

---

# The New Evangelisation

---

## THE NEW EVANGELISATION

### *The Last Word In Conciliar Fashion*

The New Evangelisation is now in fashion again. Faced with the dramatic and undeniable decline of the Catholic Church following the Second Vatican Council, Church authorities are promoting the New Evangelisation as the strategy that will finally bring about the intended fruits of the Second Vatican Council - a full fifty years after its opening session. In reality, however, this latest initiative is probably the last great project the Conciliar Church can launch before it slides into global irrelevance.

#### What Is The New Evangelisation?

The New Evangelisation is not new. It is a term that has appeared in numerous official documents of the Church since the Second Vatican Council - the latest being the *Lineamenta* (Lines of Thought) published on 2nd February 2011. The *Lineamenta* brings together all the work published on the subject since the Second Vatican Council as a discussion document for the XIII<sup>th</sup> Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops due to meet in October 2012.

A best attempt to distil a definition of the New Evangelisation from the imprecise text of the *Lineamenta* yielded the following: *The New Evangelisation is the ordering of every aspect of the Church's activity (preaching, catechesis, liturgy, the sacramental life, popular piety and the witness of a Christian life) to transmit the faith to those who have drifted from the Church in traditionally Christian countries.*

#### Why The New Evangelisation Will Fail

There is nothing revolutionary in this definition of the New Evangelisation, but the initiative is bound to fail because it is based on the same erroneous principle that underpins the new theology of the Second Vatican Council - namely that man, by his natural inclination and natural powers, can attain to his final destiny which is union with God in the beatific vision.

Henri de Lubac S.J. is the father of this new theology (see *Surnaturel* [1946]). His reasoning can be summarised as follows:

1. The desire for God is in all men. Now, what is in all men is natural to man. Therefore, the desire for

God is natural to man.

2. Where there is a natural desire in man, there are natural means for satisfying this desire in man (otherwise God would be unjust if he made us want something we could never attain). Now, the desire for God is natural in man. Therefore, the means for satisfying the desire for God are natural in man.

While this might seem fairly straight forward and uninteresting to most readers, the consequences of the second conclusion are in fact dramatic. By saying that every man is born with the means to satisfying his desire for God, de Lubac implies that every man is born with the means of attaining the beatific vision. By this implication, de Lubac destroys the distinction between the natural order and the supernatural order, he destroys the necessity of grace (as understood as a supernatural gift necessary for our salvation), supernatural virtues and gifts; he also implicitly denies the wounds of original sin which make men tend away from God unless helped by actual and habitual grace.

His fundamental error was not to distinguish between a natural desire for God which is limited to a desire of God as first cause of the universe and a supernatural desire for God which is by the infused, supernatural virtue of charity.

A sign of the prevalence of this new theology in the Second Vatican Council is the scarcity of the word 'supernatural' in the major Council documents. In *Gaudium et Spes* (*Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*) and *Dignitatis Humanae* (*Declaration on Religious Freedom*) it is not used even once. It is used once in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*) and twice in passing in *Lumen Gentium* (*Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*).

#### Wrong Idea of Faith

The consequences of de Lubac's error go very far. In relation to faith, instead of seeing it as an infused supernatural, intellectual virtue by which we give assent to all that God has revealed (i.e.

---

## The New Evangelisation

---

Catholic doctrine) because of His authority, faith is seen as something natural which originates from the natural desire for God. It resides not in the intellect, but among the passions as an experience, an awakening, an emotional response to an exterior stimulus (see *Pascendi* §7). This faith experience is called a 'faith-encounter' - the term is a favourite of Pope Benedict XVI.

In the *Lineamenta* the notion of faith-encounter is described in several places:

Transmitting the faith means to create in every place and time the conditions for this personal encounter of individuals with Jesus Christ. (Chp.2)

The faith-encounter with the person of Jesus Christ is a relationship with him, "remembering him" (in the Eucharist) and, through the grace of the Spirit, having in us the mind of Jesus Christ. (Chp.2)

Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction. (Chp.2)

Since the celebration of the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church has rediscovered that transmitting the faith is a personal encounter with Christ, which is done by means of the Sacred Scripture and Church's living Tradition, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. (*Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation Dei Verbum*, 7ff.) (Chp.2)

Incidentally, while grace is acknowledged as a cause of the faith-encounter, it is not the grace of traditional Catholic theology. The grace of the new theology is one which makes man more human (and so more divine). It is co-natural (of the same nature) with man (see *Gaudium et Spes* §22).

By reducing faith to an experience, it becomes entirely subjective - varying from man to man. This in turn means that dogma, while attempting to express an unchanging truth, is reduced to formulae which stimulate the faith-experience. But then, as man changes through the ages, dogma should also change so that it remains an effective stimulant for man. And so by reducing faith to the natural order and turning it into an experience, the new theology undermines whole system of Catholic doctrine (see *Pascendi* §12).

Any evangelisation, therefore, which seeks to stimulate a faith-

encounter in a soul instead of disposing it to the reception of the supernatural virtue of faith, far from transmitting the faith, will end up destroying what little faith there remains in the Church.

### Wrong Idea Of Religious Liberty

In relation to religious liberty, instead of the Church condemning error and preventing the public practice of non-Catholic religions where the common good is served, the new theology holds that: if all men (a) are born with a natural desire for the beatific vision, (b) possess by their nature all they need to arrive at the beatific vision and (c) naturally tend to the object of their desire, then they must be already co-natural with God (they must already be divinised by the fact that they have human nature), and must be left free to make their own way to the beatific vision because the search and acceptance of truth must be free (see *Dignitas Humanae* Chp.3).

In the *Lineamenta* these errors are manifest in the following passage:

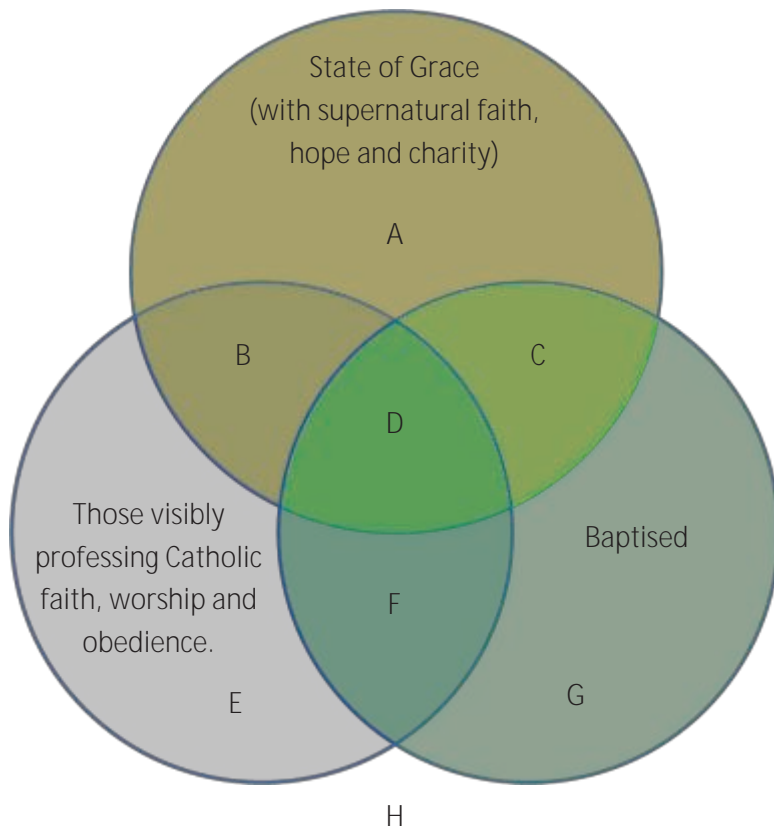
Others, especially among other Christian confessions, are suspicious that a "new evangelisation" camouflages the Church's intention to proselytize. Still others tend to think that the term might lead to a change in the Church's attitude towards non-believers, turning them into participants in a debate and no longer partners in a dialogue which sees us as sharers in the same humanity in search of the truth about existence.

As believers, we must also show concern for persons who call themselves agnostic or atheists, who may have fears when we speak of a "new evangelisation", thinking that they are the primary objective of the Church's missionary activity. (Chp.1)

It is an astonishing thing to state that, for fear of upsetting non-Catholics, the goal of the New Evangelisation has nothing to do with making converts to the one, true Church outside of which there is no salvation (Lateran IV D802). Its goal is endless non-judgmental dialogue which will inevitably result in endless boredom and indifference. Furthermore, the reality of original sin which inclines man away from God is completely ignored. Left entirely unguided, man will not tend to God; he needs clear direction.

(Continued on page 6)

# The New Evangelisation



<u>KEY</u>	
<i>(N.B. The relative areas do not indicate the relative numbers of souls in each category)</i>	
A.	Invincibly ignorant, unbaptised, non-practicing souls in a state of grace.
B.	Catechumens in a state of grace.
C.	Invincibly ignorant, validly baptised protestants/ schismatics in a state of grace.
D.	Baptised practicing Catholics in a state of grace.
E.	Catechumens in a state of mortal sin.
F.	Practicing Catholics in a state of mortal sin.
G.	Validly baptised protestants/ schismatics/ excommunicates in a state of mortal sin.
H.	Everyone else.

*Figure 1 :The Different States of Souls According to Pius XII's Mystici Corporis. Traditional evangelisation disposes souls to the reception of the sanctifying grace. Once in a state of grace, a soul is a member of the Mystical Body of Christ and there exists for him who has reached the age of reason an intrinsic supernatural impulsion (by grace) to baptism and to visible profession of the faith if either are lacking.*

## False Ecumenism

False ecumenism is another consequence of the non-distinction of the natural and supernatural order. The reasoning is simple: if all men naturally tend to God, then so do all religions too. Similarly, if there is no distinction between the natural and supernatural order, then the distinction between the Catholic religion and the non-Catholic religions is only one of degree instead of a distinction of order. The Catholic Church is no longer the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, it is just one among others, but perhaps holier (i.e. more authentically human), more historically and geographically catholic and better related to the apostles than the rest, but notwithstanding, all religions are good in some way (see *Lumen Gentium* Chp.2 §15-16).

The paragraph of the *Lineamenta* shows this misplaced respect of non-Catholic religions.

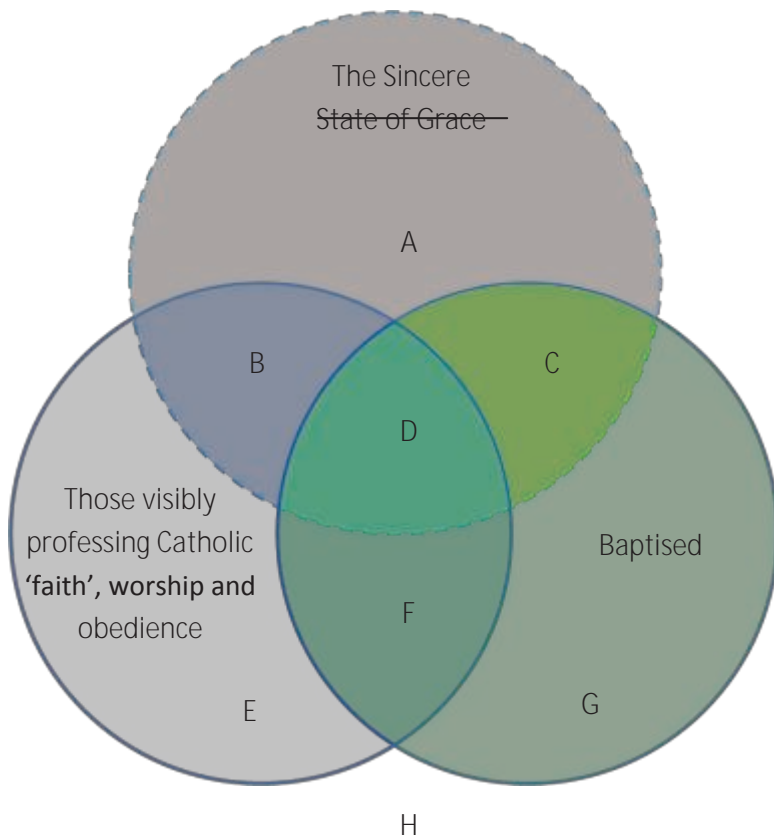
Also included in this context are encounters and

dialogue with the great religious traditions, particularly those of the East, which the Church has undertaken in recent decades and continues to intensify. This dialogue is a promising opportunity to learn and compare how the religious question is seen in other religions, thus allowing Catholicism to understand more deeply the ways with which the Christian faith can listen and respond to each person's religious sense. (Chp.1)

More encounters and dialogue. Perhaps one might be justified in thinking that an evangelising effort in the name of a religion which does not seek converts and does not have confidence in its own uniqueness, holiness, self-sufficiency and exclusive legitimacy is unlikely to change very many lives.

It is also important to note that non-Catholic religions are not good *per se* (i.e. by their nature) and can do no good *per se*, but only *per accidens* (i.e. indirectly). A soul can save itself in a non-

# The New Evangelisation



KEY	
<i>(N.B. The relative areas do not indicate the relative numbers of souls in each category)</i>	
A.	Unbaptised, non-practicing souls who are sincere (i.e. who follow their conscience (whether informed or not).
B.	Sincere catechumens.
C.	Sincere, validly baptised protestants/schismatics .
D.	Sincere, baptised practicing Catholics.
E.	Insincere catechumens.
F.	Insincere, practicing Catholics .
G.	Insincere validly baptised protestants/schismatics/ excommunicates.
H.	Everyone else (very few).

*Figure 2 :The Different States of Souls According to the New Theology. The New Evangelisation tries to bring about a faith-encounter by which a man is revealed to himself through Jesus Christ. Following a faith-encounter, man will best actuate his intrinsic natural impulsion towards the beatific vision as a baptised and visible member of the Church, but only if he is entirely free (i.e. unguided) in his choice of this path to God. All sincere men (regardless of religion) have already actuated the intrinsic natural impulsion towards the beatific vision.*

Catholic religion not because that religion is good in itself (n.b. many non-Catholic religions were actually founded in opposition to the Catholic Church), not *through* that religion, but *in spite of it*, through the grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, through His Church.

## What will happen next?

Over the next few years, many gushing pages will be written about the success of the New Evangelisation and then subsequently ignored by the overwhelming majority of mankind ...and disbelieved by most of the rest.

The project of the New Evangelisation is probably the Conciliar Church's final attempt to put the new theology of the Second Vatican Council into practice, but, if what the bishops and priests will teach is no longer other-worldly, no longer holy, no longer intellectual, no longer confident in its veracity, no longer

objective, no longer judgemental, no longer unique, and above all, no longer true, they can hardly expect to kindle human interest in their new religion, and still less can they expect to be assisted by the Holy Ghost.

And furthermore, as a closing thought, if the Catholics who have sat on the front pew every Sunday of their lives since the Second Vatican Council still do not know the catechism of their fifty year old religion (which is predominantly the case), it is unlikely that the bishops and priests will succeed in teaching it to those who have never yet turned-up.

The New Evangelisation will be an utter failure; it will be one more humiliation for the Church, but at least it will bring forward the inevitable demise of this new theology which has made Her suffer so much.

Rev. Fr. Robert Brucciani.