

November DNA: Evangelization and Joy (according to three popes)

Opening Prayer: St. John Paul II's prayer for the New Evangelization:

Loving God, you called each of us by name.

You gave your only Son to redeem us.

In your faithfulness you sent the Holy Spirit to complete the mission of Jesus among us.

Open our hearts to Jesus.

Give us the courage to speak his Name to those who are close to us, and the generosity to share his love with those who are far away.

We pray that every person throughout the world be invited to know and love Jesus as Savior and Redeemer.

May they come to know his all-surpassing love.

May that love transform every element of our society.

We make this prayer through our Lord, Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

Amen.

1. *All who believe in Christ should feel, as an integral part of their faith, an apostolic concern to pass on to others its light and joy. This concern must become, as it were, a hunger and thirst to make the Lord known, given the vastness of the non-Christian world.*
– Saint John Paul II

Each of us are *called* to evangelize. It is a vocation given to us by Christ, who shows us the way. St. John Paul II points out that faith should be filled with light and joy. Have you ever felt this call to share your faith with others? Was it filled with “light and joy”? What has been your experience?

2. *Let us recover and deepen our enthusiasm, that ‘delightful and comforting joy’ of evangelizing, 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 fervor, who have first received the joy of Christ.* – Pope Francis

Evangelization flows from a lived relationship with God in Christ through the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church. As we enter into deeper relationship with God in prayer, worship, and service, we are encouraged to invite others to share in this divine life. Do you find evangelizing is a “delightful and comforting joy?” Do you see the world searching with hope or anguish for Christ? Why or why not?

3. *The Church always evangelizes and has never interrupted the path of evangelization. ... And this evangelization bears fruit: It gives light and joy, it gives the path of life to many*

people; many others live, often unknowingly, of the light and the warmth that radiate from this permanent evangelization. – Pope Benedict XVI

Evangelization is about creating a “path of life” for many people, of giving “light and joy.” Everything we do as a church is a touchpoint of evangelization. Every liturgy, gathering, meeting, school day, and conversation can become an invitation to a deeper life in Christ experienced through the sacramental life of the Church and our community. How might this understanding bear fruit? How do others “live, often unknowingly, of the light and warmth that radiate from this permanent evangelization”?

4. *[A]n evangelizing community is filled with joy; it knows how to rejoice always. It celebrates every small victory, every step forward in the work of evangelization. Evangelization with joy becomes beauty in the liturgy, as part of our daily concern to spread goodness. The Church evangelizes and is herself evangelized through the beauty of the liturgy, which is both a celebration of the task of evangelization and the source of her renewed self-giving. – Pope Francis*

Pope Francis points out that joy in evangelization become beauty in the liturgy, and in our daily concern to spread goodness. In doing so, he connects evangelization, liturgy, and doing good out in the world. How do those three connect in your own life? How are they a witness to the joy of the Gospel?

5. *Christian hope sustains us in committing ourselves fully to the new evangelization and to the worldwide mission, and leads us to pray as Jesus taught us: “Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” – Saint John Paul II*

The theological virtue of hope sustains us in our evangelizing, as we place our trust, our efforts, and our lives in God’s hands. How do you sustain hope? What nourishes your Christian hope in difficult times?

Go Deeper: Read Pope Francis’ *Evangelii Gaudium* The Joy of the Gospel:
https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html