

Pope Francis: A Christian must give light to the world, urges Pop

Vatican City, Feb 9, 2014 - Pope Francis centered his Angelus message this Sunday on the image of a Christian whose faith is like a burning lamp that brings light to the darkness.

“We must carry the light of Christ with the witness of a genuine love,” encouraged the Pope on Feb. 9. “The Christian must be a luminous person who carries the light, a light that comes from one that his not his own, but a gift of God, a gift of Jesus. We carry this light forward!”

If a Christian loses this light, “his life doesn’t make sense. He is a Christian in name only,” Pope Francis cautioned.

Departing from his prepared remarks, the pontiff turned to query the crowds gathered in St. Peter’s Square. “I want to ask you now, how do you want to live? As a lamp that is lit, or one that is off?”

“I can’t hear your response!” he said, urging the crowd to reply louder.

“A lit lamp!” he affirmed, “This is the Christian vocation!”

Sunday’s gospel passage recounted Jesus’ encouragement to his disciples, “you are the salt of the earth...you are the light of the world.”

This story might “surprise us a little,” noted Pope Francis, “if we think of who was in front of Jesus when he said these words.”

The disciples were mere “fishermen, simple people...but Jesus saw them with the eyes of God.”

Christ “wanted to say to them: if you will be poor in spirit, if you will be gentle, if you will be pure of heart, if you will be merciful, you will be the salt of the earth and the light of the world!”

Such a calling extends to all Christians, the Pope explained. “All of us who are baptized are missionary disciples and we are called to become a living gospel in the world: with a holy life we will give ‘flavor’ to diverse settings and preserve them from decay, as salt does.”

Evangelizing in Shanghai (I) - Yang

After a blessed Christmas in the New York City I had the opportunity to attend my college reunion in Shanghai, China. I was filled with nostalgia and anticipation: 30 years ago we were youths studying hard, getting ready to conquer the world. Now we have evolved into mid-aged, seasoned men and women. What are the important lessons we have learned from our respective lives? How did we pull through the three decades’ strife and triumph? Are we still developing? Are we in good shape, I mean the entirety of us, the body and soul, the heart and mind? I was curious and concerned.

The reunion took place on the New Year’s Eve in a grand ballroom at a five-star hotel in the center of Shanghai. About 150 former schoolmates from six continents attended this occasion. I was asked to give a speech at the opening. Standing in front of my former schoolmates, professors and school administrator I saw the past replacing the present reality. It was heart warming. I was among the people whom I knew and trusted and who also appreciated and loved me. Intuitively I wanted to preach the Gospel, to give them my best, to share with them the most precious person I’ve encountered overseas. But I debated with myself if I should mention the name “Jesus Christ” to this mostly atheist crowd. Of course I don’t want to be a mere “cultural Christian” who shuns from proclaiming His name, but I don’t want to face public humiliation, either.



I started with a heartfelt thanks to the 4 dedicated organizers whom I knew for months had been working extremely hard and with ingenuity to make this reunion happen in perfect form. The whole process from planning to executing was extreme labor intense and time consuming but they took it in stride with a joyful attitude. Therefore my first question to the audience is why are these organizers so dedicated to the reunion? One man from the audience answered, "Because they are self-sacrifice and because they are giving." I asked, "But can you tell me where did these good virtues come from originally? I think one of my most favorite Gospel passages would inform us with a good answer." In the soft ballroom lights over the wine and champagne I shared with my former schoolmates the story of Jesus: He said let the children come to me, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to them (cf. Mt 19:14). I forwarded my understanding of this passage: the Kingdom of God in our everyday plain Chinese language is 真(truth), 善(mercy), 美(beauty), 爱(love) in its perfection, the source of all the goodness, beauty and virtues. Those children remind me of our beloved organizers who are pure and generous in heart, most open to 真(truth), 善(mercy), 美(beauty), 爱(love) and therefore are able to serve us out of love. We need to learn from them to keep this childlike 赤子之心(the heart of the faithful son) so as to bring 真(truth), 善(mercy), 美(beauty), 爱(love) to the world through our words and deeds, to make it a better place for our neighbors and all the people in this universe.

Before I could worry about any possible objections from the audience the name Jesus Christ came out so naturally, like the fish swimming in the river, the Sun rises from the east. It is good and necessary to proclaim His name, as Pope Francis says, "There can be no true evangelization without the explicit proclamation of Jesus as Lord." (Evangelii Gaudium, #110) Actually the result turned out to be the opposite of what I was worried about: many schoolmates came to me telling me that they, too, have their respective beliefs, either in Christianity, Buddhism or Mormonism, but because of the fear of the perceived public rejection, they had been keeping their faith in private. However some Christian schoolmates told me that they actually regretted missing the opportunity to spread Gospel in this occasion. Some seemed to be interested in religious beliefs and came to ask me the questions on different aspects of spirituality.

Encouraged by the positive response when it was my turn to introduce my life in U.S. like each of my schoolmates did, I stressed the phenomenon that we overseas Chinese tend to connect learning with job demands: we learn practical skills to make a comfortable living and then the learning seems to stop there. But looking at our root of excellence planted here about 30 years ago in this college: we should not forsake our spirit of excellence in learning; we could do a lot more; we need to have the courage to enter into the spheres that we have overlooked before, such as the studies of religions that are the very fabrics of the Eastern and Western civilizations in which we have made our first and second homes. I called that in this New Year of Horse we overseas Chinese need to renew our 龙马精神 (the spirit of the horse and dragon), become open-minded to engage ourselves in these interesting fields so as to make a difference in the world and to seek for a meaningful understanding of our authentic selves, as we are sailing into the middle age.

After my speech, the Party Secretary of our college came to shake my hand, calling me "still an idealist", a compliment against being a materialistic or pragmatic that is prevalent in China. My former sophomore professor nodded his head quietly in approval. My former Catholic professor who suffered a great deal during the Cultural Revolution hugged me, saying that she was so proud of me and she was actually praying for me during the speech.

In this event of evangelizing in Shanghai I tasted again the sweetness of Pope Francis' teaching: In union with Jesus, we can courageously open up new paths of evangelization and human promotion.

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福傳快訊

2月14日

教宗方濟各：基督徒要作世上的光

(梵蒂岡電台訊) 教宗方濟各 2 月 9 日在三鐘經祈禱活動中勉勵所有基督徒在自己所生活的環境中發揮“調味”的功能，通過自己的見證作世上的“明燈”。

他強調：我們這些跟隨耶穌的門徒，也受召作“地上的鹽”、“世上的光”。只有當我們“是神貧、溫良、心裡潔淨”和“憐憫人”時，這才能實現。教宗繼續說，作為“新以色列”的基督徒，從基督那裏領受了一項使命：“引導和祝聖人類，使其結出碩果”。

“我們所有受過洗的人，都是負有使命的門徒，受召在世上作生活的福音：以聖善的生活為各個環境‘調味’，保顧它不致腐壞，如同鹽那樣；並且以純真愛德的見證攜帶基督的光。我們這些基督徒若失去味道，不再發揮光和鹽的作用，我們將失去功效”。

教宗繼續說：“基督徒應該是光明的人，携帶着光，始終給予光明！”這光“不屬於他，而是天主的恩典，耶穌的恩典”。教宗向聖伯多祿廣場上的信眾問道：“你們願意渡怎樣的生活？作一盞點亮了的燈，或是一盞熄滅的燈？正是天主賜予我們這光明，而我們也要把它給予他人。作點亮了的燈！這是基督徒的聖召”。

《我的 21 種福傳動力》 講者：列國芳修女 第二集：耶穌的遺囑

列：天主保佑各位。

馬：列修女，你好，我們又在空氣中見面。

夏：列修女，你好。

鋒：列修女，你好，我們又回來了。

馬：我們有這麼多位門徒跟著你，就是想跟著你去找耶穌。21 種福傳動力，由今天開始說第一個。很多年前，你在意大利寫了一篇文章，我很期待第一個動力，究竟那一個動力會排第一呢？列修女，你可以告訴我們嗎？

列：我很自然便動筆寫下，是耶穌的遺言。紙上所寫的是耶穌的遺囑，因為這是幾年前所寫的，遺囑的意思就是「我囑咐你要這樣做」。



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馬：夏竹欣，你知道耶穌寫過遺囑嗎？

夏：耶穌沒有請律師寫遺囑吧。

馬：那麼，請你說說「耶穌的遺囑」到底是甚麼呢？

列：當耶穌在十字架上，耶穌說了七句說話，稱為「架上七言」。當中第五句為我來說，最為刻骨銘心，他說了句很短的說話：「我渴。」即是「我口渴」。

夏：為何遺囑上會寫著「我口渴」呢？

列：你們都是教友，我們記得耶穌和門徒共進最後晚餐後，應該一直都沒有喝水。他先去祈禱，然後被仇恨耶穌的人拉去鞭打，他流盡寶血，等到星期五十二時，他被釘在十字架上，流了很多血，所以根本沒有水進入他的身體；直至下午三時，耶穌才呼出自己最後的一口氣，並將聖神交給我們。

他在架上辛苦地說了七句說話，每句我都記著，而且每天都念數次，其中「我渴」為我來說最為深刻，最會記在心中。因為這份「渴」不只是耶穌的口渴，在聖經中你會看到，當耶穌說「我渴」的時候，那些士兵以苦膽和醋浸在海綿中，給耶穌喝。耶穌嚐一嚐就沒有再喝，因為這種飲品是有麻醉的作用，而耶穌卻想接受所有的痛苦，來讓我們知道他有多愛我們。

而這份「渴」，從很多聖人的解釋及自己的默想，就是耶穌渴望人靈的得救，因為他的死，就是為了人。當我聽到救主說：「我渴。」應該表示渴望所有人的得救，主現在為你死，你能否得到救贖，才是最重要的。

馬：原來這並不是代表「口渴」，而是渴望我們的得救。於是，這句說話便刺激了你……

列：我覺得我必須要照耶穌的說話，去傳揚福音，將耶穌愛人的表現傳出去。這也是我第一個福傳動力，我時時都會記住。其實，耶穌說了「我渴」之後，都有句說話讓我刻骨銘心……

馬：那就下一集繼續。（轉載活水基金「金錢以外」電台福傳節目）

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