

Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (<https://www.ncronline.org>)

March 18, 2011 at 6:59am

Abp Martin Gets the New Evangelization

by Michael Sean Winters

Distinctly Catholic

In his sermon at the recent service of repentance at Dublin's pro-Cathedral, which was magnificent in every way, Archbishop Diarmuid Martin spoke this sentence: "Young Irish people are among the most catechised in Europe but apparently among the least evangelized."

In my conversations with many churchmen about the New Evangelization, it quickly becomes clear that they are not exactly sure what the Holy Father is talking about. Some see this merely as a call to use the blogosphere more intelligently. Others think that fighting gay marriage is the key. But, Archbishop Martin gets it. The New Evangelization is not about dotting i's in canon law or crossing one's t's in the moral law. It is about making the Gospel come alive in the hearts of the faithful and generating a culture that helps enliven those hearts with the Holy Spirit. This requires getting past an easy moralism. In fact, moralism can get in the way. The New Evangelization is about making the proposal that the death and resurrection of Jesus are the most true events in human history, that those events define who we are as human beings, and that the call to discipleship is a radical one. In short, as the good archbishop said, it is not about catechetics, it is about evangelization. If you understand the difference, you understand what the New Evangelization is all about.

Source URL (retrieved on 02/18/2018 - 5:42am): <https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/distinctly-catholic/abp-martin-gets-new-evangelization>

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