

# The Church's Teaching on Mission

As we have noted in this session, disciples are called to adhere to the teachings of the Apostles, to embrace the truth of Jesus Christ, and to resist the temptation to watered down faith. One teaching of great importance is this: authentic discipleship is inseparable from mission.

Pope Paul VI exclaims: *"it is unthinkable that a person should accept the Word and give himself to the kingdom without becoming a person who bears witness to it and proclaims it in his turn"* (Evangelii Nuntiandi 24). To follow Christ means not only to follow him personally, but to evangelize, inviting others into the same joy. This teaching can be found both in the Sacred Scriptures and in the Tradition of the Church.

## Sacred Scripture

The Apostles' teaching is rooted in Scripture. Take a moment to reflect on each of these passages, and how they relate to the universal call to mission:

- **Matthew 28:19–20** : "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."
- **Matthew 9:37–38** : "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."
- **1 Corinthians 9:16** : "Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!"
- **2 Timothy 4:2** : "Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching."

## The Tradition of the Church

Echoing the teachings of scripture, Pope Francis reminds us of the following in his exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*:

*"All the baptized, whatever their position in the Church or their level of instruction in the faith, are agents of evangelization, and it would be insufficient to envisage a plan of evangelization to be carried out by professionals while the rest of the faithful would simply be passive recipients....anyone who has truly experienced God's saving love does not need much time or lengthy training to go out and proclaim that love."* (EG 120)

In other words, each baptized Christian, regardless of their vocation or state in life, is called to live their faith by sharing the love of Christ and making disciples.

**Discuss:** Are you convinced that, as a baptized Christian, it's both your privilege and duty to evangelize others? Why or why not?

## Take Action

Earlier in Growing Discipleship, we wrote down names with the intention of praying for those people, as well as making specific invitations to lead these friends closer to Christ. To review, these were the categories...

1. Those that do not have Jesus in their lives
2. Those that have Jesus in their life, but not as the center
3. Those who make Christ the center of their lives

**Discuss:** How did those invitations go, are there any you still need to make? Are there any new invitations you'd like to make or new people you'd like to add to this list?