



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF POPE FRANCIS
TO MEMBERS OF THE 13th ORDINARY COUNCIL
OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS**

*Consistory Hall
Thursday, 13 June 2013*

Dear Confreres in the Episcopate,

I greet you warmly and thank Archbishop Eterovi?, General Secretary, in particular for his words to me. Through you, I extend my greeting to the particular Churches entrusted to your pastoral care. I am grateful to you for the assistance offered to the Bishop of Rome, in his office as President of the Synod of Bishops, for drafting and implementing what emerged from the 13th General Ordinary Assembly. This is a precious service to the universal Church that demands availability, hard work, sacrifice, and long journeys. I offer my sincere thanks to each of you!

I would like to emphasize the importance of that Assembly's theme: "The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith". There is a close connection between these two elements: the transmission of the Christian faith is the purpose of the new evangelization and of the entire evangelizing mission of the Church which exists for this very reason. Moreover the expression "new evangelization" sheds light on the ever clearer awareness that countries with an ancient Christian tradition also need a renewed proclamation of the Gospel to lead them back to an encounter with Christ which truly transforms life and is not superficial, marked by routine. This has consequences for pastoral action. As the Servant of God Paul VI noted, "the condition of the society in which we live obliges all of us therefore to revise methods, to seek by every means to study how we can bring the Christian message to modern man. For it is only in the Christian message that he can find the answer to his questions and the energy for his commitment to human solidarity" (cf. *Discourse to the Sacred College of Cardinals*, 22 June 1973; *L'Osservatore Romano* English edition 5 July 1973, p. 6).

This Pope reminded us in [*Evangelii Nuntiandi*](#) — a very full text that has lost nothing of its

timeliness — that with regard to the commitment to proclaim the Gospel, “there is no doubt that [it]... is a service rendered to the Christian community and also to... humanity” (n. 1). I would like to encourage the entire ecclesial community to be an evangelizing community and not to be afraid to “step out” of itself in order to proclaim, trusting above all in the merciful presence of God who guides us. Techniques of evangelization are important, of course, but even the most perfect ones could not replace the gentle action of the One who is the principal agent of evangelization: the Holy Spirit (cf. *ibid.*, n. 75). We must let ourselves be guided by him, even if he leads us on new roads; we must allow him to transform us, so that in our proclamation, our words are always accompanied by a simple life, a spirit of prayer, charity to all, especially the lowly and the poor, humility and detachment from ourselves, and holiness of life (cf. *ibid.*, n. 76). Only in this way will they be truly fertile.

In addition, a thought on the Synod of Bishops which was without a doubt one of the fruits of the Second Vatican Council. Thanks be to God it has been possible in these almost 50 years to experience the benefits of this institution which has been permanently placed at the service of the mission and communion of the Church as an expression of collegiality.

I can also bear witness to this through my personal experience, having taken part in various Synod Assemblies. Open to the grace of the Holy Spirit, the soul of the Church, let us be confident that the Synod of Bishops will experience further developments to encourage deeper dialogue and collaboration between Bishops, and between them and the Bishop of Rome.

Dear Confreres, the purpose of your meeting in these days in Rome is to help me to choose the theme of the next Ordinary General Assembly. I thank you for the suggestions sent by the institutions with which the General Secretariat of the Synod is in touch: the Synods of Eastern Catholic Churches *sui iuris*, the Bishops’ Conferences, the Dicasteries of the Roman Curia, the Executive Board of the Union of Superiors General. I am sure that with discernment, accompanied by prayer, this work will produce abundant fruits for the whole Church which, faithful to the Lord, wishes to proclaim Jesus Christ with fresh courage to the men and women of our time. He is “the way, and the truth, and the life” (Jn 14:6) for each and every one.

As I entrust your ecclesial service to the motherly intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Star of the New Evangelization, I warmly impart the Apostolic Blessing to you, to your co-workers, and to your particular Churches.

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