

[24] Catechetical renewal in the Church in recent decades has helped to give rise to Christians who experience God's mercy,  
    who have rediscovered Christ,  
    who have a sense of ministry in the world,  
    and who are aware of the social obligations of faith.

[25] But there are also those who, although baptized, live as though they were not.  
In these person's hearts, there is no religious feeling left.  
There are also those of simple faith who follow popular devotions but do not understand their faith deeply enough.

There are also those adults who still live in their childhood lessons and now need to reexamine and develop their faith.

[26] And there are also, finally, those who shun an explicitly Christian life in favor of dialogue with others, secularism, or cultural pluralism. A new evangelization is needed today in catechesis to address these situations more effectively.

[27] The inner life of the Church is key in this, especially the fruit borne by Vatican Council II and how it has been received in the Church. Without doubt, liturgical life is richer. Indeed, more than ever before it is seen as the source and summit of the life of the Church.

The people of God understand better that all share a common priesthood founded on baptism and lived with holiness and service.

The word of God holds a more central place. AND the Church's mission in the world is now understood in terms of dialogue, human development, cultural diversity, and the urgent quest for Christian unity.

[28] But all of this has also had its cost. In some quarters the council has not been received well, and in others, disagreement about its reforms has led to divisions which damage evangelization.

[34] After his resurrection, Jesus Christ sent the Spirit in the Name of the Father, so that salvation might emerge from within and that he might animate his followers to continue the mission to the world.

Jesus was the first and foremost evangelizer, proclaiming the reign of God and calling it the gospel. He made plain the joys, demand, and mysteries of this divine reign as well as a life of solidarity with others--all ending in eternal fulfillment.

[46] Indeed, the very purpose of the Church is to evangelize. There are various aspects of this, which are all connected.

First there is the call to proclaim,  
then to make disciples and teach,  
then to witness to Christ personally,  
then to baptize,  
then to do this in memory of Christ,  
and finally, to love one another in the process.

There are means by which the gospel is passed on, the means, in other words, of evangelization.

[47] For its part, the Church evangelizes through witness, dialogue, and presence in charity, through proclamation of the gospel and the call to conversion, through the catechumenate and Christian initiation, and through the formation of community by means of the sacraments and their ministers.

[48] Hence we might say the Church evangelizes by renewing the whole world in charity, by witnessing to Christ by the way we live, by explicitly proclaiming the gospel and its call to conversion, by initiating those who follow Christ into the community, by constantly nourishing the faithful through teaching, celebrating the sacraments, and practicing charity, and by arousing a sense of mission, by word and deed, throughout the world.

[49] Evangelization, then, varies based on its audience. It occurs in "sacred moments" and unfolds slowly. There is, first, missionary activity directed toward non-believers and those who live in religious indifference.

Then there is initial catechetical activity for those who choose the gospel or need to complete their initiation.

There is also pastoral activity directed toward Christian people of mature faith living within the community.

These moments flow together and may be repeated as the needs of each person and the community call for it.

[50] In the ministry of the word it is essential that the name, the teaching, the life, the promises, the reign of God and the mystery of Jesus, the Son of God, be proclaimed explicitly.

They must be proclaimed to everyone, including those already baptized.

The *words* used in this proclamation must always point to the *works* of God, to the witness of Christians, and to the transformation of the world.

The human words used in this proclamation are the means by which the Holy Spirit, (who is the principal agent of evangelization) does the divine work of salvation.

[53] in Mark 1:15, Jesus called us to "repent and believe the good news." Today we speak of this as "conversion and faith"; evangelization invites us to both.

Conversion is first. It is the full and sincere adherence to the person of Christ and the decision to walk in his footsteps.

Faith is a personal encounter with Jesus Christ, making oneself a disciple, and it demands a permanent commitment to think, judge, and live like him.

Toward this end, the believer is united to the community of disciples and takes on the faith of the Church.

[54] Coming to faith this way involves a twofold movement within the believer; trusting abandonment to God and assent to God's revelation. This is possible only with the power of the Holy Spirit.

[55] And all of this, of course, demands a change of life, a metanoia, as it is sometimes called, on the part of the believer.

Our interior life of prayer and assent to God, our part in the mission of the Church, our married and family life, our professional life, and our part in the economic and social work--all these affected profoundly.

Thus everything we humans can hope for, everything that brings happiness, everything that fulfills the deepest human longing is all found in superabundance only in coming to faith.

Faith responds to the "waiting" which many of us experience even when we don't realize it. We are waiting for the fresh water of the good news of Jesus Christ.

Faith, which is a gift, will be born in our hearts at the right moment. Grace empowers us and we respond in complete freedom, turning our hearts toward God--and lo! Faith is born.

We venerate Mary because her response was lived so fully.

[56] Once we come to faith, continuing conversion is set in motion and lasts the rest of our lifetime. Here again, several "moments" occur in this lifelong process. First is an initial interest in the gospel, even without any firm decision. This first movement of the Spirit provides an inclination to belief.

Second is conversion itself which occurs after a period of searching but is fundamental in the Christian life. This "turning toward the face of God" leads to study, reflection, and prayer.

Third is the profession of faith. Catechesis initiates the new believer in the knowledge of the ways of faith, and a progressive change occurs until one is ready to profess one's faith fully. There is both challenge and joy in this period.

Fourth is the journey toward perfection, the lifelong process of growth in faith, moved by the Spirit, empowered by the sacraments, nourished by prayer, lived in the practice of charity, and assisted by ongoing education. The ministry of the word is at the service of this process.