

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

Three Groups for Evangelization St. Bartholomew, apostle Monday, August 24, 2015
8:15 AM Rv 21:9b-14; Jn 1:45-51 (We need a Church which as communities reflect that and work at bringing about this message, this good news in the world, where all the members have some role to play in being sent, that is, in being apostles.)

Now by common consensus **Nathanael is Bartholomew**. Why two different names? I have no idea; no one knows this either. There are twelve apostles in the synoptics; one is Bartholomew. There are twelve apostles in John; one of them is Nathanael. That's the only different one, so scholars assume they are the same man.

The point here is that **an apostle is a missionary**. That's what the word means. It comes from the Greek word "to send." So **Jesus is calling people to himself just to send them away**. But before he sends them away, they have to have some experience. Andrew says, "Come and see." Now this is really for everyone because we live in an apostolic Church, meaning all people of the Church are sent. Many are not prepared to be sent because they have never come to see. **In order to be properly equipped to be sent, we have to already have seen. We have to have encountered Christ.**

In the exhortation *Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis mentions **three different categories of people who need evangelization**. The first is of course **those who come every week to the Lord's table**. We always need further evangelization. There's never a time when we have enough. There's never a time when we don't need to be formed by the word of God. This is an ongoing need; everyone has it. So he mentions those who are already **practicing on a regular basis**. **And he also mentioned in that same group those who don't actually come to Mass, but do have deep faith**. So he does acknowledge there are people with deep faith who don't practice in a religious sense. Of course they must practice in some other sense. Faith has to be lived out somehow. But as far as I know, it's the first time an official of the Church has acknowledged this phenomena that some people practice without going to Mass. But they too need further formation. **And their commitment has to be enriched, and it would be enriched if they came to share at the Lord's table.**

The second group he talks about are **those who are baptized, but whose lives and values do not reflect baptismal promises**. This is a much more serious problem. If people have a

deep faith and they have a deep prayer life, but fail to go to Mass, that's a problem of a sort, but relatively minor. But if they are baptized, but their lives and their values do not reflect the promises of Baptism, you have a serious problem. You have what is here called **duplicity**. Nathanael was a man without duplicity, but that is duplicity: to practice Baptism, to incorporate oneself or one's family into the Church, but then not live by values consistent with those promises—very serious problem. **They need even more so the word of God, the formation of the word of God, the joy of the gospel. They are living a life of contradiction.**

The third group he mentions are **those who have never heard the gospel or who have heard it with their ears, but rejected it in their heart.** They still need the good news of Jesus Christ. The good news of Jesus Christ is really for everyone, even hardened sinners, even atheists, even those who are turned away from God. **God's word is for everyone, and the joy of the gospel is for everyone.** God's love is for everyone. And we need a Church, and this is what the pope is saying, **we need a Church which as communities reflect that and work at bringing about this message, this good news in the world, where all the members have some role to play in being sent, that is, in being apostles.** There are different ways in which this is done. There are different avenues and different theaters of operation, but no one is excluded, once they come and see, from the mission of being sent. It is simply impossible.