

Participating in the Church's Evangelizing Mission

**Baptism unites us with Christ,
making us part of his body, the Church.
Through Baptism,
every Christian shares in the Church's mission to evangelize,
that is, to proclaim the Good News of Christ's Gospel with their lives.**

Your Experience

Someone whose kindness to me reflects the Gospel of Jesus...

What is your favourite Gospel story or passage, and how does it help you live as a person of faith?

What Vatican II Says

Therefore, even when occupied with temporal affairs, the laity can and must be involved in the precious work of evangelizing the world.

Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium), No. 35.

... [the laity's] apostolate is exercised when they work to evangelize people and make them holy; it is exercised, too, when they endeavor to have the Gospel spirit permeate and improve the temporal order, going about it in a way that bears clear witness to Christ and helps forward the salvation of humanity.

Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People (Apostolicam Actuositatem) No. 2.

Lay people have countless opportunities for exercising the apostolate of evangelization and sanctification. The very witness of a Christian life, and good works done in a supernatural spirit, are effective in drawing women and men to the faith and to God; and that is what the Lord has said: "Your light must shine so brightly before people that they can see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Mt 5, 16).

Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People, (Apostolicam Actuositatem) No. 5.

What the Catechism Says

905 Lay people also fulfill their prophetic mission by evangelization, "that is, the proclamation of Christ by word and the testimony of life." For lay people, "this evangelization . . . acquires a specific property and peculiar efficacy because it is accomplished in the ordinary circumstances of the world."⁴⁴⁰

Your Experience

What obstacles keep us from spreading the Good News with our words and lives?

How can we help one another to overcome these obstacles?

Praying Your Experience

You have been reflecting on your call to proclaim the Gospel with your daily life.
Please use the space below to bring to God what is in your heart.

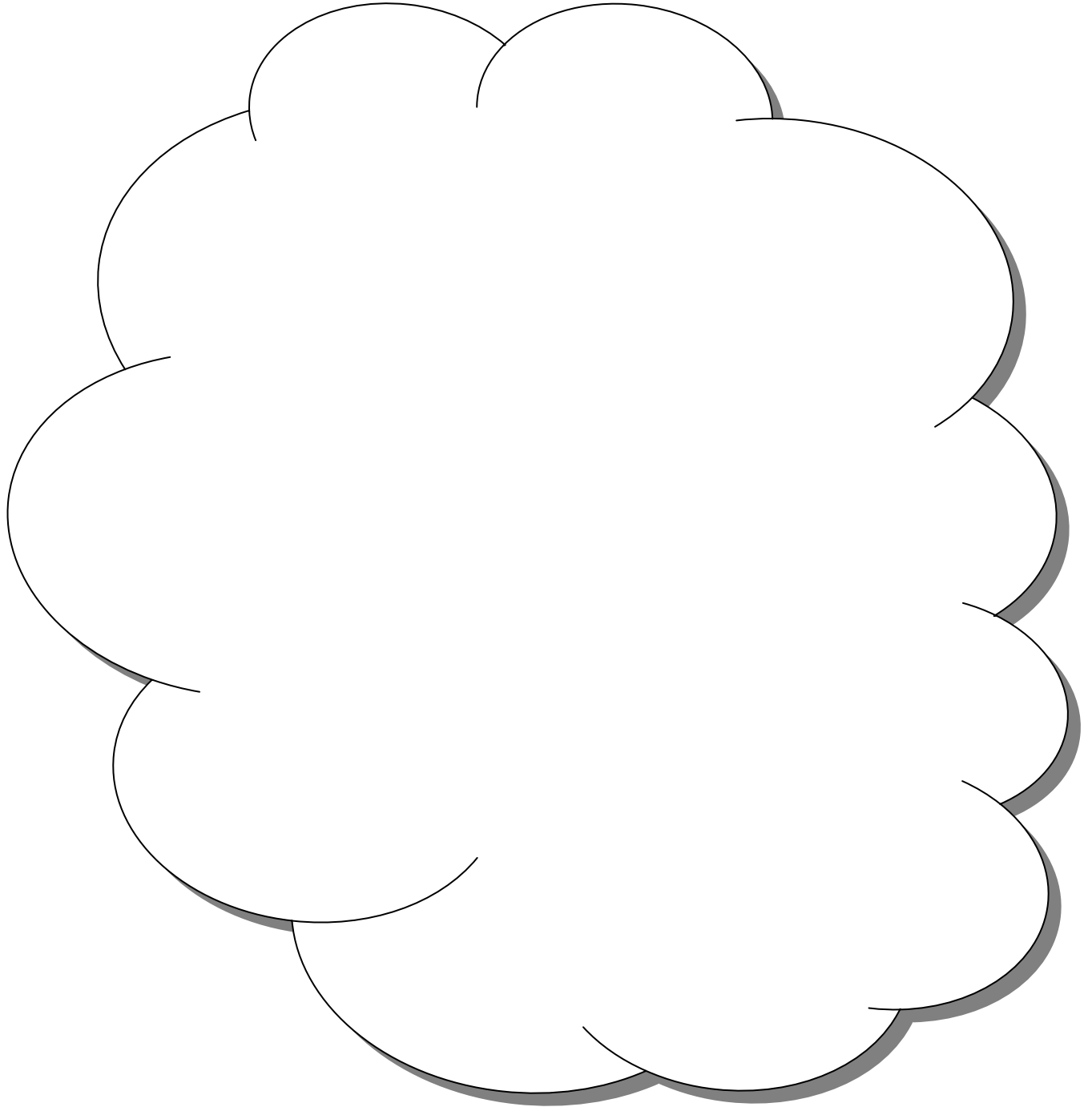
Thank you, God...

Help me, Lord...

Amen

Integrating Activity

Draw an image or write a poem, word or phrase
that reflects what it means for you
to share in the Church's evangelizing mission.



Further Reading

One cannot fail to stress the evangelizing action of the family in the evangelizing apostolate of the laity. At different moments in the Church's history and also in the Second Vatican Council, the family has well deserved the beautiful name of "domestic Church." This means that there should be found in every Christian family the various aspects of the entire Church. Furthermore, the family, like the Church, ought to be a place where the Gospel is transmitted and from which the Gospel radiates. In a family which is conscious of this mission, all the members evangelize and are evangelized. The parents not only communicate the Gospel to their children, but from their children they can themselves receive the same Gospel as deeply lived by them. And such a family becomes the evangelizer of many other families, and of the neighborhood of which it forms part. Families resulting from a mixed [interdenominational] marriage also have the duty of proclaiming Christ to the children in the fullness of the consequences of a common Baptism; they have moreover the difficult task of becoming builders of unity.

Pope Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, No. 70

The apostolate of the laity derives from their Christian vocation and the Church can never be without it. Sacred Scripture clearly shows how spontaneous and fruitful such activity was at the very beginning of the Church (cf. Acts 11:19-21; 18:26; Rom. 16:1-16; Phil. 4:3).

Second Vatican Council, *Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People (Apostolicam Actuositatem)*, No. 1.

The whole Church, Pastors and lay faithful alike, standing on the threshold of the Third Millennium, ought to feel more strongly the Church's responsibility to obey the command of Christ, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation" (Mk 16,15), and take up anew the missionary endeavour. A great venture, both challenging and wonderful, is entrusted to the Church –that of a *re-evangelization*, which is so much needed by the present world. The lay faithful ought to regard themselves as an active and responsible part of this venture, called as they are to proclaim and to live the gospel in service to the person and to society while respecting the totality of the values and needs of both.

Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *On the Mission and Vocation of the Lay Faithful (Christifideles Laici)*, No. 64.

To nourish ourselves with the word in order to be servants of the word in the work of evangelization: this is surely a priority for the Church at the dawn of the new millennium. Even in countries evangelized many centuries ago, the reality of a "Christian society" which, ... measured itself explicitly on Gospel values, is now gone. ...Over the years, I have often repeated the summons to the *new evangelization*. I do so again now, especially in order to insist that we must ... allow ourselves to be filled with the ardour of the apostolic preaching which followed Pentecost. We must revive in ourselves the burning conviction of Paul, who cried out: "Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel" (1 Cor 9:16).

This passion will not fail to stir in the Church a new sense of mission, which cannot be left to a group of "specialists" but must involve the responsibility of all the members of

the People of God. Those who have come into genuine contact with Christ cannot keep him for themselves, they must proclaim him. A new apostolic outreach is needed, which will be lived as *the everyday commitment of Christian communities and groups*.

Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, No. 40.

...the mandate to evangelize does not only concern a few but rather all of the baptized.

Pope Benedict XVI, *Opening of the Pastoral Convention of the Diocese of Rome on the Theme: "Church Membership and Pastoral Co-Responsibility."* Tuesday May 26, 2009.