adapting of the message of Christ to the various cultures, but in the bringing of all cultures to Christ that the duty of evangelization, entrusted to you, is carried out. How many of these children of mine would already belong to Christ, if today the power and the impact of evangelization were not weakened.”* (14/11/80)

Evangelization and Holiness

“And the divine will is that you become holy. I therefore help you to walk along the road of holiness, so that the divine will may be accomplished by you in a perfect way and thus you may give, in your life, the greatest glory to the Most Holy Trinity” (1/1/91). By studying the history of the great Religious Orders, such as those established or renewed by the Saints: St. Benedict, St. Bernard, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Theresa of Avila, Blessed Theresa of Calcutta, the missionary orders which arose especially in the nineteenth century, and lastly other orders and movements – such as the MMP – which arose in the last 50 years, we can see that a great number of people followed them, especially at the beginning. They were a true light for all Christianity and instruments of a great evangelization both within the church and among the pagans.

Therefore we must conclude, following the teachings of the Popes, that only those who will be able to offer to the community of men a high quality of Christian life will be authentic evangelizers. Our Lady tells us: *“I want to bring you to a great summit of holiness, to repel the attack of my Adversary who – especially in your countries – is seeking to obscure the Church with the secularism which has entered deeply in the life of so many of my consecrated sons and into many religious houses”* (20/9/84).

The new evangelization will be authentic only if it derives from a new and faithful relationship with Jesus Christ; if it culminates in the practice of the Sacraments; if it recognizes the glory of communicating the faith to others; if it leads to the manifestation of one’s own Christian identity. Apostolic ardour isn’t fanaticism, but a coherence to the Christian life. In other words, as the Pope says in the document *Redemptoris Missio*, “The true missionary is the saint”. (RM 90).

In her message of 16 July 1983, Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, our Mother gave us a very beautiful message, entitled ‘The Holy Mountain’: *“Today ascend with me the ‘holy mountain’ which is Jesus Christ, so that you can enter into a life of intimacy with Him... because you must be his own presence in the world... Ascend the ‘holy mountain’ of his Heart, so that you may be transformed by the burning bush of his divine charity... and in the world you will be the very pulsations themselves of the Heart of Jesus, which seeks above all those who are furthest away, and wishes to envelop all in the flames of his infinite mercy... In this way with your love you will bring an immense number of my children to the path of salvation.*

Ascend the 'holy mountain' of his divine humanity, in order to become reflections of his perennial immolation for you."

In his Speech to the Bishops of Europe, John Paul II said that the new evangelizers "*must be contemplative souls who are in love with God. Thus what we need are new saints: the saints were the great evangelizers of Europe. Let us beseech our Lord to increase the spirit of holiness in his Church.*" (6th Symposium of the Council of the Episcopal Conferences of Europe, 11 October 1985)

The MMP has definitely fulfilled this purpose in these times which are so difficult for the Church and for humanity. It is a movement foretold by the Saints and led personally by Our Lady herself. Let us follow our Mother and once again immerse ourselves into the mission which she has entrusted to us all. In fact, if we are here, at these Spiritual Exercises, it is because She has chosen us. Catechetical pastoral action finds its most suitable instrument for the new evangelization in the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

Don Stefano was in Moravia on 3 September 1991. On this occasion Our Lady said: "*... There awaits you the task of evangelizing this poor humanity, which has been so deceived and seduced by the Spirit of Evil. Think of the great number of my children – above all, the young – Take them up in your priestly arms, these straying children of mine, and carry them all into the safe sheepfold of my Immaculate Heart. Be therefore persevering in your ministry of catechesis, giving the light of the truth which Christ has revealed to you, in order to help all to remain in the true faith. In this way, you accomplish the task of this second evangelization, so very much demanded by the first of my beloved sons, Pope John Paul II.*"

In a speech he gave to the Congregation for the Clergy on 29 April 1993, regarding the New Catechism, the same Pope said: "*...There is a widespread need of conviction in the profession of faith and in the personal commitment to conversion and Christian life. The recent Catechism intends to meet this need and, because it is a real catechetical text, it will not fail to be beneficial to the new evangelization, preserving the integrity of the message of Christ, without mutilated or falsified forms. (cf. CT 30). The new evangelization, whose destiny is closely related to catechetical commitment, has as its starting point the certainty that in Christ we find inscrutable riches (cf. Eph 3:8), which no culture and no era can exhaust and which humanity is continually called to draw on in order to orient its own existence. Such riches are first of all the very person of Christ, in whom we have access to the truth concerning God and man.*"

A new zeal for evangelization for the MMP too – thirty-eight years have gone by since our Mother began to speak to us through Don Stefano. In a few years she herself spread her messages, the Consecration to her Immaculate Heart, and the Cenacles in every nation of the world. Above all with Don Stefano's visit to all five continents, Our Lady has called the great army of her beloved sons. I have also travelled with Don Stefano throughout Canada, and I have witnessed this miracle which still continues in one way or another. However, 16 years after his last visit, at least to North America, we are somewhat feeling the weakness of old age.

This cannot hold true in South America, since Don Stefano travels there regularly. If other nations experience the same reduction in the number of people who participate in the Cenacles, then it is precisely to us Priests of the MMP that Our Lady says to begin once more, and with greater zeal, to shed light upon the world with her rays of love. In fact, in her last public message she said: "The moment has come for you to come out from your hiddenness in order to go and shed light upon the earth. Show yourselves to all as my children for I am with you always. Let the faith be the light which enlightens you in these days of darkness, and let zeal alone consume you, zeal for the honour and glory of my Son Jesus." (21/12/97) During his general audience on 19 August 2009 Benedict XVI said: "let us prevent the "new evangelization" from being merely an attractive slogan and ensure that it is expressed in reality". Let us also apply the Holy Father's exhortation to us of the MMP. In fact, Our Lady speaks to us very often, in her messages, of the situation of today's world which has become pagan. Therefore, speaking of the new evangelization, we also must proclaim the urgency of the present situation.

These times were also foretold by St. Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort, when he said that in the future, God would call forth the Apostles of the last times, consecrated to Our Lady and full of God's zeal. His prophecy is practically contained in a paragraph of the Message of 8 June 1991: "*Show yourselves to all as my consecrated ones, as the apostles of these last times. As apostles of the last times, you must announce with courage all the truths of the Catholic faith; proclaim the Gospel with force; and resolutely unmask the dangerous heresies which disguise themselves with truth in order to better deceive minds and thus lead astray from the true faith a great number of my children. As apostles of the last times -you must withstand with the strength of little ones the proud force of the great and the learned... -you must follow Jesus along the road of disdain for the world and for yourselves, of humility, of prayer, of poverty, of silence, of mortification, of charity and of a more profound union with God. -you must now illumine the earth with the light of Christ...*"

That is, the new evangelization must rediscover the great breath of the Spirit of Pentecost, with a renewed apostolic zeal and with the enthusiasm of the evangelizing saints. Let us think of Don Nazzareno and the other MMP martyrs of Vietnam and China. We too must start with the awareness of the urgent duty of ardently and courageously proclaiming Jesus Christ, Redeemer of all mankind, through the Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

In her last public message, which Don Stefano expanded on last year, our mother concludes in a very powerful way, in case we, who belong to the MMP, are still not convinced of the urgency of the present moment: "*Fight, children of the light, because the hour of my battle has now arrived. In the harshest of winters, you are the buds which are opening up from my Immaculate Heart and which I am placing on the branches of the Church, to tell you that her most beautiful springtime is about to arrive. This will be for her the second Pentecost.*" If we don't defend the Faith and boldly proclaim the truth, if we don't promote Cenacles, if we don't try to lead souls entrusted to us to consecrate themselves to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, or, in the event that we don't have souls under our care, if we don't offer prayers and suffering for the same purpose, then we should doubt that we are truly Apostles of the last times. "*Your times have come and I have formed you during these years, so that you may be able to give now your strong witness as faithful disciples of Jesus, even to the shedding of your very own blood. When, from every part of the earth, all of you, my little children, will give*

this witness as Apostles of the last times, then my Immaculate Heart will have its greatest triumph.” (8/6/91).

Recipients of the New Evangelization

Speaking to the Bishops of Tuscany on their “ad limina visit”, John Paul II said: “Your region is a land of missions too”. (11-12 March 1991). Paul VI also speaks of a “new evangelization” in countries with ancient Christian roots which have lost a living sense of the faith (Redemptoris Mission. 33).

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And during the Spiritual Exercises in Brazil: “Go to all my children, especially those furthest away, to the sinners, to the poor, to those who are victims of evil, of vice, of egoism, of hatred, of impurity. Go to every creature, with the power which is given you by this, my motherly mission. Go as apostles of the second evangelization, to which the first of my beloved sons, Pope John Paul II, is urgently calling you.” (27/3/92).

What did John Paul II teach concerning this? He said we have to “rekindle faith in the Faithful”. He put strong emphasis on “the need for evangelization, catechesis, education and ongoing education in the faith – biblical, theological, ecumenical – of the faithful, at the level of the local communities, and of the clergy and those involved in formation. There is a need to engage in a new evangelization and an updated catechesis, which aim to strengthen the faith” (Speech of 27 October 1989).

In the Document *Christifideles laici*, we read: In these times, “*the whole Church, Pastors and lay faithful alike, standing on the threshold of the Third Millennium, ought to feel more strongly the Church’s responsibility to obey the command of Christ, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation” (Mk 16:15), and take up anew the missionary endeavour. A great venture, both challenging and wonderful, is entrusted to the Church – that of a re-evangelization, which is so much needed by the present world.*” (*Christifideles laici* 64).

In the *Evangelium Nuntiandi*, as well, he responds to the new ideas which are growing prevalent among Catholic missionaries, who affirm that we must not do proselytism – as they call it – with those who belong to other religions: “Can we gain salvation if – says the Holy Father – through negligence or fear or shame – what St. Paul called “blushing for the Gospel” (Rom 1:16) – or as a result of false ideas, we fail to preach it? For that would be to betray the call of God, who wishes the seed to bear fruit through the voice of the ministers of the Gospel; and it will depend on us whether this grows into trees and produces its full fruit. Let us therefore preserve our fervor of spirit” (EN 80)

An evangelization new in its ardour

Evangelization will be new in its ardour, that is, in its holiness, in the measure in which it is actuated in a union with Christ which is always deeper, for He was the first evangelizer. The time of the new evangelization begins with the conversion of the heart. Therefore, there must be an awakening of the conscience to the Christian vocation which is a vocation of

holiness, in living the Gospel to the letter. Our mother tells us: *“Let the Church once again believe in the Gospel of Jesus. Let the Gospel of Jesus, preached and lived to the letter, become the only light which guides it along its earthly journey. Then will the Church once again be humble, holy, beautiful, poor, evangelical, without spot or wrinkle, in imitation of its heavenly Mother, who is leading it each day toward its greatest renewal.”* (27/3/92).

In *Redemptoris Missio*, we read: *“Today there is a need for an evangelization that possesses the ardour of Pentecost”*. (RM 11). It is sin that slows down evangelization! Therefore it is our duty to be profoundly converted to Christ, the one source of authentic communion and solidarity. This is how Jesus himself used to evangelize: *“This is the time of fulfillment – he said – and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent, and believe in the Gospel.”* The Father *“has anointed me to bring good news to the poor... I bless you, Father...for hiding these things from the wise and the learned and revealing them to little children.”*

Our Heavenly mother gave us a very beautiful message while Don Stefano was in India: *“And the Gospel must be preached to every creature, just as Jesus preached it to you, as the Holy Spirit gave it to the Church. The Gospel must be kept today to the letter. The Gospel must be lived today to the letter. The Gospel must be preached today to the letter... The power of evangelization is in its fidelity and its authenticity. It is not in the adapting of the message of Christ to the various cultures, but in the bringing of all cultures to Christ that the duty of evangelization, entrusted to you, is carried out. How many of these children of mine would already belong to Christ, if today the power and the impact of evangelization were not weakened.”* (14/11/80)

Evangelization and Holiness

“And the divine will is that you become holy. I therefore help you to walk along the road of holiness, so that the divine will may be accomplished by you in a perfect way and thus you may give, in your life, the greatest glory to the Most Holy Trinity” (1/1/91).

By studying the history of the great Religious Orders, such as those established or renewed by the Saints: St. Benedict, St. Bernard, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Theresa of Avila, Blessed Theresa of Calcutta, the missionary orders which arose especially in the nineteenth century, and lastly other orders and movements – such as the MMP – which arose in the last 50 years, we can see that a great number of people followed them, especially at the beginning. They were a true light for all Christianity and instruments of a great evangelization both within the church and among the pagans. Therefore we must conclude, following the teachings of the Popes, that only those who will be able to offer to the community of men a high quality of Christian life will be authentic evangelizers.

Our Lady tells us: *“I want to bring you to a great summit of holiness, to repel the attack of my Adversary who – especially in your countries – is seeking to obscure the Church with the secularism which has entered deeply in the life of so many of my consecrated sons and into many religious houses”* (20/9/84). The new evangelization will be authentic only if it derives from a new and faithful relationship with Jesus Christ; if it culminates in the practice of the Sacraments; if it recognizes the glory of communicating the faith to others; if it leads to the manifestation of one’s own Christian identity. Apostolic ardour isn’t fanaticism, but a

coherence to the Christian life. In other words, as the Pope says in the document *Redemptoris Missio*, “The true missionary is the saint”. (RM 90).

In her message of 16 July 1983, Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, our Mother gave us a very beautiful message, entitled ‘The Holy Mountain’: *“Today ascend with me the ‘holy mountain’ which is Jesus Christ, so that you can enter into a life of intimacy with Him... because you must be his own presence in the world... Ascend the ‘holy mountain’ of his Heart, so that you may be transformed by the burning bush of his divine charity... and in the world you will be the very pulsations themselves of the Heart of Jesus, which seeks above all those who are furthest away, and wishes to envelop all in the flames of his infinite mercy... In this way with your love you will bring an immense number of my children to the path of salvation. Ascend the ‘holy mountain’ of his divine humanity, in order to become reflections of his perennial immolation for you.”*

In his Speech to the Bishops of Europe, John Paul II said that the new evangelizers “must be contemplative souls who are in love with God. Thus what we need are new saints: the saints were the great evangelizers of Europe. Let us beseech our Lord to increase the spirit of holiness in his Church.” (6th Symposium of the Council of the Episcopal Conferences of Europe, 11 October 1985)

The MMP has definitely fulfilled this purpose in these times which are so difficult for the Church and for humanity. It is a movement foretold by the Saints and led personally by Our Lady herself. Let us follow our Mother and once again immerse ourselves into the mission which she has entrusted to us all. In fact, if we are here, at these Spiritual Exercises, it is because She has chosen us. Catechetical pastoral action finds its most suitable instrument for the new evangelization in the Catechism of the Catholic Church

Don Stefano was in Moravia on 3 September 1991. On this occasion Our Lady said: *“... There awaits you the task of evangelizing this poor humanity, which has been so deceived and seduced by the Spirit of Evil. Think of the great number of my children – above all, the young – ... Take them up in your priestly arms, these straying children of mine, and carry them all into the safe sheepfold of my Immaculate Heart. Be therefore persevering in your ministry of catechesis, giving the light of the truth which Christ has revealed to you, in order to help all to remain in the true faith. In this way, you accomplish the task of this second evangelization, so very much demanded by the first of my beloved sons, Pope John Paul II.”*

In a speech he gave to the Congregation for the Clergy on 29 April 1993, regarding the New Catechism, the same Pope said: *“...There is a widespread need of conviction in the profession of faith and in the personal commitment to conversion and Christian life. The recent Catechism intends to meet this need and, because it is a real catechetical text, it will not fail to be beneficial to the new evangelization, preserving the integrity of the message of Christ, without mutilated or falsified forms. (cf. CT 30). The new evangelization, whose destiny is closely related to catechetical commitment, has as its starting point the certainty that in Christ we find inscrutable riches (cf. Eph 3:8), which no culture and no era can exhaust and which humanity is continually called to draw on in order to orient its own existence. Such riches are first of all the very person of Christ, in whom we have access to the truth concerning God and man.”*

A new zeal for evangelization for the MMP too

Thirty-eight years have gone by since our Mother began to speak to us through Don Stefano. In a few years she herself spread her messages, the Consecration to her Immaculate Heart, and the Cenacles in every nation of the world. Above all with Don Stefano's visit to all five continents, Our Lady has called the great army of her beloved sons. I have also travelled with Don Stefano throughout Canada, and I have witnessed this miracle which still continues in one way or another. However, 16 years after his last visit, at least to North America, we are somewhat feeling the weakness of old age. This cannot hold true in South America, since Don Stefano travels there regularly. If other nations experience the same reduction in the number of people who participate in the Cenacles, then it is precisely to us Priests of the MMP that Our Lady says to begin once more, and with greater zeal, to shed light upon the world with her rays of love. In fact, in her last public message she said: "The moment has come for you to come out from your hiddenness in order to go and shed light upon the earth. Show yourselves to all as my children for I am with you always. Let the faith be the light which enlightens you in these days of darkness, and let zeal alone consume you, zeal for the honour and glory of my Son Jesus." (21/12/97).

During his general audience on 19 August 2009 Benedict XVI said: "let us prevent the "new evangelization" from being merely an attractive slogan and ensure that it is expressed in reality". Let us also apply the Holy Father's exhortation to us of the MMP. In fact, Our Lady speaks to us very often, in her messages, of the situation of today's world which has become pagan. Therefore, speaking of the new evangelization, we also must proclaim the urgency of the present situation. These times were also foretold by St. Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort, when he said that in the future, God would call forth the Apostles of the last times, consecrated to Our Lady and full of God's zeal. His prophecy is practically contained in a paragraph of the Message of 8 June 1991: "*Show yourselves to all as my consecrated ones, as the apostles of these last times. As apostles of the last times, you must announce with courage all the truths of the Catholic faith; proclaim the Gospel with force; and resolutely unmask the dangerous heresies which disguise themselves with truth in order to better deceive minds and thus lead astray from the true faith a great number of my children. As apostles of the last times you must withstand with the strength of little ones the proud force of the great and the learned...you must follow Jesus along the road of disdain for the world and for yourselves, of humility, of prayer, of poverty, of silence, of mortification, of charity and of a more profound union with God. you must now illumine the earth with the light of Christ...*" That is, the new evangelization must rediscover the great breath of the Spirit of Pentecost, with a renewed apostolic zeal and with the enthusiasm of the evangelizing saints. Let us think of Don Nazzareno and the other MMP martyrs of Vietnam and China. We too must start with the awareness of the urgent duty of ardently and courageously proclaiming Jesus Christ, Redeemer of all mankind, through the Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

In her last public message, which Don Stefano expanded on last year, our mother concludes in a very powerful way, in case we, who belong to the MMP, are still not convinced of the urgency of the present moment: "*Fight, children of the light, because the hour of my battle has now arrived. In the harshest of winters, you are the buds which are opening up from my Immaculate Heart and which I am placing on the branches of the Church, to tell you that her most beautiful springtime is about to arrive. This will be for her the second Pentecost.*"

If we don't defend the Faith and boldly proclaim the truth, if we don't promote Cenacles, if we don't try to lead souls entrusted to us to consecrate themselves to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, or, in the event that we don't have souls under our care, if we don't offer prayers and suffering for the same purpose, then we should doubt that we are truly Apostles of the last times.

"Your times have come and I have formed you during these years, so that you may be able to give now your strong witness as faithful disciples of Jesus, even to the shedding of your very own blood. When, from every part of the earth, all of you, my little children, will give this witness as Apostles of the last times, then my Immaculate Heart will have its greatest triumph." (8/6/91).