

## New Evangelisation:

# Proclamation and Healings

Robert Canton

### What is Evangelisation?

The glossary to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* defines Evangelisation as “the proclamation of Christ and His Gospel by word and the testimony of life in fulfilment of Christ’s demands.”

Pope Paul VI, in his *Apostolic Exhortation “Evangelii Nuntiandi,”* or “On Evangelisation in the Modern World,” says, “Evangelising is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelise.” (14)

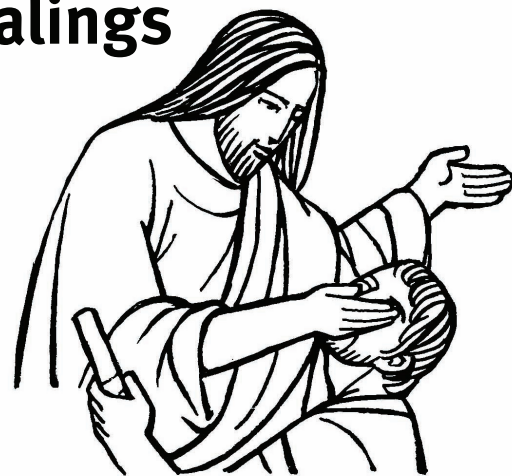
Blessed Pope John Paul II echoed this call by his predecessor by penning down an encyclical entitled *Redemptoris Missio* or “Mission of the Redeemer.” He states, “God is opening before the Church the horizon of a humanity more fully prepared for the sowing of the Gospel. I sense that the moment has come to commit all of the Church’s energies to a new evangelisation and to the mission *ad gentes*. No believer in Christ, no institution of the Church can avoid the supreme duty; to proclaim Christ to all peoples.” (3)

When he discussed the new evangelisation, Blessed Pope John Paul II was referring to a proclamation of the Good News which is and must always be new; “new in its ardour, new in its methods and expression, new intensity and enthusiasm, a new loyalty to Christ.”

### Why do we need the New Evangelisation?

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops states in its teachings on evangelisation: “The New Evangelisation offers hope. Jesus grants all people rest and comfort from this world’s burdens (Matt 11:28) by offering us the hope of salvation and eternal life. The New Evangelisation offers the gift of faith, hope, love, and the new life in Christ.”

In his *Apostolic Letter “Porta Fidei,”* proclaiming a “Year of Faith” which begins in October 11, 2012, Pope Benedict XVI also mentions the need for the new evangelisation. He says, “It is the love of Christ that fills our hearts and impels us to evangelise. Today as in the past, he sends us through the highways of the world to proclaim his Gospel to all



the peoples of the earth (cf. Mt 28:19). Through his love, Jesus Christ attracts to himself the people of every generation: in every age he convokes the Church, entrusting her with the proclamation of the Gospel by a mandate that is ever new” (7).

“Where does healing come in?” you may ask. This was what Pope Paul VI also says in *Evangelii Nuntiandi*: “But Christ also carries out this proclamation by innumerable signs which amaze the crowds and at the same time draw them to Him in order to see Him, listen to Him and allow themselves to be transformed by Him; the sick are cured, water is changed into wine, bread is multiplied, the dead come back to life. And among all these signs, there is the one which He attaches great importance: the humble and the poor are evangelised” (12).

Healing is definitely Good News. It is undoubtedly one of the best tools for evangelisation. Jesus is the Master Healer and He had a unique method of evangelism. He would preach the gospel and then heal the sick and cast out demons to confirm His message. In *Matthew 10:7-8*, Jesus says to His disciples, “As you go, make this proclamation: ‘The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, drive out demons.’”

Pope Benedict XVI, in his book *Jesus of Nazareth*, states that “Healing is an essential dimension of the apostolic mission and of Christian faith in general. Eugen Biser even goes so far as to call Christianity a ‘therapeutic religion’—a religion of healing.”

In my humble capacity as a lay person with a healing ministry, I had the privilege to preach and minister in over 40 countries so far including non-Christian countries such as South Korea, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, and in United Arab Emirates and I had witnessed the

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lame walking, the deaf hearing, the blind seeing, tumours and abnormal growths disappearing, and those oppressed by evil spirits being set free by the Lord Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit. Most importantly, many have received spiritual healing which for me, is the most important healing of all because it restores a person to a relationship with God.

Certainly, healing is one of the most effective answers to the challenges posed by Blessed Pope John Paul II: “To go out to the deep for a catch,” a challenge which he issued to the faithful in his *Apostolic Letter “Novo Millennio Ineunte,”* and to his call “to commit all the Church’s energies to New Evangelisation,” as contained in his encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*.

For us to be vessels that are more effective for God’s healing power, certain principles are necessary as our guide. The acronym for these principles is “LOOK FAR.”

1. Live in love. This is what St Paul says to the Ephesians in 5:2. If we want the healing power of God to flow through us, first, we must be passionate lovers of God, and lovers of the person next to us. To obtain the capacity to love as Jesus did, we must put Jesus at the very centre of our lives, permeating the very core of our being. Jesus heals because of His love and compassion for His people. In *Matthew 14:14*, we read: “When He disembarked and saw the vast crowd, His heart was moved with pity for them, and He cured their sick.”

2. Obedience to the Lord. In 1 Samuel 15:22, the Lord says: “Obedience is better than sacrifice, and submission than the fat of rams.” When we totally obey the leadings of the Holy Spirit, we will witness the glory of God, healings and miracles will follow us. Two months ago, while ministering healing in Jakarta, Indonesia attended by thousands, many came in wheelchairs. I “heard” the voice of the Lord in my heart saying, “My son, command those in wheelchairs to stand and walk in my Name.” The moment I obeyed His commands, we witnessed many lame people came out of the wheelchairs and started walking normally. There was a great manifestation of God’s glory in that place.


3. Openness to the Holy Spirit’s power. “And do not get drunk on wine in which lies debauchery but be filled with the Holy Spirit” (Eph 5:18). When Jesus was still walking on this Earth, He was a Miracle Worker par excellence. He was anointed by the Holy Spirit, led by the Holy Spirit and ministered in the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus was truly God and truly man. Nevertheless, in His humanity, He had to rely on the power of the Holy Spirit to do His works. Jesus says: “Amen, amen, I say to you, a Son cannot do anything on His own, but only what He sees His

Father doing; for what He does, His Son will do also” (Jn 5:19). Jesus shared His healings, preachings and teachings under the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

4. Kingdom living. In *Mark 1:15*, Jesus says: “The Kingdom of God is at hand.” Kingdom living means living a life of holiness and purity. The Lord says in *Ecclesiastes 9:8*, “At all times, let your garments be white.” “Be holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy.” (Lev 19:2). Holiness means to stand blameless in the sight of God. Blessed John Paul II states in his *Apostolic Letter “Novo Millennio Ineunte,”* that “holiness is not only a state but a task, whereby Christians should strive for a full Christian life, imitating Christ, the Son of God, who gave his life for God and for his neighbour.”

5. Faith, according to *Hebrews 11:1*, “is the realisation of what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen.” Jesus says in the *Gospel of John 14:12*: “Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes in me will do the works that I do, and will do greater ones than these, because I am going to the Father.” I believe that one of the reasons why healings and miracles are not being manifested in the lives of many Christians is lack of faith; faith in Jesus, faith in His words and power.

6. “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened” (Matt 7:7). Clearly, these words of Jesus remind us to be persistent and to persevere in our prayers. We should not give up too easily if we do not perceive immediate results to our prayers. Healing comes as an answer to prayer.

7. Receive the Lord’s healing promises with enthusiasm and expectant faith. “Bless the Lord, all my soul; do not forget all the gifts of God, who pardons all your sins, heals all your ills,” (Ps 103:2-3); “For I will restore you to health; of your wounds I will heal you, says the Lord.” (Jer 30:17); “In their distress they cried to the Lord, who saved them in their peril, sent forth the word to heal them, snatched them from their grave” (Ps 107:19-20). These are but few passages of God’s healing promises found in the Scriptures. The Catechism of the Catholic Church #1503, states, “Christ’s compassion toward the sick and his many healings of every kind of infirmity are a resplendent sign that ‘God has visited his people’ and that the Kingdom of God is close at hand. Jesus has the power not only to heal, but also to forgive sins; he has come to heal the whole man, soul and body; he is the physician the sick have need of.” 

## The gift of communication: are we being understood?

■ Ann Brereton

We know God's love because He chose to communicate it with us. This active love communication between Him, the Creator and us, His creatures promises to draw us deeper into the fulfillment of an intimacy, which leads to union.

Communication deals with the transmission and reception of a message. If the recipient receives a message the way it was intended, good communication has occurred. When true communication is exercised a deep connection will be experienced by all participants. A communication of love will always bring us to intimacy—the depth of that intimacy depends on the depth of the communication exchanged.

In creating the world, God was communicating His divine plan. Adam and Eve were created to know and love God and invited them to share in His intimate life. Through sin, the communication between God and man was broken. Man's disobedience opened a chasm between God and humanity. However, the love-language of God continued to speak through His prophets, promising to send One who would restore communication and therefore intimacy with Him.

His communication is self-disclosure and through this discourse, man is given a glimpse of the splendour of the Divine Goodness. This act of self-giving creates communion and, through Jesus, communion with God becomes a possibility in our lives. Jesus gives us a share in His divine nature.

Communication is both a God-given gift and a skill. We communicate on many different levels, in many different ways. The most common, being through the spoken and written word (language), and the senses. Often, we fail to see the immense responsibility and gift that communication is. Am I truly aware that the way I communicate today has the potential to change the world of tomorrow? What is achieved through the action of the Holy Spirit? However, we need to be co-workers in this action. There are many simple ways to develop continual communication between ourselves and God. Here are a few suggestions.

Before engaging in any activity, stop for a moment and glance inwardly, to He who lives within. Reconnect with Him through a word or phrase.

When engaging in any type of reading (spiritual or otherwise), before turning the page, take a moment to reconnect to the Sacred Presence within. Become aware that He is communicating with you through these words.

The written word today is more prolific than ever before (thanks to the Internet). Cyber space reaches the ends of the earth with the ability to build up or tear down. Perhaps we could ask ourselves, as I send emails, am I aware of the power in this form of communication. Are the words I write encouraging and life giving? Do they give glory to God?

Before pressing the send button on an email, take that inward journey: "Lord bless the one who will receive this message. Would you have me add or change anything that I have written?"

Practicing this discipline can help draw us into a deeper level of communication, to deeper intimacy with God and others.

The art of communication is the language of good leadership. It is the pathway that connects people with others. To be an effective leader in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, it is essential to have

excellent communication skills. A leader must be able to share knowledge and ideas with a sense of urgency, to get a message across clearly and to encourage and motivate others to act on it.

### Active listening

As leaders, we can wrongly assume that when a person shares a difficulty, we need to give a solution to correct it. Active listening is not about having the answer but is about sincerely connecting to the other with warmth, empathy, undivided attention and an acceptance of who they are at this moment. We also rely on the Holy Spirit to help us to hear and understand the total message of what they are expressing. Feed back to them what you understand they are communicating to clarify that you have understood correctly.

Jesus shows us the art of active listening in *John* 4:1–41 (The Woman at the Well). He sincerely connected to this woman. He understood her non-verbal language (coming alone in the middle of the day to avoid the gossipers). He empathised with her in her pain, listened and passed no judgement. His acceptance of her gave her the courage to be honest with Him and ultimately to change her life.

### Clear communication

This is particularly important in times of correction. During these times, our message needs to be clear and precise. Our motives need to be pure. Any space created by the failure to communicate effectively can soon be filled with misunderstanding and confusion. It can become a foothold for Satan to do his work.

### Self-expression

This gives others the opportunity to see into our hearts. When expressing our feelings, in a holistic way, we emotionally connect with others. Jesus "wept at the death of Lazarus" (Jn 11:35). He was moved with pity for the leper (Mk 1:41). Jesus expressed his compassion, not only in the words he used, but also by touching this man, who was an outcast and would not have felt the touch of another human for many years.

"Excellent communicators are not born—they are trained." As leaders, it is our responsibility to enhance our communication skills. Ask yourself, "Am I being understood clearly? Do I need further training?" In answer to these questions, ask for feedback from others who will give you an honest opinion.

At the end of each day, reflect on how you have communicated with others: "The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks" (Lk 6:45). Be open to the Holy Spirit showing you areas where you could use improvement. If possible, watch replays of presentations you have given—be open and honest in your summation. What worked? What could you have improved?

When accepting the role of leadership in CCR I was given these words of wisdom: "Be yourself. Sincerely connect with the people. Trust God and everything else is just details." Our lives may be the only gospel someone will ever read. Are we communicating the Good News of Jesus Christ in our lives? Communication is a powerful gift. Let us use it to build the Kingdom of God for His Greater Glory. 🙏



## QUESTIONS TO THE ICCRS DOCTRINAL COMMISSION

The ICCRS Doctrinal Commission, currently headed by Dr. Mary Healy, is in consultation with theologians and experts from around the world.

If you have a question about the CCR, please send it to [newsletter@iccrs.org](mailto:newsletter@iccrs.org)

# Should I pray for baptism in the Spirit for people living in a situation of sin?

Baptism in the Holy Spirit is the love of the Father poured into one's heart. For the human heart to be rightly disposed to receiving this divine love, the person must be able to declare like the psalmist: "My heart is ready, O God; my heart is ready!" (Ps 57:8). But what happens when someone who desires to receive baptism in the Spirit also wishes to persist in a "situation of sin"? In such a case we are facing a heart in crisis—a heart in conflict over readiness, since the key to readiness is repentance.

For example, what if a man and woman who are living together outside of marriage come to a Life in the Spirit Seminar and want to receive prayer for baptism in the Spirit? Those responsible for the Seminar must firmly but lovingly invite the couple to repentance and to the concrete action that manifests repentance—in this case, either marrying or ceasing to live together. If they are not willing to do so, then to pray over them for baptism in the Spirit would not be consonant with the requirement of a "ready heart."

The fact that repentance is necessary to dispose people for baptism in the Holy Spirit is revealed in God's own providential sequence: John-before-Jesus. To prepare for the mission of his Son, our heavenly Father set up a prerequisite. The *Gospel of Luke* portrays the coming of John the Baptist, the precursor, in preparation for the coming of Jesus (Lk 1:5-80; 3:1-22). John, whose mission was the baptism of repentance, was sent ahead of Jesus whose mission (as John described it) was baptism in the Holy Spirit (Matt 3:11). John was sent to ensure that the soil of Israel's heart would be plowed through repentance, so as to prepare the way for Jesus, the source of new life in the Holy Spirit. John-before-Jesus is an unmistakable principle in God's plan of salvation.

Peter did not hesitate to apply this principle on Pentecost morning, as the Spirit was poured forth in fulfillment of Joel's prophecy. Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, exhorted the crowd to "repent and be baptised" so as to receive forgiveness and the gift of the Holy Spirit. "Save yourselves," he said to the multitude, confirming that the handle to the door of one's heart is on the inside, and each individual must freely choose to open it (see Rev 3:20). Three thousand in the crowd "accepted his message

and were baptised," while apparently others did not (Acts 2:41).

Peter thus established a timeless pastoral principle for ministering to the work of the Spirit. The Catholic Charismatic Renewal follows this principle by having the fourth session of the Life in the Spirit Seminar focus on *metanoia*—repentance or "turning away" from anything that may block our relationship with God. This has been the pattern ever since the first publication on the Seminar more than forty years ago (*Life in the Spirit Seminar Team Manual*, 1971). The strategic placement of the call to repentance—just before the session in which people are prayed with to receive baptism in the Holy Spirit—reflects a foundational understanding in the Renewal.

**“Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, exhorted the crowd to ‘repent and be baptised’ so as to receive forgiveness and the gift of the Holy Spirit.”**



the Holy Spirit rather than receiving him, while at the same time implicitly opening a path for disruption of the charismatic community or prayer group.

Some of the "situations of sin" that we may encounter are very difficult—for example, the case of someone who has divorced and remarried without an annulment. Nevertheless, those who would wish to pray for baptism in the Holy Spirit must hold back their hands and lift up their own hearts to the Lord, once this circumstance is disclosed. Clearly it is a conundrum that only Christ can solve... only the One who has received "all power in heaven and on earth" (Matt 28:18).

The Lord sometimes removes barriers to repentance in surprising ways, especially through intercessory prayer. Solutions can come from we know not where. We do know, however, that our own role in these matters must be humble and circumscribed. It remains wise pastoral practice to lead people to authentic repentance before praying over them for baptism in the Holy Spirit. 🕯