***NEW EVANGELIZATION AND THE OFS-YOUFRA*OFS YouFra Asia Oceania Congress – South Korea, May 2013**

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1. **What is New Evangelization?**

“[N]ew evangelization” means to rekindle in ourselves the impetus of the Church’s beginnings and allow ourselves to be filled with the ardor 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[[1]](#footnote-1).

 The call to a new evangelization was placed “at the top of the Church’s agenda” by the emeritus Pope Benedict XVI through a series of actions that are part of “a unified plan” which include the following:

* Convening the *XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of bishops* on “The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith*”*, which was held in the Vatican City, from October 7-28, 2012;
* The establishment of the *Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization* through the Apostolic Letter *motu proprio Ubicumque et semper*, (21 September 2010)[[2]](#footnote-2);
* The publication of the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation [*Verbum Domini*](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_ben-xvi_exh_20100930_verbum-domini_en.html)[[3]](#footnote-3).

 As followers of Francis of Assisi, a passionate and illuminated evangelizer – *herald of God* and *of Christ*[[4]](#footnote-4)–, the Spirit impels us to respond to the Church’s call with passion and evangelical zeal. Stimulated by the celebration of the Synod on the new evangelization, a *Study day* was organized by the *Franciscan Institute of Spirituality* at the *Pontifical University Antonianum* on the topic of “New Evangelization and the Franciscan Charism: Perspectives and Testimonies,”[[5]](#footnote-5) in May 2012. Other sources we can turn to are the many documents of the Church that deal with evangelization[[6]](#footnote-6), the new evangelization,[[7]](#footnote-7) and to the various documents related to the *Synod on the new evangelization*, such as: the *Lineamenta*[[8]](#footnote-8), the *Message to the People of God*[[9]](#footnote-9)*,* and the *Final List of Propositions of the Synod of Bishops* given to Pope Benedict XVI[[10]](#footnote-10).

1. **Hints for Linking the New Evangelization and the Franciscan experience**[[11]](#footnote-11)

 Based on the aforementioned sources, I would like to propose some aspects of the new evangelization that intersect with the Franciscan experience that may help us to establish a fruitful interaction between these two realities.

* 1. **The New Evangelization Requires an Experience of God in Christ**

 Evangelization does not consist of spreading the doctrinal content of the faith in an abstract way, but, above all, it requires that we **witness to and proclaim faith in Jesus Christ**, the faithful witness of the Father. This witnessing comes from the **personal and communal experience** of His transforming and liberating presence, in the Holy Spirit. The new evangelization is both a proclamation and a concrete realization of such experience of God. Let us recall that the last OFS General Chapter, held in Brazil in 2011, had as its theme **“Evangelized to Evangelize”.** In this sense, the Synod’s *Lineamenta* affirms that the “first step in evangelization is seeking to keep [***the search for God]*** alive”[[12]](#footnote-12). In continuity with this statement, let us consider one of many evocative paragraphs contained in the *Message to the People of God* of the Synod Fathers:

The work of the new evangelization consists in presenting once more **the beauty and perennial newness of the encounter with Christ** to the often **distracted and confused heart and mind** of the men and women of our time, above all **to ourselves**. We invite you all **to** **contemplate** the face of the Lord Jesus Christ, **to** **enter the mystery** of his life given for us on the cross, reconfirmed in his resurrection from the dead as the Father’s gift and imparted to us through the Spirit[[13]](#footnote-13).

 In terms of the experience of faith, we cannot forget the **centrality that Christ** had in the life of **Saint Francis** as manifested so clearly in many passages of his life and writings. Suffice it to recall the Saint’s response to a young friar who suggested having someone read the Scriptures to him during his painful illness: “…I do not need more, son; **I know Christ, poor and crucified**”[[14]](#footnote-14).

* 1. **The Centrality of the Word of God**

 In his Apostolic Exhortation ***Verbum Domini***, Pope Benedict XVI expressed his desire for **the Word of God** to be rediscovered in the life of the Church as a **source of constant renewal**, so that it “will be ever more fully **at the heart of every ecclesial activity**”[[15]](#footnote-15). In this regard, the Synod’s *Lineamenta* called for a better understanding of the role and implementation of God’s Word in the various fields of evangelization:

The Church, as the People of God, must develop **a greater awareness** among her members **of the role of the Word of God and its power** to reveal and manifest God’s will for humanity and his plan of salvation. **Greater care** needs to be exercised **in proclaiming the Word** of God in liturgical assemblies and greater conviction and dedication given to the task of **preaching**. More **attentiveness, conviction and trust** is required in viewing the role of the Word of God in the Church’s mission, in both the actual time allotted to proclaiming the message of salvation as well to the more reflective moments of **listening and dialogue with cultures**[[16]](#footnote-16).

 The *Message to the people of God* of the Synod Fathers connects the Word of God - read from within the Tradition – with the **knowledge of Jesus**, both in His historical perspective and in the evangelizing encounter with Him “in the **fundamental dimensions of human life**: the family, work, friendship, various forms of poverty and the trials of life, etc”[[17]](#footnote-17). The same *Message* adds that “the Church must first of all **heed the Word before she can evangelize** the world. The invitation to evangelize becomes **a call to conversion**”[[18]](#footnote-18).

* 1. **Dialogue with Today’s Cultures**

 We are called to promote the inculturation of the Gospel in order to achieve the renewal from within of the multiple cultures and societies of our time with the yeast of the kingdom of God. In this sense, it is worth recalling the fundamental and still timely message of Pope Paul VI in *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, on the subject of the evangelization of cultures:

**The split between the Gospel and culture** is without a doubt **the drama of our time**, just as it was of other times. Therefore every effort must be made to ensure **a full evangelization of culture**, or more correctly **of cultures**. They have to be **regenerated by an encounter with the Gospel**…[[19]](#footnote-19)

 It seems appropriate to us to revisit the ***new situations* in human history** described in the Synod’s *Lineamenta*, in which Christians are called to proclaim and witness to the Gospel[[20]](#footnote-20) so that a new humanity may flourish. These sectors are, in summary:

1) The cultural phenomenon of ***secularization*** understood as the “liberation” of the world and humanity from any idea of the transcendent;

2) The social phenomenon of ***migration* to other countries and towards urban settings**, which favours *an unprecedented encounter and mixing of cultures*;

3) The challenge of **the means of social communication**. In this field we observe the universal presence of *media and digital culture* that is fast becoming the “forum” of public life and social interaction;

4) The economic sector which is marked by **the *growing disproportion in the northern and southern hemispheres in access to resources***, the persistent *economic crisis*, and the decreasing *media coverage* of these problems, e*specially from the perspective of the poor*.

5) **Science and technology** have made extraordinary progress but they are in danger of becoming *today’s new idols*.

6) ***Civic and political life*** has been characterized by *colossal changes*, such as: the fall of Communism and the emergence of *new economic, political and religious forces in global politics from places like Asia and the Islamic world*, etc.

 Considering such a historical context, the new evangelization cannot but incorporate a ***liberating dimension*** with respect to all human cultures:

Today it is not possible to think of the New Evangelization without the proclamation of full freedom from everything that oppresses the human person, i.e. sin and its consequences. Without a serious commitment to life and justice and the change of the situations that generate poverty and exclusion (cf. *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, 36) there can be no progress. This is particularly true in the face of challenges of globalization[[21]](#footnote-21).

 Pope Benedict XVI has introduced another element in the dialogue with the world, including non-believers: the “***Court of the Gentiles***”, which is intended to be a space of encounter and dialogue “…in which people might in some way latch on to God, without knowing him and before gaining access to his mystery, at whose service the inner life of the Church stands”[[22]](#footnote-22).

* 1. **Rediscovering our Christian and Franciscan Roots**

 The call for a new evangelization has also resonated in the Franciscan world as a desire to rediscover the central dimensions of the spiritual experience of Francis of Assisi.

* + 1. **Doing Penance**

 In the field of Franciscan theological reflection, and based on the study of the Franciscan sources, the centrality of “doing penance” – *facere poenitentiam* – in the life and preaching of the Saint of Assisi has shown to be a key in understanding Franciscan spirituality[[23]](#footnote-23). St. Francis’ *Testament* reminds us that the Lord himself led Francis to do penance by showing mercy to lepers and set him off on a journey of profound conversion[[24]](#footnote-24) and a way of life that was later assumed by his first companions[[25]](#footnote-25).

 Francis felt himself called not only to do penance but to highlight it in his preaching and in that of his brothers: “**He then began to preach penance to all with a fervent spirit and joyful attitude**. He inspired his listeners with words that were simple and a heart that was heroic”[[26]](#footnote-26). Current thinking seeks to overcome the mistake of reducing the call to do penance to a simple moral exhortation or to a simple invitation to self-mortification. It invites us to recuperate the **evangelical sense of penance as *metànoia***, i.e. a call to conversion, a change of mentality that predisposes us to believe in the gift of the Kingdom of God that is proclaimed and inaugurated by Jesus[[27]](#footnote-27).

* + 1. **The Spiritual Power of Franciscan Symbols**

 As Francis did before us, Franciscans today may also obtain abundant fruit in contemplating the spiritual meaning of the TAU and to use it as a key element in our own evangelization. The *Tau* is often used merely as a decorative object or as a distinctive sign deprived of any spiritual meaning or of a personal commitment to Christ. There are other Franciscan symbols, such as the crucifix of *San Damiano*, that often lack a catechesis that may shed light on their spiritual wealth and enable people to make a more meaningful and transformative use of them.

* + 1. **The Message of Peace**

 Peace is a gift of the risen Christ and a fruit of the Holy Spirit. It was so abundantly received by Francis that it did not only transform him, but also made of him His herald and true witness - even in the most diverse and difficult experiences in his life. This message of peace emanated from the Saint’s deep experience of God[[28]](#footnote-28). He also shared this mission with his brothers: “***Go, my dear brothers, two by two through different parts of the world, announcing peace to the people and penance for the remission of sins***”[[29]](#footnote-29). And he wrote: “***I council, admonish and exhort my brothers in the Lord Jesus Christ not to quarrel or argue or judge others when they go about in the world; but let them be meek, peaceful, modest, gentle and humble, speaking courteously to everyone, as is becoming***”[[30]](#footnote-30). He also urged them to seek peace within the Church through humility:

We have been sent to help clerics for the salvation of souls so that we may take up whatever may be lacking in them... So, be subject to prelates so that as much as possible on your part no jealousy arises. If you are children of peace, you will win over both clergy and people for the Lord, and the Lord will judge that more acceptable than only winning over the people while scandalizing the clergy[[31]](#footnote-31).

 Due in great part to his visit to the Sultan Melek-el-Kamel in 1219[[32]](#footnote-32), accompanied by Brother Illuminatus, Francis is considered a precursor of a dialogue between Christianity and Islam that is sustained by an inalienable Catholic identity that is not closed in itself, but opens itself to a constructive encounter. In this sense, Benedict XVI participated in the 25th Anniversary of the *Spirit of Assisi* in October 2011 that commemorated the historic gathering of religious leaders that his predecessor, Blessed John Paul II, had organized in 1986, precisely in the city of the Saint, to promote the collaboration of diverse religions for world peace.

* + 1. **The Holy Spirit**

 Since the time of the Vatican II it has been repeatedly said that a new Pentecost is needed in the Church. Following Francis, who gave pride of place in his life and teaching to the Holy Spirit and who exhorted his followers to “***pay attention to what they must desire above all else: to have the Spirit of the Lord and Its holy activity***”[[33]](#footnote-33), the Franciscan tradition has sustained throughout its history the preeminence of the Spirit of the Lord in the life and mission of the Church. The *Message to the People of God* of the Synod Fathers summarizes some elements of the role of the Holy Spirit in the work of the new evangelization:

…the Lord’s Spirit is capable of renewing his Church and rendering her garment resplendent if we let him mold us. This is demonstrated by the lives of the Saints, the remembrance and narration of which is a privileged means of the new evangelization […] conversion in the Church, just like evangelization, does not come about primarily through us poor mortals, but rather through the Spirit of the Lord. […] We are confident in the inspiration and strength of the Spirit, who will teach us what we are to say and what we are to do even in the most difficult moments[[34]](#footnote-34).

* 1. **New Ardor, New Methods, and New Expressions**

 The three characteristics with which John Paul II described the **“new evangelization” – “new in its ardor, methods and expression**”[[35]](#footnote-35) – have inspired countless faithful in various parts of the world. The geographic and ecclesial scope of this first appeal has grown to **encompass the whole Church** and is now especially pressing, considering the **fatigue, discouragement and persecution** that many Christians and local Churches are experiencing daily. We now present some ways in which these innovations are being implemented.

* + 1. **Simply Franciscan**

 Many members of the Franciscan family are trying to answer this call to a new evangelization ‘simply’ through a **renewed commitment** to live the **fundamental aspects of the Franciscan charism**. In particular, both religious and secular Franciscans are **seeking to live more fully in accordance with the Rule** that they have professed, in **vital communion with the authority** of their communities and in **fidelity to their institutional priorities**. The attempt is to truly live the values ​​we have embraced in our way of life so that **this search for creative fidelity is itself evangelizing**.

* + 1. **Fundamental Values and Personal Charism**

 Successful projects of new evangelization within the Franciscan family are characterized by embodying an evangelical *way of life* that harmoniously combines this life’s **fundamental values** with the appreciation of **each brother or sister’s *personal gifts and charism*s**. Focusing on the fundamental values of the OFS-YouFra identity and mission is critical for the engagement of all fraternities in the work of new evangelization. In this sense, the **five priorities for the OFS** as approved by the last General Chapter are an indispensable point of reference: formation, communication, Franciscan Youth, presence in the world, and emerging fraternities.

* + 1. **The Centrality of Relationships**

 Some Franciscan communities have been intentionally **organized in a way** that **effectively** **supports** the various kinds of **relationships** that make up their **vital fabric**. Firstly, conditions are set to foster a relationship **with God**, both for the individual members and for the fraternity as a whole, by allowing quality time for prayer, liturgy, retreats, study, etc. Secondly, **fraternal life** is not limited to formal and superficial interaction but becomes a genuine experience of communion that gives priority to people over structures and favours meaningful encounters and dialogue, shared responsibility in decision-making, mutual service, accepting and celebrating cultural diversity as a gift and opportunity for mutual growth, etc.

 Thirdly, this model of community also fosters a way of relating to **persons, families and surrounding communities** that comes from the conviction of having been *sent by the Lord to serve* and being sustained by the very *experience of fraternity*. It is about *reaching out to others* rather than just waiting for them to come to us - all of this with a missionary spirit characterized by an itinerant and collaborating attitude. This model promotes an atmosphere of *fraternal hospitality* that evangelizes naturally those who come into contact with the community. Lastly, this type of fraternity also esteems as important the relationshipwith **work and material goods**. Manual labour and mutual service are signs of *poverty and communion* that these communities also project to the outside - especially in *the world of the poor*.

* + 1. **Itinerant and missionary spirit**

 The task to ‘*go and repair’ the Lord’s Church*, has been understood as a call to ‘set off,’ to set our comfort aside and to evangelize after the model of Francis’s apostolic life and, even more, after the example of Jesus Himself, who taught even when He was on the way. Our *enclosure* is *all the world*.[[36]](#footnote-36) Today we know that the Church’s mission is necessary in all continents and environments. All this makes even more urgent the need to awaken in the OFS and YouFra Fraternities a genuine *missionary spirit*, a real sense of *evangelical itinerancy* that comes from experiencing God and is carried out in communion.

* + 1. **New Language**

 In various ways and occasions, evangelizers have been asked to **renew the language or expressions** ​​in which the Words of Life are ‘wrapped’ or expressed. For the new evangelization to have a **real impact on the lives of individuals, families and society**, it is necessary to do away with a language that is abstract and distant from the reality of the believers. Let the example of Francis *– the herald of the great King*[[37]](#footnote-37) *–* help us: “He filled the whole world with the Gospel of Christ; in the course of one day often visiting four or five towns and villages, proclaiming to everyone the good news of the kingdom of God, edifying his listeners by his example as much as by his words, as **he made of his body a tongue**.”[[38]](#footnote-38) Some have recently attributed to him the following saying: “***Preach the Gospel always – when necessary use words***.”

1. **Evangelization in the OFS documents**

 Evangelization is deeply rooted in the life and mission of Secular Franciscans and Franciscan Youth because the gospel life is the centre of their life commitment, just as it was for St. Francis and is clearly defined in their official documents[[39]](#footnote-39). Here are some of the main elements of this call to evangelize as presented in the OFS Rule and Constitutions:

1. **The call** from God – or vocation – **to follow Christ in the footsteps of St. Francis of Assisi** (*Rule* 1), that is common to all members of the **Franciscan family**, is specified as the “**rule and life of the Secular Franciscans**”, that is: “**to observe the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ** by following the **example of Saint Francis** of Assisi”, who made of Him *the inspiration and the centre of his life with God and people* (*Rule* 4).
	1. This vocation to the OFS to live the Gospel is fulfilled “**in fraternal communion**”, its members gather in **fraternities** (cf*. Const*. 3, 3). Therefore, this journey of evangelical life has both **a personal and a communal dimension** (Cf. *Const*. 8.2).
	2. Secular Franciscans are called to follow “«**Christ, poor and crucified», victor over death and risen**”. He is their point of reference for living, loving, suffering and witnessing to him, “even in difficulties and persecutions” (cf. *Const*. 10; *Rule* 10).
	3. The OFS Rule exhorts Secular Franciscans **to seek Christ** as a *“living and active person…****in******their brothers and sisters, in Sacred Scripture, in the Church, and in liturgical activity****”* (*Rule* 5).
	4. This particular vocation clearly impacts their spiritual life: “The **spirituality** of the secular Franciscan is **a plan of life centred on the person and on the following of Christ**, rather than a detailed program to be put into practice” (*Const* 9.1).
2. **The profession** of the brothers and sisters of the OFS is also ordered to this vocation because through it they “**pledge themselves to live the gospel in the manner of St. Francis** by means of the same rule” (*Rule* 2):
	1. “**in their secular state**” (*Const*. 1.3; 8.1),
	2. continuing St. Francis mission **with the other components of the Franciscan Family** (Cf. *Const*. 3.2)
	3. living “**the spirit of the Beatitudes** and, in a special way, the spirit of **poverty**” (*Const*. 15)
3. The **careful reading, listening, meditating and assiduous studying of the G*ospel***and the Sacred Scripture that Secular Franciscans are called to cultivate is another direct consequence of their Christ-centred vocation, and it implies the well-known principle of“**going from gospel to life and life to the gospel**” (*Rule* 4, Cf. *Cost*. 9,2; 44.3).
	1. In this sense, “**love for the word of the Gospel**” and helping “the brothers and sisters to know and understand it” should be **fostered by “the fraternity and its leaders**” (*Const*. 9,2. Cf. *Rule* 4,3).
	2. It should be an important element of their **ongoing formation** (*Const*. 44.3).
	3. Closely linked to the love for the word of God, secular Franciscans are to make of “**prayer and contemplation**...**the soul of all they are and do**”, after the example of Jesus, “the true worshipper of the Father” (*Rule* 8).
4. **Conversion as the daily radical interior change** is also directed towards the fundamental vocation of Secular Franciscans to follow Christ and is explained as ***conforming their thoughts and deeds to those of Christ***.
	1. This conversion is directly linked to their historical and unifying identity as “**brothers and sisters of penance**” and is based on the “the **dynamic power of the gospel**” (*Rule* 7).
	2. “**Witnessing to the good yet to come** and obliged to **acquire purity of heart** because of the vocation they have embraced, they should **set themselves free to love** God and their brothers and sisters” (*Rule* 12).
5. **The work of the Holy Spirit within and among Secular Franciscans**:
	1. **Who moves them** to commit themselves to the evangelical life through their profession (Cf. *Cost*. 1.3), and
	2. Who is “the **source of their vocation** and the **animator of fraternal life and mission**”.
	3. Imitating “the **faithfulness** of Francis to **His inspiration**”, secular Franciscans should “**desire above all things ‘the Spirit of God at work within them**’” (Const. 11).
6. The **active involvement** of Secular Franciscans in ***the Church’s mission*** as its “**witnesses and instruments**... among all people, ***proclaiming Christ by their life and words***”.
	1. They are “called like Saint Francis ***to rebuild the Church***… in ***full communion with the pope, bishops, and priests***,
	2. fostering an **open and trusting *dialogue of apostolic effectiveness and creativity***” (*Rule* 6; Cf. *Const*. 14.1,3).
7. The call to the Secular Franciscans “to **accept all people** as a gift of the Lord and an image of Christ”, “with a **gentle and courteous spirit**” (*Rule* 13). “They should deepen the true foundations of ***universal kinship*** and create a spirit of welcome and an atmosphere of ***fraternity*** everywhere” (Const. 18,2).
	1. This **sense of community** impels them to joyfully “place themselves on an **equal basis** with all people, especially with **the lowly** for whom they shall strive **to create conditions of life** worthy of people redeemed by Christ” (*Rule* 13).
	2. **Sharing** “spiritual and material goods with their brothers and sisters, especially **those most in need**… as **good stewards** and not as owners” (*Const*. 15.3).
8. The OFS brothers and sisters should **bear witness** **to** the great gift which Christ has given: “**the revelation of the Father**”: “in their family life[[40]](#footnote-40); in their work; in their joys and sufferings; in their associations with all men and women, brothers and sisters of the same Father; in their presence and participation in the life of society; in their fraternal relationships with all creatures” (*Const*. 12.1).
	1. St. Francis’ experience of faith is clearly marked by an ***intimate and dynamic relationship with the three Persons of the Holy Trinity*** as it clearly shown in all the Rules that derive from him.
	2. In the ***Exhortation of St. Francis to the Brothers and Sisters of Penance***, those who do penance are “home and dwelling” of the Lord’s Spirit, “sons of the heavenly Father”, “spouses, brothers and mothers of our Lord Jesus Christ”.
9. **The call to Secular Franciscans “to build a more fraternal and evangelical world”** in order to bring about “**the kingdom of God** more effectively” in **collaboration** with “all **people of good will**” (cf. *Rule* 14).
	1. They are to exercise their **responsibilities** with **competence and** a “**Christian spirit of service**” (*Rule* 14), and “fulfil the **duties** proper to their **various circumstances of life**” **with faithfulness** (*cf. Rule* 10).
	2. This call requires **openness *“to the challenges*** that come from society and from the Church's life situation” (*Const*. 8.2).
	3. It also implies being “**in the forefront in promoting justice** by the **testimony** of their human lives and their **courageous initiatives**. Especially in the field of **public life**, they should make **definite choices** in harmony with their **faith**” (*Rule* 15; Cf. *Cost*. 12.2).
	4. Taking “**a firm position against consumerism and against ideologies and practices** which prefer riches over human and religious values and **which permit the exploitation of the human person**” (*Const.* 15.3).
	5. “[T]hey should **respect all creatures**, animate and inanimate, which “bear the imprint of the Most High”, and they should strive to move from the **temptation of exploiting creation** to the Franciscan concept of **universal kinship”** (*Rule* 18).
	6. “Mindful that they are **bearers of peace** which must be built up unceasingly, they should **seek out ways of unity and fraternal harmony** through **dialogue**, trusting in the presence of the **divine seed in everyone** and in the transforming power of **love and pardon”** (*Rule* 19, cf. *Const*. 23).
	7. Following the Gospel, secular Franciscans therefore **affirm their hope and their joy in living**. They make a contribution **to counter widespread distress and pessimism, preparing a better future** (*Const*. 26, cf. *Rule* 19).
10. ***Ongoing formation*** of Secular Franciscans is also understood in relationship to the call to follow Christ, as an ever renewing ***journey*** of ***deepening***, “in the light of faith, ***the values and choices of the evangelical life***”, united to daily conversion (*Const*. 8.2).
	1. It also implies to **reflect “on events** in the Church and in society **in the light of faith** and with the help of the documents of the **Church’s teachings**, consequently taking consistent positions” (*Const*. 44.3).
	2. It also includes “**studying the writings of Saint Francis, Saint Clare and Franciscan authors**” in order to deepen their Franciscan vocation (*Const*. 44.3).

**Conclusion**

 As a way to conclude this reflection, I invite each one of you to reflect on how you and your local fraternity are carrying out the diverse aspects of the New Evangelization and the elements of the evangelical life assumed by the OFS and YouFra. As the gospel of Matthew reminds us, *we are the salt and the light of the earth*! But we can be salt that loses its taste or light that is hidden instead of shining before the men and women of our time and places!

You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned? It is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden.Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lamp stand, where it gives light to all in the house. Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father. (*Mt* 5:13-16)

 We have been given everything we need to fulfil our mission of proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ, with words and actions. Let us rekindle the flame of the Spirit in each one of us, in each local, regional and national fraternity, so that a new Pentecost in the OFS and YouFra may lead us all to a more convincing and faithful witnessing to the Lord Jesus, who captivated the mind and heart of St. Francis and those of ours. Let us pray to the Holy Spirit so that he may stir up our desire to rebuild the Church of Christ in Asia and Oceania, with joy and fidelity. May you all be the yeast of the kingdom of God in this beautiful part of the planet, so filled with cultural and religious diversity, and with new opportunities and challenges for the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ!

 As Pope Paul VI stated: “**Jesus** Himself, **the Good News of God**, was **the very first and the greatest evangelizer**; He was so through and through: to **perfection** and to the point of the **sacrifice** of His earthly life”[[41]](#footnote-41).

 At the begining of this reflection, we affirmed that the call to a new evangelization belongs to all the faithful. Let the concluding words of the Gospel according to Mark be an inspiration for all of us: **“Go out to the whole world; proclaim the Good News to all creation [...] they went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word through accompanying signs”** (*Mc* 16:15.20).

**Questions for reflection and dialogue**

1. How has your OFS or YouFra fraternity made its own the reiterated call of the Church to commit ourselves to “a new evangelization: new in its ardour, methods and expression”?
2. How can you and your fraternity foster and enrich the work of the new evangelization based on the richness of the OFS and YouFra identity and mission?
1. Synod of bishops, *XIII Ordinary General Assembly: The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith*. *Lineamenta*, 2 February 2011, 24. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Cf. *L'Osservatore Romano*: Weekly Edition in English, 20 October 2010, p. 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Synod of bishops, *XIII Ordinary General Assembly, Lineamenta*, 2 February 2011, 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. *2C* 210, *LMj* 11,3. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The acts of the study day were published in: *Nuova evangelizzazione e carisma francescano: Prospettive e testimonianze* , a cura di P. Martinelli, Edizioni Dehoniane, Bologna, 2012. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Key among these documents remains the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* of Pope Paul VI, *December 8, 1975, in:* <http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi_en.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization, *Enchiridion of the New Evangelization*, Librería Editrice Vaticana, 2012. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. <http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20110202_lineamenta-xiii-assembly_en.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. <http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20121026_message-synod_en.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Given the peculiar character of these propositions, there are no official translations of the original Latin texts, only an unofficial one in English. Cf. <http://www.zenit.org/article-35831?l=english> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Section 2 draws the main ideas from parts of the *Letter of the Minister General and General Council to all the Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis of Assisi for the Solemnity of Christmas 2012,* on *New Evangelization and Franciscan Experience, in:*

<http://www.francescanitor.org/resources/Letters/english/PRT_2012_97_Christmas_eng.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Synod of bishops, *XIII Ordinary General Assembly.* *Lineamenta* 5; see also n. 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Synod of bishops, *XIII Ordinary General Assembly. Message to the People of God*, 26 October 2012, 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. *2C* 105 [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Benedict XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Verbum Domini*, (30 September 2010), 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Synod of bishops, *XIII Ordinary General Assembly*. *Lineamenta,* 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Synod of bishops, *XIII Ordinary General Assembly. Message to the People of God*, 26 October 2012, 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Synod of bishops, *XIII Ordinary General Assembly. Message to the People of God*, 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi* (8 December 1975), n. 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Synod of bishops, *XIII Ordinary General Assembly.* *Lineamenta,* 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Synod of bishops, *XIII Ordinary General Assembly. Final List of Propositions*, 27 October 2012, Proposition 19. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Benedict XVI, *Address to the Members of the Roman Curia and Papal Representatives for the Traditional Exchange of Christmas Greetings*, Clementine Hall, 21 December 2009. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Cf. Pazzelli, R., *Penitenza, mortificazione*, in *Dizionario francescano*, 2 ed., Padova 1995, p. 1447-1471. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. *Test* 1 [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. *L3C* 37 [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. *1C* 23 [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. *Mc* 1, 15 [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. *1C* 23, *LMj* 3, 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. *1C* 29 [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. *LR* 3, 10-11 [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. *2C* 146 [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Cf*. 1C* 57; *2C* 30; *LMJ* 9, 7.8. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. *LR* 10, 8 [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Synod of bishops, XIII *Ordinary General Assembly. Message to the People of God*, 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. John Paul II, *Discourse to the XIX Assembly of C.E.L.AM*. (9 March 1983), 3: *L’Osservatore Romano: Weekly Edition in English,* 18 April 1983, p. 9: AAS 75 (1983) 7 [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Cf. *ScEx* 63 [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. *LMj* 2,5 [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. *1C* 97 [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. What is stated here is intended also for YouFra in the light of art. 96.2,3 of the OFS Constitutions which affirms that the Franciscan Youth deepen *“their own vocation within the context of the Secular Franciscan Order”* and *“consider the Rule of the OFS as an inspirational document for the growth of their own Christian and Franciscan vocation either individually or in a group”.* [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. About the importance and modalities of the secular Franciscans’ own family for living their Christian commitment and Franciscan vocation see *Cost*. 24. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi*, n. 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)