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The door into the Vatican's Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith. (NCR /Joshua J. McElwee)

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The increasing number of people who do not see the Gospel as a fundamental resource for their life should inspire — not discourage — Catholics in rediscovering the joy of evangelization, Pope Leo XIV said.

The transmission of the faith is "a topic of great urgency," the pope said in remarks to members and officials of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith and others participating in its plenary session at the Vatican Jan. 27-29.

Meeting with the group at the Vatican Jan. 29, Leo praised the dicastery for its "valuable service" of helping the pope and the world's bishops proclaim the Gospel by promoting and safeguarding the integrity of Catholic teaching on faith and morals.

"It does this by drawing upon the deposit of faith and seeking an ever deeper understanding of it in the face of new questions," he said, citing Pope Francis' apostolic constitution on the reform of the Roman Curia, Praedicate Evangelium ("Preach the Gospel").

Of great importance today, he said, is the "transmission of the faith," a topic discussed during the dicastery's plenary.

"We cannot ignore the fact that, in recent decades, there has been a breakdown in the way Catholics pass down the Christian faith" from generation to generation, he said, and that "there is an increasing number of people who no longer perceive the Gospel as a fundamental resource for their life, especially among the younger generations."

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In fact, he added, many young men and women "live without any reference to God and the Church, and while this causes us believers pain, it must also lead us to

rediscover the 'delightful and comforting joy of evangelizing,' which is at the very heart of the life and mission" of the Catholic Church.

Reiterating his appeal during his extraordinary consistory with the College of Cardinals in early January, Leo said, the Catholic Church wants to be a missionary Church "that looks beyond itself, at others" and that proclaims the Gospel, "above all through the power of attraction," reminding them that "it is not the Church that attracts, but Christ."

Leo highlighted the importance of the dicastery's work, which includes offering clarification on Church doctrine "through pastoral and theological guidance on often very sensitive issues" as well as handling "delicta graviora," that is, "more grave crimes" against church law, which include the abuse of minors.

He encouraged the dicastery to continue their task of "welcoming and accompanying, with every kindness and judgment, the bishops and superiors general called to deal with cases of crimes reserved to the dicastery."

"This is a very delicate area of ministry, in which it is essential to ensure that the requirements of justice, truth and charity are always honored and respected," he said, further encouraging them to continue to contribute to the whole church in a "humble and unobtrusive manner."

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