

Paul's Dynamic Mission Vision

The apostle Paul, undoubtedly the greatest missionary of all times, boldly states "I am not ashamed of the Good News" (Rom 1:16) in today's first reading. This brief presentation surfaces ten "mission principles," valid for Paul of Tarsus as well as for all modern-day Pauls.

(1) Depth Awareness of Vocation. For Paul and all missionaries, *mission originates in the call of God.* **(2) Radical Commitment to Christ.** Paul's conversion experience on the Damascus road was only the starting point of a life-long relationship; *mission envisions a totally Christ-centered life.* **(3) Voluntary Acceptance of Suffering.** The Apostle Paul preached the Gospel by his life and example. *Vulnerability and acceptance of the cross authenticate mission.* **(4) Insightful Mission Methods.** Paul employed distinct methods to achieve his purposes. *Mission demands creative, inculturated, ever-renewed approaches to evangelization.* **(5) Urgent Gospel Proclamation.** Paul heralds a message from God that profoundly affects all humanity. *Mission has lost none of its urgency in the contemporary world.*

(6) Deep Love of the Church. For Paul the Church is primarily the local community of baptized followers of Jesus Christ. *Mission and love of the people who constitute the Church go hand-in-hand.* **(7) Close Collaboration with Co-workers.** Paul, though a strong individual, was a team-worker in the task of evangelization. *All apostolic ministry is enhanced through collaborative efforts.* **(8) Commitment to Social Transformation.** Paul's preaching of liberation included a manifest concern for the poor and suffering. *The Gospel message of human dignity leads to social transformation.* **(9) Effective, Exemplary Life-style.** Paul was always careful to live an authentic life-style. *The witness of a Christian life is the first and often most effective proclamation of the Gospel.* **(10) Total Reliance on God's Providence.** Paul asks: "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Rom 8:31). *Mission always remains "God's project."* Pastors, missionaries, catechists, religious, laity, all ministers of the Church, imitate Paul, the joyful evangelizer!