

THE JOY OF THE GOSPEL  
Chapter I  
The Church's  
Missionary Transformation







# “GO FORTH”

“Evangelization takes place in obedience to the missionary mandate of Jesus: ‘Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations’.” (EG.19)

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“Each Christian  
and every community  
must discern the path that the Lord points out,  
but all of us are asked to obey his call  
to go forth from our own comfort zone  
in order to reach all the “peripheries”  
in need of the light of the Gospel.”

*EG 20*

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# A COMMUNITY OF MISSIONARY DISCIPLES TAKE THE FIRST STEP

“Evangelizers take on the smell of the sheep”

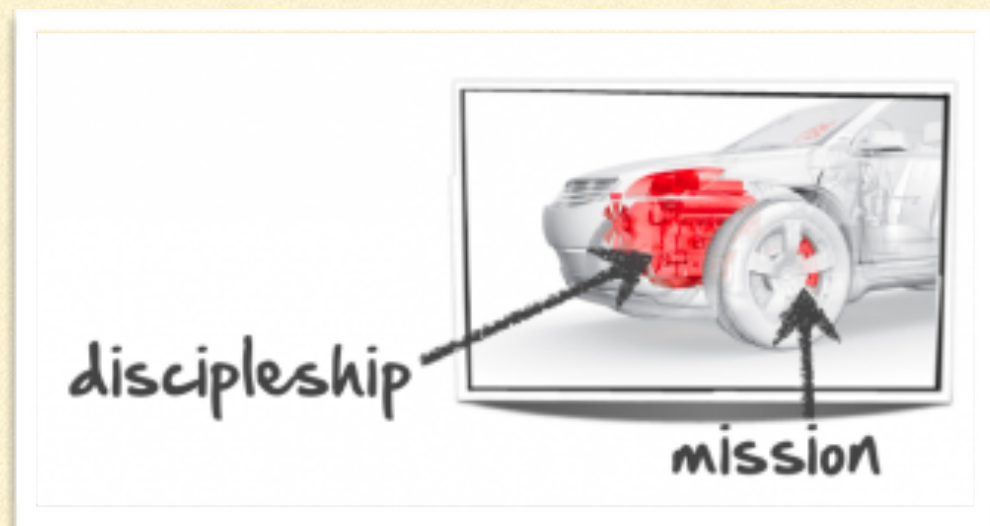
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Such a community

- Has an endless desire to show mercy
  - Gets involved by word and deed in people's daily lives; it builds bridges
  - Is supportive, standing by people at every step of the way, no matter how difficult or lengthy this may prove to be
  - Is familiar with patient expectation and apostolic endurance
  - Bears fruits of new life, however imperfect or incomplete these may be
  - Is filled with joy; it knows how to rejoice always and celebrates at every small victory.  
(EG 24)
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# THE IDEAL AND THE REALITY



“There are ecclesial structures which can hamper efforts at evangelization, **yet even good structures are only helpful when there is a life constantly driving, sustaining and assessing them.** Without new life and an authentic evangelical spirit, without the Church’s “fidelity to her own calling”, any new structure will soon prove ineffective.”

EG 26



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# “I DREAM OF A MISSIONARY OPTION...”

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I dream of a “missionary option”, that is, **a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything**, so that the Church’s customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today’s world rather than for her self-preservation. (EG 27)

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# A MISSIONARY PARISH

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Parish has potential for great flexibility

- Openness and missionary creativity of pastor and community
  - In contact with people and not a self-absorbed cluster
  - An environment for hearing hearing God's word, for growth in the Christian life, for dialogue, proclamation, charitable outreach, worship and celebration
  - A community of communities
  - A sanctuary and a centre of outreach
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# MISSIONARY SPIRIT AT ALL LEVELS OF CHURCH LIFE

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- Other church communities: “Do not lose contact with local parish” (EG 29)
  - Diocese: “concern for areas of greatest need... new social cultural settings” (EG 30)
  - Bishop: “Foster missionary communion; at times going before his people, at times in their midst, and times walking after them” (EG 31)
  - Papacy: “I am called to put in practice what I ask of others, so I too must think about a conversion of the papacy... Excessive centralization complicates the Church’s life and her missionary outreach.” (EG 32)
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# INVITATION TO ALL

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“I invite everyone to be bold and creative in this task of rethinking the goals, structures, style and methods of evangelization in their respective communities. ....The important thing is to not walk alone, but to rely on each other as brothers and sisters,” EG (33)



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# COMMUNICATING THE MESSAGE

## I. THE HEART OF THE GOSPEL

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“All revealed truths derive from the same divine source and are to be believed with the same faith, yet some of them are more important for giving direct expression to the heart of the Gospel. **In this basic core, what shines forth is the beauty of the saving love of God** made manifest in Jesus Christ who died and rose from the dead.” (EG 36)



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# COMMUNICATING THE MESSAGE

## 2. A FITTING SENSE OF PROPORTION

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- Keep moral teaching in context of basic message
  - Not obsessed with a multitude of doctrines
  - In preaching maintain a fitting sense of proportion
  - As far as external works are concerned, mercy is the greatest of all the virtues
  - Relate individual doctrines to basic message
  - “Before all else, the Gospel invites us to respond to the God of love who saves us, to see God in others and to go forth from ourselves to seek the good of others. Under no circumstance can this invitation be obscured!” (EG 39)
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# A CHURCH THAT GROWS

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“The Church is herself a missionary disciple; she needs to grow in her interpretation of the revealed word and in her understanding of truth.” (EG 40)

Learn from philosophy, theology, social sciences and pastoral practice (EG 40)

Renewal of forms of expression (EG 42)

Re-examine established customs (EG 43)

Sacramental practice: “I want to remind priests that the confessional must not be a torture chamber but rather an encounter with the Lord’s mercy which spurs us on to do our best.” (EG 44)

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# A MISSIONARY HEART

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“It [a missionary heart] realizes that it has to grow in its own understanding of the Gospel and in discerning the paths of the Spirit, and so it always does what good it can, even if in the process, its shoes get soiled by the mud of the street.” (EG 45)

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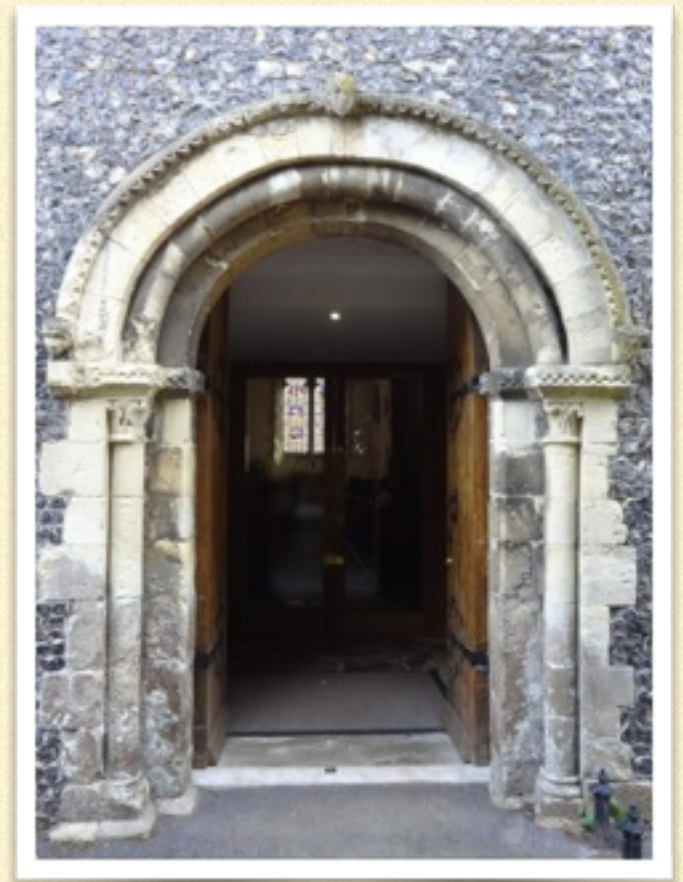
# A CHURCH THAT IS OPEN

“One concrete sign of such openness is that our church doors should always be open... nor should the doors of the sacraments be closed for simply any reason.

This is especially true of the sacrament which is itself “the door”: baptism.

The Eucharist, although it is the fullness of sacramental life, is not a prize for the perfect but a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak....

Frequently, we act as arbiters of grace rather than its facilitators.” (EG 47)





# AND FIRSTLY TO THE POOR



“If the whole Church takes up this missionary impulse, she has to go forth to everyone without exception. But to whom should she go first? When we read the Gospel we find a clear indication: not so much our friends and wealthy neighbours, but above all the poor and the sick, those who are usually despised and overlooked, “those who cannot repay you” (EG 48)



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# “LET US GO FORTH TO OFFER EVERYONE THE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST”

“If something should rightly disturb us and trouble our consciences, it is the fact that so many of our brothers and sisters are living without the strength, light and consolation born of friendship with Jesus Christ, without a community of faith to support them, without meaning and a goal in life.” (EG 49)

