

## **CTK Mission Principle #10:**

**We the people of Christ the King, called by God our Father to be surrendered to the Lord Jesus, in the power of His Holy Spirit, in the heart of His Church.**

- **to be a people committed to evangelization and catechesis, realizing that we “who have received the Good News and who have been gathered by it into the community of salvation can and must communicate and spread it.” (Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, #13)**

The readings for this Sunday’s Mass are for World Mission Sunday. This is a Sunday designated by the American bishops to remind all the Catholic faithful of our fundamental responsibilities to be heralds of the Good News. We too can echo with Isaiah the Good News that our Light has come, that the glory of the Lord has truly shown upon us. The invitation that Isaiah subsequently makes is to remind the Jewish people, and us, that this gift of the Light was not given simply for us but that if we let our Light truly shine then “Nations shall walk by your light.” How crucial that is, especially today, when more and more nations are falling into darkness instead of light. The great challenges that face even our own great nation will prove to be too much if the People who walked in darkness and who have now seen the great Light refuse to share that Light with those around them. That people, of course, is us! We have been given the “true Light that enlightens all men” as St. John puts it in the introduction to his Gospel.

The responsorial Psalm response speaks to a once and future event. On the one hand, it is true that “Their message goes out through all the earth.” Creation itself, of itself, proclaims the glory of God and His handiwork. But, on the other hand, the far greater Light must be announced! For the Incarnation of the Lord Jesus transcends the rest of creation like His Eucharistic Presence transcends ordinary bread! You see this marvelously fulfilled in the very week we celebrate. The Sabbath of the Lord, instituted as the Seventh Day, the Day of Rest, to commemorate the great completion of Creation itself is subsequently transcended by the Day of the Lord, that day on which the King of Kings rose from the dead and everything was changed. Saturday yields to Sunday as the ultimate act in Creation takes place: the Incarnation of the Son of God.

The second reading reminds us that the proclamation of the Gospel is not just some minor option to be exercised. St. Paul notes: “If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” Since the salvation of our immortal souls is the most important goal for us as human beings, then confessing His Lordship with our mouths is clearly no little thing, but is of paramount importance. St. Paul, driven by his missionary zeal, reiterates that that confession of our faith, our relationship with the Lord Jesus, must move outward, reminding us that those out there, who have not yet heard the Word, will never hear it “without someone to preach.”

That command to preach the Gospel, to evangelize all, is most powerfully stated in what has become known as the Great Commission, Matthew 28:19: “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...” While this is explicitly addressed to the 11 Apostles, the Church has made it clear that all of us share in that responsibility to proclaim the Gospel. That sentiment is perfectly well expressed in the Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, cited above as part of this Mission Statement Principle. The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council, the Bishops of the world assembled, also stated it clearly in their Decree on the Mission Activity of the Church, *Ad Gentes*:

Therefore, this sacred synod, while rendering thanks to God for the excellent results that have been achieved through the whole Church's great - hearted endeavor, desires...to rally the forces of all the faithful in order that the people of God, marching along the narrow way of the Cross, may spread everywhere the reign of Christ.... (*Ad Gentes*, #1)

We see the Scriptures calling us to evangelize, the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council, the Popes, and our own Bishop:

We are all to be missionaries. We need to meet people where they are – to value them and their own experiences as preparations to receive the Good News of Jesus Christ. Then, we invite them to Jesus because we believe in this Christian life and we are happy living it. We want to share our joy with others. Just as missionaries of every generation have crossed oceans to bring truth to those who yearn for it, so must we help people see what fulfills the longing of every human heart. *Go and Announce the Gospel of the Lord*, Pastoral Letter of Bishop Earl Boyea, #52.

The call on our lives as followers of the Lord Jesus to evangelize is clear. It has been proclaimed to us literally by every level of the Church. We can see how this Great Commission is meant to be shared by all of the followers of the Lord Jesus. To do our part in this requires grace, that very grace given to us in our Confirmations, when we publically professed our identity to be soldiers of Christ, willing to live and die for Him. To proclaim His Good News is essential to that very identity. Let us plead with the Lord Jesus to give us greater missionary zeal, that we would be so obedient to the Lord Jesus' call to us in the Gospel that we too can proclaim with St. Paul: “Woe is me if I do not preach the Gospel!” (I Corinthians 9:16).

#### Reflection Questions:

For the individual: What can I do to better evangelize?

For the family: How can we as a family evangelize more?

For the parish: How can we as a parish be more effective as we evangelize?