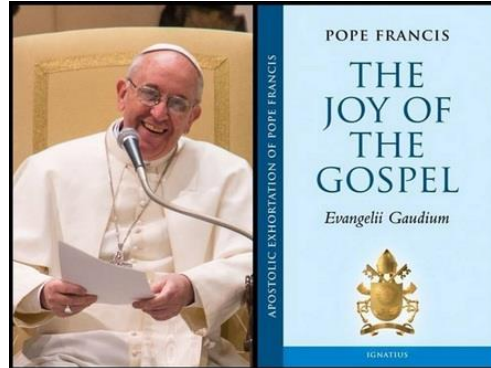


PRAYING THE JOY OF THE GOSPEL

This prayer is based on Chapter 5 of *Evangelii Gaudium*, the Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis.



SPIRIT-FILLED EVANGELIZERS

I. Sign of the Cross: Leader

II. Opening Prayer

Reader 1:

“In this final chapter, I do not intend to offer a synthesis of Christian spirituality, or to explore great themes like prayer, Eucharistic adoration or the liturgical celebration of the faith. For all these we already have valuable texts of the magisterium and celebrated writings by great authors. I do not claim to replace or improve upon these treasures. I simply wish to offer some thoughts about the spirit of the new evangelization.” (260)

Reader 2:

“The Holy Spirit grants the courage to proclaim the newness of the Gospel with boldness, in every time and place, even when it meets with opposition. Let us call upon him today, firmly rooted in prayer, for without prayer all our activity risks being fruitless and our message empty.” (259)

III. Meditative Reading of The Joy of the Gospel

Reader 3:

“‘Spirit-filled evangelizers’ means evangelizers fearlessly open to the working of the Holy Spirit. (259) Whenever we say that something is ‘spirited’, it usually refers to some interior impulse which encourages, motivates, nourishes and gives meaning to our individual and communal activity.” (261)

Reader 4:

“Spirit-filled evangelization is not the same as a set of tasks dutifully carried out despite one’s own personal inclinations and wishes. How I long to find the right words to stir up enthusiasm for a new chapter of evangelization full of fervour, joy, generosity, courage, boundless love and attraction! Yet I realize that no words of encouragement will be enough unless the fire of the Holy Spirit burns in our hearts.” (261)

Reader 5:

“A spirit-filled evangelization is one guided by the Holy Spirit, for he is the soul of the Church called to proclaim the Gospel. Before offering some spiritual motivations and suggestions, I once more invoke the Holy Spirit. I implore him to come and renew the Church, to stir and impel her to go forth boldly to evangelize all peoples. (261) Jesus wants evangelizers who proclaim the good news not only with words, but above all by a life transfigured by God’s presence.” (259)

IV. Reflection -Leader

Pope Francis writes that “without prolonged moments of adoration, of prayerful encounter with the Word, of sincere conversation with the Lord, our work easily becomes meaningless; we lose energy as a result of weariness and difficulties, and our fervor dies out. The Church urgently needs the deep breath of prayer” (262). How do I personally cultivate these deep breathes of prayer to keep a healthy balance between work and my relationship with God and others? (*Discuss if time permits.*)

V. Prayerful Response: Pray antiphonally.

- 1) “Because we do not always see these seeds growing, we need an interior certainty, a conviction that God is able to act in every situation, even amid apparent setbacks.
- 2) “We have this treasure in earthen vessels” (2 Cor 4:7). This certainty is often called ‘a sense of mystery’. It involves knowing with certitude that all those who entrust themselves to God in love will bear good fruit (cf. Jn 15:5).
- 1) This fruitfulness is often invisible, elusive and unquantifiable. ..We may be sure that none of our acts of love will be lost, nor any of our acts of sincere concern for others. No single act of love for God will be lost, no generous effort is meaningless, no painful endurance is wasted.
- 2) All of these encircle our world like a vital force. Sometimes it seems that our work is fruitless, but mission is not like a business transaction or investment, or even a humanitarian activity. It is not a show where we count how many people come as a result of our publicity; it is something much deeper, which escapes all measurement.
- 1) It may be that the Lord uses our sacrifices to shower blessings in another part of the world which we will never visit. The Holy Spirit works as he wills, when he wills and where he wills; we entrust ourselves without pretending to see striking results.
- 2) We know only that our commitment is necessary. Let us learn to rest in the tenderness of the arms of the Father amid our creative and generous commitment. Let us keep marching forward; let us give him everything, allowing him to make our efforts bear fruit in his good time.” (279)

VI. Closing Prayer: Leader

“The Holy Spirit grants the courage to proclaim the newness of the Gospel with boldness, in every time and place, even when it meets with opposition. Let us call upon him today, firmly rooted in prayer, for without prayer all our activity risks being fruitless and our message empty.” (259)

Let us together offer a prayer of praise to the Holy Trinity.

ALL: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: As it was in the beginning, is now, and forever. Amen.

