Vatican

Francis, the comic strip



Pope Francis is pictured during his general audience in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican April 18. (CNS/Paul Haring)

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Christians must be willing to move where the Spirit leads them and not be benchwarmers on the sidelines of efforts to evangelize, Pope Francis said.

Evangelization "isn't a well-thought-out plan of proselytism" but rather an occasion in which the Holy Spirit "tells you how you should go to bring the word of God, to carry Jesus' name," the pope said in his homily April 19 during morning Mass at the Domus Sanctae Marthae.

"A 'couch potato' evangelization doesn't exist. Get up and go! Be always on the move. Go to the place where you must speak the word (of God)," he said.

The pope reflected on the day's first reading from the Acts of the Apostles in which the apostle Philip, after being commanded by an angel, preaches the Gospel to an Ethiopian eunuch and baptizes him.

Comparing the event to a wind that carries seedlings and plants them, Francis said it was a beautiful account of how God works in evangelization.

"This is how the Lord evangelizes, this is how the Lord proclaims, this is how the Lord wants us to evangelize," the pope said.

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The great wind carrying the seed of God's word, he added, was the Christian persecution which caused the disciples to spread out and preach the Gospel.

Christians, he said, "cannot evangelize theoretically" but must get up, approach others and proclaim God's word beginning from a person's concrete situation.

But even the best, most active plan of evangelization will not work without the Holy Spirit's gifts and guidance, he said. "It is the Spirit that pushes us to get up, to

approach others and to begin from their situations."