

Discussion Summary

Joy of the Gospel: Always Alert to God's Signs

Some themes that emerged during table conversations included the difficulty of finding joy in such a troubled world. Both ongoing wars and the challenges of mission work were mentioned, as well as the privatization of religion, the access of the laity to reading, understanding, and implementing *Joy of the Gospel* without the support that priests and religious get for such study, and priests who are not open to supporting mission when approached for appeals or transferred into a parish.

One connection that resonated was the idea that Pope Francis is “canonizing Vatican II” by canonizing John XXIII, Paul VI, John Paul I, and John Paul II, and particularly by setting the feast day of John XXIII on the anniversary of the opening day of Vatican II, October 11.

The table communities examined how to find joy every day, discern joy in the signs of the times and recognize the opportunities presented by the upcoming Eucharistic Revival in the United States. It was also observed that some priests and sisters are in mission here while other participants are part of communities participating in global mission. The reminder of the endurance of the Gospel message and our universal call to mission also surfaced during conversations.

After listening to the table communities' reports, Fr. Jim offered a few responses. Regarding the challenge of finding joy, he directed us back to the handout, page 3, specifically the section beginning, “Francis is not overwhelmed by current realities...”

He also noted the challenge of facing real challenges, including helping people encouraged people to live together instead of being enamored of devices. Local churches overseas are more people oriented not as individualistic as in the United States. As someone mentioned, religion has become privatized. Building together as our common goal is an idea that has captured younger people, particularly the ideas of *Laudato Si*.

Why isn't EG used very much today? Why is mission not imbibed by our priests? Probably less than 5% of seminaries have a full semester course on mission that includes dialogue and the like.

Identify the real source of joy! In the realities of today, joy is passive. I think a deep joy can come from touching people and touching their wounds. The story of doubting Thomas in John's Gospel, and Jesus invites him to put his hand into his side, and then Thomas discovered the joy of the resurrection. I think we're not afraid to touch people's wounds and that can become a deeper encounter of faith.

Canonizing Vatican II. There is so much wisdom there that still needs to be integrated.

Eucharistic Revival. If it only stops with going to Mass and doesn't issue into mission, it's not a complete revival. *Ite misse est* GO! You (plural) are sent. The word Mass comes from mission. For the Eucharistic Revival to be complete, it needs a sense of mission.

Interpreting Signs of the Times. It takes individual and communal discernment. As the last table mentioned, we have to look for leaders of energy and take time for joy. If we don't take time, we don't discover the joy, and we can discover it from many sources.

Other Resources: Fr. Jim has written *Walking with Pope Francis*, which will be published in January by Orbis. SEDOS has published *New Trends in Mission* (\$60!—a price barrier for seminaries and theology schools overseas)