

# THE KERYGMA

## *Talk Handout*

### I. Definition of Kerygma

- 1) *Kerygma* = Gk. “the preaching”
- 2) Kerygma = The proclamation of the basic ‘Good News’ of the Lord Jesus Christ, His saving actions, and the coming of the Kingdom of God, which invites the hearers to conversion and eternal salvation.
- 4) Kerygma = “the initial ardent proclamation by which a person is one day overwhelmed and brought to the decision to entrust himself to Jesus Christ by faith.”  
(John Paul II, *Catechesi Tradendae – On Catechesis in Our Time*, 25)
- 3) Kerygma = “the germ cell, energy source, absolute core of the Christian faith.”  
(Peter Herbeck, *Elements of the Gospel I*, Renewal Ministries School of Evangelization, 2002)

### II. Content of the Kerygma

#### A. Jesus Christ

##### 1) Proclamation is about a Person: Jesus

“There is no true evangelization if the name, the teaching, the life, the promises, the Kingdom and the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God are not proclaimed.” (Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi - On Evangelization in the Modern World*, 22)

##### 2) Jesus’ Death & Resurrection

“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that **Christ died for our sins** in accordance with the scriptures, that he was buried, that **he was raised on the third day** in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.” (1 Cor 15:3-8)

“Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, ... be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of **Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead**, by him this [once crippled] man is standing before you well. This is the stone which was rejected by you builders, but which has become the head of the corner. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:8-12)

**Meaning of Jesus’ Death & Resurrection** (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 601-617)

##### a) Jesus’ Redemptive Death

“601 ... In particular Jesus' redemptive death fulfills Isaiah's prophecy of the suffering Servant (cf. Is 53:7-8 and Acts 8:32-35). Indeed Jesus himself explained the meaning of his life and death in the light of God's suffering Servant (cf. Mt 20:28). After his Resurrection he gave this interpretation of the Scriptures to the disciples at Emmaus, and then to the apostles (cf. Lk 24:25-27, 44-45).”

“We had all gone astray like sheep, each following his own way; But the Lord laid upon him the guilt of us all. ... he was cut off from the land of the living, and smitten for the sin of his people.” (Isaiah 53:6-8)

##### b) "For our sake God made him to be sin"

602 Consequently, St. Peter can formulate the apostolic faith in the divine plan of salvation in this way: "You were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your fathers... with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. He was destined before the foundation of the world but was made manifest at the end of the times for your sake." (I Pt 1:18-20). Man's sins, following on original sin, are punishable by death (Cf. Rom 5:12; I Cor 15:56). By sending his own Son in the form of a slave, in the form of a fallen humanity, on account of sin, God "made him to be

sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." (2 Cor 5:21; cf. Phil 2:7; Rom 8:3)

“603 Jesus did not experience reprobation as if he himself had sinned (Jn 8:46). But in the redeeming love that always united him to the Father, he assumed us in the state of our waywardness of sin, to the point that he could say in our name from the cross: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mk 15:34; Ps 22:2; cf. Jn 8:29) Having thus established him in solidarity with us sinners, God "did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all", so that we might be "reconciled to God by the death of his Son". (Rom 8:32; 5:10)”

### c) Christ's death is the unique and definitive sacrifice

“613 Christ's death is both the *Paschal sacrifice* that accomplishes the definitive redemption of men, through "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (Jn 1:29; cf. 8:34-36; 1 Cor 5:7; 1 Pt 1:19.), and the *sacrifice of the New Covenant*, which restores man to communion with God by reconciling him to God through the "blood of the covenant, which was poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Mt 26:28; cf. Ex 24:8; Lev 16:15-16; Cor 11:25).”

“614 This sacrifice of Christ is unique; it completes and surpasses all other sacrifices (cf. Heb 10:10)...” (CCC 614)

“The sacrifices of the Mosaic Law were multiple, Christ’s sacrifice was unique; the Mosaic sacrifices did not really have the power to forgive sins, Christ’s sacrifice does; the Mosaic ones were done with the blood of animals, Christ shed his own blood; the Mosaic ones belong to the time of waiting and preparation, Christ’s sacrifice marks the beginning of the fullness of time (cf. Mt 13:40-49; 24:3; 28:20; 1 Cor 10:11; Gal 4:4; Eph 1:10)” (The Navarre Bible, *Hebrews*, p. 218)

### d) Jesus substitutes his obedience for our disobedience

“615 ‘For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous.' (Rom 5:19) By his obedience unto death, Jesus accomplished the substitution of the suffering Servant, who "makes himself an *offering for sin*", when "he bore the sin of many", and who "shall make many to be accounted righteous", for "he shall bear their iniquities" (Is 53:10-12). Jesus atoned for our faults and made satisfaction for our sins to the Father (cf. Council of Trent (1547): DS 1529).”

### e) Jesus consummates his sacrifice on the cross

“616 It is love "to the end" (Jn 13:1) that confers on Christ's sacrifice its value as redemption and reparation, as atonement and satisfaction. He knew and loved us all when he offered his life (cf. Gal 2:20; Eph 5:2, 25). Now "the love of Christ controls us, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died." (2 Cor 5:14) No man, not even the holiest, was ever able to take on himself the sins of all men and offer himself as a sacrifice for all. The existence in Christ of the divine person of the Son, who at once surpasses and embraces all human persons, and constitutes himself as the Head of all mankind, makes possible his redemptive sacrifice for all.”

#### Satisfaction through Love

“The work of the Passion is a work of love. The act of love in which Christ died makes satisfaction for all the offenses we have committed against God’s righteousness. “As St. Thomas [Aquinas] says... we make satisfaction to someone when we give him back something which is of equal if not greater value than the thing that was lost. God the Father lost from us that response of love and trust and obedience that He offered us. He lost that because we didn’t give it to Him and without the grace of Christ we never would give it to Him. But in Jesus Christ, He received a pure act of love from a human heart, which was so beautiful and so great, that it more than compensated for all the sins of mankind. And that’s the heart of Redemption.” (Francis Martin, *Themes of the Passion*, tape 1)

“617 The Council of Trent emphasizes the unique character of Christ's sacrifice as "the source of eternal salvation" (Heb 5:9) and teaches that "his most holy Passion on the wood of the cross merited justification for us." (Council of Trent: DS 1529)”

*“I will be reckoned to us who believe in him that raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, who was put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification.” (Rom 4:25)*

## **F) Jesus’ Resurrection demonstrates His victory over sin & death**

### **3) Jesus’ Ascension - Jesus Christ is Lord**

*“But Peter and the apostles answered, 'We must obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised Jesus whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.’” (Acts 5:29-31)*

*“Jesus Christ who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers subject to Him.” (1 Pet 4:21-22)*

“The central problem of our time is the emptying-out of the historical figure of Jesus.”  
(Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Synod of Bishops in Rome*, Oct 6, 2001)

## **B. The Kingdom of God**

### **1) Jesus reveals the Kingdom**

“Jesus gradually reveals the characteristics and demands of the Kingdom through his words, his actions and his own person.” (Pope John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio - On the permanent validity of the Church’s missionary mandate*, 14)

*“After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the ‘Good News’ of God: ‘This is the time of fulfillment. The Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.’” (Mark 1:14-15)*

### **2) Jesus is the King**

“The kingdom of God is not a concept, a doctrine, or a program subject to free interpretation, but it is before all else a person with the face and name of Jesus of Nazareth, the image of the invisible God.” (RM 18)

### **3) The Clash of Kingdoms**

*“[The Father] rescued us from the power of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of his beloved Son. Through him we have redemption, the forgiveness of our sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creatures.” (Col 1:13-15)*

*“Then comes the end, when he hands over the Kingdom to his God and Father, when he has destroyed every sovereignty and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death...” (1 Cor 15:24-27)*

### **4) The Church is the Seed of the Kingdom**

“The Kingdom of heaven was inaugurated on earth by Christ. ‘This Kingdom shone out before men in the world, in the works and in the presence of Christ’ (LG 5). The Church is the seed and beginning of this Kingdom. Its keys are entrusted to Peter.” (CCC 567)

## C. Conversion

### 1) The Call to Conversion

Jesus began His public ministry with the call to conversion (Mk 1:15; Mt 4:17).  
The theme of conversion runs throughout the preaching of the apostolic Church.

### 2) Conversion is turning away from evil and turning towards God.

Baptismal Promises: Renounce sin & evil → Profess faith in God.

“The human heart is heavy and hardened. God must give man a new heart.

Conversion is first of all a work of the grace of God who makes our hearts return to him...” (CCC 1432)

### 3) God’s call invites our response.

God offers to humanity this newness of life. “Can one reject Christ and everything that he has brought about in the history of humankind? Of course one can. Man is free. He can say ‘no’ to God.” (RM 7)

## D. Eternal Life

### 1) Our Responsibility: We will be judged.

### 2) The Promise of God: The Holy Spirit is the “down payment” on eternal life.

*“For the Lord himself, with a word of command, with the voice of an archangel and with the trumpet of God, will come down from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore, console one another with these words.” (1 Thess 4:16)*

## III. The Kerygma of the Apostles

### A. Missionary Discourses

“The Acts of the Apostles records six summaries of the ‘missionary discourses’ which were addressed to the Jews during the Church’s infancy (cf. Acts 2:22-39; 3:12-26; 4:9-12; 5:29-32; 10:34-43; 13:16-41).” (RM 24)

### B. Pentecost: Jesus is Lord and Messiah

#### 1) The outpouring of the Holy Spirit inspires the preaching of the Kerygma.

*“Wait for the promise of my Father... you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 1:4-5)*

*“You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; and you shall be my witnesses...” (Acts 1:8)*

*“And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit...” (Acts 2:4)*

#### 2) Elements of the Kerygma: See worksheet *Identify the Elements of the Kerygma* (Acts 2:22-39).

#### 3) The Holy Spirit confirms the message through signs & wonders.

“Baptized in the Holy Spirit, tongue-speaking Galilean Jews proclaiming under the Spirit’s anointing to all Israel that God raised Jesus of Nazareth from the dead and has made Him ‘Lord and Messiah’.”

(Peter Herbeck, *Elements of the Gospel I*, Renewal Ministries School of Evangelization, 2002)

### C. The Holy Spirit backs the preaching of the Gospel.

“The word is living and active because it is backed by a ‘demonstration of the Spirit and power’ (1 Cor 2:4).

The Holy Spirit brings the word to life; he brings the power and authority of heaven to stand behind the message.

When the truth about Jesus is proclaimed, God ‘lets light shine’ in our hearts so we can see the ‘light of the glory of God which shines on the face of Christ’ (2 Cor 4:6). God acts when the word is spoken. Whether it is from a pulpit, in the backyard at a neighborhood barbecue or at the local bus stop, God sheds his light into the darkness of the human heart, a darkness that has blinded that heart to the truth about God and His plan for their lives.” (Peter Herbeck, *Words and Deeds*, September Newsletter, Renewal Ministries)

# Identify the Elements of the Kerygma

(Acts 2:22-39)

“You who are Israelites, hear these words. Jesus the Nazorean was a man commended to you by God with mighty deeds, wonders, and signs, which God worked through him in your midst, as you yourselves know. This man, delivered up by the set plan and foreknowledge of God, you killed, using lawless men to crucify him. But God raised him up, releasing him from the throes of death, because it was impossible for him to be held by it.

“For David says of Him: ‘I saw the Lord ever before me, with Him at my right hand I shall not be disturbed. Therefore my heart has been glad and my tongue has exulted; my flesh, too, will dwell in hope, because you will not abandon my soul to the netherworld, nor will you suffer your holy one to see corruption. You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.’

“My brothers, one can confidently say to you about the patriarch David that he died and was buried, and his tomb is in our midst to this day. But since he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants upon the throne, he foresaw and spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that neither was he abandoned to the nether world, nor did his flesh see corruption. God raised this Jesus; of this we are all witnesses. Exulted at the right hand of God, he received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father and poured it forth, as you both see and hear. For David did not go up into heaven, but he himself said: ‘The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.’

“Therefore let the whole house of Israel know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and they asked Peter and the other Apostles, “What are we to do my brothers?” Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is made to you and to your children and to all those far off, whomever the Lord our God will call.”

## **(1) Jesus Christ**

Death and Resurrection  
Lordship / Ascension

## **(2) The Kingdom of God**

Jesus reveals the Kingdom  
Jesus is the King

## **(3) Conversion**

Turn away from sin to God  
Calls for a response

## **(4) Eternal Life**

Promise of God  
You will be judged