

THE LAY FAITHFUL

John Paul Speaks

*Notable quotations from Pope John Paul II and
official teachings of the Roman Catholic Church*

THE LAITY'S DECISIVE ROLE

The new evangelization that can make the 21st century a springtime of the Gospel is a task for the entire People of God, but will depend in a decisive way on the lay faithful being fully aware of their baptismal vocation and their responsibility for bringing the good news of Jesus Christ to their culture and society.

“AN ESPECIALLY URGENT INVITATION”

The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council gave special attention to the dignity and mission of the lay faithful, urging them “in the Lord’s name to give a glad, generous and prompt response to the impulse of the Holy Spirit and to the voice of Christ, Who is giving them an especially urgent invitation at this moment...”

“IN THE FRONT LINE”

More and more lay people had taken to heart the stirring words of Pope Pius XII: “Lay believers are in the front line of Church life; for them the Church is the animating principle of human society. Therefore, they in particular ought to have an ever clearer consciousness not only of belonging to the Church, but of being the Church...”

GOSPEL WITNESSES

The first requirement of the new evangelization is *the actual witness of Christians who live by the Gospel...*

“THE ONLY VALID RESPONSE”

Since lay people are at the forefront of the Church’s mission to evangelize all areas of human activity...they must be strong enough and sufficiently catechized “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*, n. 34).

“MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY”

The immediate and in many ways most important arena of the laity’s Christian witness is marriage and the family.

THE “CIVILIZATION OF LIFE AND LOVE”

Where family life is strong and healthy, the sense of community and solidarity is also strong, and this helps to build that “civilization of life and love” which must be everyone’s aim. But where the family is weak, all human relationships are exposed to instability and fragmentation.

“A FAMILY OF FAMILIES”

The parish should be a “family of families,” helping in every way possible to nourish the spiritual life of parents and children through prayer, the word of God, the sacraments, and the witness of holiness and charity.

“PRINCIPAL PROMOTERS”

...The principal promoters of Christian family life are couples and families themselves, who have a special responsibility to be servants of other couples and families.

(Source: *Ad limina* visit of bishops from Minnesota, North and South Dakota, June 6, 1998)

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