

Settimo Cielo



di Sandro Magister

22 mag

Proselytism, the Phantasm of Pope Francis



> Italiano

> English

> Español

> Français

> All the articles of Settimo Cielo in English

*

In entitling (see above) the **speech** given on May 20 by Pope Francis to the Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions, "Vatican News," the official digital news bulletin of the Holy See, emphasized his umpteenth inevitable broadside against "proselytism."

The text that Francis was reading did not mention it, but the pope could not resist making this addition off the cuff:

"There is a danger that is popping up again - it seems overcome, but it pops up again: confusing evangelization with proselytism. No. Evangelization is testimony to Jesus Christ, dead and risen. It is He who draws in. This is why the Church grows by attraction, and not by proselytism, as Benedict XVI had said. But this confusion has arisen to some extent from a political-economic conception of evangelization, which is no longer evangelization. Then the presence, the concrete presence, through which they ask you why you are this way. And then you proclaim Jesus Christ. It is not seeking new members for this 'Catholic society,' no, it is showing Jesus: that He should show himself in my person, in my behavior; and with my life opening up spaces for Jesus. This is evangelizing. And this is what your founders had in their hearts."

Further on Francis again added off the cuff:

"On this allow me to recommend to you the last sections of 'Evangelii Nuntiandi.' You know that 'Evangelii Nuntiandi' is the greatest pastoral document of the post-Council: it is still recent, it is still in effect, and has not lost its power. In the last paragraphs, when it describes what an evangelizer should be like, it speaks of the joy of evangelizing. When Saint Paul VI speaks of the sins of the evangelizer: the last four or five sections. Read it well, thinking of the joy that he urges for us."

In these two additions there is no surprise. Both the criticism of proselytism and the exaltation of "Evangelii Nuntiandi" are the mantra of Jorge Mario Bergoglio, every time he speaks of missions.

But it is the why and the how of this twofold insistence of his that are difficult to understand.

ON PROSELYTISM

If by "proselytism" Francis means a missionary effort pushed to the extreme, forced, measured by the number of the newly baptized, it is a mystery from where he would gather the conviction that this is a real "danger" in the Catholic Church that "is popping up again today."

Because if there is one incontestable reality in the Church of the past half century, it is not the excess but the collapse of the missionary drive.

It is the collapse that was well-known to Paul VI, John Paul II, and Benedict XVI, who tried in various ways to oppose it and call the Church back to an authentic mission: the first, among other ways, with a synod on evangelization and with the subsequent apostolic exhortation "**Evangelii Nuntiandi**" of 1975, the second with the 1990 encyclical "**Redemptoris Missio**," the third with the 2007 "**Doctrinal note on some aspects of evangelization**" and with a new synod on the missions.

Without receiving a favorable welcome for these appeals of theirs, except in the vitality of some young Churches of Africa and of Asia or, in the West, in a few isolated pockets that have been able to keep alive the authentic missionary impulse. Among which none other than the Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions received in audience three days ago by the pope.

One member of this institute was Fr. **Piero Gheddo** (1929-2017), to whom John Paul II entrusted the composition of the encyclical "Redemptoris Missio" and who even before that was among the main authors of the missionary decree "Ad Gentes" of Vatican Council II.

But contrary to his predecessors and on the basis of an opposite interpretation of the missionary experience of the Church in the last few decades, Francis seems to want instead to put the brakes on the missions.

In essence, he wants a silent "testimony" to the Christian faith with one's life, with one's behavior, in the first place with love of neighbor. And only after the testimony has eventually prompted questions does he encourage "proclaiming Jesus." But without ever clarifying this second step, and instead stopping every time with insisting on the first, the only healthy alternative - for Francis - to the much-deplored "proselytism," complete with citations from Paul VI's "Evangelii Nuntiandi," in the judgment of the current pope "the greatest pastoral document of the post-Council."

ON "EVANGELII NUNTIANDI"

However, even Francis's frequent recourse to this document of Paul VI opens contradictions. Because it is true that Paul VI assigns a "primordial importance" to the silent testimony of life, in the hope that this may touch minds and hearts and ignite an expectation.

But immediately afterward he writes:

"Nevertheless this always remains insufficient, because even the finest witness will prove ineffective in the long run if it is not explained, justified - what Peter called always having 'your answer ready for people who ask you the reason for the hope that you all have' - and made explicit by a clear and unequivocal proclamation of the Lord Jesus. The Good News proclaimed by the witness of life sooner or later has to be proclaimed by the word of life. There is no true evangelization if the name, the teaching, the life, the promises, the kingdom and the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God are not proclaimed."

And that's not all. Because proclamation is not enough - Paul VI continues - if it does not "arouse a genuine adherence in the one who has thus received it," an adherence to the Church and a desire to become an evangelizer in turn. "Witness, explicit proclamation, inner adherence, entry into the community, acceptance of signs, apostolic initiative:" all of this is, for Paul VI, the "complex process" of evangelization.

Francis systematically skims over all of this. And even the appeal he addresses to the missionaries of the Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions to reread in the last paragraphs of "Evangelii Nuntiandi" the warnings of Paul VI against "the sins of the evangelizer" appears contradictory.

If for example one rereads section 80 of the exhortation, one will see that Paul VI brands as error precisely those modes of thinking that the most part apply to the many supporters of the current pontificate, and that in fact paralyze any sort of missionary impulse:

"One too frequently hears it said, in various terms, that to impose a truth, be it that of the Gospel, or to impose a way, be it that of salvation, cannot but be a violation of religious liberty. Besides, it is added, why proclaim the Gospel when the whole world is saved by uprightness of heart? We know likewise that the world and history are filled with 'seeds of the Word;' is it not therefore an illusion to claim to bring the Gospel where it already exists in the seeds that the Lord Himself has sown?"

And again, in section 78, against certain facile domestications of the truths of faith:

"The preacher of the Gospel will be a person who even at the price of personal renunciation and suffering always seeks the truth that he must transmit to others. He never betrays or hides truth out of a desire to please men, in order to astonish or to shock, nor for the sake of originality or a desire to make an impression. He does not refuse truth. He does not obscure revealed truth by being too idle to search for it, or for the sake of his own comfort, or out of fear."

Condividi:



22 maggio 2019

English

0

NESSUN COMMENTO

I commenti sono disabilitati.

CHI SONO



Versione italiana



English version



Versión española

CERCA NEL BLOG

Cerca



Del 2002 al 2016 quindici anni di notizie, analisi, documenti sulla Chiesa cattolica. In italiano, inglese, francese e spagnolo

From 2002 to 2016 fifteen years of news, analysis, documents on the Catholic Church. In Italian, English, French, and Spanish

De 2002 à 2016 quinze ans d'informations, d'analyses, de documents concernant l'Église catholique. En italien, en anglais, en français et en espagnol

De 2002 a 2016 quince años de noticias, análisis y documentos sobre la Iglesia católica. En italiano, inglés, francés y español

NEWSLETTER

Italiano English Español Français

Vuoi ricevere l'avviso di ogni nuovo articolo?

ISCRIVITI

Per cambiare il tuo indirizzo o altri dati:

MODIFICA

Per annullare la tua iscrizione:

CANCELLA

ARTICOLI RECENTI

Papa non rigorista ma della vera misericordia. Ecco come Ratzinger racconta oggi Giovanni Paolo II

Not a Rigorist Pope, But One of True Mercy. Here's How Ratzinger Describes John Paul II Today

Passo dopo passo verso i preti sposati. Un aggiornamento

Step By Step Toward Married Priests. An Update

Paso a paso hacia los sacerdotes casados. Una actualización

Francesco imprenditore buono "che non vuole licenziare nessuno". Ma i fatti dicono l'opposto

Francis, the Good Boss "Who Doesn't Want To Fire Anyone." But the Facts Say the Opposite

Francisco, un buen empresario "que no quiere despedir a nadie". Pero los hechos dicen lo contrario

Il virus è un castigo di Dio? "La Civiltà Cattolica" dice di no

Is the Virus a Chastisement From God? "La Civiltà Cattolica" Says No

maggio: 2019

L	M	M	G	V	S	D
		1	2		4	5
6	7	8		10	11	12
		15		17	18	19
		21		24		
27	28			31		

LINK

- Santa Sede
- Sala stampa
- Vatican News
- L'Osservatore Romano
- La Civiltà Cattolica
- Il Sismografo
- Diplomazia pontificia
- Vatican Insider
- Avvenire
- La Nuova Bussola Quotidiana
- CNA
- ACI Stampa
- ACI Africa
- Crux
- Asia News
- UCA News
- Bitter Winter
- Zen
- Religiondigital.com
- Corrispondenza Romana
- RossoPorpora
- Rod Dreher
- Opzione Benedetto
- LifeSite News
- Edward Peters
- messainlatino.it
- Lo Straniero
- L'Isola di Patmos
- InfoVaticana
- Il Regno
- A. Grillo
- A.M. Valli
- finesettimana.org
- Catholic World Report
- First Things
- The Catholic Thing
- MondayVatican
- NCR - Pentin
- Ross Douthat
- Jason Horowitz
- Francis X. Rocca
- Religion News Service
- KNA in English
- Pew Research

ARCHIVI

Seleziona mese