

Pope St. Gregory (6thc) shared words which could apply to our own time, "It's regrettable that the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few. There's no shortage of people to hear the Good news. **What is missing are people to spread it!**" The Church exists to evangelize. The nature of the Church is missionary. The Catholic Church has always taught that every human being has a right to hear the liberating Gospel of Christ and to be invited into new life in the heart of His Church. That task of proclamation and invitation will be accomplished in this hour by you and me. We're all baptized into Christ and enlisted to participate in the saving mission of His Church. To be able to engage such a missionary task, many Catholics need to first be renewed in their own Baptismal faith through a personal and transformative encounter with the Risen Lord. This encounter with the Risen Christ needs to then be rooted, strengthened and secured by solid catechesis in what it really means to live as a Catholic in this post Christian age.

The New Evangelization, coined by Pope St. John Paul II, invites each one of us to **truly** understand and then to **really** live our baptismal vocation. We're invited to **freely** choose the Lord and be completely given over to the work of the Lord, by living in the heart of the Church for the sake of the world. This kind of evangelical renewal requires an authentic and ongoing spiritual renewal of the Church so that she can then undertake a new missionary outreach to the whole world. Only a Church fully alive in the Lord and filled with His Spirit can carry out such an evangelical missionary task in this critical hour in history. The Church is the Ark, the boat, presided over by the Lord. He's at the helm, steering His redemptive course through time into eternity. The Lord of the harvest is calling workers for the New Evangelization and the new missionary age. He's sending us out into the field. He will work His saving mission in and through us, because we're members of His Mystical Body, the Church. I believe we're alive at the beginning of a great resurgence in the Catholic Church. There's a growing evangelical Catholic faith and life being manifested among so many of the faithful throughout the world.

In his apostolic exhortation to the Laity, Pope St. John Paul II described "whole countries and nations where religion and the Christian life were formerly flourishing and capable of fostering a viable and working community of faith, are now put to a hard test, as a result of a constant spreading of an indifference to religion, secularism and atheism. This indifference to religion and the practice of religion devoid of true meaning in the face of life's serious problems, are not less worrying and upsetting when compared with atheism. At this moment, the lay faithful's responsibility is to testify how the Christian faith constitutes **the only valid response** to the problems and hopes that life poses to every person and society." (Christifidelis Laici, #34)

The Lord who birthed the Church from His wounded side on Calvary is renewing Her by His Spirit and calling Her to continue His saving work until He returns in glory. By the power of the Holy Spirit, He now walks with our feet and issues His invitation to all men and women through our lips and by the witness of our lives. We're called to live our lives in Christ by living them in the Church for the sake of the world which God still loves. The world is the field into which we're sent.