

Teaching for Parish Evangelisation Cells System (PECS) – No. 100

THEME: Christian Identity spurs on to Mission

What has inspired the choice of the above theme and the texts below for the celebration of the fifth anniversary of the Parish Evangelisation Cells (PECS) at Holy Innocents’?

Pope Saint John Paul (1978-2005) earnestly urged the Catholic Church to undertake a “renewed missionary commitment.” Missionary activity renews the Church; it revitalises faith and Christian identity. “All renewal in the Church must have mission as its goal if it is not to fall prey to a kind of ecclesial introversion [Church navel-gazing].”¹

On 30 November 2019, the Catholic Church will celebrate the hundredth anniversary of the Apostolic Letter **Maximum illud** issued by Pope Benedict XV (1914-1922) on 30 November 1919 with which he sought to give new impetus to the missionary task of proclaiming the Gospel. As is traditional with such documents, it takes its title from the opening words of the original Latin text, meaning “that momentous”. Benedict begins by recalling “that momentous and holy charge” found in Mark 16:15: “Go into all the world and proclaim [preach] the good news [gospel] to all creation.”

On the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of Pope Benedict’s Apostolic Letter, Pope Francis has called for an Extraordinary Missionary Month to be celebrated in October, entitled **Baptised and sent: the Church of Christ on mission in the world**, with the aim of fostering our awareness of making disciples and enabling us “to take to heart the proclamation of the gospel” and to help our parishes “grow in missionary and evangelising zeal.”

Key Texts

1. Exodus 19:5-6

“... if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”

2. 1 Peter 2:9

“... you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s possession, in order that you may proclaim the mighty deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.”

3. Dogmatic² Constitution³ on the Church of the Second Vatican Council, Lumen Gentium [Christ is the light of humanity], n.10

¹ Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation The Joy of the Gospel, no. 27

² **Dogma** [from Greek *dogma*, declaration, decree, commandment, ordinance, or requirement] is a doctrine taught by the Church to be believed by all the faithful as part of God’s revelation. Therefore, all dogmas are formally revealed truths and proclaimed as such. They are revealed either in **Scripture** or **Tradition**, either explicitly (as the Incarnation; the son of God took flesh) or implicitly (as the Immaculate Conception or the Assumption of Our Lady).

³ **Constitution** is a document issued by an ecumenical [from Greek *oikoumene* (inhabited), in Latin *oecumenicus*] or universal council and approved by the Pope, containing the positive teaching of the Church. Among the documents of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), the constitutions are either unqualified, on the liturgy; or dogmatic, on the Church and Divine Revelation; or pastoral, on the Church in the modern world.

“Christ the Lord, High Priest taken from among men, made the new people "a kingdom and priests to God the Father". The baptized, by regeneration [rebirth] and the anointing of the Holy Spirit, are consecrated as a spiritual house and a holy priesthood, in order that ... they may... proclaim the power of Him who has called them out of darkness into His marvellous light. Therefore all the disciples of Christ... must bear witness to Christ and give an answer to those who seek an account of that hope of eternal life which is in them.

Though they differ from one another in essence and not only in degree, the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial... priesthood are nonetheless interrelated: each of them in its own special way is a participation in the one priesthood of Christ. The ministerial priest, by the sacred power he enjoys, teaches and rules [leads] the priestly people; acting in the person of Christ, he makes present the Eucharistic sacrifice, and offers it to God in the name of all the people. But the faithful, in virtue of their royal priesthood, join in the offering of the Eucharist. They likewise exercise that priesthood in receiving the sacraments, in prayer and thanksgiving, in the witness of a holy life, and by self-denial and active charity.”

4. Catechism of the Catholic Church – nos. 1546, 1547

“Christ, high priest and unique mediator, has made of the Church "a kingdom, priests for his God and Father." The whole community of believers is, as such, priestly. The faithful exercise their baptismal priesthood through their participation, each according to his own vocation, in Christ's mission as priest, prophet, and king. Through the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation the faithful are "consecrated to be . . . a holy priesthood."

“The ministerial... priesthood of bishops and priests, and the common priesthood of all the faithful participate, "each in its own proper way, in the one priesthood of Christ." While being "ordered one to another," they differ essentially. In what sense? While the common priesthood of the faithful is exercised by the unfolding of baptismal grace - a life of faith, hope, and charity, a life according to the Spirit - , the ministerial priesthood is at the service of the common priesthood. It is directed at the unfolding of the baptismal grace of all Christians. The ministerial priesthood is a means by which Christ unceasingly builds up and leads his Church. For this reason it is transmitted by its own sacrament, the sacrament of Holy Orders.”

5. The Rite of Baptism – Effects of Baptism

Celebrant: “God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has freed you from sin, given you a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit and welcomed you into his holy people. He now anoints you with chrism of salvation. As Christ was anointed Priest, Prophet, and King, so may you live always as a member of his body, sharing everlasting life.”

All: “Amen.”

Group Question

How can we make our parish grow ever stronger in its mission, or outreach of evangelisation or re-evangelisation?