

Lesson 2

EVANGELISATION- THE BASIC DUTY OF THE CHURCH



“After John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news” (Mk 1 : 14-15) . Jesus had the conviction that He is anointed to proclaim the Gospel of the kingdom of God. Jesus revealed this kingdom of God to the world through His presence, messages and miracles .He entrusted the task of preaching this gospel to His apostles. It is continued even today through the church.

Church -The Result of the proclamation of the Gospel

The apostles received the message of the kingdom of God from Jesus. He revealed to them the mysteries of the kingdom. He sent them for proclamation

during His public life while He was with them (Mt. 10: 5-8). Jesus instructed them that they should do mission work with total trust in God and with a lot of sacrifices. “He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics” (Mk 6: 8-9). Jesus exhorted them that the ministry of the proclamation of the Gospel involves sacrifices. He warned them that they are sent like sheep to a pack of wolves. (Mt 10:16). Jesus asked them mainly to preach that the kingdom of God is near (Mt 10: 7-8).



The apostles were witnesses to the words and deeds and especially to the death and resurrection of Jesus. The vision of the resurrected Lord confirmed the apostles in their faith. Jesus instructed Peter: 'Take care of my lambs' and thus He appointed Peter as the head of the Church (John 21:15). The apostles empowered by the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost started proclaiming the Gospel publicly (Acts 2:14). The first Christian community was formed as a result of the proclamation of the word by St. Peter on that day. The community that listened to his preaching repented and believed. “They devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and fellowship to the breaking of bread and the prayers” (Act 2:42). Thus the Church started growing.



Taking up the exhortation of Jesus to proclaim the Gospel to the whole world, the apostles went to different parts of the world. Wherever they reached, they proclaimed the word and witnessed Jesus. Their witness led many to Jesus. The activities of the apostles were in the name of Jesus and with the power and authority that they received from Jesus. The salvation preached by the apostles and witnessed by the Holy Spirit through signs

and miracles was confirmed by the Lord. Thousands believed in Jesus and received baptism. Thus Church communities were formed in all those places. In India, the Church was formed as a result of the proclamation of the Gospel by St. Thomas, the apostle.

Church- the Evangeliser

The Church which was formed by proclamation is the evangeliser or agent of evangelisation. The Church does this in two ways:

1. Re-evangelisation within the church to keep up the Spirit, Power and newness of the Church.
2. Evangelisation activities to evangelise the non- believers.

Evangelisation is the duty of the Church. It is her vocation and mission. Evangelisation is impossible without the Church; the identity of the Church is manifested through evangelisation. Activities like preaching the Gospel, teaching the people, and preparing the way of receiving the grace of sacraments are part of the evangelisation ministry of the Church (EN 14)

The Kingdom of God - The Theme of proclamation

The mission of Jesus was the proclamation of the kingdom of God and its institution. God's kingdom is not a matter of eating and drinking but of the righteousness, peace and joy which the Holy Spirit gives-says the word of God (Rom. 14:17). It is a disposition of believing in the merciful love of God the Father and creator of all and loving everyone as brother and sister. Then we experience justice and peace. Jesus went around forgiving sins, healing the sick and announcing the Good News of salvation to give this experience of the kingdom of God.

The kingdom of God is the state of God's will being fulfilled. The whole focus of Jesus was on fulfilling the will of the Father. Which Jesus made clear on several occasion. Jesus stood delighted in leading the Samaritan woman to the source of

life-giving-water. When the disciples came to Him with food, He said to them: “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work” (Jn 4:34). The reason why Jesus came to the world itself is to do the will of the Father (Heb 10:9). Jesus declared definitely that it is those who do the will of the Father that enters the kingdom of God (Mt. 7:21). Jesus gives us the assurance: “But strive first for the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Mt 6:33).

Activity - 1. Find out the Biblical passages that illustrate the zeal of Jesus to fulfill the will of the Father and write them down

Proclamation and witness

The important means for evangelisation is witness through Christian life. The church teaches that life - witness of Christians is essential for evangelisation. “Wherever the Christians may be, they should glorify God the Father through their exemplary life and witness to the Word” (AG.11)



Whenever we give up self and work in co- operation for the good of the community and share our talents, health and money for the welfare of others, we are witnessing to the kingdom of God. Doing one's duty faithfully and loving our enemies are also very powerful and effective means of evangelisation.

St. Mother Theresa of Calcutta, the mother of the poor, Bl.Kunjachan Thevarparambil, Who preached the Gospel to the poor and dalits in a heroic way and Bl.Mariam Thresia, an excellent model of family apostolate are persons who preached the Gospel through their life- witness. The most simple and effective evangelisation is sharing one's faith experience directly to another.



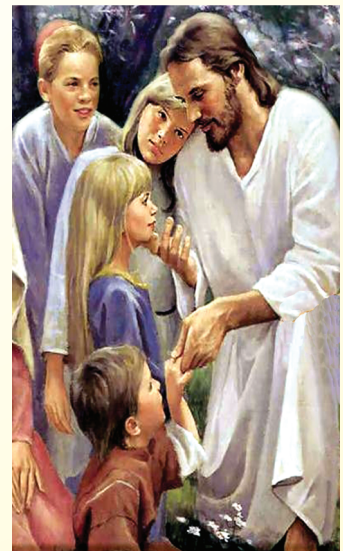
Activity - 2. Discuss the occasions that you get to bear witness to the kingdom of God and prepare a chart.

Evangelisation and Formation of the Church

Evangelisation is the first step for the formation of the Church. The important means to plant the Church is to preach the Gospel of Christ (AG-6). Jesus teaches very clearly the need for the proclamation of the Gospel resulting in conversion (Lk. 24:47). Here what we intent mainly is to preach about Jesus to the non-Christian world. The main theme of this preaching is Jesus Himself. The Acts of the Apostles makes it very clear that the apostles preached the Good News of salvation fulfilled in Jesus.

The proclamation of the Gospel by word or proclaiming is essential at all times. St. Paul the apostle says: “But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ” (Rom. 10:14, 17). The Church makes her own the words of Jesus “I must preach the Good News of the kingdom of God” (Lk.4:43). It is my duty to preach the Gospel. Woe to me if do not preach the Gospel (1 Cor 9:16). The zeal that prompted St. Paul to utter those words still remains in the Church ever fresh and active.

Jesus envisaged a community with a universal character that spreads throughout the boundaries of the earth and lasts until the end of the world. The church is always intent on presenting the Gospel truths to the people of each locality in their own language and style so as to enable them to grasp it and proclaim it in their own language.



The goal of the church is not mere material prosperity and progress of mankind. Instead, it is a means to lead humanity to God through the teachings of Jesus about faith and morality and developing human dignity and fellow-feeling. Thus, the Church helps man to attain salvation by loving God and neighbour.

We are the children of the Church who received the mission of the proclamation of the kingdom of God and which is formed through the proclamation of the word of God. We are partakers of this mission of the proclamation of the word through baptism, anointing and Holy Eucharist. Let us fulfill this mission by sharing the word of God and life-witness.

Let us Read the Word of God and Meditate

Mk. 16: 14-17

A Word of God to Remember

“Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation”
(Mk. 16: 15)

Let us Pray

Jesus our Lord! bless us to be your witnesses
in the fields of our activities.

My Decision

I will try to spread the messages of the
Gospel in the school where I study.

Let us think with the Church

It was the plan of God to make Jesus the centre of salvation for the whole world.
And the Holy Spirit inspires the Church to co-operate with this divine plan to
fulfill it effectively. The church invites her listeners to confess their faith
and proclaim the Gospel for this.

Let us find out the answers

1. Do you agree with the statement that the Church was formed as a result of proclamation of the Word of God? Give reasons.
2. The Church which was formed by the proclamation of the Gospel is the evangeliser also. How does the Church fulfill this mission?
3. What are the specific features of the kingdom of God?
4. What is the relationship between the proclamation of the Gospel and witness?
5. What are the goals of evangelisation?