



Praying Advent with Pope Francis'



Part II:

The Delightful and Comforting Joy of Evangelizing



In the second part of his exhortation on "The Joy of the Gospel," Pope Francis focuses on the profound joy it is to share the Gospel. All of us are called to experience the joy of knowing God's love for us and then to share that joy with others. It is not a burden, but an extremely rewarding mission.

Pope Francis says it so simply:

If we wish to lead a dignified and fulfilling life, we have to reach out to others and seek their good. [9]

When we give ourselves to this service, we find that it is deeply rewarding::

When the Church summons Christians to take up the task of evangelization, she is simply pointing to the source of authentic personal fulfilment. [10]

He says we shouldn't look like we've "just come back from a funeral." Pope Francis refers to what Pope Paul VI said in his exhortation on evangelization, in 1978, about the spirit of our sharing the good news:

Let us recover and deepen our enthusiasm, that “delightful and comforting joy of evangelizing, even when it is in tears that we must sow... And may the world of our time, which is searching, sometimes with anguish, sometimes with hope, be enabled to receive the good news not from evangelizers who are dejected, discouraged, impatient or anxious, but from ministers of the Gospel whose lives glow with fervour, who have first received the joy of Christ”. [10]

Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Nuntiandi (8 December 1975)

The Holy Father writes about an "eternal newness" to the Gospel, which keeps it fresh and continually renews us:

With this newness he is always able to renew our lives and our communities, and even if the Christian message has known periods of darkness and ecclesial weakness, it will never grow old. Jesus can also break through the dull categories with which we would enclose him and he constantly amazes us by his divine creativity. Whenever we make the effort to return to the source and to recover the original freshness of the Gospel, new avenues arise, new paths of creativity open up, with different forms of expression, more eloquent signs and words with new meaning for today's world. Every form of authentic evangelization is always "new". [11]

In the midst of the hard work involved in sharing the Gospel, Pope Francis reminds us that it is God who does the work, takes the initiative and provides the grace for what we do.

This conviction enables us to maintain a spirit of joy in the midst of a task so demanding and challenging that it engages our entire life. God asks everything of us, yet at the same time he offers everything to us. [12]

The Holy Father tells us that source of our continuing ability to share the good news is our memory of God's saving deeds. This remembering nourishes us and gives us life.

The joy of evangelizing always arises from grateful remembrance: it is a grace which we constantly need to implore. ... The believer is essentially "one who remembers". [13]

This second, introductory, part of the exhortation encourages us to enter into the fulfilling experience of remembering the story of God's love for us. Isaiah's promises are fulfilled and all people have reason for hope. In Jesus, we have the forgiveness of our sins and the presence of our God with us, preparing the way for eternal happiness. These days, we let this joy grow in us. We let it shine light into our darkness and struggle. We let it come out in the freedom with which we live each day with greater peace. And, we let ourselves become sharers of this good news by how we love and reach out to others.



May our Lord keep opening our hearts to hear the depth of this exhortation, for our renewal, and for the transformation of our world.

“Let us rediscover the beauty of being together along the way: the Church, with her vocation and mission, and the whole of humanity, the people, the civilizations, the cultures, all together on the paths of time.”