

Living in the Kingdom

Lesson 26: Go into All the World!

The Church's Missionary Mandate



CCC 760
CCC 849

Mt 28:18-20
Jn 20:21

Acts 2:38
Acts 4:12, 16:31
Rom 10:9

Jn 14:6, 1 Jn
2:22-23, 5:11-12
Heb 2:3

Jn 3:5
Mk 16:15-16
CCC 1257

CCC 816, 831,
836

CCC 845-47
1 Pet 3:20-21

1. *"Just as God's will is creation and is called 'the world,' so his intention is the salvation of men, and it is called 'the Church.'"* Divinely sent to the nations that she might be 'the universal sacrament of salvation,' the Church, in obedience to Jesus and because it is demanded by her own universality, strives to preach the Gospel to all men.
2. Review lesson B1 (The Church): Adam and Eve lost the way, the truth and the life for all mankind. Through his covenants with Israel and the offices of priest, prophet and king, God began to gather his family.
3. Jesus Christ, the way, the truth and the life is priest, prophet and king who formed a New Covenant with Israel and accomplished the redemption of the world through his Paschal Mystery
4. Jesus called the apostles to bring his salvation to all people. In the Great Commission, he commanded them to go make disciples (prophetic office / truth), to baptize them (priestly office / life) and to teach them to observe his commandments (kingly office / way).
5. At Pentecost, the Church was born. Peter called the Jews to *"be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins."* Salvation can be found in no other name than Jesus. It is through faith in him and through baptism that one is saved.
6. The necessity of faith in Christ: *"He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."* (Jn 3:36)
7. *"Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."* The Church does not know of any means other than Baptism that assures entry into eternal beatitude; this is why she takes care not to neglect the mission she has received from the Lord to see that all who can be baptized are 'reborn of water and the Spirit.'
8. The Church conveys Christ's salvation through:
 - a. Sacred Scripture (prophetic office – truth)
 - b. Sacred Tradition/liturgy (priestly office – life)
 - c. The Magisterium (kingly office – way)
9. The sole Church that Christ founded subsists in the Catholic Church, governed by the successor of Peter together with the bishops. It is through Christ's Catholic Church alone that the fullness of the means of salvation can be obtained, and therefore all people are called to belong to the new People of God.
10. The Church is the Ark of God's salvation and therefore necessary for salvation. Hence they could not be saved who, knowing that the Catholic Church was founded as necessary by God through Christ, would refuse either to enter it or to remain in it. This affirmation is not aimed at those who, through no fault of their own, do not know Christ and his Church yet seek God and try to do his will with a sincere heart.

<p>CCC 848-49 Rom 10:14-15</p> <p>CCC 850-51 1 Tim 2:4</p> <p>CCC 852</p> <p>CCC 853</p> <p>NA 2, LG 16 CCC 843-44</p> <p>CCC 845 DI 4, 22</p> <p>RM 55, AG 7</p> <p>Gal 2:16, 2:21 Rom 9:31-32 Lev 17:11 Mt 15:24, Rom 1:16, 1 Jn 2:23, NJJ 1.7.</p> <p>CCC 816-19</p> <p>UR 3, DI 17 UR 97</p>	<p>11. Although God can lead to faith those who, through no fault of their own, are ignorant of the gospel, the Church still has the obligation and also the sacred right to evangelize all people.</p> <p>12. The ultimate purpose of mission is to make men share in the eternal love of the Most Holy Trinity. It is from God's love for all that the Church receives the obligation of her missionary dynamism. Salvation is found in the truth, and so she must bring the truth to all people.</p> <p>13. The Church's mission, led by the Holy Spirit, follows the mission of Christ: a way of poverty and obedience, of service and self-sacrifice even to death – leading to resurrection.</p> <p>14. The Church's mission has suffered much from the counter-witness of Christians who have not lived up to the Gospel. Only by taking the way of repentance and renewal, the narrow way of the cross, can the people of God extend Christ's reign.</p> <p>15. The Catholic Church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in other religions; their teachings can sometimes be a preparation for the gospel. But they also display limits and errors that disfigure the image of God, exchange His truth for a lie, or may expose people to despair.</p> <p>16. The Church's missionary proclamation is endangered today by relativistic theories which seek to justify religious pluralism. God has willed that the Church be the instrument for the salvation of <i>all</i> humanity, scattered and led astray by sin. This rules out a mentality of indifferentism claiming that 'one religion is as good as another'. Followers of other religions may receive divine grace but <i>objectively speaking</i> they are in a gravely deficient situation in comparison with those who, in the Church, have the fullness of the means of salvation.</p> <p>17. Inter-religious dialogue does not dispense from evangelization. Dialogue should be conducted with the conviction that the Church is the ordinary means of salvation and that she alone possesses the fullness of the means of salvation. All must be converted to Christ, and all must be incorporated into him by Baptism and into the Church which is his body.</p> <p>18. The Church and the Jews: Though the Jewish people remain beloved by God, their covenant with God is not salvific. Salvation cannot be obtained by the works of the Torah. Blood atonement is necessary to receive the forgiveness of sins, but it is absent today from Judaism. The mission of Christ and the apostles was at first directed exclusively towards the Jews, and so <i>Church and Judaism cannot be seen as two parallel ways of salvation, and the Church must witness to Christ as the Redeemer for all.</i></p> <p>19. The Church and Other Christians: The sole Church of Christ subsists in the Catholic Church. Yet from its very beginnings there arose certain rifts. Later, large communities became separated from the Church. One cannot charge with the sin of the separation those now born in these communities, and the Catholic Church accepts them with affection as brothers. Many elements of sanctification and of truth are found in them, and Christ's Spirit uses them as means of salvation.</p> <p>20. Yet the Church of Christ is not a collection of denominations. "It is only through Christ's Catholic Church, which is the all-embracing means of salvation, that the separated brethren can benefit fully from the means</p>
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<p>CCC 1399</p>	<p>of salvation.” Communities with no valid Episcopate and without a true Eucharistic mystery are not Churches in the proper sense. The communion of all churches with the Church of Rome is—in God's plan—essential for full and visible communion.</p> <p>21. Eastern [Orthodox] churches have a valid priesthood [by apostolic succession] and Eucharist. Eucharistic intercommunion with them is possible and even encouraged in certain circumstances.</p>
<p>CCC 1400</p>	<p>22. Separated Protestant and Messianic communities have not preserved the full reality of the Eucharistic mystery, especially because of the absence of Holy Orders. For this reason, Eucharistic intercommunion with these communities is not possible.</p>
<p>CCC 820, UR 11 Jn 17:21</p>	<p>23. The Church must pray and work to perfect the unity that Christ wills for her, as he prayed: “<i>that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us.</i>” We should always avoid false irenicism, where the purity of Catholic doctrine suffers loss and its genuine and certain meaning is clouded.</p>
<p>CCC 821</p>	<p>24. Things required for moving toward unity: Permanent renewal of the Church; conversion of heart; prayer in common; fraternal knowledge of each other; ecumenical formation; dialogue and meetings; collaboration in service to mankind.</p>
<p>CL 3, UR 4 Mt 9:37-38, 12:30 1 Cor 9:16</p> <p>Ezek 22:29-31 Ezek 3:18 Acts 4:18-20 Acts 5:28-29</p>	<p>25. All Catholics are called to take an active, conscientious and responsible part in the mission of the Church and in the work of ecumenism. “If lack of commitment is always unacceptable, the present time renders it even more so. It is not permissible for anyone to remain idle.”</p> <p>26. Even though there will always be opposition to the Gospel, we must fear God more than we fear man. If we fail to warn the wicked man and he dies in his sins, his blood will be required of us.</p> <p>27. How shall we take part in the Church’s mission?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>Repent</i> if we have neglected to respond to the call to mission; b. <i>Desire</i> to see others enter the kingdom (the Church); c. <i>Pray</i> for the salvation of unbelievers; d. <i>Participate</i> fully in the Church’s sacramental life, to be fully joined with Christ, the Lord of the harvest; e. <i>Live</i> your Christian life fully to be a witness in deeds; f. <i>Study</i> and learn how to share your faith; g. <i>Share</i> your Catholic faith in words, in truth and love; h. <i>Invite</i> people to socials, meetings, meals, lessons; i. <i>Give</i> information and literature on the faith, when appropriate.

“Peoples everywhere, open the doors to Christ! His Gospel in no way detracts from man's freedom, from the respect that is owed to every culture and to whatever is good in each religion. By accepting Christ, you open yourselves to the definitive Word of God, to the One in whom God has made himself fully known and has shown us the path to himself.” (John Paul II, RM 3)

Questions for Discussion

1. Why is the Church's call to mission so important?
2. Why does God call all people into the Catholic Church? Is it not enough to have a personal relationship with Christ?
3. What is the relationship between the Gospel and other religions? How are inter-religious dialogue and evangelization related?
4. Why is it not possible to have communion together with Protestants or Messianic Jews?
5. Do you think your local church is doing a good job in sharing the good news with others and calling all people into the Kingdom of God?
6. Do you think you have made a contribution to the Church's call to make disciples?
7. How can you make a difference to the people in your life? How do you think you could witness to them?
8. What should we do when people react negatively to the gospel, laugh at us, reject us or even persecute us?

Abbreviations

- AG**: *Ad Gentes*, Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity (Vatican II, 1965);
- CCC**: Catechism of the Catholic Church (1992);
- CL**: *Christifideles Laici*, On the Vocation and the Mission of the Lay Faithful and in the World (John Paul II, 1994);
- DI**: *Dominus Iesus*, On the Unicity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church (Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, 2000);
- NA**: *Nostra Aetate*, Declaration on the Relations of the Church to Non-Christian Religions (Vatican II, 1965);
- NJJ**: Notes on the Correct Way to Present the Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis (Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, 1985);
- LG**: *Lumen Gentium*, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Vatican II, 1964);
- RM**: *Redemptoris Missio*, On the Permanent Validity of the Church's Missionary Mandate (John Paul II, 1990);
- UR**: *Unitatis Redintegratio*, Decree on Ecumenism (Vatican II, 1964).