

## **The Joy of the Gospel (Homework)**

### **Readings:**

Luke 10: 17, Luke 10: 21, Acts 2: 6, Mark 1: 38.

### **Evangelii Gaudium**

*'Taking the first step, being involved and supportive, bearing fruit and rejoicing'*

The Church which "goes forth" is a community of missionary disciples who take the first step, who are involved and supportive, who bear fruit and rejoice. An evangelizing community knows that the Lord has taken the initiative, he has loved us first (cf. 1 Jn 4:19), and therefore we can move forward, boldly take the initiative, go out to others, seek those who have fallen away, stand at the crossroads and welcome the outcast. Such a community has an endless desire to show mercy, the fruit of its own experience of the power of the Father's infinite mercy. Let us try a little harder to take the first step and to become involved. Jesus washed the feet of his disciples. The Lord gets involved and he involves his own, as he kneels to wash their feet. He tells his disciples: "You will be blessed if you do this" (Jn 13:17).

An evangelising community gets involved by word and deed in people's daily lives; it bridges distances, it is willing to abase itself if necessary, and it embraces human life, touches the suffering flesh of Christ in others. Evangelisers thus take on the "smell of the sheep" and the sheep are willing to hear their voice. An evangelising community is also supportive, standing by people at every step of the way, no matter how difficult or lengthy this may prove to be. It is familiar with patient expectation and apostolic endurance. Evangelisation consists mostly of patience and disregard for constraints of time. Faithful to the Lord's gift, it also bears fruit. An evangelising community is always concerned with fruit, because the Lord wants her to be fruitful. It cares for the grain and does not grow impatient at the weeds. The sower, when he sees weeds sprouting among the grain does not grumble or overreact. He or she finds a way to let the word take flesh in a particular situation and bear fruits of new life, however imperfect or incomplete these may appear. The disciple is ready to put his or her whole life on the line, even to accepting martyrdom, in bearing witness to Jesus Christ, yet the goal is not to make enemies but to see God's word accepted and its capacity for liberation and renewal revealed. Finally, an evangelising community is filled with joy; it knows how to rejoice always. It celebrates every small victory, every step forward in the work of evangelisation. Evangelisation with joy becomes beauty in the liturgy, as part of our daily concern to spread goodness. The Church evangelises and is herself evangelised through the beauty of the liturgy, which is both a celebration of the task of evangelisation and the source of her renewed self-giving.