

Church must find more effective ways to evangelize, says pope

VATICAN CITY - New evangelization means finding the most effective ways to proclaim the Gospel to a world that is either too distracted or too blind to see the divine, Pope Benedict XVI said.

Today's spiritual crisis is marked by people excluding God from their lives, "generalized indifference" toward Christianity and stringently pushing faith from the public to the private sphere, he said.

The church will have to "find ways to make the proclamation of salvation more effective," he told members of the Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelization.

The newly created council, headed by Archbishop Rino Fisichella, met for its first plenary assembly May 30 to June 1.

Pope Benedict, who established the new council, said he hoped the members would help outline a plan for the whole church in regards to the urgent task of evangelization, which must include formation, especially for young people.

It's important for people to understand that "being Christian is not a kind of outfit to wear in private or on special occasions but is something that is alive and all-encompassing, capable of taking on all that is good in modern times," he said.

Part of reinvigorating the missionary spirit involves making sure one's actions are compatible with one's beliefs, he said.

"The lifestyle of believers needs real credibility," he said, adding that the more "dramatic" the situation of society is, the more "convincing" Christians need to be with their lives.