

THE JOY OF THE GOSPEL

CHAPTER 3: THE PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL

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POPE FRANCIS AND THE NEW ÉVANGÉLIZATION

CALLED TO BE ...

SALT

LEAVEN

LIGHT!



Miserando atque eligendo:

*“Looking upon him with mercy,
Jésus chose him.”*



Pope Francis and Vatican II

- ▶ MISSIONARY CONVERSION AS CENTRAL TO CHURCH REFORM
- ▶ FROM “SELF-RÉFÉRENTIAL” TO THE “GEOGRAPHICAL AND EXISTENTIAL PÉRIPHÉRIES”
- ▶ “A FIELD HOSPITAL WHERE THE WOUNDED CAN BE HEALED”
- ▶ “THINKING WITH THE CHURCH = THE WHOLE CHURCH (NOT JUST THE MAGISTERIUM OR THE CLERGY)
- ▶ ECCLESIA SEMPER RÉFORMANDA: HUMBLE, LISTENING, DISCERNING, RÉSPONDING TO REAL NEEDS
- ▶ THE CHURCH DOES NOT HAVE A MISSION; THE MISSION HAS A CHURCH!

**APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION
EVANGELII GAUDIUM
TO BISHOPS, PRIESTS, DEACONS,
CONSECRATED MEN AND WOMEN,
AND ALL THE LAY FAITHFUL
ON THE PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL
IN THE WORLD TODAY**

“The joy of the Gospel fills the heart and life of those who have had an encounter with Jesus.”

Evangelii Gaudium ...Overview

- ▶ Chapter 1 : Missionary transformation
- ▶ Chapter 2 : Crisis of Communal Commitment
- ▶ Chapter 3 : Proclamation of the Gospel
- ▶ Chapter 4 : Social Dimension of Evangelization
- ▶ Chapter 5: Witnesses in and with the Spirit

The Missionary Program

Chapter 1: Missionary Transformation of the Church

I. A Church that “goes out”: initiative, engagement, accompaniment, celebration

II. Missionary Conversion: Renewal now. Not later!!

III. From the heart of the Gospel

IV. Within our human limitations

V. Church as Mother with an open heart

Chapter 3: THE PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL

- ▶ People of God
- ▶ Leaven hidden in the dough of humanity
- ▶ Source of courage, hope, strength in the journey
- ▶ Abundant mercy
- ▶ A place where all are welcomed, loved, forgiven, and challenged to live according to the Gospel. (114)

Ch. 3: Overview - 4 parts

I. ALL GOD'S PEOPLE PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL!

II. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE HOMILY

III. PREPARING AND PREACHING THE HOMILY

IV. ÉVANGÉLIZATION, CATECHESIS, KERYGMA

I. ALL GOD'S PEOPLE PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL!

- ▶ One People, Many Faces (1000??)
- ▶ All called to be missionary-disciples
- ▶ Popular Piety: Obstacle or powerful expression?
- ▶ Witness from person to person
- ▶ Charisms at the service of communion
- ▶ Evangelizing through culture, art, éducation

A favored expression: MISSIONARY DISCIPLES!

- ▶ Rooted in Baptism and Confirmation
- ▶ Whatever our vocation, function, or level of formation, we are all active subjects of évangélization
- ▶ Foundation: personal encounter with the love of God in Jésus Christ;
- ▶ Do not say that some are disciples, and others are missionaries, but rather that we are all “missionnary disciples” (120)

EVANGÉLIZATION: ONE TO ONE, UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL!!

- ▶ “Always preach the Gospel. When necessary, use words.”
- ▶ Our daily “preaching” is to carry the Gospel to others, to bear witness in word and indeed: near and far, known and unknown.
- ▶ The informal preaching of a chance conversation, a visit over coffee, reaching out to a neighbour or work colleague.
- ▶ A missionary disciple is always ready to bring the love of Christ to others, spontaneously, anywhere: in the street, at work, in the public forum, on the road of life. (127)

DIALOGUE: ONE MOUTH, TWO EARS: BEGIN BY LISTENING!!

- ▶ Dialogue of salvation: respectful, loving, allowing the other to share joys, hopes, struggles, anxieties, worries about those near and dear, whatever is on the mind and the heart.
- ▶ Only once this human contact is made do we introduce the Word of God, connecting it to the “kerygma” or the “heart of the message”: God’s personal love for each of us, made known in his Incarnation and paschal Mystery: “He loved me, and gave himself for me.” (128)

II. THE HOMILY: WHY SO IMPORTANT?

- ▶ Liturgical and biblical
- ▶ Carefully prepared and structured
- ▶ Touching minds and hearts and imaginations
- ▶ Linking the Word of God to daily life
- ▶ At once deeply personal and fundamentally communal
- ▶ Paul VI: simple, clear, direct, adapted to reality of hearers
- ▶ Francis: Positive and Encouraging: a story, an insight, an image

IF THIS IS TRUE FOR THE HOMILY, THEN WHAT ABOUT OUR ...

- ▶ Teachings
- ▶ Catechesis
- ▶ Formation Activities and Retreats
- ▶ Parent Meetings
- ▶ Adult Education Efforts

How do we make these more simple, clear, positive, affirming, adapted to their needs and questions?

HOMILY AS CENTRAL TOOL FOR THE NEW ÉVANGÉLIZATION

- ▶ Pope Francis: homily as touchstone marking proximity and connection between a pastor and his people.
- ▶ *A bit of humour: “In fact, we know that the faithful give much importance to the homily, and like the clergy, they often suffer: the former for having to listen to them, and the latter, for having to preach them!*
- ▶ More seriously: the homily, at best, can be an intense and happy experience: a comforting and challenging encounter with the Word, a constant source of renewal and spiritual growth. (135)

LECTIO DIVINA (152-153)

- ▶ Prayerful reflection on the Word of God, allowing that Word to illuminate, renew, challenge, transform.
- ▶ “Enter in”: disposing oneself for prayer
- ▶ LECTIO - what is the text saying? What is the context?
- ▶ MEDITATIO - what is God saying to ME in this text? Attention to spiritual movements, to consolation and desolation
- ▶ ORATIO - what do I want to say to GOD in response? Spontaneous vocal prayer, journalling ...
- ▶ CONTEMPLATIO - drawn into silent adoration, resting in God
- ▶ ACTION !! - what will I now do differently?

A Reminder ...

- ▶ **Homilies should not try to respond to questions no one is asking in the first place! (155)**

KEY ELEMENTS

- ▶ Need for images that are CONCRETE:
- ▶ A good homily should be built around three points: “one idea, one feeling, one image” . (157)
- ▶ More positive and encouraging messages, less moralistic sermonizing!!
- ▶ *“It is not so much concerned with pointing out what shouldn’t be done, but with suggesting what we can do better. In any case, if it does draw attention to something negative, it will also attempt to point to a positive and attractive value, and avoid becoming mired in complaints, laments, criticisms and reproaches. Positive preaching always offers hope, points to the future, does not leave us trapped in negativity. How good it is when priests, deacons and the laity seek to make preaching more attractive! (159)*

III. CATECHESIS AND *Evangélization*

- ▶ **Kérygma**
- ▶ **Mystagogy**
- ▶ **Faith Transmission**
- ▶ **Spiritual Growth**
- ▶ **Accompaniment: Personal and Communal**
- ▶ **Centred in the Word of God!**

FROM EVANGELIZATION TO CATECHESIS: GROWTH IN FAITH!

- ▶ The first proclamation of the Gospel (KERYGMA) should lead the faithful on a path of formation and maturation. Faith education and catéchèse: at service of growth in Christian faith and life. (163)
- ▶ “We must not think that in catechesis the kerygma gives way to a supposedly more “solid” formation. Nothing is more solid, profound, secure, meaningful and wisdom-filled than that initial proclamation. All Christian formation consists of entering more deeply into the kerygma, which is reflected in and constantly illumines, the work of catechesis, thereby enabling us to understand more fully the significance of every subject which the latter treats. It is the message capable of responding to the desire for the infinite which abides in every human heart.” (165)

THE CORE MESSAGE!!!

On the lips of each catechist must always echo that first proclamation of Good News :

- ▶ “Jesus Christ loves you, he gave his life to save you, his Spirit lives within you and he walks beside you to enlighten you, strengthen you, and set you free”. (164)

A WORD PROFOUNDLY RESPECTFUL OF OUR FREEDOM (165)

- ▶ The centrality of the kerygma calls for stressing those elements which are most needed today:
- ▶ it has to express God's saving love which precedes any moral and religious obligation on our part;
- ▶ it should not impose the truth but appeal to freedom;
- ▶ it should be marked by joy, encouragement, liveliness and a harmonious balance;
- ▶ Requires from the evangelizer certain attitudes: approachability, readiness for dialogue, patience, warmth, welcome, non-judgmental.

MYSTAGOGIA: 2 dimensions

- ▶ Gradual and Progressive Nature of Formation in the Christian Life, and the role of the community
- ▶ Renewed importance accorded to the liturgical signs and symbols connected to Christian initiation. (166)
- ▶ Do we connect RCIC to RCIA?
- ▶ Need for appropriate materials and approaches for pre-schoolers, elementary, secondary, young adult, mature inquirers? (Post-ALPHA, is there BETA ... and even OMEGA?)
- ▶ *How are we doing?*

THE WAY OF BEAUTY ... AND PROXIMITY:

- ▶ New signs, new symbols, new ways in which the Word can take flesh; ways of beauty which correspond to widely diverse cultures. (167)
- ▶ Not just the “conventionally beautiful”, but the beauty which is truly in the eye of the beholder: to see as we have been fully seen, know as we have been fully known, love as we have been fully loved... in other words, to put on the mind, eyes, and heart of Christ.

LISTENING, ACCOMPANYING, JOURNEYING

- ▶ The art of listening is more than simply hearing.
- ▶ An openness of heart which makes possible that closeness without which genuine spiritual encounter cannot occur.
- ▶ To find the right gesture and word: we are not simply bystanders.
- ▶ Through respectful and compassionate listening, we enter on the paths of true growth and awaken a yearning for the Christian ideal
- ▶ “The desire to respond fully to God’s love and to bring to fruition what he has sown in our hearts.” (171)

What priority do we give to listening, accompanying, journeying in our catechetical ministry?

THE WORD OF GOD: Food for the Journey

- ▶ All evangelization is based on God's word, listened to, meditated upon, lived, celebrated and witnessed to. The sacred Scriptures are the very source of evangelization. (...)
- ▶ The Church does not evangelize unless she constantly lets herself be evangelized. Word of God "ever more fully at the heart of every ecclesial activity".
- ▶ God's word, listened to and celebrated, above all in the Eucharist, nourishes and inwardly strengthens Christians, enabling them to offer an authentic witness to the Gospel in daily life.
- ▶ We have long since moved beyond that old contraposition between word and sacrament. The preaching of the word, living and effective, prepares for the reception of the sacrament, and in the sacrament that word attains its maximum efficacy." (174)

STUDY OF THE BIBLE: SOURCE OF INSPIRATION AND DEEPENING OF OUR CATÉCHÈSIS

- ▶ The study of the sacred Scriptures must be a door opened to every believer. It is essential that the revealed word radically enrich our catechesis and all our efforts to pass on the faith.
- ▶ Evangelization demands familiarity with God's word, which calls for dioceses, parishes and Catholic associations to provide for a serious, ongoing study of the Bible, while encouraging its prayerful individual and communal reading.

AND FINALLY ...

- ▶ So let us receive the sublime treasure of the revealed **WORD!** (175)

TIME OF INTEGRATION AND REFLECTION

Of what you have heard today so far (this presentation and Archbishop Lepine):

- What inspires you? ...*
- What bothers you? ...*
- What conversion or transformation are you called to as a missionary-disciple, sharing in Christ's ministry of teaching and proclamation?*

HOW DO THESE WORDS OF POPE FRANCIS APPLY TO MY REALITY ...

- PERSONAL
- PARISH
- FAITH FORMATION OR MINISTRY
- DIOCESAN

" I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security. I do not want a Church concerned with being at the centre, caught up in a web of obsessions and procedures. If something should rightly disturb us and trouble our consciences, it is the fact that so many of our brothers and sisters are living without the strength, light and consolation born of friendship with Jesus Christ, without a community of faith to support them, without meaning and a goal in life." (EG #49)

GOING BACK TO THE BEGINNING:

- ▶ Real drama: empty churches ... or empty hearts?
- ▶ “The joy of the gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. With Christ joy is constantly born anew. (...) I wish to encourage the Christian faithful to embark upon a new chapter of evangelization marked by this joy, while pointing out new paths for the Church’s journey in years to come. (E.G. #1)

CONCLUSION AND REVIEW

- ▶ DIFFICULTIES AND CHALLENGES?
- ▶ SUCCESSES AND NEW INSIGHTS?
- ▶ MOVING AHEAD IN THANKSGIVING!

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