

Synod of Bishops 2012  
The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith

October 13, 2012

**The Event of a Different Humanity, Capable of Reawakening Interest in the Faith**

Speech by Julián Carrón

Most Holy Father,  
Venerable Fathers,  
Brothers and Sisters:

The Synod on the New Evangelization and the *Year of Faith* derive from the same conviction: that we cannot continue to “think of the faith as a self-evident presupposition for life in society. In reality, not only can this presupposition no longer be taken for granted, but it is often openly denied” (*Porta fidei*, 2). If faith can no longer be taken for granted, then the first urgent question is how to reawaken interest in faith and Christianity in the people of our time. The privileged place where this can happen is daily life, where as Christians we enter into a relationship with our fellow human beings.

In reading the *Instrumentum laboris*, which contains many precious indications for our task, I was struck by this observation: “many responses [to the *Lineamenta*] voice a concern on the scarcity of initial proclamation taking place every day in neighborhoods and the workplace.” It seems to me that this appraisal, which emerges in many responses, touches on a sore point, and indicates the challenge that we find ourselves facing.

Despite all of the attempts made in recent decades to improve the instruments of the transmission of the faith, the observation is simple: all of the effort put forth thus far has struggled in generating a newness of life that awakens in neighbors and colleagues a curiosity toward what the baptized live in daily life (neighborhoods and the workplace). This says a great deal about the difficulty that we find ourselves facing today as a Church: how to overcome that fracture between faith and life, which makes it more difficult for faith to be encountered in a reasonable way, and therefore attractive in daily life. If we do not succeed in approaching the issue with clarity, then we will continue to make enormous efforts without responding adequately to the root of the problem.

Here lies, in my opinion, the profound link between the *Year of Faith* and the New Evangelization. In fact, without “rediscovering and receiving once again this precious gift

which is faith,” which renders each baptized person a “new creation” able to demonstrate the beauty of an existence lived in the faith, the new evangelization runs the risk of being reduced to a question of experts and a discussion about instruments, rather than occurring as a personal and ecclesial experience capable of reawakening in people an interest in the faith.

In order to provoke this interest, we have an ally inside each person, of any culture or condition. We know that the heart of man is made for the infinite. And this desire, even if it is buried under a thousand distractions and errors, is indelible. There always remains in man the expectation of fulfillment. Because no “false infinite” – to use Benedict XVI’s expression – with which the human being, many times, identifies his fulfillment, succeeds in satisfying him. “What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world yet lose himself? Or what can one give in exchange for himself?” (*Mt 16:26*).

The response to this expectation, however, cannot simply be a doctrine, collection of rules, or organization, but rather the event of a different humanity. As Fr. Giussani said during the Synod on the Laity in 1987, “It is not so much that verbal or cultural repetition of the annunciation is missing. Man today expects perhaps unconsciously the experience of the encounter with people for whom the fact of Christ is such a present reality that their life is changed. What will shake today’s man is a human impact, an event that echoes the initial event, when Jesus raised His eyes and said, ‘Zacchaeus, hurry down. I mean to stay at your house today.’” Then as now, only a new creation, a witness of a life changed, can once again provoke curiosity about Christianity: to see realized that fullness that one desires to attain, but doesn’t know how. It will take new men who create places where everyone can be invited to verify what the first disciples verified on the bank of the Jordan: “Come and see,” because “only a faith arising from life experience and confirmed by it (and, therefore, relevant to life’s needs) can be sufficiently strong to survive in a world where *everything* points in the opposite direction” (L. Giussani, *The Risk of Education*).