

E: Spiritual Formation

E\10

“Announce to the world – I am sending you.”

Additional Session (Pgs 6-10)

We are sent by Christ as He was sent by the Father

Adapted from Lumko No. 15M&P

TOPICS OF AsIPA TEXTS:

- A: GOSPEL SHARING(7 Steps)**
- B: SMALL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES**
- C: A PARTICIPATORY CHURCH**
- D: TRAINING FOR PARISH TEAMS**
- E: SPIRITUAL FORMATION**
- F: FORMATION AND TRAINING OF LEADERS**

AsIPA E: Community Training Series

Spiritual Formation of Leaders

E\10

“Announce to the world – I am sending you.”

Prepare beforehand:

Newsprint, felt-tip marker pen, one copy of the Vatican II documents, a picture of Christ sending us. Bibles for all participants, Copies of this text

Introduction

In this session we would like to acquire a sense of urgency in our task of announcing the Good News.

We will be reflecting on the theme “Announce to the world – I am sending you”. We leaders of the Christian community need a sense of urgency. We are in danger of becoming used to the situation that people do not know the gospel sufficiently. We want to revive in ourselves the conviction that we must use all our talents to announce the Good News.

Step 1. THE MOST IMPORTANT WORDS OF THE GOOD NEWS

Let us consider what the Good News is which we are to announce.

- *In groups of five to eight people, Write on newsprint some of the most important sentences of the Good News (For example: “Love your enemies”). You can write words of the bible which are important, or you can write the most important ideas of the gospel in your own words. Write short sentences, not long explanations. It is clear that you cannot write the whole bible on one newsprint. Just write the most important sentences.*
- *Be prepared to report after 30 minutes.*

Note to facilitator:

While the groups write, the facilitator also writes a similar list. Write key sentences of the Good News as the Vatican Council selected them, e.g.:

- ✘ All people shall be united with God.
- ✘ All people shall be united with each other.
- ✘ God is love.
- ✘ The Father forgives.
- ✘ Be holy as your Father is holy.
- ✘ Love your enemies.
- ✘ Become God's family, the Church.
- ✘ You all have talents. Use them.
- ✘ It is the heart which matters, not what you do.
- ✘ The risen Christ is with us.
- ✘ We are called to renew this world of today.
- ✘ God wants the progress of peoples.
- ✘ God wants us to respond in freedom.
- ✘ God makes no distinctions.
- ✘ God loves the unloved, the despised, the oppressed.
- ✘ God will bring his creation to fulfilment.

Reports:

1. *All groups display their newsprint sentences and report.*
2. *Facilitator now displays his/her newsprint and explains "the bishops, too, have answered the same question at the Second Vatican Council. They have put on paper what they think is the Good News for today. list displayed reflects roughly what they said in the documents of Vatican II."*
3. *Let us look at all the lists and compare them.*
4. *Keep all lists displayed on the wall.*

Step 2 HOW MUCH HAS THE GOOD NEWS CHANGED THE LOCAL PEOPLE?

We have until now asked for the message which is to be announced. Let us now look at people and ask how much they have received this message.

1. Individual work for 20 minutes:

Working quietly on your own write down six names of adult people whom you work with in the parish. They can be sick people whom he visits, people whom he instructs, people who work with him in the Church, etc.

You can also choose to write down the names of six people who are neighbours, relatives, and work-colleagues.

(We wait until everybody has written down six names.)

2. *Let us now compare the lists of the main ideas of the gospel which we still see displayed on the walls, with the six people we have written down.*

3. *Write next to each name which of these main ideas of the gospel this person understands?*

(Write only key words, not whole sentences.)

Reports

Do not read out the names which you wrote, but only the key words of the gospel which were understood.

(Collect as many reports as possible.)

Summary

From these reports we should become aware of the great need to bring the Good News even to people who are baptised, or who give the impression of being good people.

It will also become clear to us how little we are concerned about the extent to which the Good News has reached people.

Step 3 HOW MUCH HAS THE GOOD NEWS TRANSFORMED DAILY LIFE?

The gospel is not only directed at individual people. It is to transform our whole way of living, the political life of the nation, the way in which we earn our living, the business world, our customs, the way in which we find enjoyment and pleasure. Therefore we cannot limit ourselves to the question of how individual people have responded to the gospel. We must also ask how the gospel has penetrated all sectors of life.

Work in small groups if more time is available. If not, work in the whole group.

In what ways has the Gospel transformed the following areas of our lives?

The gospel should transform:

- Our way of living
- Our customs
- Our political life
- Our way of earning our livelihood
- Our entertainment

- 1. Discuss briefly each area and say what you think about how they have been transformed by the gospel.*
- 2. Let us listen to each other. We can see that most areas of our lives are not yet transformed by the gospel.*
- 3. Write down key words of what we have discussed next to the areas listed.*

It becomes clear to us that we have an immense task to evangelise every sector of life. We will not take this further here but we should already begin to see the urgency of our task to evangelize.

Step 4 CLOSING PRAYER

We will close the meeting with a short Service of the Word.

- 1. Place an open bible on a small table with a lighted candle, or display a picture of Christ sending his apostles.*
- 2. Sing a hymn*
- 3. Read the Gospel of Matthew 28:16-20.*
- 4. Keep silent for 3 or 4 minutes or whatever is suitable.*
- 5. Invite participants to pray spontaneously.*
- 6. Close with a hymn.*



Additional Session

Introduction

In this session we want to realize that we are sent by Christ, as he was sent by the Father. We would like to continue contemplating the fact that we are sent by God. Whatever kind of work we are doing within the Christian community, we are sent to do it by God Himself. In order to understand this better, we will begin by studying the scriptures.

Step 1 JESUS FELT A POWER IN HIMSELF: I AM SENT BY MY FATHER

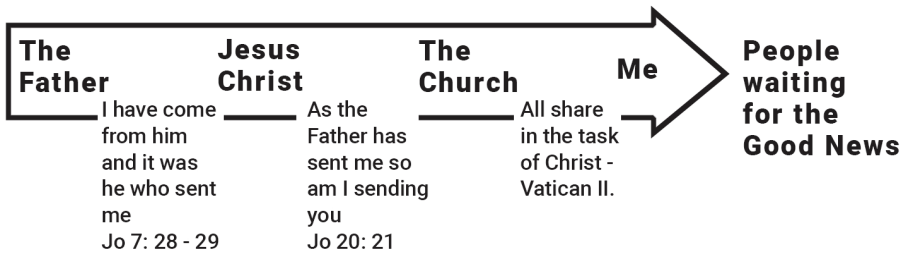
How was Jesus able to continue announcing the Good News, although he was often misunderstood, often opposed and even rejected? How was he able to remain convinced that his message would eventually bear fruit? Why did he not give up bearing witness to love? The answer is that he was deeply aware of being sent by the Father.

Let us study the gospel of St. John and see for ourselves how often he says that it is the Father who sends him. We will read from the gospel of St John since he told us more than the other evangelists about how Christ Himself experienced being sent by his Father. Not less than 42 times does Jesus say in the gospel of St. John that he is sent by the Father. We, too, need this sense of being sent. We want to learn to feel as Jesus felt and to come closer to this experience of Jesus.

1. *Let us look up the texts where Jesus speaks of being sent by the Father.*
2. *Work in small groups of 5 to 8 persons for 40 minutes*
3. *Take one set of chapters for each group.*
4. *Divide the chapters of the gospel as shown below.*
 - a. *Chapter 1-4 (except chapter 2)*
 - b. *Chapter 5-6*
 - c. *Chapter 7-10*
 - d. *Chapter 11-15 (leave our chapter 13)*
 - e. *Chapter 16-20*
5. *Read and study the chapters from St John's Gospel and then write the verses on newsprint, in which Jesus says he was sent by his Father. (You need not write the whole verse, if it is long. Only write a part of those verses, but do not just write the number of the verses. Since the other groups would not know what words were said in those verses.)*
6. *Display the newsprint sheets, all at the same time. Give people enough time to read.*

SUMMARY

Jesus was always aware that he was sent by his Father. This gave him the power to continue in spite of his failure to convince all. It helped him to remain faithful. It gave him the strength to make sacrifices. It gave him the hope that it was not in vain in spite of the fact that he could not see much success.



Let us look briefly at the above diagram. It shows that there is one great movement of the Word into the world. This movement comes from the Father and wants to reach the whole world and every man. You and I, we are a part of this movement and it is up to us not to hinder it, but to take part in it.

We, too are sent by the Father, in the Spirit of Christ.

Others were sent to me. Now I am sent to those who need me. I am not sent by people. I am sent by God, but his voice which sends me comes to me through the Church.

Let us read the prayer together:

*Lord, help me to retain
the fervour of announcing your Word.
Help me to remain convinced
that you are sending me.
Help me to overcome despair and fatigue.
Give me joy in taking part
in your plan of renewing the world.*

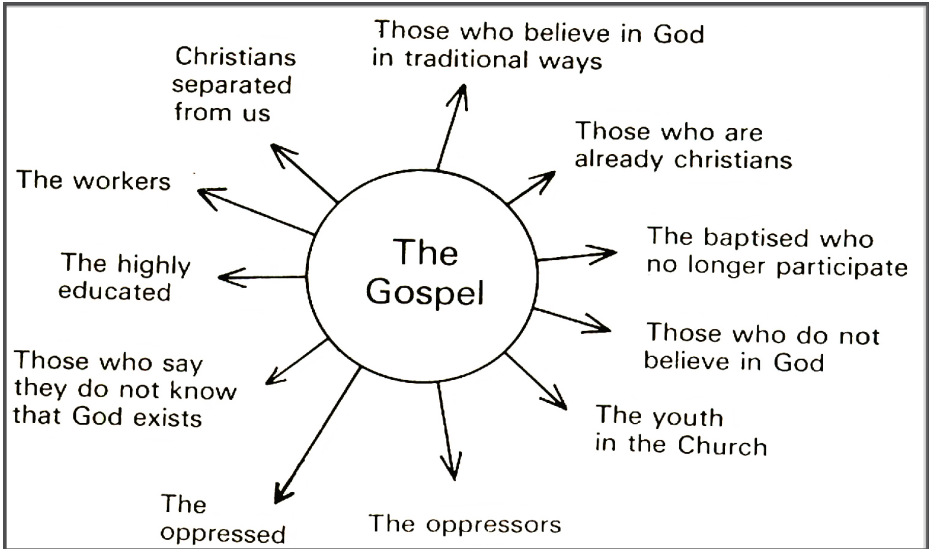
Step 2 PEOPLE ARE WAITING FOR THE GOOD NEWS STILL TODAY

Look at the drawing below with the circle in which the words "The Gospel" are written.

What does it want to convey to us?...

(Give as many suggestions as possible).

We want to experience in a deeper way that we are all sent and why we are sent. Let us work in small groups for 30 minutes and consider what the Good News could mean to so many different groups. Complete the tasks given below this diagram:



The gospel is addressed to all men. We have to ask ourselves whether God's message is in fact announced to all:

(Newsprint to the distributed – one to each group)

1. For each of these different groups of people, list a need or a suffering which they experience because the Good News has not reached them completely.
2. List a joy which they would experience if they heard and accepted the Good News.

- Report-back to the whole group.

Step 3 SHORT CELEBRATION OF THE WORD

Display a picture of Christ sending us or any other picture. Or place the bible on a little table and a lighted candle with it. Sing a hymn, give time for silent prayer and end with spontaneous prayer and hymn'.



“We live in the Church at a privileged moment of the Spirit. Everywhere people are trying to know him better, as the Scripture reveals him. They are happy to place themselves under his inspiration. They are gathering about him; they want to let themselves be led by him.”

From the encyclical EVANGEL II NUNTIANDI, No. 75.

“Let us therefore preserve our fervour of Spirit. Let us present the delightful and comforting joy of evangelising, even when it is in tears that we must sow.”

“And may the world of our time, which is searching, sometimes with anguish, sometimes with hope, be enabled to receive the Good News not from evangelizers who are dejected, discouraged, impatient or anxious, but from ministers of the Gospel whose lives glow with fervour, who have first received the joy of Christ, and who are willing to risk their lives so that the Kingdom may be proclaimed and the Church established in the midst of the world.”

EVANGEL II NUNTIANDI Nr. 80.

METHOD OF AsIPA TEXTS

AsIPA TEXTS are compiled for Christian men and women at grass root level of the parish. They can be conducted most fruitfully in Small Christian Communities, Neighbourhood Communities, Parish Pastoral Councils or any other small groups in the parish.

AsIPA TEXTS can also be used with larger groups, e.g. in the parish hall - provided the "participatory method" is maintained in smaller working groups.

Features of the "AsIPA approach"

1. AsIPA TEXTS adopt a "participatory approach" in which all participants of a group search and discover for themselves as far as they are able to.
2. The texts are compiled in such a way that the facilitator can use them with a minimum of preparation.
3. The facilitator is requested to follow the text as closely as possible and allow the participants to contribute when indicated in the text.
4. The facilitator is not content with one answer to a question but he/she encourages as many participants as possible to search for an answer. "Buzz groups" of 2/3 are helpful to achieve maximum participation.
5. The SUPPLEMENT can help add to the findings of the participants and summarize them.
6. The SUMMARY is meant to be used as 'input'.

AsIPA: As-ian -I-ntegral -P-astoral -A-pproach

The Asian Bishops declared in the Final Statement of their Fifth Plenary Session in Bandung: The Church of 1990s has to be a "Participatory Church", a "Communion of Communities", a Church that "witnesses to the Risen Lord" (FABC5,#8).

The question was, how to promote this "new way of being Church". Therefore, late in 1993, jointly sponsored by the FABC Offices of Human Development and of Laity, a consultation meeting was held in Malaysia. It was during this consultation that the pastoral process for promoting a "Participatory Church" in Asia was termed AsIPA: Asian Integral Pastoral Approach.

AsIPA TEXTS (training programmes) follow this directive:

ASIAN

They want to implement the vision of the Asian Bishops and help Asian Christians face Asian life in the light of the gospel.

INTEGRAL

They aim at achieving a balance between the "spiritual" and the "social", between the individual and the community, between hierarchical leadership and the co-responsibility of the laity.

PASTORAL

They train the laity in their pastoral mission in Church and world.

APPROACH

The process of AsIPA TEXTS can be described as a pastoral approach which is "Christ- and Community centred". It involves the participants of workshops to search for themselves and allows them to experience a "New Way of Being Church."