

## DAILY NEWS

## Cardinal-Designate Dolan's Tips for Evangelization

**Soon-to-be cardinal offers thoughts on how to 'speak again as a child the eternal truth, beauty and simplicity of Jesus and his Church' at 'Day of Reflection and Prayer With Members of the College of Cardinals.'**

BY CARDINAL-DESIGNATE TIMOTHY DOLAN

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Cardinal-designate Timothy Dolan of New York gave this speech Feb. 17 before the Pope and the College of Cardinals: "The Announcement of the Gospel Today, Between *Missio Ad Gentes* and the New Evangelization."



Holy Father, Cardinal Sodano, my brothers in Christ:

*Sia lodato Gesu Cristo!*

It is as old as the final mandate of Jesus, "Go, teach all nations!" yet as fresh as God's holy word proclaimed at our own Mass this morning.

I speak of the sacred duty of evangelization. It is "ever ancient, ever new." The how of it, the when of it, the where of it, may change, but the charge remains constant, as does the message and inspiration, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and tomorrow."

We gather in the *caput mundi*, evangelized by Peter and Paul themselves, in the city from where the successors of St. Peter "sent out" evangelizers to present the saving Person, message and invitation that is at the heart of evangelization: throughout Europe, to the "new world" in the "era of discovery," to Africa and Asia in recent centuries.

We gather near the basilica where the evangelical fervor of the Church was expanded during the Second Vatican Council and near the tomb of the Blessed Pontiff who made the New Evangelization a household word.

We gather grateful for the fraternal company of a pastor who has made the challenge of the New Evangelization almost a daily message.

Yes, we gather as missionaries, as evangelizers.

We hail the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, especially found in *Lumen Gentium*, *Gaudium et Spes* and *Ad Gentes*, that refines the Church's understanding of her evangelical duty, defining the entire Church as missionary, that all Christians, by reason of baptism, confirmation and Eucharist, are evangelizers.

Yes, the Council reaffirmed, especially in *Ad Gentes*, there are explicit missionaries, sent to lands and peoples who have never heard the very Name by which all are saved, but also that no Christian is exempt from the duty of witnessing to Jesus and offering his invitation to others in his own day-to-day life.

Thus, mission became central to the life of every local Church, to every believer. The context of mission shifted not only in a geographical sense, but in a theological sense, as mission applied not only to unbelievers, but to believers, and some thoughtful people began to wonder if such a providential expansion of the concept of evangelization unintentionally diluted the emphasis of mission *ad gentes*.

Blessed John Paul II developed this fresh understanding, speaking of evangelizing cultures, since the engagement between faith and culture supplanted the relationship between church and state dominant prior to the Council and included in this task the re-evangelizing of cultures that had once been the very engine of Gospel values.

The New Evangelization became the dare to apply the invitation of Jesus to conversion of heart not only *ad extra*, but *ad intra*, to believers and cultures where the salt of the Gospel had lost its tang. Thus, the *missio* is not only to New Guinea, but to New York.

In *Redemptoris Missio*, 33, he elaborated upon this, noting primary evangelization — the preaching of Jesus to lands and people unaware of his saving message — the New Evangelization — the rekindling of faith in persons and cultures where it has grown lackluster — and the pastoral care of those daily living as believers.

We, of course, acknowledge that there can be no opposition between the *missio ad gentes* and the New Evangelization. It is not an “either-or,” but a “both-and” proposition. The New Evangelization generates enthusiastic missionaries; those in the apostolate of the *missio ad gentes* require themselves to be constantly evangelized anew.

Even in the New Testament, to the very generation who had the *missio ad gentes* given by the Master at his ascension still ringing in their ears, Paul had to remind them to “stir into flame” the gift of faith given them, certainly an early instance of the New Evangelization.

And, just recently, in the inspirational Synod in Africa, we heard our brothers from the very lands radiant with the fruits of the *missio ad gentes* report that those now in the second and third generation after the initial missionary zeal already stand in need of the New Evangelization.

The acclaimed American missionary and TV evangelist Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen, commented, “Our Lord’s first word to his disciples was: ‘Come!’ His last word was: ‘Go!’ You can’t ‘go’ unless you’ve first ‘come’ to him.”

A towering challenge to both the *missio ad gentes* and the New Evangelization today is what we call secularism. Listen to how our Pope describes it:

“Secularization, which presents itself in cultures by imposing a world and humanity without reference to Transcendence, is invading every aspect of daily life and developing a mentality in which God is effectively absent, wholly or partially, from human life and awareness. This secularization is not only an external threat to believers, but has been manifest for some time in the heart of the Church herself. It profoundly distorts the Christian faith from within and, consequently, the lifestyle and daily behavior of believers. They live in the world and are often marked, if not conditioned, by the cultural imagery that impresses contradictory and impelling models regarding the practical denial of God: There is no longer any need for God, to think of him or to return to him. Furthermore, the prevalent hedonistic and consumeristic mindset fosters in the faithful and in pastors a tendency to superficiality and selfishness that is harmful to ecclesial life” (Benedict XVI, “Address to Pontifical Council for Culture,” 8.III.2008).

This secularization calls for a creative strategy of evangelization, and I want to detail seven planks of this strategy:

1. Actually, in graciously inviting me to speak on this topic, “The Announcement of the Gospel Today, Between *Missio Ad Gentes* and the New Evangelization,” my new brother cardinal, His Eminence, the Secretary of State, asked me to put it into the context of secularism, hinting that my home archdiocese of New York might be the “capital of a secular culture.”

As I trust my friend and new brother cardinal Edwin O’Brien — who grew up in New York — will agree, New York — without denying its dramatic evidence of graphic secularism — is also a very religious city.

There, one finds, even among groups usually identified as materialistic — the media, entertainment, business, politics, artists, writers — an undeniable openness to the divine.

The cardinals who serve Jesus and his Church universal on the Roman Curia may recall the address Pope Benedict gave them at Christmas two years ago, when he celebrated this innate openness to the divine obvious even in those who boast of their secularism:

“We, as believers, must have at heart even those people who consider themselves agnostics or atheists. When we speak of a New Evangelization, these people are perhaps taken aback. They do not want to see themselves as an object of mission or to give up their freedom of thought and will. Yet the question of God remains present even for them. As the first step of evangelization, we must seek to keep this quest alive; we must be concerned that human beings do not set aside the question of God, but, rather, see it as an essential question for their lives. We must make sure that they are open to this question and to the yearning concealed within. I think that today, too, the Church should open a sort of ‘Court of the Gentiles’ 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.”

This is my first point: We believe with the philosophers and poets of old, who never had the benefit of Revelation, that even a person who brags about being secular and is dismissive of religion has within an undeniable spark of interest in the beyond and recognizes that humanity and creation is a dismal riddle without the concept of some kind of Creator.

A movie popular at home now is *The Way*, starring a popular actor, Martin Sheen. Perhaps you have seen it. He plays a grieving father whose estranged son dies while walking the Camino de Santiago de Compostella in Spain. The father decides, in his grief, to complete the pilgrimage in place of his dead son. He is an icon of a secular man: self-satisfied, dismissive of God and religion, calling himself a “former Catholic,” cynical about faith ... but yet unable to deny within him an irrepressible interest in the transcendent, a thirst for something — no, Someone — more, which grows on the way.

Yes, to borrow the report of the apostles to Jesus from last Sunday’s Gospel, “All the people are looking for you!”

They still are ...

2. ... and, my second point: This fact gives us immense confidence and courage in the sacred task of mission and New Evangelization.

“Be not afraid,” we’re told, is the most repeated exhortation in the Bible.

After the Council, the good news was that triumphalism in the Church was dead.

The bad news was that so was confidence.

We are convinced, confident and courageous in the New Evangelization because of the power of the Person sending us on mission — who happens to be the second Person of the Most Blessed Trinity — because of the truth of the message and the deep-down openness in even the most secularized of people to the divine.

Confident, yes!

Triumphant, never!

What keeps us from the swagger and arrogance of triumphalism is a recognition of what Pope Paul VI taught in *Evangelii Nuntiandi*: The Church herself needs evangelization.

This gives us humility as we confess that *Nemo dat quod non habet*, that the Church has a deep need for the interior conversion that is at the marrow of the call to evangelization.

3. A third necessary ingredient in the recipe of effective mission is that God does not satisfy the thirst of the human heart with a proposition, but with a Person, whose name is Jesus.

The invitation implicit in the *missio ad gentes* and the New Evangelization is not to a doctrine, but to know, love and serve — not a something, but a Someone.

When you began your ministry as successor of St. Peter, Holy Father, you invited us to friendship with Jesus, which is the way you defined sanctity.

There it is ... love of a Person, a relationship at the root of our faith.

As St. Augustine writes, “*Ex una sane doctrina impressam fidem credentium cordibus singulorum qui hoc idem credunt verissime dicimus, sed aliud sunt ea quae creduntur, aliud fides qua creduntur*” (*De Trinitate*, XIII, 2.5).

4. Yes, and here’s my fourth point: But this Person, Jesus, tells us he is the truth.

So, our mission has a substance, a content, and this 20th anniversary of the Catechism, the approaching 50th anniversary of the Council, and the upcoming Year of Faith charge us to combat catechetical illiteracy.

True enough, the New Evangelization is urgent because secularism has often choked the seed of faith; but that choking was sadly made easy because so many believers really had no adequate knowledge or grasp of the wisdom, beauty and coherence of the Truth.

Cardinal George Pell has observed that “it’s not so much that our people have lost their faith, but that they barely had it to begin with; and, if they did, it was so vapid that it was easily taken away.”

So did Cardinal Avery Dulles call for neo-apologetics, rooted not in dull polemics, but in the Truth that has a name, Jesus.

So did Blessed John Newman, upon reception of his own *biglietto* nominating him a cardinal, warn again of what he constantly called a dangerous liberalism in religion: "... the belief that there is no objective truth in religion, that one creed is as good as another. ... Revealed religion is not a truth, but a sentiment, a taste ... "

And, just as Jesus tells us, "I am the Truth," he also describes himself as "the Way and the Life."

The Way of Jesus is in and through his Church, a holy mother who imparts to us his life.

"For what would I ever know of him without her?" asks De Lubac, referring to the intimate identification of Jesus and his Church.

Thus, our mission, the New Evangelization, has essential catechetical and ecclesial dimensions.

This impels us to think about Church in a fresh way: to think of the Church as a mission. As John Paul II taught in *Redemptoris Missio*, the Church does not "have a mission," as if "mission" were one of many things the Church does. No, the Church is a mission, and each of us who names Jesus as Lord and Savior should measure ourselves by our mission effectiveness.

Over the 50 years since the convocation of the Council, we have seen the Church pass through the last stages of the Counter-Reformation and rediscover itself as a missionary enterprise. In some venues, this has meant a new discovery of the Gospel. In once-catechized lands, it has meant a re-evangelization that sets out from the shallow waters of institutional maintenance, and, as John Paul II instructed us in *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, puts out "into the deep" for a catch.

In many of the countries represented in this college, the ambient public culture once transmitted the Gospel, but does so no more. In those circumstances, the proclamation of the Gospel — the deliberate invitation to enter into friendship with the Lord Jesus — must be at the very center of the Catholic life of all of our people. But in all circumstances, the Second Vatican Council and the two great Popes who have given it an authoritative interpretation are urging us to call our people to think of themselves as missionaries and evangelists.

5. When I was a new seminarian at the North American College here in Rome, all the first-year men from all the Roman theological universities were invited to a Mass at St. Peter's with the prefect of the Congregation for the Clergy, Cardinal John Wright, as celebrant and homilist.

We thought he would give us a cerebral homily. But he began by asking, "Seminarians: Do me and the Church a big favor. When you walk the streets of Rome, smile!"

So, point five: The missionary, the evangelist, must be a person of joy.

"Joy is the infallible sign of God's presence," claims Leon Bloy.

When I became archbishop of New York, an old priest told me, "You better stop smiling when you walk the streets of Manhattan, or you'll be arrested!"

A man dying of AIDS at the Gift of Peace Hospice, administered by the Missionaries of Charity in Cardinal Donald Wuerl's Archdiocese of Washington, asked for baptism. When the priest asked for an expression of faith, the dying man whispered, "All I know is that I'm unhappy, and these sisters are very happy, even when I curse them and spit on them. Yesterday I finally asked them why they were so happy. They replied, 'Jesus.' I want this Jesus so I can finally be happy."

A genuine act of faith, right?

The New Evangelization is accomplished with a smile, not a frown.

The *missio ad gentes* is all about a 'Yes' to everything decent, good, true, beautiful and noble in the human person.

The Church is about a Yes! Not a No!

6. And, next-to-last point: The New Evangelization is about love.

Recently, our brother John Thomas Kattrukudiyil, the bishop of Itanagar, in the northeast corner of India, was asked to explain the tremendous growth of the Church in his diocese, registering over 10,000 adult converts a year.

"Because we present God as a loving father, and because people see the Church loving them," he replied.

Not a nebulous love, he went on, but a love incarnate in wonderful schools for all children, clinics for the sick, homes for the elderly, centers for orphans, food for the hungry.

In New York, the heart of the most hardened secularist softens when visiting one of our inner-city Catholic schools. When one of our benefactors, who described himself as an agnostic, asked Sister Michelle why, at her age, with painful arthritic knees, she continued to serve at one of these struggling but excellent poor schools, she answered, "Because God loves me, and I love him, and I want these children to discover this love."

7. Joy, love ... and, last point ...

Sorry to bring it up ... but blood.

Tomorrow, 22 of us will hear what most of you have heard before:

"To the praise of God, and the honor of the Apostolic See, receive the red biretta, the sign of the cardinal's dignity; and know that you must be willing to conduct yourselves with fortitude even to the shedding of your blood: for the growth of the Christian faith, the peace and tranquility of the people of God, and the freedom and spread of the Holy Roman Church."

Holy Father, can you omit "to the shedding of your blood" when you present me with the biretta?

Of course not! We are but "scarlet audio-visual aids" for all of our brothers and sisters also called to be ready to suffer and die for Jesus.

It was Pope Paul VI who noted wisely that people today learn more from "witness than from words," and the supreme witness is martyrdom.

Sadly, today we have martyrs in abundance.

Thank you, Holy Father, for so often reminding us of those today suffering persecution for their faith throughout the world.

Thank you, Cardinal Koch, for calling the Church to an annual "day of solidarity" with those persecuted for the sake of the Gospel and for inviting our ecumenical and interreligious partners to an "ecumenism of martyrdom."

While we cry for today's martyrs, while we love them, pray with and for them; while we vigorously advocate on their behalf, we are also very proud of them, brag about them, and trumpet their supreme witness to the world.

They spark the *missio ad gentes* and New Evangelization.

A young man in New York tells me he returned to the Catholic faith of his childhood, which he had jettisoned as a teenager, because he read *The Monks of Tibhirine*, about Trappists martyred in Algeria 15 years ago, and after viewing the drama about them, the French film, *Of Gods and Men*.

Tertullian would not be surprised.

Thank you, Holy Father and brethren, for your patience with my primitive Italian.

When Cardinal Bertone asked me to give this address in Italian, I worried, because I speak Italian like a child.

But, then I recalled that, as a newly ordained parish priest, my first pastor said to me as I went over to school to teach the 6-year old children their catechism, "Now we'll see if all your theology sunk in and if you can speak of the faith like a child."

And maybe that's a fitting place to conclude: We need to speak again as a child the eternal truth, beauty and simplicity of Jesus and his Church.

*Sia lodato Gesu Cristo!*

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