

Contents

I. A Joy Ever New, a Joy Which Is Shared.....	1
II. The Delightful and Comforting Joy of Evangelizing.....	5
Eternal Newness.....	6
III. The New Evangelization for the	
Transmission of the Faith.....	8
The Scope and Limits of This Exhortation.....	9
CHAPTER ONE: THE CHURCH'S	
MISSIONARY TRANSFORMATION.....	11
I. A Church Which Goes Forth.....	11
Taking the First Step, Being Involved and Supportive, Bearing	
Fruit and Rejoicing.....	13
II. Pastoral Activity and Conversion.....	14
An Ecclesial Renewal Which Cannot Be Deferred.....	15
III. From the Heart of the Gospel.....	18
IV. A Mission Embodied Within Human Limits.....	21
V. A Mother with an Open Heart.....	24
CHAPTER TWO: AMID THE CRISIS OF	
COMMUNAL COMMITMENT.....	26
I. Some Challenges of Today's World.....	27
No to an Economy of Exclusion.....	27
No to the New Idolatry of Money.....	29
No to a Financial System Which Rules	
Rather Than Serves.....	30
No to the Inequality Which Spawns Violence.....	30
Some Cultural Challenges.....	32
Challenges to Inculturating the Faith.....	35
Challenges from Urban Cultures.....	37

II. Temptations Faced by Pastoral Workers.....	39
Yes to the Challenge of a Missionary Spirituality.....	40
No to Selfishness and Spiritual Sloth.....	42
No to a Sterile Pessimism.....	43
Yes to the New Relationships Brought by Christ.....	45
No to Spiritual Worldliness.....	48
No to Warring Among Ourselves.....	50
Other Ecclesial Challenges.....	52

CHAPTER THREE: THE PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL.....

I. The Entire People of God Proclaims the Gospel.....	56
A People for Everyone.....	57
A People of Many Faces.....	58
We Are All Missionary Disciples.....	60
The Evangelizing Power of Popular Piety.....	62
Person to Person.....	64
Charisms at the Service of a Communion	
Which Evangelizes.....	66
Culture, Thought and Education.....	67
II. The Homily.....	68
The Liturgical Context.....	68
A Mother's Conversation.....	69
Words Which Set Hearts on Fire.....	71
III. Preparing to Preach.....	72
Reverence for Truth.....	73
Personalizing the Word.....	75
Spiritual Reading.....	77
An Ear to the People.....	78
Homiletic Resources.....	79

IV. Evangelization and the Deeper Understanding of the Kerygma	81
Kerygmatic And Mystagogical Catechesis	82
Personal Accompaniment in Processes of Growth	85
Centered on the Word of God	87

CHAPTER FOUR: THE SOCIAL DIMENSION OF EVANGELIZATION

I. Communal and Societal Repercussions of the Kerygma	89
Confession of Faith and Commitment to Society	89
The Kingdom and Its Challenge	91
The Church's Teaching on Social Questions	92
II. The Inclusion of the Poor in Society	94
In Union with God, We Hear a Plea	94
Fidelity to the Gospel, Lest We Run in Vain	97
The Special Place of the Poor in God's People	99
The Economy and the Distribution of Income	102
Concern for the Vulnerable	105
III. The Common Good and Peace in Society	108
Time Is Greater than Space	109
Unity Prevails over Conflict	110
Realities Are More Important than Ideas	112
The Whole Is Greater than the Part	113
IV. Social Dialogue as a Contribution to Peace	115
Dialogue Between Faith, Reason and Science	116
Ecumenical Dialogue	117
Relations with Judaism	119
Interreligious Dialogue	120
Social Dialogue in a Context of Religious Freedom	122

CHAPTER FIVE: SPIRIT-FILLED EVANGELIZERS	125
I. Reasons for a Renewed Missionary Impulse	126
Personal Encounter with the Saving Love of Jesus	127
The Spiritual Savor of Being a People	130
The Mysterious Working of the Risen Christ and His Spirit	133
The Missionary Power of Intercessory Prayer	136
II. Mary, Mother of Evangelization	137
Jesus' Gift to His People	137
Star of the New Evangelization	139
NOTES	143

CHAPTER TWO

Amid the Crisis of Communal Commitment

50. Before taking up some basic questions related to the work of evangelization, it may be helpful to mention briefly the context in which we all have to live and work. Today, we frequently hear of a "diagnostic overload" which is not always accompanied by improved and actually applicable methods of treatment. Nor would we be well served by a purely sociological analysis which would aim to embrace all of reality by employing an allegedly neutral and clinical method. What I would like to propose is something much more in the line of an evangelical discernment. It is the approach of a missionary disciple, an approach "nourished by the light and strength of the Holy Spirit."⁵³

51. It is not the task of the Pope to offer a detailed and complete analysis of contemporary reality, but I do exhort all the communities to an "ever watchful scrutiny of the signs of the times."⁵⁴ This is in fact a grave responsibility, since certain present realities, unless effectively dealt with, are capable of setting off processes of dehumanization which would then be hard to reverse. We need to distinguish clearly what might be a fruit of the kingdom from what runs counter to God's plan. This involves not only recognizing and discerning spirits, but also—and this is decisive—choosing movements of the spirit of good and rejecting those of the spirit of evil. I take for granted the different analyses which other documents of the universal magisterium have offered, as well as those proposed by the regional and national conferences of bishops. In this Exhortation I claim only to consider briefly, and from a pastoral perspective,

certain factors which can restrain or weaken the impulse of missionary renewal in the Church, either because they threaten the life and dignity of God's people or because they affect those who are directly involved in the Church's institutions and in her work of evangelization.

I. SOME CHALLENGES OF TODAY'S WORLD

52. In our time humanity is experiencing a turning point in its history, as we can see from the advances being made in so many fields. We can only praise the steps being taken to improve people's welfare in areas such as health care, education and communications. At the same time we have to remember that the majority of our contemporaries are barely living from day to day, with dire consequences. A number of diseases are spreading. The hearts of many people are gripped by fear and desperation, even in the so-called rich countries. The joy of living frequently fades, lack of respect for others and violence are on the rise, and inequality is increasingly evident. It is a struggle to live and, often, to live with precious little dignity. This epochal change has been set in motion by the enormous qualitative, quantitative, rapid and cumulative advances occurring in the sciences and in technology, and by their instant application in different areas of nature and of life. We are in an age of knowledge and information, which has led to new and often anonymous kinds of power.

NO TO AN ECONOMY OF EXCLUSION

53. Just as the commandment "Thou shalt not kill" sets a clear limit in order to safeguard the value of human life, today we also have to say "thou shalt not" to an economy of exclusion and inequality. Such an economy kills. How can it be that it is not a news item when an elderly homeless person dies of exposure, but it is news

when the stock market loses two points? This is a case of exclusion. Can we continue to stand by when food is thrown away while people are starving? This is a case of inequality. Today everything comes under the laws of competition and the survival of the fittest, where the powerful feed upon the powerless. As a consequence, masses of people find themselves excluded and marginalized: without work, without possibilities, without any means of escape.

Human beings are themselves considered consumer goods to be used and then discarded. We have created a "disposable" culture which is now spreading. It is no longer simply about exploitation and oppression, but something new. Exclusion ultimately has to do with what it means to be a part of the society in which we live; those excluded are no longer society's underside or its fringes or its disenfranchised—they are no longer even a part of it. The excluded are not the "exploited" but the outcast, the "leftovers."

54. In this context, some people continue to defend trickle-down theories which assume that economic growth, encouraged by a free market, will inevitably succeed in bringing about greater justice and inclusiveness in the world. This opinion, which has never been confirmed by the facts, expresses a crude and naive trust in the goodness of those wielding economic power and in the sacralized workings of the prevailing economic system. Meanwhile, the excluded are still waiting. To sustain a lifestyle which excludes others, or to sustain enthusiasm for that selfish ideal, a globalization of indifference has developed. Almost without being aware of it, we end up being incapable of feeling compassion at the outcry of the poor, weeping for other people's pain, and feeling a need to help them, as though all this were someone else's responsibility and not our own. The culture of prosperity deadens us; we are thrilled if the market offers us something new to purchase; and in the meantime all those lives stunted for lack of opportunity seem a mere spectacle; they fail to move us.

NO TO THE NEW IDOLATRY OF MONEY

55. One cause of this situation is found in our relationship with money, since we calmly accept its dominion over ourselves and our societies. The current financial crisis can make us overlook the fact that it originated in a profound human crisis: the denial of the primacy of the human person! We have created new idols. The worship of the ancient golden calf (cf. Ex 32:1-35) has returned in a new and ruthless guise in the idolatry of money and the dictatorship of an impersonal economy lacking a truly human purpose. The worldwide crisis affecting finance and the economy lays bare their imbalances and, above all, their lack of real concern for human beings; man is reduced to one of his needs alone: consumption.

56. While the earnings of a minority are growing exponentially, so too is the gap separating the majority from the prosperity enjoyed by those happy few. This imbalance is the result of ideologies which defend the absolute autonomy of the marketplace and financial speculation. Consequently, they reject the right of states, charged with vigilance for the common good, to exercise any form of control. A new tyranny is thus born, invisible and often virtual, which unilaterally and relentlessly imposes its own laws and rules. Debt and the accumulation of interest also make it difficult for countries to realize the potential of their own economies and keep citizens from enjoying their real purchasing power. To all this we can add widespread corruption and self-serving tax evasion, which have taken on worldwide dimensions. The thirst for power and possessions knows no limits. In this system, which tends to devour everything which stands in the way of increased profits, whatever is fragile, like the environment, is defenseless before the interests of a deified market, which become the only rule.

NO TO A FINANCIAL SYSTEM WHICH RULES RATHER THAN SERVES

57. Behind this attitude lurks a rejection of ethics and a rejection of God. Ethics has come to be viewed with a certain scornful derision. It is seen as counterproductive, too human, because it makes money and power relative. It is felt to be a threat, since it condemns the manipulation and debasement of the person. In effect, ethics leads to a God who calls for a committed response which is outside of the categories of the marketplace. When these latter are absolutized, God can only be seen as uncontrollable, unmanageable, even dangerous, since he calls human beings to their full realization and to freedom from all forms of enslavement. Ethics—a non-ideological ethics—would make it possible to bring about balance and a more humane social order. With this in mind, I encourage financial experts and political leaders to ponder the words of one of the sages of antiquity: "Not to share one's wealth with the poor is to steal from them and to take away their livelihood. It is not our own goods which we hold, but theirs."⁵⁵

58. A financial reform open to such ethical considerations would require a vigorous change of approach on the part of political leaders. I urge them to face this challenge with determination and an eye to the future, while not ignoring, of course, the specifics of each case. Money must serve, not rule! The Pope loves everyone, rich and poor alike, but he is obliged in the name of Christ to remind all that the rich must help, respect and promote the poor. I exhort you to generous solidarity and a return of economics and finance to an ethical approach which favors human beings.

NO TO THE INEQUALITY WHICH SPAWNS VIOLENCE

59. Today in many places we hear a call for greater security. But until exclusion and inequality in society and between peoples are