

DIVINE RENOVATION

SUMMARIZING CHAPTER TWO

“Rebuild my house: From Vatican II to Pope Francis”

ACTUALLY, SAINT FRANCIS DIDN'T SAY THAT. “Pope Paul also reminds us that we must avoid the temptation of thinking that the witness of our lives alone is sufficient to evangelize. As he says, ‘the Good News proclaimed by the witness of life, sooner or later has to be proclaimed by the word of life.’ (*On Evangelization in the Modern World*. 1975, no. 22) This is a very important principle for us today, as it emphasizes the proclamation or *kerygmatic* dimension of Paul VI’s definition. **There is much confusion today about the necessity of using words to achieve the goal of evangelization.** We have all heard that saying attributed to Saint Francis of Assisi: ‘Preach the Gospel at all times and if necessary, use words.’ **In spite of the popularity of this phrase, it appears to be a kind of ecclesiastical urban myth.** A search of the Franciscan Omnibus of Sources will not turn up this quote. **Saint Francis appears never to have said this, and, in any case, it is erroneous.** Saint Paul tells us that ‘Faith comes from what is heard’ (Romans 10:17) Certainly, however, there is a primacy to the witness of life. We instinctively cringe when we encounter someone who is not living it but is spouting it. However, it is not an either/or situation, it is both/and, and both/and is a sound Catholic principle. The witness of life must come first, but it must lead to the word of life being proclaimed. Without actions, our words are not believed by our cynical post-modern, post-Christian society, but without words, our actions are not understood.”

WE ARE CALLED TO HOLINESS. ALL OF US. NOT JUST THE PRIESTS. ALL OF US. “The idea that the call to holiness and mission is rooted not in ordination or in religious profession but in baptism had been so forgotten that it was revolutionary. We are called to holiness because we are baptized. We are called to mission, to evangelize, to share the Good News because we are baptized.”

WOW. “Evangelization is now a moral obligation. It’s almost a selfish thing to not evangelize. If we find something wonderful and we keep it for ourselves, then we would be morally culpable.”

IS THIS CATHOLIC? “For many traditionally minded Catholics, the recurrence of terms such as evangelization and personal relationship with Jesus seems, well, not quite Catholic. In my first months at my present parish, when I would speak in this way, many parishioners would say, ‘Father, this just doesn’t sound very Catholic.’ That the average Catholic struggles even today with evangelization is seen in the reason for the synod topic given in the *Lineamenta* document: ‘That despite the fact that the expression [the New Evangelization] is widely known in the Church it has failed to be accepted fully and totally.’ (no. 5) The document says this in spite of the fact that 30 years had passed since Pope John Paul II first spoke about it. What more can we do to demonstrate that this language is quintessentially ‘Catholic’? Being Christian and ‘being Church’ means being missionary; one is or is not. Loving one’s faith implies bearing witness to it, bringing it to others and allowing others to participate in it.”