

04. Sharing Jesus' Mission



*‘I have come to cast fire upon the earth
and how I wish it were blazing already’ (Luke 12:49)*

Teilhard de Chardin 1934

‘Some day,
after harnessing space,
the winds,
the tides
and gravitation,

We shall harness for God
the energies of Love.

And then,
for the second time in the history of the
world,
we shall have discovered fire.’

‘I have come that you may live, and live to the full’(John 10:10).

Roman Catechism, Council of Trent, 1545-1563, Preface 10.

‘The whole concern of doctrine and its teaching
must be directed to the love that never ends.

Whether something is proposed for belief,
for hope or for action,

the love of our Lord must always be made accessible,
so that anyone can see

that all the works of perfect Christian virtue
spring from love

and have no other objective
than to arrive at love.’



Pope Francis

‘Evangelii Gaudium’

‘The Joy of the Gospel’

‘I have said these things to you so that **my joy** may be in you, and that **your joy** may be complete’(John 15:11; quoted n.5).

Matthew 28:16-20

THE UNIVERSAL MISSION OF THE DISCIPLES OF THE RISEN CHRIST

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am **with you** always, to the end of the age.'

In Paul's words" 'in Christ God was reconciling **the world** to himself'(2Corinthians 5:19).

In John's words: 'God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that **everyone** who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life'(John 3:16).

Hence the conviction of Jesus' followers that they must carry on the mission of Jesus by sharing the Good News with '**all nations**'(Matthew 28:19).

John 21:15-17

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon son of John, do you love (agapan) me more than these?'

He said to him, 'Lord; you know that I love (philein) you.'

Jesus said to him, 'Feed my lambs.'

A second time he said to him, 'Simon son of John, do you love (agapan) me?' He said to him, 'Lord; you know that I love (philein) you.'

Jesus said to him, 'Tend my sheep.'

He said to him the third time, 'Simon son of John, do you love (philein) me?' Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, 'Do you love (philein) me?' And he said to him, 'Lord, you know everything; you know that I love (philein) you.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed my sheep.'

‘Missionary activity is the greatest and the holiest duty of the Church.’

(Vatican II Ad Gentes 29).

‘Jesus called to him those whom he wanted, and they came to him.

He appointed twelve to be **with him**,

and to be sent out to proclaim the Good News’(Mark 3:13-14).

‘As the Father sent me, I am sending you’(John 20:21).

‘As you, Father, are in me and I am in you,

may they also be in us,

so that the world may believe that you have sent me’(John 17:21).

‘Missionary dynamism is not born of the will of those who decide to become propagators of the faith. It is born of the Spirit and it progresses through faith in God’s love.’

(JPII Mission of the Redeemer n. 44).

‘The spiritual life of the priest should be profoundly marked by a missionary zeal and dynamism. In the exercise of their ministry and the witness of their lives, priests have the duty to form the community entrusted to them as a truly missionary community.’

(JP II I will give you shepherds n. 32).

‘The ultimate purpose of mission is to enable people to share in the communion which exists between the Father and the Son.’

(JPII Mission of the Redeemer n. 23).

‘The Church’s fundamental function in every age, and particularly in ours, is to direct the gaze of human beings, to point the awareness and experience of the whole of humanity, towards the mystery of Christ.’ (JPII Mission of the Redeemer n.4)

‘In his Son, the definitive Word of his revelation,
God has made himself known in the fullest possible way.
God has revealed to humankind who he is.
This definitive self-revelation of God is the fundamental reason
why the Church is missionary by her very nature.
The Church cannot do otherwise than proclaim the Gospel,
that is, the fullness of the truth
which God has enabled us to know about himself.’

(JPII Mission of the Redeemer n.5)

‘Missionary activity to those who do not know Christ has only one purpose: to serve men and women by revealing to them the love of God shown forth in Jesus Christ.’

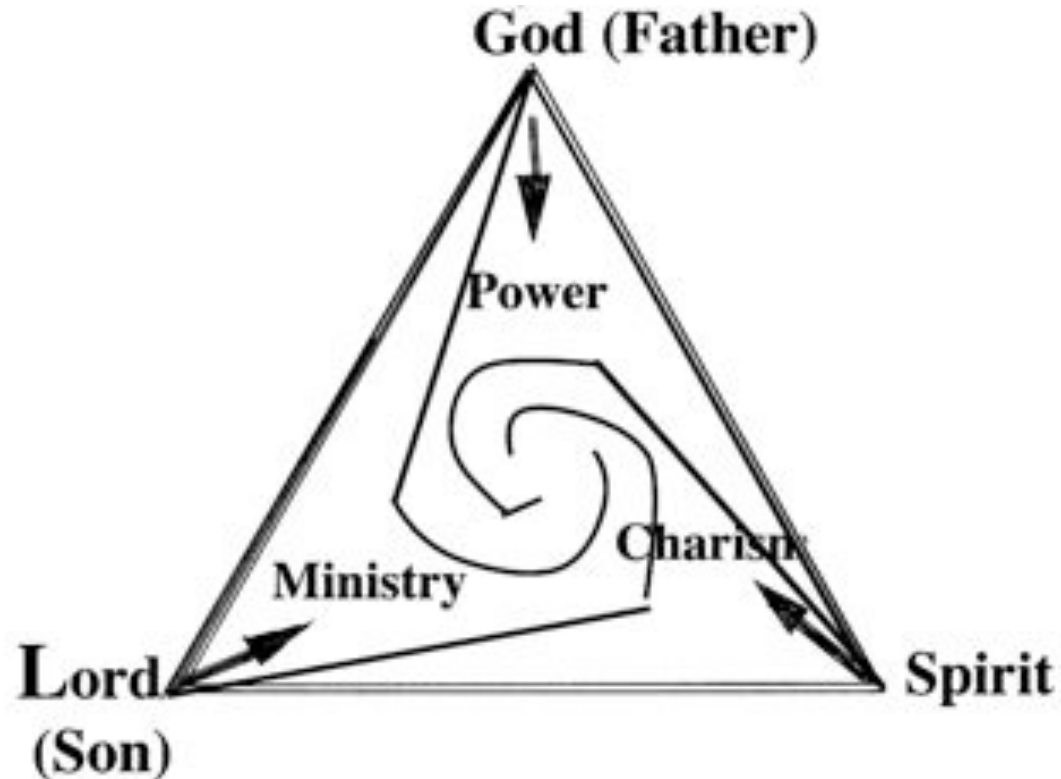
(JPII Mission of the Redeemer n. 2).

God’s design is to ‘unite everyone in Christ’(Ephesians 1:10).

‘Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation’(Mark 16:15).

1 Corinthians 12:4-7

there are varieties of ways of exercising power [energema]
but it is the same God who activates them all in everyone.



there are varieties of ministries
[diakonia]
but the same Lord;

‘There are varieties of gifts
[charisma]
but the same Spirit;

Living in communion with Jesus we are able to live in such a way that God can be ‘everything to everyone’ (1Corinthians 15:28).



‘The joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. With Christ joy is constantly born anew.

In this Exhortation I wish to encourage the Christian faithful to embark upon a new chapter of evangelisation marked by this joy, while pointing out new paths for the Church’s journey in years to come.’

The opening paragraph of the Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis
24th November 2013, Feast of Christ the King.

The Joy of the Gospel

‘A dignified and fulfilled life ... the life in the Spirit which has its source in the heart of the risen Christ’^(n.2)

‘I never tire of repeating those words of Benedict XVI which take us to the very heart of the Gospel: “Being a Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction” (“God is love”, I; quoted n.7).

‘All of us need to grow in Christ. Evangelization should stimulate a desire for this growth, so that each of us can say wholeheartedly: “It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me” (*Galatians* 2:20) (n. 160).

‘A true missionary, who never ceases to be a disciple, knows that Jesus walks with him, speaks to him, breathes with him, works with him. He senses Jesus alive with him in the midst of the missionary enterprise. Unless we see him present at the heart of our missionary commitment, our enthusiasm soon wanes and we are no longer sure of what it is that we are handing on; we lack vigour and passion. A person who is not convinced, enthusiastic, certain and in love, will convince nobody’ (n. 266).

Bernard Lonergan SJ Philosophy of God and Theology 1973

The person does not come first.

What comes first is the community.

It is within community
through the way persons relate
that the individual person emerges.

Since persons are the products of community,
and since the strongest and best of communities is based on love,
religious experience and the emergence of personality
go hand in hand.

‘The joys and the hopes,
the griefs and the anxieties
of the men and women of this age,
especially those who are in any way afflicted,
these are the joys and hopes,
the griefs and anxieties
of the followers of Christ.

Indeed nothing genuinely human
fails to raise an echo in their hearts,
for theirs is a community composed of men and women.

United in Christ,
they are led by the Holy Spirit in their journey
to the kingdom of their Father
and they have welcomed **the news of salvation
which is meant for everyone**’(n. 1).

The 'Catholic' Church: All-embracing

Paul VI announcing the Secretariat for Non-Christians, Pentecost 1966

'To take away from the Church its qualification of "catholic" would mean to change its face, the face Christ wants and loves; it would mean to go against the ineffable intention of God who wanted to make the Church the expression of his unbounded love for mankind.

Pope Paul VI speaks of how small the human heart can be, and goes on:

‘But when the name “catholic” becomes an interior reality,
all egoism is overcome,
all class struggle develops into full social solidarity,
all nationalism is reconciled with the good of the world community,
all racism is condemned,
and all totalitarianism is unmasked in its inhumanity.
The small heart has been broken open or, better,
acquires a completely new capacity to expand.
As Saint Augustine says: ‘Let the space for love be widened’.

‘A catholic heart means a heart with universal dimensions: a heart that has overcome its basic narrowness that prevents us listening to our calling towards supreme love.

It means a magnanimous heart, an ecumenical heart, a heart capable of embracing the whole world.

This does not make it a heart that is indifferent to the truth of things or to sincerity of words. It does not mistake goodness for weakness, nor does it confuse peace with cowardice or apathy.

It lives the marvellous synthesis of St. Paul: ‘Doing the truth in love’(Ephesians 4:15).’

‘Catholic’ is not a brand name

We are to reverence and respect the unique mystery of each person’s experience and the many ways in which people’s experience is expressed culturally.

Unity	not	Uniformity
Communion	not	Conformity

‘Make every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace’(Ephesians 4:3).

Pope Francis: 'The Joy of the Gospel'

'When properly understood, cultural diversity is not a threat to Church unity. The Holy Spirit, sent by the Father and the Son, transforms our hearts and enables us to enter into the perfect communion of the blessed Trinity, where all things find their unity. He builds up the communion and harmony of the people of God. The same Spirit is that harmony, just as he is the bond of love between the Father and the Son. It is the Spirit who brings forth a rich variety of gifts, while at the same time creating a unity which is never uniformity but a multifaceted and inviting harmony. Evangelization joyfully acknowledges these varied treasures which the Holy Spirit pours out upon the Church. We would not do justice to the logic of the incarnation if we thought of Christianity as monocultural and monotonous' (n. 117).

The Church's mission is to share (with everyone who wants to listen) the Good News of what Jesus revealed about God

about the meaning of life

about how we can best live to the full.

A truly 'Catholic' community

- open to embrace every person in his or her uniqueness
- open to welcome each person's gifts and insights
- open to respect each person's freedom

- Contemplative
Looking



- Michelangelo

‘While preserving unity in essentials,
let everyone in the Church,
according to the office entrusted to them,
preserve a proper freedom
in the various forms of spiritual life and discipline,
in the variety of liturgical rites,
and even in the theological elaborations of revealed truth.
In all things let charity prevail.
If they are true to this course of action,
they will be giving ever richer expression
to the authentic catholicity and apostolicity of the Church.’

Unity not Uniformity

Communion not Conformity

Imperfect belonging to the Body of Christ

- We are all imperfect in Faith, Hope and Love
- We all belong to a community that does not fully acknowledge all parts of the Catholic Tradition
- We are all called to constant repentance, to open our hearts to let Christ live more and more in us.
- We are all called to draw nearer to Jesus, and so to each other, and so to mutual enrichment

We are to create communities that live the love that filled Jesus' heart and to invite people to share this experience.

The Church is not given a mission to control or force.

The Church is only to present and attract,

leaving people free to accept or reject,

for that is the nature of love.

That is the nature of God as revealed by Jesus.

Respect for people's experience and freedom

- Central to the mission of the Church is respect and reverence for each and every person

for the ways in which God is acting in their lives

and the ways in which, whether they realise it or not, they are responding to grace.

This means respecting people's freedom as to how they choose to respond to the Good News that we never cease to offer them.

‘I have come that you may live, and live to the full’(John 10:10)

Mature persons are **generative**. That is, they are able to spend their life in creative communion which is life-giving both to themselves and to those with whom they relate.

To be generative, a person must have experienced **intimacy**: the kind of loving and being loved which is experienced as being the fruit of being deeply known and accepted by another whom we intimately know and accept.

To be truly intimate one must have a sense of one’s personal **identity**: a sense of self that is experienced as being affirmed by another who is significant to us.

Finding our identity within the church

Treasured Possession : segullâ

‘If you obey my voice and keep my covenant,
you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples’(Exodus 19:5).

‘YHWH has chosen Jacob for himself,
Israel as his treasured possession’(Psalm 135:4).

‘They shall be mine, says YHWH of hosts,
my treasured possession’(Malachi 3:17).

‘You are a people holy to YHWH your God;
YHWH your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on earth
to be his people, his treasured possession’(Deuteronomy 7:6; 14:2).

‘Today YHWH has obtained your agreement: to be his treasured people,
as he promised you, and to keep his commandments’(Deuteronomy 26:18).



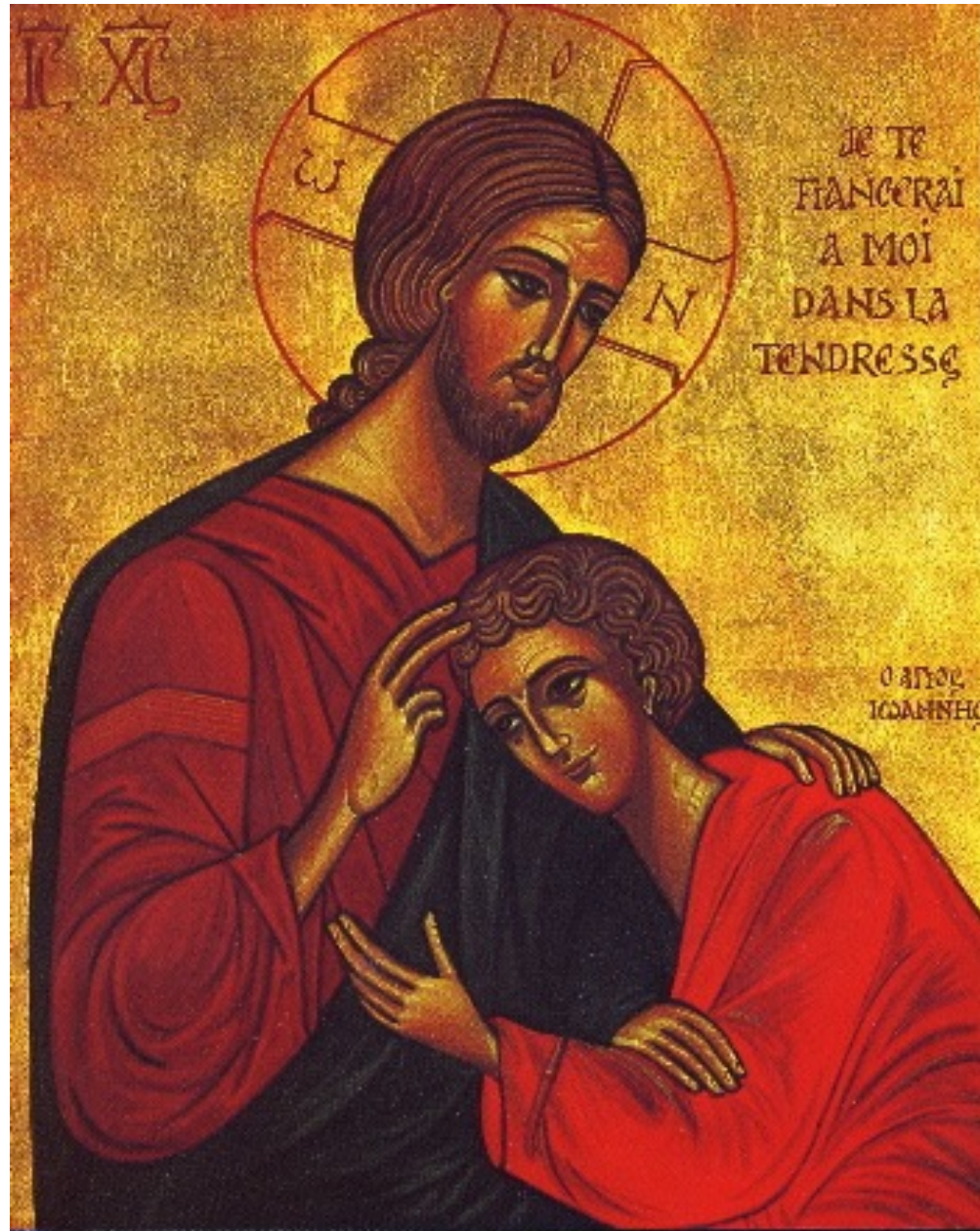
Tintoretto 1592

The Church is THE **Sacrament** of Jesus

his 'body' in the world,
living the life given to us by his Spirit –
the Spirit he shares with the Father.



Tintoretto 1592



Here I am, Lord