

The BLUE ARMY and "EVANGELIZATION"

by

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All over the world there is a new "program of evangelization."

In a pastoral letter written in late 1980, the Most Rev. Edward A. McCarthy, Archbishop of Miami, wrote: "The program of evangelization could be the greatest thing that has ever happened to you, your family, your friends, the Church."

The Archbishop continued that "evangelization means a new, broad, united effort by all of us to take Jesus more seriously, to have His Gospel and His grace radically transform our lives and our world. It means a new effort to share the teaching of Jesus Christ with those who have never heard or accepted them."

Many perhaps turn away from the idea of "evangelization" because they think it means trying to convert non-Catholics. But it primarily means a living of the Gospel and of making the Gospel a living force in our own lives — and to extend this force within our families, our parishes, our organizations, and only then to those beyond.

Fatima Message "Most Important"

The Message of Fatima takes a most important place — perhaps a place at the very head of this program — because as all the Popes have said since the apparitions of Our Lady of Fatima in 1917: "Fatima is a reaffirmation of the Gospel."

In the December 1980 issue of "Talks of Pope John Paul II," published by Pro Ecclesia, the main headline read: **Pope Says that Devotion to Mary can be Basis for Evangelization.**

Among the many things which the Holy Father has said in this regard is the following:

"Devotion to Our Lady...generally expresses a certain 'thirst for God' (cf. Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, n. 48). And then it is not necessarily a vague sentiment, or an interior form of religious expression. In fact it often contains a deep sense of God and His attributes, such as Fatherhood, loving presence, mercy, etc."

Special Understanding of Mary's Role

His Holiness added that the pre-eminent position of Our Lady does not exclude or even diminish the universal and irreplaceable mediation of Christ Who is always the way to arrive at the meeting with God as the Second Vatican Council preaches (*Lumen Gentium*, n. 60). His Holiness then concluded:

"...As a Mother full of kindness, the Blessed Virgin does not cease to invite all Her sons, members of the Mystical Body, to cultivate kindness, reconciliation, and unity among themselves. Allow me at this moment,... to gather and interpret what is certainly in the hearts of all and to place it in the Immaculate Heart of the Mother of Jesus and Our Mother. I invite you to follow in silent prayer the prayer that I recite on behalf of all:

"Mary, you said, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that the generations would call you blessed. We take up again the song of past generations so that it will not be interrupted, and exalt in you the most radiant being that mankind has offered to God: the human creature in

its perfection, created anew in justice and holiness in a peerless beauty which we call "the Immaculate" or "Full of Grace."

"Mother, you are the 'New Eve.' The Church of your son, aware of the fact that it is only with 'new men' that it is possible to evangelize...."

Conclusion

We in the Blue Army are practicing what Pope John Paul II has preached — and for which he has prayed.

We call Our Lady "blessed" at least 53 times a day as we pray the Rosary, and we unite our hearts to Her Immaculate Heart through the devotion of the Scapular.

We strive to "evangelize" our own lives by following the Message of the Gospel in the Mysteries of the Rosary and applying them to amendment of our own faults and the sanctification of our daily duty — an essential part of our Blue Army Pledge.

But do we adequately let the prerogatives that shine in Mary shine also from us and bring about an "evangelization" within our families, our parishes, and among our neighbors? And do we pray for our own evangelization and for the success of the evangelization program within our own diocese, our own nation, our world?

As the Pope has indicated the pre-eminent position of Mary in the evangelization program, members of the Blue Army should distinguish themselves in this program, proving that not only in word but in deed:

"Fatima is a reaffirmation of the Gospel."