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“Con un corazón misionero, siempre en movimiento”
“With a missionary heart, always on the move”

First theme:

**THE REALITY TO EVANGELIZE:
THE CHALLENGES OF A CHANGING WORLD**

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Dear sisters and brothers:

I am structuring my presentation in four unequal parts:

- I. The reality of today's world**
- II. Our response to this reality**
- III. Four means of interiorization in the light of *Evangelii Gaudium***
- IV. Concluding**

I. The reality of today's world

I begin with a phrase from the Pope:

...What we are experiencing is not simply an epoch of changes, but an epochal change. (Francis, Address to the Curia, 21/12/19)

What we are experiencing is not simply an epoch of changes, but an epochal change.

This phrase of the Holy Father will be the axis of what we are going to share in this presentation since it responds to the title and the content that I have been asked to present. We really are in an *epochal change* and not in a simple *epoch of changes*.

On two occasions, I have recently had contact with Archbishop Rino Fisichella, pro-prefect of the *Dicastery for Evangelization*, who asked if the mobile phone he had in his hand was an instrument. The answer from most of those present was yes. Bishop Fisichella, after a pause, stated that the mobile phone is more than an instrument: it is *culture*, a *new culture*. It is a simple example that illustrates part of the *epochal change* we are going through.

A few lines later, in the same letter, Pope Francis continues:

...we find ourselves living at a time when change is no longer linear, but epochal. It entails decisions that rapidly transform our ways of living, of

relating to one another, of communicating and thinking, of how different generations relate to one another and how we understand and experience faith and science.

Here is a first theoretical description that the Pope offers us so that we can better enter the subject. The titles that emerge from it are *non-linear changes, profound transformation, decisions that rapidly transform everything...*

The first question I ask myself about it is:

How does all this translate into the actual fabric of life?

We are listing some titles without intending to be exhaustive; many more could and should be added. We are not making any ethical assessment of each one a priori. We are simply titling them and letting them echo in our lives.

1. Artificial intelligence.
2. Gender violence and domestic violence.
3. Search for meditative harmonization of life.
4. Structural social injustice.
5. Immediacy of communications in multimedia.
6. Wars and permanent small armed conflicts.
7. Robotization of work.
8. Ideological colonization and unique thought.
9. The different self-perceptions of one's sexual gender.
10. Ecological sensitivity.
11. Religious and political fundamentalisms.
12. Solidarity with the most neglected, discarded and invisible.
13. The fragmentation of the family.
14. The in-depth study of the human genome at the service of health.
15. Human trafficking and exploitation.
16. Linear thinking and oblique and digital thinking.
17. Lack of promotion of some human rights, especially care and respect for life.
18. The emergence of a global pandemic in the XXI century.

All this and much more translates, in a more specific form, into situations of different sorts. So as to give just one example, I wish to comment on something I noticed on a trip outside Argentina a few months ago:

- In one country, the law allows a 14-year-old girl to have an abortion on her own sole decision, without the intervention of her parents or any adult or guardian.
- In the same country there is a law that fines people for *pushing* a pet and requires that, in addition to payment, they take a special course to learn how to treat pets.

It is evident that pets should never be mistreated, under any aspect and for any reason. However, the disproportion regarding the care and protection of life between one legislation and another is significant.

This is our world today whether we like it or not!

These are the realities to be evangelized in an epochal change!

What to do in the face of all this?

I will not give a specific and definite answer. We will discover that throughout the various presentations and the moments of group work. In addition, it should then be updated in each country and each region according to its own context.

Now, I will simply present four clues for us to let ourselves be challenged by the Pope's speech that we have been breaking down for our topic:

FIRST CLUE: LET YOURSELF BE QUESTIONED

The healthy attitude is, rather, to allow oneself to be questioned by the challenges of the present time and to understand them with the virtues of discernment, parrhesia and hypomoné.

Rather than becoming frightened and closed off, the Pope asks for a first attitude: *letting oneself be questioned by the challenges... and understanding them with three attitudes: discernment, courage and evangelical audacity (this is parrhesia); and firm and constant hope (this is hypomoné).* Each one of these three words has a lot of weight in addressing the realities of the *epochal change* which we have to evangelize. It would be necessary to break down each of these three expressions for a renewed evangelization in our time: *discernment; evangelical courage and audacity; firm and constant hope...*

I think it's very important *to let yourself be questioned*; to not be afraid or to retire in yourself in the face of the difficult and disconcerting; to not close yourself off in the face of the *epochal change* but allow yourself to be questioned by everything that happens!

An example of possible questions: On the topic of gender: Shouldn't we discern very well the difference between *gender ideology* and *gender perspective*? Shouldn't the *condition of homosexual people* in our communities be discerned very well from the so-called *homosexual lobby*?

SECOND CLUE: START PROCESSES RATHER THAN OCCUPY SPACES

We need to initiate processes and not just occupy spaces: "God manifests himself in historical revelation, in history. Time initiates processes and space crystalizes them. God is in history, in the processes. We must not focus on occupying the spaces where power is exercised..."

Initiate processes rather than occupy spaces of power:

- Which *processes* should be initiated and/or focused?
- Which *spaces* of power should be left to the side or not placed in the centre?

It is a complex issue in the world, in the Church and in Cursillos in Christianity. Overcome the internal struggles for *spaces* of power in order to *discern* the *epochal change* and initiate processes of evangelization there.

An example of possible questions: When someone new to the path of faith wants to start participating in a group and in the community: Shouldn't we be more open and let him really start *his process* of insertion and active participation even though he still has a long way to go? Shouldn't it be necessary to overcome artificial prejudices sometimes created considering a sort of stereotype of the *average Catholic*? Don't we easily fall into the temptation of wishing to control the *space* so that nothing gets complicated according to our criteria?

THIRD CLUE: EVERYTHING HAS TO BE EVANGELIZING

Saint Paul VI stated: "*Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize*" (EN 14). *Evangelii nuntiandi* remains the most important pastoral document after the Council and is current. In fact, the current objective of the reform is that "*customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channelled for the evangelization of today's world rather than for her self-preservation. The renewal of structures demanded by pastoral conversion can only be understood in this light: as part of an effort to make them more mission-oriented*" (EG 27).

Everything has to be absolutely *missionary and evangelizing*. We need to reread EN and resume EG in the face of the reality of the *epochal change*.

Rediscover the Church in the line of evangelization and not in the perspective of *self-preservation*. For all this, *pastoral conversion* is necessary so that everything becomes missionary. Saying *the Church* is same as saying every baptized person, every cursillista and every Cursillo in Christianity in any corner of the world.

What to do and how to do it so that Cursillos in Christianity in each service that it carries out is totally missionary and evangelizing in this *epochal change*?

A possible example: If everything has to be missionary and evangelizing, don't we have to rethink some aspects of our liturgical celebrations so that they are meaningful to the people of today's world? In order to maintain fidelity to the essential elements of our faith, which should be the music, the signs, the times, the biorhythms of a liturgy that responds to young people as young people, to girls and boys in a format that responds to the sensitivity of their stage of life?

FOURTH CLUE: OVERCOME THE MODEL OF CHRISTIANITY TO ASSUME THE PARADIGM OF THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH

The first two Congregations mentioned [Doctrine of the Faith and the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples] were established in an age when it was easier to distinguish between two rather well-defined realities: a Christian world and a world yet to be evangelized. That situation no longer exists today [...] ... we need other "maps", other paradigms, which can help us reposition our ways of thinking and our attitudes. Brothers and sisters, Christendom no longer exists! Today we are no longer the only ones who create culture, nor are we in the forefront or those most listened to. We need a change in our pastoral mindset, which does not mean moving towards a relativistic pastoral care. We are no longer living in a Christian world, because faith – especially in Europe, but also in a large part of the West – is no longer an evident presupposition of social life; indeed, faith is often rejected, derided, marginalized and ridiculed. (Francis, Address to the Curia, 21/21/19)

The world got very well-defined: *one side is Christian; the other is a side to be evangelized.* We need *other maps and other paradigms* to reposition ways of thinking and attitudes.

Christendom no longer exists. This is absolutely clear and is not always actually assumed. We admit it theoretically, but we do not apply it to our ecclesial systems. We continue to carry out our pastoral activities as if the world were more or less Christian. And it hasn't been for quite some time in most parts of the world where it had been at some point in time.

What is needed is *a change of pastoral mentality* that *does not mean relativism.* It means knowing that *we are not the only ones who produce culture, nor are we in the forefront or those most listened to.* Faith is no longer an *evident presupposition of social life.* Moreover, the Pope recognizes that in many cases the faith is even *rejected, derided, marginalized and ridiculed.*

This *change of pastoral mentality* has to do with moving from the paradigm of Christendom to the paradigm of the Apostolic Church. It is urgent that we look again at the model, at the map of the primitive Christian community to apply it with different categories to the evangelization of the world today.

A possible example: Many of the girls and boys who come to our communities to begin the path of catechesis do not have the same basic elements of faith that the children who arrived 20 years ago had. Making the Sign of the Cross, knowing the Our Father and the Hail Mary prayers was a kind of common heritage of many families even though they were not practitioners of the faith. This is no longer a reality. It does not exist in most cases. This implies beginning a catechetical path that necessarily has to be kerygmatic as well, inasmuch as it incorporates the essential elements of the first proclamation of the faith.

So far the problem has been raised. This is the first and foremost issue I was asked to express in this presentation. However, we obviously must seek to give a first response which you will continue to improve and feed in the successive days of this VIII Encounter.

II. Our response to this reality

In this context of epochal change we have outlined:

What place does God occupy in all this...?

What place does the Church – that is, each and every one of the baptized – occupy...?

What place does the Movement of Cursillos in Christianity occupy...?

To take a single evangelical phrase from the many that we could choose:

John 10:10

I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly.

If that is so... What are we doing? How are we doing it? If Jesus came so that people have life and have it abundantly in his name:

What is going on?

Why is this not happening in many cases?

What about the proclamation of Christ in the Church today?

How has the evangelizing service of the Movement of Cursillos in Christianity at this moment in history been?

We are challenged to announce Christ to this world, to evangelize this reality of *epochal change*. We cannot escape, we cannot give up being missionaries since the Church is, by essence, evangelizing. If there is no evangelization, there is no Church, there is no community, there is no true Movement of Cursillos in Christianity.

We know that this is not easy. I am going to give some clues to outline an answer from a biblical text from the context of the Apostolic Church. It is about the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch by the deacon Philip in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles. Here we have a “map” of the Apostolic Church we should seek to apply creatively in our evangelizing service to overcome the Church of Christendom paradigm.

Acts 8:26-40

²⁶ Then the angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, “Get up and head south on the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza, the desert route.” ²⁷ So he got up and set out. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace,* that is, the queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury, who had come to Jerusalem to worship, ²⁸ and was returning home. Seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. ²⁹ The Spirit said to Philip, “Go and join up with that chariot.” ³⁰ Philip ran up and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and said, “Do you understand what you are reading?” ³¹ He replied, “How can I, unless someone instructs me?” So he invited Philip to get in and sit with him. ³² This was the scripture passage he was reading:

“Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he opened not his mouth. ³³ In (his) humiliation justice was denied to him. Who will tell of his posterity? For his life is taken from the earth.”

³⁴ Then the eunuch said to Philip in reply, “I beg you, about whom is the prophet saying this? About himself, or about someone else?” ³⁵ Then Philip opened his mouth and, beginning with this scripture passage, he proclaimed Jesus to him. ³⁶ As they travelled along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “Look, there is water. What is to prevent my being baptized?” ³⁸ Then he ordered the chariot to stop, and Philip and the eunuch both went down into the water, and he baptized him. ³⁹ When they came out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, but continued on his way rejoicing.

⁴⁰ Philip came to Azotus and went about proclaiming the good news to all the towns until he reached Caesarea.

	<i>Apostolic Church paradigm model in Acts 8,25-40</i>	<i>Elements for an evangelization in that model in our days</i>
1	Philip's <i>docility</i> to the voice of the Lord through his Angel.	The <i>docility</i> to God that invites us to be evangelizers with the Spirit.

2	<i>Acceptance of God's will to set out and go to a desert road.</i>	<i>The path of life of each person as a place of evangelization. Roads that can be deserts.</i>
3	<i>Philip's docility to the Spirit who asks him to approach and walk next to the chariot of the Ethiopian eunuch.</i>	<i>Approaching and walking alongside those you want to evangelize.</i>
4	<i>Philip listens to what the Ethiopian eunuch reads.</i>	<i>Listening to the beating of the heart of those we want to evangelize.</i>
5	<i>Philip respectfully asks questions to the Ethiopian eunuch.</i>	<i>Asking questions delicately to find out what those we want to evangelize are experiencing.</i>
6	<i>Philip's attitude has generated confidence in the eunuch who asks him to get into his car.</i>	<i>Generating a bond of trust with regard to those we want to evangelize, getting on the car of their lives.</i>
7	<i>Philip responds to the Ethiopian's concerns. He does not express a definite and pre-prepared speech.</i>	<i>Responding to specific concerns people we want to evangelize are experiencing today. Paying attention to the questions from our contemporaries.</i>
8	<i>Starting from the written Word of God, Philip announces Jesus' life.</i>	<i>Announcing Jesus through the written Word of God.</i>
9	<i>With a question, the Ethiopian implores Philip to be baptized. He receives the sacrament that is the gateway to the entire sacramental universe of the Church.</i>	<i>Once the Word is received, the Church's challenge is marked by seeking the sacramental participation of all those who have accepted the Good News of the Lord. Here we enter the most catechetical universe.</i>
10	<i>With Christ's life through Baptism, the eunuch joyfully follows his path.</i>	<i>The happiness and joy of those who receive Christ in their hearts.</i>

We are facing a model of evangelization of the Apostolic Church. Points 3 to 8 would express the most clearly kerygmatic moment. That is to say, the explicit announcement of Christ, prepared by a series of attitudes that make it really well received in the heart of the Ethiopian. Points 9 and 10 could indicate more clearly what is proper to the *mystagogy* of the sacramental universe of the Church. That is, a true introduction to the mystery of life in Christ of one who has accepted his message.

The *kerygmatic* and *mystagogic* claim and complement each other. It is not always easy to draw the borders between one and the other. But both must be present in the entire evangelizing and catechetical process of those of us who live in this *epochal change*.

The Church is challenged to announce Christ in this epochal change. Cursillo de Cristiandad is challenged to announce Christ in this epochal change.

We must be passionate about this service which has to bring out the best in each and every one of us. This passion has its starting point in Christ who uses us as instruments, as in the case of Philip, so that all people truly have life in abundance.

III. Five means to interiorize in light of the content of *Evangelii Gaudium*

Concluding, I share five more intuitions that Pope Francis proposes to us in *Evangelii Gaudium* in line with what we have been sharing in this reflection. That is to say: how to evangelize in this *epochal change*. Many more could be thought of, but these can serve as a good trigger.

FIRST MEANS: GIVE CONSTANT AND SUSTAINED WITNESS TO THE JOY OF THE GOSPEL

The joy of the gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. With Christ joy is constantly born anew. In this Exhortation I wish to encourage the Christian faithful to embark upon a new chapter of evangelization marked by this joy, while pointing out new paths for the Church's journey in years to come. (EG 1).

The joy of the Gospel is an essential element. The joy that springs from faith and the encounter with Christ is a healthy remedy to react against negativity, constant complaining and ruthless criticism. All these negative attitudes spring from resentment that hurts the heart. With Jesus Christ, change for the better is always possible.

Lord, give us the ability to experience and enjoy the joy of the Gospel to share it with all the people around us!

SECOND MEANS: RENEW THE LANGUAGE OF FAITH SO THAT IT BE SIGNIFICANT IN OUR TIME

... vast and rapid cultural changes demand that we constantly seek ways of expressing unchanging truths in a language which brings out their abiding newness. (EG 41).

This is an enormous challenge: to present the truths of the faith so that they are meaningful to people who are going through this *epochal change*; to present the forever truth of Christ to humanity today.

Lord, give us the grace to be creative in conveying the faith to our everyday world so that it is truly meaningful to the people of our time!

THIRD MEANS: PEDAGOGICALLY REFORMULATING THE RULES SO THAT THEY BE A MEAN OF LIFE

...there are rules or precepts which may have been quite effective in their time, but no longer have the same usefulness for directing and shaping people's lives... (EG 43).

That is why *pastoral conversion* and *change of mentality* are necessary so as not to continue with the recipes of 50 years ago, which are clearly no longer useful. Renewing is definitely mandatory. Renewing ourselves today in fidelity to the always same faith. We do not evangelize for the cultural context of 50 or 500 years ago.

Lord, give us the necessary audacity to renew ourselves and render ineffective those norms that gave us security in the past but that no longer have meaning in our journey of living the faith today!

FOURTH MEANS: GUIDE CHRISTIAN MORALITY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE BEST POSSIBLE GOOD

We see then that the task of evangelization operates within the limits of language and of circumstances. It constantly seeks to communicate more effectively the truth of the Gospel in a specific context, without renouncing the truth, the goodness and the light which it can bring whenever perfection is not possible. A missionary heart is aware of these limits and makes itself "weak with the weak... everything for everyone" (1 Cor 9:22). It never closes itself off, never retreats into its own security, never opts for rigidity and defensiveness. It realizes that it has to grow in its own understanding of the Gospel and in discerning the paths of the Spirit, and so it always does what good it can, even if in the process, its shoes get soiled by the mud of the street. (EG 45).

Helping discover that, while we are still on this path in our lives, the ideal of perfection in Christian life should always guide us but we will never reach 100%. We must open ourselves to the category of *possible good*, the one that becomes gradually real in light of the diverse circumstances and contexts of each person and each group or community.

Lord, give us the grace to be enthusiastic about the ideal of Christian holiness so that we learn to embody it in real life, step by step, in the continued search for the possible good!

FIFTH MEANS: DECODING THE VARIOUS SEARCHES FOR GOD OF OUR CONTEMPORARIES

Today, our challenge is not so much atheism as the need to respond adequately to many people's thirst for God, lest they try to satisfy it with alienating solutions or with a disembodied Jesus who demands nothing of us with regard to others. Unless these people find in the Church a spirituality which can offer healing and liberation, and fill them with life and peace, while at the same time summoning them to fraternal communion and missionary fruitfulness, they will end up by being taken in by solutions which neither make life truly human nor give glory to God. (EG 89).

Knowing how to decode the thirst for God in this *epochal change*. There is a thirst for God in other codes and other formats we must learn to interpret. In many cases that thirst for God will be small and even impure and contaminated. We must not drown it. On the contrary, we must make a foothold in that incipient religiosity and

give it content through the joyful presentation of Christ who brings life in abundance.

Lord, give us the ability to interpret the searches for God of the people of our time to give them an adequate response from the joy of the Gospel!

IV. Concluding

I invite you to conclude our journey with two series of texts. Some biblical and others magisterial. The first and the main series contain seven scattered verses from different letters of St. Paul the Apostle, patron saint of the Cursillo Movement. It is the written Word of God that stimulates us. The second is a set of phrases of Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium* where he invites us to be bold and live these seven, *let us not allow ourselves to be robbed* of so many good things we can enjoy in the life and in the faith of the Church. These are words that should motivate and guide us so that we do not get bogged down in internalisms or bureaucratic issues that do not touch the core of faith.

Both series of texts, the biblical and the magisterial, are in Spanish and English. I invite everyone to read them out loud. Those of Romance languages in Spanish and those of Anglo-Saxon languages in English. Those of other language families in what language they find most comfortable. We do it loudly and enthusiastically even though Spanish and English overlap differently!

BIBLICAL TEXTS

Gal 2,20

Ya no vivo yo, sino que Cristo vive en mí: la vida que sigo viviendo en la carne, la vivo en la fe en el Hijo de Dios, que me amó y se entregó por mí.

Yet I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me.

Fil 1,21

Para mí la vida es Cristo, y la muerte, una ganancia.

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

Fil 4,4

Alégrese siempre en el Señor. Vuelvo a insistir, alégrese

Rejoice in the Lord always: again I will say, rejoice.

1Co 9,16b

¡Ay de mí si no predicara el Evangelio!

If I preach not the Gospel!

2Co 4,5

Porque no nos predicamos a nosotros mismos, sino a Cristo Jesús, el Señor, y nosotros no somos más que servidores de ustedes por amor de Jesús.

For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.

Rom 10,17

La fe, por lo tanto, nace de la predicación y la predicación se realiza en virtud de la Palabra de Cristo.

So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

1Co 9,22

Y me hice débil con los débiles, para ganar a los débiles. Me hice todo para todos, para ganar por lo menos a algunos, a cualquier precio.

To the weak I became weak, that I might gain the weak: I am become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some.

TEXTOS MAGISTERIALES DEL PAPA FRANCISCO**EG 80:**

¡No nos dejemos robar el entusiasmo misionero!

Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of missionary enthusiasm!

EG 83:

¡No nos dejemos robar la alegría evangelizadora!

Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of the joy of evangelization!

EG 86:

¡No nos dejemos robar la esperanza!

Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of hope!

EG 92:

¡No nos dejemos robar la comunidad!

Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of community!

EG 97:

¡No nos dejemos robar el Evangelio!

Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of the Gospel!

EG 101:

¡No nos dejemos robar el ideal del amor fraterno!

Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of the ideal of fraternal love!

EG 109:

¡No nos dejemos robar la fuerza misionera!

Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of missionary vigour!

Three possible questions for the groups:

1. Looking at this first presentation as a whole: Which are the three words that resound in my heart in the light of evangelization in an *epochal change*?
2. How will we have to modify the pedagogy of the faith of our usual pastoral staff so that we Catholic Christians really live *in, through* and *from* the joy of the Gospel?
3. What two steps should be taken in living the faith of the Movement of Cursillos in Christianity in your country or region in order to be able to respond in terms of evangelization to the men and women of *our time*?