

THE NECESSITY OF EVANGELIZATION

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Homily of Monday, 19th Week of the Year, August 8, 2011
Deut. 10:12-22, Ps. 147, Matt. 17:22-27

“As they were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them, ‘The Son of man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him, and he will be raised on the third day.’ And they were greatly distressed” (Matt. 17:22-23).

Once again Jesus predicts his passion, death, and resurrection, which will be the central events of his life and the reason for his coming into the world, for this is the means whereby he will save man from his sins and give him eternal life. Without Jesus Christ, man is lost and lives in alienation from God. This is why the Father sent his only Son into the world, to reconcile man with God through his vicarious death on the cross. Man’s salvation is only in Jesus Christ. There is no other means whereby he can be reconciled with God. Therefore the evangelization of the world is necessary, for the salvation and reconciliation of man come only through Jesus Christ and his death on the cross, when one believes in Christ and invokes his name. It is important that all know this and have the opportunity to personally accept this salvation, be baptized, and enter the Church.

“And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me’” (John 14:6). “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life ... He who believes in him is not condemned; he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God” (John 3:16, 18). “He who believes in the Son has eternal life; he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God rests upon him” (John 3:36). “And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who has not the Son of God has not life” (1 John 5:11-12).

We do not know how all can believe in Christ for their salvation, but we do clearly know that the Church must evangelize the entire world, that is, all peoples, all people groups, so that all may have the opportunity to believe in him in their heart for their eternal salvation (Rom. 10:9) and for their reconciliation with God even in this present life. The Church must therefore preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15), to all peoples (*ethnē*) (Matt. 28:19). We have to preach

repentance and the forgiveness of sins in Christ's name to all the people groups on earth, for it is through faith in Christ that one is saved through the merits of his death on the cross, in which he suffered our punishment due to our sins for us to save us from this punishment, give us peace, reconcile us with God, and give us eternal life. "And he said the them, 'Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all nations (*ethnē*), beginning from Jerusalem" (Luke 24:46-47). The gospel has now been preached to all nations, but not to all peoples, and the Greek word used here for "nations" is *ethnē*, that is, "peoples." To achieve this, cross-cultural missionaries have to be sent to these people groups and preach Christ to them for their salvation. The Church has not yet done this. It is to be a cooperative task of the local Church and foreign missionaries.

We do not know how the word of God travels: by word of mouth, in writing, by radio and television, and above all now by the internet—by group email, websites, and blogs—and by various combinations of all of these, so that all may hear it and believe it in their heart for their salvation, peace, the forgiveness of their sins, their reconciliation with God, and a new life.