

## “God has spoken, He has truly broken the great silence”

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1. Pope Benedict XVI (2012): “Many people wonder: is God just a hypothesis or not? Is he a reality or not? Why do we not hear him? ‘Gospel’ means: *God has broken his silence, God has spoken, God exists*. This fact in itself is salvation: *God knows us, God loves us, he has entered into history*. Jesus is his Word, God with us, God showing us that he loves us, that he suffers with us until death and rises again. This is the Gospel. God has spoken, he is no longer the great unknown, but has shown himself and this is salvation” (*Mediation during Synod of Bishops for New Evangelization*, 8 Oct. 2012; emphasis added).
2. The words of St. John: “We announce to you the eternal life which dwelt with the Father and was made visible to us. What we have seen and heard we announce to you, so that you may have fellowship with us and our common fellowship be with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:2-3).
3. Vatican II (1965): *In His goodness and wisdom God chose to reveal Himself and to make known to us the hidden purpose of His will* (see Eph. 1:9) by which through Christ, the Word made flesh, man might in the Holy Spirit have **access to the Father** and **come to share in the divine nature** (see Eph. 2:18; 2 Peter 1:4). Through this revelation, therefore, the invisible God (see Col. 1:15, 1 Tim. 1:17) out of the *abundance of His love* speaks to men as friends (see Ex. 33:11; John 15:14-15) and lives among them (see Bar. 3:38), so that He may invite and take them into fellowship with Himself. This plan of revelation is realized by *deeds and words* having an *inner unity*: the deeds wrought by God in the history of salvation manifest and confirm the teaching and realities signified by the words, while the words proclaim the deeds and clarify the *mystery* contained in them. By this revelation then, the deepest truth about God and the salvation of man shines out for our sake in Christ, who is both the mediator and the fullness of all revelation (*Dei verbum*, n. 2; emphasis added).
4. Vatican II (1965): Then, after speaking in many and varied ways through [the patriarchs, Moses, and] the prophets, ‘now at last in these days God has spoken to us in His Son’ (Heb. 1:1-2). For He sent His Son, the eternal Word, who enlightens all men, so that He might dwell among men and tell them of the *innermost being of God* (see John 1:1-18). Jesus Christ, therefore, the Word made flesh, was sent as ‘a man to men.’ He ‘speaks the words of God’ (John 3:34), and *completes the work of salvation* which His Father gave Him to do (see John 5:36; John 17:4). To see Jesus is to see His Father (John 14:9). For this reason **Jesus perfected revelation by fulfilling it through his whole work of making Himself present and manifesting Himself: through His words and deeds, His signs and wonders, but especially through His death and glorious resurrection from the dead and final sending of the Spirit of truth**. Moreover He confirmed with divine testimony what revelation proclaimed, that God is with us to free us from the darkness of sin and death, and to raise us up to life eternal. (*Dei verbum*, n. 4; emphasis added; emphasis added)
5. Pope Paul VI (1975): “Above all the Gospel must be proclaimed by witness. Take a Christian or a handful of Christians who, in the midst of their own community, show their capacity for understanding and acceptance, their *sharing of life and destiny* with other people, their *solidarity* with the efforts of all for whatever is *noble and good*. Let us suppose that, in addition, they radiate in an altogether simple and unaffected way their faith in values that go beyond current values, and their *hope in something that is not seen* and that one would not dare to imagine. Through this wordless witness these Christians stir up irresistible questions in the hearts of those who see how they live: *Why are they like this? Why do they live in this way? What or who is it that inspires them? Why are*

*they in our midst?* Such a witness is already a *silent proclamation of the Good News* and a very powerful and effective one. Here we have an **initial act of evangelization**. The above questions will ask, whether they are people to whom Christ has never been proclaimed, or baptized people who do not practice, or people who live as nominal Christians but according to principles that are in no way Christian, or people who are seeking, and not without suffering, something or someone whom they sense but cannot name. *Other questions will arise, deeper and more demanding ones, questions evoked by this witness which involves presence, sharing, solidarity, and which is an essential element, and generally the first one, in evangelization.*” (*Evangelii nuntiandi*, 21; emphasis added)

6. Pope Paul VI (1975): “Nevertheless this always remains insufficient, because even the finest witness will prove ineffective in the long run if it is not explained, justified - what Peter called always having ‘your answer ready for people who ask you the reason for the hope that you all have’ (1 Pet 3:15) - and made explicit by a clear and unequivocal proclamation of the Lord Jesus. **The Good News proclaimed by the witness of life sooner or later has to be proclaimed by the word of life. There is no true evangelization if the name, the teaching, the life, the promises, the kingdom and the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God are not proclaimed.** The history of the Church, from the discourse of Peter on the morning of Pentecost onwards, has been intermingled and identified with the history of this proclamation. *At every new phase of human history, the Church, constantly gripped by the desire to evangelize, has but one preoccupation: whom to send to proclaim the mystery of Jesus? In what way is this mystery to be proclaimed? How can one ensure that it will resound and reach all those who should hear it?* This proclamation - kerygma, preaching or catechesis - occupies such an important place in evangelization that it has often become synonymous with it; and yet it is only one aspect of evangelization.” (*Evangelii nuntiandi*, 22; emphasis added)
  
7. Pope Benedict XVI (2012): “‘*confessio*’ in pre-Christian Latin would not have been ‘*confessio*’ but ‘*professio*’...: this is the positive presentation of a reality. Instead, the word ‘*confessio*’ refers to the situation in a court, in a trial where someone opens his mind and confesses. In other words, this word ‘confession’, which in Christian Latin replaced the word ‘*professio*’ brings with it **the martyrological element, the element of witnessing to faith in front of the enemy, even in situations of passion and of the danger of death. Christian confession essentially involves a willingness to suffer....Again, in the essence of the “*confessio*” of our Creed, an openness to passion, suffering, indeed, giving up life is implied. And this guarantees credibility: the ‘*confessio*’ is not just something that can be abandoned; the ‘*confessio*’ implies the willingness to give up my life, to accept the passion. This is also truly the verification of the ‘*confessio*’. It can be seen that for us ‘*confessio*’ is not a word, it is more than pain, it is more than death. For the ‘*confessio*’ it is really worth suffering, it is worth suffering up to death. Whoever makes this ‘*confessio*’ shows in this way that **what he confesses is more than life: it is life itself, the treasure, the precious and infinite pearl.** And it is in the martyrological aspect of the word ‘*confessio*’ that the truth appears: it comes into being only for a reality for which it is worth suffering, which is stronger **than even death**, and it demonstrates that I hold the truth in my hand, that I am more than certain that I am ‘bearing’ my life because I find life in this confession.” (*Mediation during Synod of Bishops for New Evangelization*, 8 Oct. 2012)**

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. How can we as Catholic Christians participate in the new evangelization? Think of 3-4 different practical activities that you can start or get involved in in your parish or social groups.
2. What are the major challenges facing the new evangelization here in San Diego? How can you assist in overcoming these challenges? Prayer is essential, but what else can you do? Think of the culture and how to impact it.