



Jesus said on one occasion, 'Your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father' (Mt 5:16). The Popes have said much the same in their documents on evangelisation. For example, in paragraph 42 of Mission of the Redeemer, St John Paul II said:

"People today put more trust in witnesses than in teachers, in experience than in teaching, and in life and action than in theories. The witness of a Christian life is the first and irreplaceable form of mission: Christ, whose mission we continue, is the "witness" par excellence (Rev 1:5; 3:14) and the model of all Christian witness."

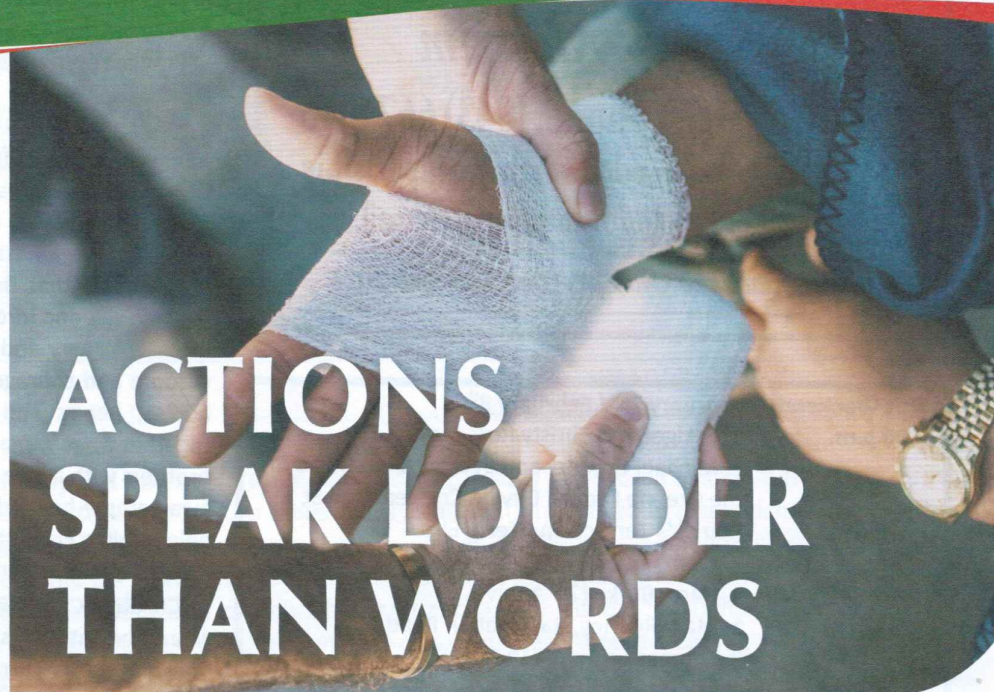
The problem with the Church is that many of its members do not practice what they preach. There is nothing new about this. For example, in the Second Letter of Clement, chapter 13 (AD 100 approx.), the author said that it was not too surprising that the name of the Lord was blasphemed by the pagans.

"For when the pagans hear from our mouths the words of God, they marvel at their beauty and greatness. But when they discover that our actions are not worthy of the words we speak, they turn from wonder to blasphemy, saying

Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

Communion Antiphon (Cf. Ps 106:8-9)
Let them thank the Lord for his mercy, his wonders for the children of men,



ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS

that the Christian faith is a myth and a delusion. For when they hear from us that God says, 'It is no credit to you if you love those who love you, but it is a credit to you if you love your enemies and those who hate you,' when they hear these things, they marvel at such extraordinary goodness. But, when they see that we do not only fail to love those who hate us we even fail to love those who love us, they scornfully laugh at us, and the Name of Jesus is blasphemed."

Is it any different nowadays? Divisions in and between the churches rob the Gospel message of its credibility. As Pope Francis observed in paragraph 244 of The Joy of the Gospel, 'The credibility of the Christian message would be much greater if Christians could

overcome their divisions and the Church could realize the fullness of catholicity proper to her.' Another cause of scandal is the vile phenomenon of child sex abuse, especially by priests and religious. Is it any wonder that many nominal Christians think that, instead of being a way of salvation, Catholicism is a sickness that mistakes itself for a cure? ■

— Pat Collins



Reflection

Reflect on the action of salt and light, the two symbols that Jesus uses to illustrate the new life of the kingdom in his disciples.



Lesson

The light of our good deeds cannot be hidden from others who are, we hope, influenced to add their light and salt to the community.



Prayer

Lord Jesus, let me be seen to be generous, merciful and just. Then, as you desire, I will be able to bring some light into our dark world and be an encouragement and support for others. Amen.

