

honors its women, and to build a civilization in which the human person can flourish.

Via a simultaneous translator we shared with them our vision of woman and answered many of their questions. And then something unusual happened. They erupted into a lively discussion amongst themselves in Chinese. The translator eagerly explained to us that the women were admitting to each other that NIW's concept of woman was what each had believed about woman; but each had been under the impression she was the only one who thought that way. The translator explained that these women, who were communist philosophers, were, for the first time, having a conversation among themselves about this subject.

In 1994 NIW was the only organization to testify before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee against the ratification of a treaty that NIW considers to be against women and against mothers. Subsequent to that testimony many other US organizations have come out openly and testified against the treaty.

We publish a newsletter that is sent to every state in the nation and reaches over 1800 leaders across the US. It not only reaches local organizations, but also ministers of many denominations, college professors, youth leaders, and heads of families.

Conclusion

I have shown in general terms that the approach of Opus Dei to the new evangelization is consonant with the recent exhortations of the Church to the laity. In particular, I have explained my contribution to the new evangelization, as a lay, supernumerary woman, through my work with The National Institute of Womanhood.

JOHN K. MURPHY

OPUS DEI AND THE NEW EVANGELIZATION

Introduction

The founder of *Opus Dei*, Saint Josemaria Escriva, was a modern apostle who was moved by God's grace and brought to the world a message of great novelty for its time: in his own words "as old as the Gospel and, like the Gospel, new." It is a message that reminds us that we are called to be "not just *alter Christus*, but *ipse Christus*", Christ himself, in our families, in our professional work and in the ordinary circumstances of our lives.

This message was indeed a foreshadowing of things to come as a very concerned Pope John XXIII convoked the Second Vatican Council in an effort to bring the Church to express her teachings in contemporary language because of what he perceived to be a crisis in society. Blessed Pope John XXIII felt that society was evolving in such a way as to exclude God and that every effort had to be made to render the Good News more readily understood and ensure that society was penetrated with "the vivifying and perennial energies of the Gospel."¹ The Council Fathers determined that the most effective way for this to happen would be to mobilize the laity in the task of evangelization.² As a result, a renewed theology of mission and evangelization emerged from the Council whereby all Christ's faithful not only have the obligation to spread "the divine message of salvation," they have the right to do so.³

As the divide between faith and culture has grown during the intervening years, especially in the West, Pope John Paul II has repeatedly called the faithful to embrace a pastoral vision that he calls the "new evangelization." In his post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Ecclesia in America*,⁴ the Holy Father outlined many elements for thought and action on the part of all believers. He drew special attention to the challenge of evangelizing in urban centres, the cities. He says "just as she was able to evangelize rural culture for centuries, the Church is called in the same way today to undertake a methodical and far-reaching urban evangelization."⁵

¹ *Humanae Salutis*, 3

² cf. Second Vatican Council, *Lumen gentium* no. 33, *Apostolicam acuositatem* no. 25

³ cf. Code of Canon Law, can. 211

⁴ *The Church in America*, Jan. 22, 1999 (Hereinafter *EA*)

⁵ *EA*, 21

The recent synod drew attention to the need for a new urban evangelization through catechesis, liturgy and the pastoral structures. Their objective is to "look towards a fresh and more profound experience of community in Christ, which is the only effective and enduring response to a culture of rootlessness, anonymity and inequality."⁶ Where this experience is weak, the Pope says, "we may expect more of the faithful to lose interest in religion or drift into the sects and pseudo-religious groups which feed off alienation and which flourish among Christians who are disenchanted with the Church for one reason or another."⁷ The Holy Father cautions that "we can no longer expect people to come spontaneously to our communities: the Church must seek out people."⁸

What the synod called for is nothing short of the evangelization which the Pope described as "new in ardour, methods and expression."⁹ He stressed the role of the parish in this "new evangelization," saying that it remained the "privileged place" for meeting Jesus and for the liturgical life "centred on the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, which is the unchangeable truth of the Christian life and service for the spiritual richness of the Church." He called for new methods and new structures to be found in parishes "to build bridges between persons." The Holy Father mentioned also that schools and other institutions of the Church must also open themselves to leading people to Christ and free themselves from "influences linked to secularization."

During his life and priestly ministry, Saint Josemaria had already undertaken this project of the "new evangelization" while, perhaps, not calling it such. Animated with the zeal that one finds in saints, he did not limit himself to proclaiming the Good News in word alone. By the grace of God, *Opus Dei* was founded on October 2, 1928. Saint Josemaria began a specific and effective way of carrying out God's universal salvific will: a "way of sanctification in daily work and in the fulfillment of the Christian's ordinary duties." In his address to members of *Opus Dei* on January 12, 2002, Pope John Paul II stated that "the Lord gives to every baptized person the grace necessary to reach the summit of divine charity. The small events of each day hold, locked with them, an unsuspected greatness. Those actions, undertaken with the love of God and neighbour, can overcome at their very root every division between faith and daily life."

It is sanctification, the quest for sanctification, the way of sanctification, that is at the root of the Christian vocation.¹⁰ The work of Saint Josemaria has given structure and direction to so many in the quest for what is most essential in the human person, holiness itself. In the words of Pope John Paul II,

⁶ *Evangelization of Urban Culture Is a Formidable Challenge for the Church*, Ad Limina Address to Bishops from Ontario, Canada (on May 4, 1999) - no.4

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ Address to the Bishops of CELAM (March 9, 1983), III: *Insegnamenti*, VI, 1 (1983), 698.

¹⁰ cf. Vatican I, *Lumen gentium*, 39-42

"Moreover, by sanctifying one's work in accord with the norms of objective reality, the lay faithful contribute in an effective way to building up a society that is more worthy of man."¹¹

Opus Dei and the "New Evangelization"

Today I want to discuss the link between the work of *Opus Dei* and the pastoral vision of Pope John Paul II, specifically what he calls the "new evangelization." On the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord, following the ceremony for the closing of the Holy Door at St. Peter's Basilica, the Holy Father signed the Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte*.¹² The document addresses the basic question that many of us pondered after the celebration of the Great Jubilee: "Where do we go from here?" The Holy Father urges us to go forth: "*Duc in altum!*" He calls us to "put out into the deep" in obedience to the command given by Jesus to the apostle Peter. The Church, by going to deeper water, is called to undertake the challenges of the future.

Pope John Paul II is clear in his letter that meeting Christ is the legacy of the Great Jubilee. He thanks God for the principal events that highlighted this year of grace. He recalls the great ecumenical beginning in St. Paul's Basilica with the leaders of different religions, the powerful act of "purification of memory," his pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and the ongoing call to mission.

Beyond the wonderful and memorable external events, Pope John Paul II views the Great Jubilee above all as an event of grace, confident that it has touched countless people's lives and has called them to undertake a journey of ever deeper conversion to the Lord. A renewed meeting with Christ is the Jubilee's true legacy, one which must now be treasured and invested for the future.

This new millennium means "starting afresh from Christ," and it can't be stressed enough that all of our pastoral activity must have as its goal an experience of solid faith, leading to "the universal call to holiness." That is why we are gathered here today. As Saint Josemaria affirmed again and again, it is with holiness as our goal that we seek to proclaim Christ and his teachings in all that we say and do. The Prelature of *Opus Dei* strives to be a faithful witness to Christ's call to serve, always in ways that are animated by unity and charity. But I am not here to tell you about *Opus Dei*, you know the life of the Prelature better than I. However, as I continue to speak about the "new evangelization" I am asking you to situate *Opus Dei*, to situate yourself, within the context of this exciting pastoral vision.

In his letter outlining the Church's hopes for the third millennium, Pope John Paul II encourages us to go to deeper waters in fidelity to the Gospel. He exhorts us to leave behind the tranquil waters that harbour the comforts of our lives, and launch out courageously into all the seas of the world, in the "new

¹¹ Jan. 12th, 2002

¹² *Beginning the New Millennium*, January 6th 2001 (Hereinafter *NMI*)

evangelization" of society. It is no accident that the Lord has raised up *Opus Dei* to fish for souls, obedient to the Lord's command: "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch."¹³ It seems to me that *Opus Dei* is ideally suited to carry out the task of the "new evangelization" whereby the faithful of the Prelature bring the Gospel to the various sectors of society in which they live and work. *Opus Dei*, with its essentially secular spirit, serves the Church and society by fostering individual holiness and apostolic commitment among the faithful, helping them to discover and take on the demands of their Christian vocation in the specific places they occupy in the world.

Novo Millennio Ineunte

Novo Millennio Ineunte culminates the drafting of a pastoral plan which has been in the works since Karol Wojtyla was elected to the Chair of Peter in 1978. In this document the Holy Father calls us to be "witnesses to love," and reflects upon "communion" as the key term for understanding the mystery of the Church.¹⁴ He identifies several indispensable commitments that we must focus on:

(1) Ecumenism: so that with all our brothers and sisters in faith we may live more and more of the full unity which the Church already enjoys in Christ.¹⁵

(2) Fraternal charity: Pope John Paul II says that many challenges face the Church, impelling her to become, with still greater imagination and generosity, an expression of God's concrete love in the countless situations of human suffering and poverty. He speaks of the courageous witness to which Christians are called in every area of social and cultural life, especially the family, the protection of life, the ecological crisis, and unethical scientific experimentation.¹⁶

(3) Interreligious dialogue: without in any way diminishing the need for Christian proclamation, dialogue remains an important sign post for everyone in advancing the search for truth and the promotion of peace.¹⁷

This is, in a nutshell, the Holy Father's agenda for the new millennium and the "new evangelization" is at its very core.

What is the "new evangelization"?

In order to speak about the "new evangelization" we must first be clear on what is meant by the term. The term "new evangelization" was first used by Pope John Paul II on March 9th 1983 in a speech to the Latin American bishops in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. He made it clear to them (CELAM) that the 500th anniversary of Christopher Columbus' arrival in the Americas, to be commemorated in 1992, required "a commitment, not to re-evangelization, but to a new evangelization, new in ardour, methods and expression."

¹³Lk. 5:4

¹⁴NMI, 43

¹⁵NMI, 48

¹⁶NMI, 49

¹⁷NMI, 55

On December 7th 1990 Pope John Paul II issued the encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* (Mission of the Redeemer) in which he distinguished the "new evangelization" from the Church's traditional form of evangelization which is aimed at "persons or groups who do not yet believe in Christ...and whose culture has not yet been influenced by the Gospel".¹⁸ He made the clarification that the "new evangelization" is rather directed to situations "where entire groups of the baptized have lost a living sense of the faith, or even no longer consider themselves members of the Church, and live a life far removed from Christ and his Gospel."¹⁹

It is important to note that the seeds of the "new evangelization" have been present for some time. Indeed they were already present in Pope John XXIII's decision to convoke the Second Vatican Council. In his speech opening the Council in 1962, the Blessed Pope John XXIII declared that "the greatest concern of the ecumenical council is this: that the sacred deposit of Christian doctrine should be guarded and taught more efficaciously." Not letting the matter rest, in 1974 his successor Pope Paul VI convoked a synod of bishops to address the topic and this resulted in the post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*. Evidently Pope John Paul II has made evangelization, and specifically the "new evangelization," a very high priority in his papacy. He has forged a deep connection between the "new evangelization" and the arrival of the third millennium. The preparation for the Great Jubilee was in fact the unfolding of a profound pastoral plan preparing the Church's faithful to embrace this task. The Holy Father gave voice to a deep sense of urgency and made it abundantly clear in his letter of November 10th 1994 entitled *Tertio Millennio Advenientes* (The Coming of the Third Millennium). He stated in stark terms that "the more the West is becoming estranged from its Christian roots, the more it is becoming missionary territory."²⁰

Remembering the Great Jubilee

While we reflect upon that statement, let's take some time to reflect back on the Jubilee Year and what led up to it. On Christmas Eve of 1999 in St. Peter's Basilica, Pope John Paul II opened the Holy Door thus marking the beginning of the Great Jubilee of the year 2000. Like so many popes before him dating back to the 15th century, John Paul II stood before the Holy Door, and the Church stood with him in prayer, in silence, and recollection to begin this year of God's favour, a year of grace, a year to devote ourselves more fervently to the spiritual journey of faith.

After the door was opened the choir sang an acclamation: "*Christus heri et hodie, finis et principium, Christus alpha et omega, ipsi gloria in saecula!*" "Christ yesterday and today, the end and the beginning, the alpha and the

¹⁸*Redemptoris Missio*, 34 (Hereinafter RM)

¹⁹RM, 33

²⁰*Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, 57 (Hereinafter TMA)

omega, to him be glory forever." This short acclamation really provides a synthesis of the "new evangelization", what it is, what it is about, what the door is, and who and what it opens to.

With all the talk of the new millennium, all the predictions, and prognostications about the future, the opening of the Holy Door reminded us that the future and the end are not about a time or even a place—but a person, Jesus Christ, and a personal God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is into the life of this mystery, a personal mystery, that we have been introduced, by name, at the moment of our Baptism.

The Responsibility of Every Believer to "Cross the Threshold"

With the opening of the Holy Door the Church reminded us of "the responsibility of every believer to cross its threshold" in faith and in hope.²¹ The Church reminded us that it is not enough that the Holy Father opened the door on Christmas eve. That was only the beginning. What remains for all of us is to respond to the invitation—each and every one of us—to cross this threshold, to enter the door that symbolizes Christ: "I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture."²²

The period of the "new evangelization" is a time of the Lord's favour, a time of grace, a time of celebration, a time to deepen our faith, a time to strive toward unity, and so the importance of dialogue with other religions. The importance of being reconciled with others was demonstrated so clearly and powerfully by the Pope's pilgrimage to the Holy Land. The "new evangelization" is a time to make a positive step ahead on the journey of faith. Easily said, but to do so we can't bring all our baggage with us. We need to give something up. We need to leave something behind. What is it?

Understanding the Jubilee

If we are honest with ourselves and each other, the Great Jubilee can give us some sobering insights into just what we must leave behind if our efforts in the "new evangelization" are to be an authentic witness to the Gospel. The word "jubilee" comes from the hebrew *yobel*, or *yovel*, which means "ram's horn," or "trumpet". The Latin *jubilaeus*, from the verb *jubilare*, signifies the sounding of the trumpet which accompanies the Holy Year devoted to the Lord. In fact, according to the 25th Chapter of the Book of Leviticus, every seven years Israel was to observe the Sabbath year when the land was allowed to rest, a year in which all debts were cancelled and those who had become slaves were to be freed. All of this was done in honour of God.²³

The Holy Father develops this aspect of Jubilee when he states that the "...Jubilee Year was meant to restore equality among all the children of Israel,

²¹ *Incarnationis mysterium*, 8

²² John 10:9

²³ *TMA*, 12

offering new possibilities to families which had lost their property and even their personal freedom. On the other hand, the Jubilee Year was a reminder to the rich that a time would come when their Israelite slaves would once again be their equals and would be able to reclaim their rights."²⁴ We should note that the prescriptions for the Jubilee set out in the 25th Chapter of Leviticus remained ideals, more hopes than things that were ever carried out in actual fact. These things remain great challenges for us as we cross the threshold of the third millennium and embrace the "new evangelization".

While the custom of the Jubilee begins in the Old Testament, it continues in the history of the Church and is key to her future. In Luke 4:16-30 Jesus stands up in the synagogue at Capernaum and reads Isaiah 61:1-2: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."

When Jesus said that "today these words have been fulfilled in your hearing",²⁵ he indicated that he is the long-awaited Messiah foretold in the prophets, and that the "long-awaited time" was beginning in him. In Jesus the day of salvation has come, in Jesus the fulness of time has arrived. For the Church the Jubilee points to the time of the Messiah, to the mission of Christ.

The Great Jubilee in the writings of Pope John Paul II

Since the publication of his very first encyclical *Redemptor Hominis* (The Redeemer of Man) on March 4th 1979, Pope John Paul II has continued to speak of the Great Jubilee of the year 2000. In particular he suggested that the years leading up to the year 2000 be lived as "a new Advent."²⁶ The years of preparation for the Jubilee were placed by the Holy Father under the sign of the most Holy Trinity: through Christ—in the Holy Spirit—to God the Father.

With the publication of *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* in 1994, the Holy Father renewed now in somewhat more urgent tones his calls in earlier writings to contemplate the mystery of God under the mystery of the Holy Trinity during the years leading up to the Jubilee. Both the Jubilee Year and devotion to the Blessed Trinity mark the papacy of John Paul II. The Holy Father states it himself when he says, "In fact, preparing for the year 2000 has become as it were a hermeneutical key of my pontificate."²⁷

In the writings of Pope John Paul II we really need to pay attention to such expressions as "new Advent," "new springtime of Christianity," "new Pentecost," "new period of grace and mission," "the fullness of time," the call to discern "what the Spirit is saying to the churches." What is John Paul II try-

²⁴ *TMA*, 13

²⁵ Lk. 4:21

²⁶ *Redemptor Hominis*, 1

²⁷ *TMA*, 23

ing to tell us? At the very least such expressions should lead us to take this call to consider the importance of the "new evangelization" and to participate fully in this mission for our own spiritual good, for the good of the Church and for the good of humanity.

The Pope, in his calls to prepare for the new millennium has repeatedly emphasized that the year 2000 be approached as an important opportunity for a genuine encounter with the Trinitarian God, an encounter that takes place individually and collectively. The God that we encounter, the God that we celebrate is a personal God, God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The importance of prayer in the "new evangelization"

There is a great danger that we become sidetracked and ignore this hidden treasure which is ours in prayer, the great mystery of the Kingdom of God which we are called to mediate to others through our words, deeds, in our very lives.

We would do well to look to the Gospels and to Jesus' own example of prayer. It is in prayer that Jesus hears and embraces the will of God. Jesus not only discerns the purposes of the Father in prayer, but states his willingness to follow the will of the Father.

The same idea appears to be at work in Lk. 6:12-16. Jesus "spent the night in prayer to God," prior to choosing the twelve. Jesus thus discerns the Father's purposes in prayer and, in prayer, puts his determinations into practice. As well, Jesus' divine commission received at his Baptism in the Jordan is associated by Luke with prayer.²⁸ As was said in the biography of Don Didimo, the parish priest of Bassan del Grappa, "Jesus preached by day, by night he prayed."

How should we approach the "new evangelization"?

The Holy Father has given us much to reflect upon, pray about and act upon as we embrace his vision for the new millennium and the "new evangelization". It is surely too much to absorb at once, or even over a lifetime. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, in his address "The New Evangelization" given for the Jubilee of Catechists 2000, reflects on the structure, method and essential contents of the "new evangelization". His Eminence cautions us against being too ambitious, looking for results and success according to human standards: "the temptation of impatience, the temptation of immediately finding the great success, in finding large numbers." In terms of the structure of the "new evangelization", he says it "must surrender to the mystery of the grain of the mustard seed and not be so pretentious as to immediately produce a large tree."

In terms of the method, the Cardinal directs us to the very core of the Christian faith. He states that "the sign of the Son is his communion with the Father. The Son introduces us into the Trinitarian communion, into the circle of

eternal love, whose persons are 'pure relations,' the pure act of giving oneself and of welcome. The Trinitarian plan—visible in the Son, who does not speak in his name—shows the form of life of the true evangelizer—rather, evangelizing is not merely a way of speaking, but a form of living: living in the listening and giving voice to the Father."

Cardinal Ratzinger focuses on the life and ministry of Jesus in listing the contents essential for "new evangelization." Very simply they are found in proclaiming conversion, the Kingdom of God, proclaiming Jesus Christ and proclaiming eternal life. He concludes his address by saying, "If we take the Christian message into well-thought-out consideration, we are not speaking of a whole lot of things. In reality, the Christian message is very simple: We speak about God and man, and in this way we say everything."

A Brief Summary of the "new evangelization"

1) We must first evangelize ourselves.

"We cannot evangelize if we do not first evangelize ourselves, if we are not personally an object of evangelization."

2) We cannot keep Christ for ourselves.

"Those who have come into genuine contact with Christ cannot keep Him for themselves; they must proclaim Him."²⁹

3) Let people know that God loves them.

According to the Holy Father the first thing this "new evangelization" should announce is that "humanity is loved by God!"³⁰

4) Christ is the programme.

Pope John Paul II is very clear that "It is not therefore a matter of inventing a 'new program.' The program already exists: it is the plan found in the Gospel and in the living tradition; it is the same as ever."³¹

5) We have to learn to pray, to learn the trinitarian shape of Christian prayer.

6) We must nourish ourselves with the Word to be servants of conversion.

Pope John Paul II explains: "Only someone who has been transformed by Christ's law of love (as seen from the Gospel) can bring about a true *metanoia* (conversion) in the hearts and minds of others, in the different fields of endeavour, in nations, in the world."³²

7) Christian witness is love of neighbour, works of mercy.

Pope John Paul II acknowledges that actions speak louder than words: "The transformation (of man) thus becomes a source of the witness which the world is waiting for. It can be summed up, first of all in love of neighbor, in the works of mercy."

²⁹NMI, 32

³⁰Christifideles Laici, 34

³¹NMI, 29

³²NMI, 40

²⁸Lk 3:21

8) We must live a spirituality of communion.

In *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, the Holy Father speaks of the need for every Christian to be formed in the life of the Gospel, summing it up in the new commandment of Jesus. He invites the entire People of God (from those at the apex of the institutional Church down to the last faithful), that people he had called since 1983 must bring about a "new evangelization," to live its necessary consequence, i.e., a "spirituality of communion."

9) The essential "newness" of ardour, methods and modes.

In 1988 the Holy Father explains these features and says that evangelization will be new in ardour if it gradually increases union with God in those who promote it. It will be new in methods if it is carried out by the entire People of God. It will be new in modes of expression if it is in conformity with the promptings of the Spirit.

10) The Gospel is directed not only at individuals but communities.

11) The role of the laity is essential.

"The laity have their part to fulfill in the formation of these ecclesial communities, not only through a testimony that only they can give (the *consecratio mundi* through the various fields of human endeavor) but also through a missionary zeal and activity towards the many people who still do not believe and who no longer live the faith received at Baptism."³³

12) The New Pentecost is what we await in hope.

The Holy Father says that "we must rekindle in ourselves the impetus of the beginnings and allow ourselves to be filled with the ardour of the apostolic preaching which followed Pentecost." Commenting on the current situation he states that "even in countries evangelized many centuries ago, the reality of a 'Christian society' which, amid all the frailties which have always marked human life, measured itself explicitly on Gospel values, is now gone. Today we must courageously face a situation which is becoming increasingly diversified and demanding, in the context of 'globalization' and of the consequent new and uncertain mingling of peoples and cultures. (...) we must (therefore) revive in ourselves the burning conviction of Paul, who cried out: 'woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel!'"³⁴

Conclusion

Pope John Paul II has challenged the universal Church with a renewed and life-giving vision of her future. The task of undertaking the challenge is one in which all believers share. *Opus Dei* has proven itself to have many willing and capable crew members as the Boat of Peter charts its course into the third millennium of Christianity and prepares to cast its nets into the deep. The Church is headed for new depths of Christian experience, taking its bearing from the stellar pastoral and mystical heritage of a two thousand year voyage. But we

³³ *Christifideles Laici*, 34

³⁴ 1 Cor. 9:16

must pray. To leave an abundant catch at Christ's feet, to bring souls closer to God, we have to be in constant touch with God in prayer. Yes, personal prayer, but above all community prayer, starting with the Eucharist, "source and summit" of the Church's life.

Duc in altum! May the work founded by Saint Josemaria be an ever more efficacious instrument of the new apostolic outreach, inspired and sustained by confidence in the presence of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. Let us now joyfully prepare ourselves for what the Holy Father calls "a new Advent,"³⁵ "a new springtime of Christianity,"³⁶ "a New Pentecost," "a new period of grace and mission."³⁷

Saint Josemaria Escriva, pray for us.

³⁵ *TMA*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *NMI*