

TRANSMITTING THE PASSION FOR CHRIST TO THE WORLD

Vatican City, 8 October 2012 (VIS) - The passion for announcing Christ to the world and the knowledge that God acts in the Church were the two key themes of the brief remarks addressed this morning by Benedict XVI to the Synod Fathers at the opening of the thirteenth Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, which is to examine the subject of new evangelisation.

The Pope explained how the question as to whether God is real is as urgent today as it was in the past. With the Gospel God broke His silence, He spoke to us and entered into history. Jesus is His Word, the God Who showed that He loved us, Who suffered with us even unto death, then rose again.

This, the Holy Father went on, is the Church's response to that great question. Yet there is another question: how to communicate this truth to the men and women of our time, that they might learn of salvation? "We cannot make the Church", he said, "we can only make known what He did. The Church did not begin with our actions but with the actions and word of God".

Having recalled how the Apostles received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, while gathered in prayer in the Upper Room, Benedict XVI went on: "The fact, then, that each synodal assembly begins with prayer is no mere formality; rather, it is evidence of our awareness that the initiative is always God's: we may implore it, but the Church can only cooperate with God".

Having achieved this awareness, the second step is "confession"; that is, bearing witness even in dangerous situations. It is precisely such witness in moments of difficulty that is a guarantee of credibility, because it implies a readiness to give our lives for that in which we believe.

Yet, confession requires a visible form, a 'clothing'. This, the Pope explained, is charity; the most powerful force, which must burn in the hearts of Christians. Faith, he concluded, must become a flame of love within us, a flame which burns in our lives and is propagated to our neighbours. This is the essence of evangelisation.

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