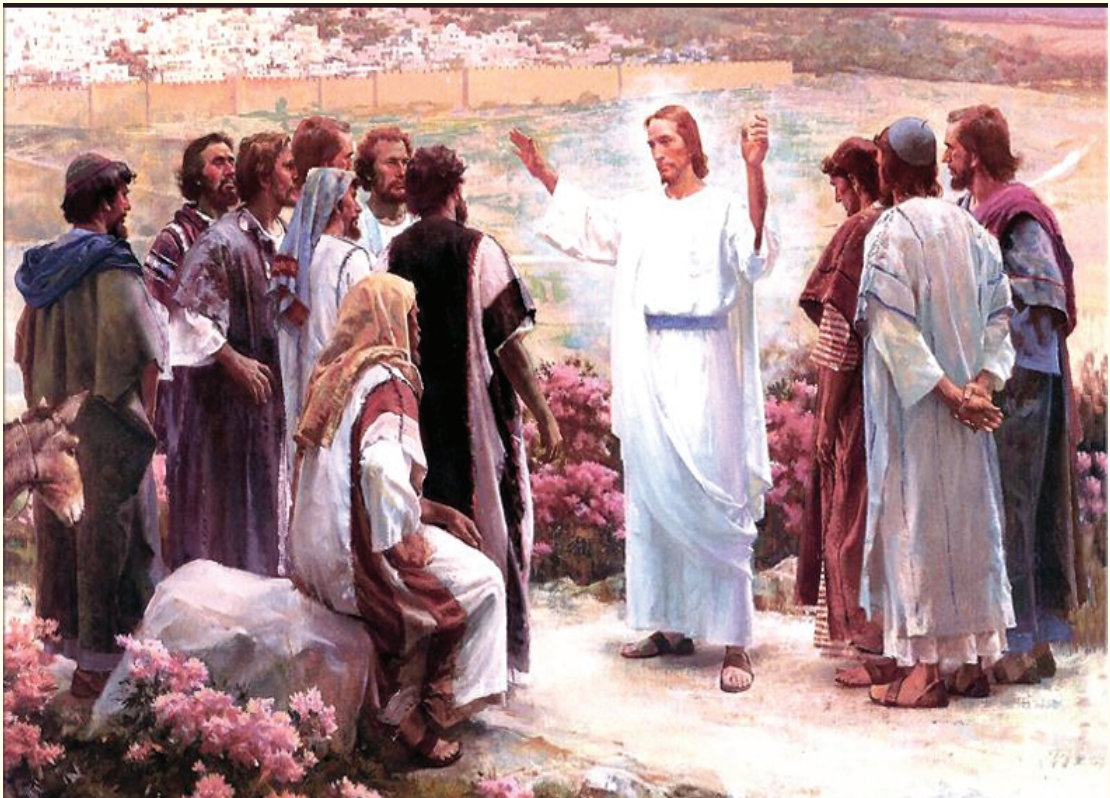


Lesson 9

NEW ORIENTATIONS OF THE APOSTOLIC ACTIVITIES



The risen Lord appeared to the disciples and said: “As the Father has sent me, so I send you. Go into all the world and proclaim the Good News to the whole creation. (Jn. 20: 21; Mk. 16:15) Church is the sacrament and continuation of Jesus in this world. The Church is appointed to continue the salvific mission of Jesus in this world. And the Church has been ever committed to this. She had to overcome many obstacles to fulfil this mission. Many of her children suffered torture and became martyrs. In spite of that, she has not turned back from her missionary commission.

Church - the Continuation of Jesus and the Messenger of His Mission

The salvation which Jesus gave is not only liberation of the soul, but the total liberation of man. Hence the goal of the church is also total liberation of man. She is always in the forefront to work for the conscientisation and liberation of the oppressed, the exploited, the weak and the neglected and she identifies herself with them. She lovingly points out the mistakes of the oppressors and denounces them strongly. She objects to the exploitation and disparities based on religion, colour, caste, etc. The Church conscientises individuals and societies to liberate them from all evils that enslave them.

Church - the conscience of the world

In the modern world, the Church tries like Jesus to be the conscience of the world. The Church gives the leadership to evaluate all the social economic and political circumstances which are against the growth of individuals and society and to take suitable, decisions. The world keenly looks to the Church for the proper response and solutions to any and every event in the world not only for the things against faith and morals but also for all things that endanger the welfare of man. The world leaders keenly listen to what the Pope says on such issues.

In the world of today, the Church tries for the total development of man in various ways. She uses means like education, politics, social services, media etc. for this. The most important among them is education.



Educational Apostolate

The aim of proper education is to form the personality of an individual with man's final end in view. (Education GE.1) Such an education aims at the integral development of the person. The goal of education should be to realise values like love, truth,

justice, fraternity, peace, etc. in one's life. Education must help individuals to avoid evil and to accept good. It must also enable people to study the problems like poverty, ignorance, slavery, exploitation etc. and to eradicate them.

II Vatican Council teaches that the aim of Christian education is not only the maturity of human person, but also a training in faith and morals (GE.2). The important aim of Christian education is to help man to attain that perfect personality in accordance with the perfection of Jesus. Hence the Church takes pains to establish educational institutions, to renew them according to the changes of the times and to give the students good education. II Vatican council teaches also about the responsibility of the parents to provide their children good education (GE3).

Activity-1. How far does the present day education help in freeing the society from the social evils like poverty, ignorance, slavery, exploitation, etc ? Discuss.

Apostolate of the Media

Media has influenced human mind to such an extent that human mind is almost its slave. II Vatican Council has published a decree on the influence of media. Council says that media, in addition to giving knowledge and entertainment, is very helpful in spreading the Kingdom of God. (Social Communications IM.2). But till recent times, the attention of the Church was mainly focussed only on publications. The knowledge / art of the printing press was discovered by Gutten Berg, a German. The first printed book was the Bible. Following that, Christians contributed many spiritual books and other books helping social progress.

When electronic media spread, the attention of the Church turned to it. The mother Church reminds her children to use media like cinema, radio, TV, Computer, internet etc. for the proclamation of the Gospel. The decree on Social Communication Media exhorts like this: "The sons and daughters of the Church have the responsibility to help and defend the Catholic newspapers, magazines, radio, television-cinema programmes and their releasing centres which work to



defend and spread the truth and give a Christian touch to human society. In the same way, the council requests individuals and organisations who have the technical knowledge and economic power to help generously by giving their talents and expert service to use these media for apostolate and building up true culture.” (IM.17).

The modern Church living in the internet age needs the use of technology very much. The children of the Church should get acquainted with it and learn to use it. The misuse of internet leads the community especially the youth to immorality. We have to be alert against it. The pontifical council for social communication media has published two decrees, “Church and Internet’ and ‘The Morality in Internet’ to save the children of the Church from this danger. The decree on ‘The Church and Internet reminds us that when modern technology gives new ways to proclaim Gospel to the people, we must be prepared to make use of it and use it with responsibility and discernment. The decree on ‘Morality

in Internet’ teaches us to use internet only to develop the common good and solidarity of humanity. The Church is very actively alive in this field through newspapers, TV channels, website etc.

Activity-2. How can we make news media a means for proclamation of the Gospel ?
Discuss.

Politics

The members of the Church serve in the field of politics too. They should be led by the model and spirit of Jesus who came to the world to give freedom to the prisoners, sight to the blind, and release to the oppressed. They must be able to defend the oppressed and exploited in society. The faithful in politics should become the voice of the voiceless and offer unstained / unblemished political service. Each

citizen has the responsibility to work with the political leaders to build up the society in truth, justice, tolerance and freedom and to develop true sense of citizenship. At the same time, the Church teaches that our conscience obliges us not to obey the instructions of the political leaders when they are against moral laws because we have to obey God more than men” (CCC. 2255, 2256)

The Fields of Art, Literature and Culture

The mother Church is conscious of the role of art and literature in the progress of humanity. The children of the Church contribute valuable service in the field of culture also. Christian writers and artists working in the spirit of the Gospel message will maintain spiritual power/zeal in the world. The artists and literary men can depict a better life (Church in the Modern World GS 62). The members of the Church have the responsibility to spread the Christian message through cinema, drama and dance forms that instil moral values and especially through Christian art forms. Hence the Church is keen on developing the literary and artistic talents of children and youth through the faith formation in various associations and to use them in spreading the Gospel message.

Protection of the Environment

The children of the Church should also pay attention to maintain the balance of nature. Created things are meant for the whole world. We have the duty to handle them justly and to protect them for common good. It is not right to exploit nature in a way that is harmful to posterity. The Church has given St. Francis Assisi, who loved nature and all the creatures and regarded them as stepping stones to God-experience, as the patron of the environment.



The voice of the Gospel Against Social Evils

There are many missionaries even today who do missionary work in different zones of India and outside India. The sacrifice of these missionaries in leaving their own home and homeland to spread the Gospel message among the non-believers is really great. They are able to lead many to Jesus through their life witness and preaching of the Gospel. As a result of their missionary activities, people have been enabled to gain knowledge and Jesus experience and to react against social evils. When this became a threat to the ruling group who exploited the ignorant people, they began to destroy missionaries. In many places, the government also turned against them, accusing them that they were converting people. Many have been a victim of their evil plans, suffering a lot and even giving up their lives. Sr. Rani Maria, Fr. Aruldas, etc. are some of them.

Gospel is eternal and ever new. The Church has the responsibility to receive the word of life proclaimed 2000 years ago in the fullness of its spirit and to interpret it to the modern age. The children of the Church should try to present the Gospel in the modern world through education, media, art, culture, etc.

Let us Read the Word of God and Meditate

Gal. 1 : 11-24

A Word of God to Remember

“Proclaim the message, be persistent whether the time is favourable or unfavourable”. (2 Tim 4:2)

Let us Pray

Jesus, the total liberator, give the spirit and inner strength for the Christian leaders who are active in social and political fields to function with a deep spirit of Gospel message.

My Decision

I will try to develop a personality based on Christian values.

Let us think with the Church

“The field of activity of lay people is a complex and vast world. It is a world of politics, economics, industry, education, Mass Media, technology, arts and sports. In many Asian countries, lay people serve as true missionaries”
(Ecclesia in Asia 45)

Let us find out the answers

1. How does the church act as the continuation of Jesus and His ambassador ?
2. Why do we say that Church is the conscience of the World ?
3. What is the vision of the Church about educational apostolate ?
4. Describe the service of the Church in the field of Mass Media.
5. Describe the contributions of the Church in the fields of politics, art and culture.