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Pope Francis and the Missionary Transformation of the Church and the Priesthood

- Preface
 - It's a great joy to be here with you in Lincoln as we enter into retreat together, when Jesus says to us what he said to the apostles after they had done and taught so much on one of their missions that they didn't have time even to eat, "Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while," and he took them on a boat with him away from the crowds. Well, the Our Lady of Good Counsel Retreat Center isn't exactly one of Peter's fishing vessels, but it will do. Elsewhere Jesus would teach them and us how he seeks to give us the rest we need, telling us, "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light." We find the rest and refreshment we need from yoking ourselves to Jesus, from responding to his invitation to unite ourselves more to him and learn from him on the inside his meekness and humility, so that no matter what challenges we're facing personally or pastorally, we know that we're facing them with him. Every retreat is an opportunity for us to yoke ourselves anew to the Lord Jesus, to the power of his resurrection living in us from within, raising us from the dead.
 - We're holding this retreat in the after burn of Pentecost that is meant to influence all of Ordinary Time. It's on this retreat that the Holy Spirit wants to answer the prayer that we made to him yesterday in the Sequence, begging him to come anew with heavenly radiance as the guest of our soul, to console us, give us rest in labor, refreshment in the heat of the vineyard, solace in the occasional woe and mourning of priestly life, cleansing in us what is impure and unfit for the priesthood, irrigating what is desiccated, healing what is wounded, bending to him whatever is stubborn, warming whatever is cold, putting back on the narrow way whatever has led us us astray, and seeking to grant us the reward of virtue, the end of salvation and eternal joy.
 - The celebration of Pentecost is a good lead in to the theme of this retreat, which is entitled, "The Missionary Metamorphosis of the Church: Pope Francis, the Reform of the Church and the Reform of the Priesthood." The Holy Spirit is constantly seeking to revivify the Church. Every Eucharist, as Pope Benedict said, is a perpetual Pentecost, in which we're constantly being summoned to the Upper Room to find our communion with God and each other and constantly being sent forth to take the Gospel to the ends, to peripheries, to preach it to every creature.
- The Missionary Metamorphosis of the Church
 - Two years ago, I was summoned to Rome to do color commentary with Raymond Arroyo for EWTN's coverage of the conclave that elected Pope Francis. His brother Cardinals elected him, as both they and he have stated on multiple occasions, to reform the Church. Three days after the white smoke rose, he joked with us media representatives that some had suggested he take the name Hadrian, after Hadrian VI, the Pope who tried to reform the Church's central administration after the scandals that led to the Protestant Reformation. Instead he took the name of the greatest reformer in Church history, Francis of Assisi, who was the Lord's instrument to rebuild his dilapidated Church as a whole, one living stone at a time. The Church is always in need of reform. *Ecclesia semper reformanda* as the old aphorism goes. It's constantly in need of reshaping, taking on the full stature of Christ, being conformed to him more and more deeply. Every pope is elected with a reform agenda, to one degree or another.
 - But in Pope Francis' election, there was a greater focus on that reform. The Cardinals were talking about it. The Vaticanisti were writing about it. But the type of reform that was needed went far beyond banks, or butlers, or bumbling bureaucracies. The chief reform the Church needed, Cardinal Bergoglio declared to his brother cardinals on March 7 during their pre-conclave meetings, had to be to address what he called the chief corruption of the Church. It occurs when the Church becomes

self-referential and spiritually worldly, “living within herself, of herself and for herself.” The fundamental reform the Church needed, he continued, was to remember that she does not have a mission, but is a mission. Unless she’s coming out of herself to bring Christ and his light to those who are living in darkness on the outskirts of life, she’s simply sick.

- We saw this corruption among the apostles who on several occasions began to focus on jockeying for position in an earthly kingdom they presumed Jesus had come to inaugurate rather than on denying themselves, picking up their cross and follow Jesus to all those on the periphery.
- We’ve seen it throughout Church history when some have fought more for benefices and sinecures or cushy assignments than for the towel to wash others’ feet.
- We see it in segments of the Church bureaucracy — from chanceries to the Roman Curia — when priests and prelates use their positions to try to advance their own “careers” or the careers of friends.
- And we see it in Church institutions — dioceses, parishes, schools, hospitals, charities — that begin to focus all of their efforts on those who are already coming, rather than getting outside of themselves to serve all those for whom Jesus gave his life.
- Cardinal Bergoglio told the Cardinals what the Church most needed in a new leader. The “next pope” had to be a “man who, from the contemplation and adoration of Jesus Christ, helps the Church to go out of herself to the existential peripheries, who helps her to be a fruitful mother living off the sweet and comforting joy of evangelizing.” Not only did the Cardinals think their colleague from Buenos Aires fulfilled those criteria but that papal job description aptly summarizes what Pope Francis has been trying to accomplish since his election.
- In his programmatic apostolic exhortation “The Joy of the Gospel,” Pope Francis expressed his hopes for the missionary metamorphosis of the Church that he’s been seeking to catalyze. “I dream of a ...missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church’s customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures, can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today’s world rather than for her self-preservation.”
- The reform he has been begun of the Curia — with the help of various new advisory councils, commissions and consultants — intends to align the Church’s central infrastructure to support and advance the mission that is the Church rather than frustrate it by structures more apt for previous centuries. But this is a reform that he wants to go far beyond the Vatican walls. He wants it to reach every Catholic. To be a disciple at all, he writes in his exhortation, is to be a “missionary disciple.” Francis wants each believer to say with him, “I am a mission on this earth; this is the reason why I am here.” He wants us as his brother priests to be able to say it. And as the whole world has been observing, Pope Francis is convinced that the reason why he was elected, why he is here, is to carry out that “sweet and comforting” task of evangelization. He has been a personification of the missionary reform of the Church, not just catechizing but *showing* everyone what a missionary disciple is and does.
- The Holy Father is also giving by word and example what he thinks is a description of the priests Christ needs today, those who from his own prayerful contemplation and worship of the Lord will help lead the Church out of herself to bring Christ and his healing, his passionate warmth, his truth to others, rather than waiting for the world to come to him.
- “It’s key that we Catholics, both clergy and laity, go out to meet the people,” he stressed in the 2010 book-length interview, *El Jesuita*. This is “not only because the Church’s mission is to announce the Gospel, but because failing to do so harms us. ... A Church that limits herself to administering parish work, that lives enclosed within a community, experiences what someone in prison does: physical and mental atrophy.” A Church that merely protects its small flock, that gives all or most of its attention to its faithful clientele, he believes, “is a Church that is sick.”
- He wants to help the entire Church, beginning with the clergy, to recover its full health, by yoking ourselves to the Divine Physician as he goes out to the peripheries to make house calls to every lost sheep.
- Over the course of this retreat, we will examine:
 - Pope Francis’ powerful and encouraging thoughts on the mission we have been given by Christ in 2015 and beyond, to re-evangelize our culture, to reevangelize our priest colleagues,

our parishioners, our friends, our families, our communities, our neighborhoods, with the beauty, joy and truth of the Gospel. The true reform of the Church will be when we, living with the contagious and lively enthusiasm that marked the early Church, draw people to the Source of our joy and life, Jesus himself.

- Pope Francis' profound thoughts on the essential message of Christianity, which he believes is God's merciful love that led God to take on our own humanity and enter our world to die on the Cross to save us.
- Pope Francis' thoughts on the priestly vocation, priestly life, and priestly apostolate.
- Pope Francis' thoughts on priestly charity.
- Pope Francis' thoughts on the missionary reform of priestly preaching.
- Pope Francis' thoughts on priestly prayer.
- For these conferences, I'll depend not only on Pope Francis' manifesto laying out his vision for Church renewal, *Evangelii Gaudium*, but also what he's said in various homilies, Angelus meditations and speeches over the course of the almost 26 months, as well as on what his probably his greatest pre-papal achievement, what's called the Aparecida document, the fruit of his work leading all the bishops of Central and South American (CELAM) in coming up with a plan for the New Evangelization of that continent. It's perhaps the greatest document in the history of the Church blending profound theology and concrete practice.
- The Reform of the Priesthood
 - Before we get there, though, I think we need to tackle an elephant in the retreat center.
 - Every major reform in Church history has begun with a reform of the priesthood, and the reform that Pope Francis was elected to carry out involves very much this dimension, as we'll be able to ponder in depth during our time together. But before we get there, I'd like to confront one of the issues that has percolated to the surface from many priests, including many great priests. It's that Pope Francis seems to be really critical of his brother priests and bishops
 - On Mardi Gras last year, Pope Francis acknowledged it, saying to his brother priests in the Diocese of Rome, "Some of you have phoned, written a letter, [or] I spoke [to you] on the phone [saying] ... 'But Father, what have you got against priests?'" Because they were saying that I bash priests! I do not wish to bash you here," he said.
 - One of my good priest friends, Fr. Raymond de Souza of the Archdiocese of Kingston, Ontario, summed up the sentiment in an article for the National Catholic Register in late 2013:
 - "Pope Francis is capable of speaking with great tenderness about those far from the Church. When discussing his brother Jesuits, even those who sent him into exile and were active obstacles to the mission of Jesus Christ and the Ignatian charism, the Holy Father speaks with nuance and delicacy. Yet when he speaks of the parish clergy, his remarks are almost always critical, inveighing against the lazy priest in his rectory, unmoved by the suffering of the afflicted in need of mercy, reduced to a functionary who has become an obstacle rather than a conduit of God's grace. Priests need to hear that to be challenged and corrected, but fallen men that we are, it is not easy. The Holy Father intends his criticisms ... for the whole Church, not just the priests and bishops. Yet, often, the clergy feel singled out for criticism or feel underappreciated. Perhaps they ought to stop feeling sorry for themselves and 'man up,' but the phenomenon is real and explains part of the uneasiness" some have with him."
 - It is true that Pope Francis has spent more time calling priests to conversion than patting them on the back. In an affirmation age this has been a little jolting. For me, I've been a little frustrated by his mentioning on several occasions those priests who turn the confessional into a "torture chamber." I've gone to confession weekly for 27 years, lived in various countries, probably confessed to 500 priests in six different languages and in the thousands of confessions I've made, I can only recall three occasions when a priest turned it into a torture chamber. I can't speak to the situation in Argentina, but I doubt that there are many sacramental sadists hiding behind purple stoles in reconciliation rooms. The Pope's essential point, of course, is to call all priests to be merciful representations of the Father of the Prodigal Son in the confessional, rather than harsh judges, a point that every pope should insist upon, but regularly mentioning priests who turn the confessional

into an Abu Ghraib may hinder the work of merciful priests who are trying to get people back to confession but who are afraid because of one bad experience in the past.

- Many Curial officials were saying similar things after the Pope's address before Christmas when he listed 15 "curial diseases," including a pathology of power, narcissism, mental and spiritual petrification, being paper pushers instead of men of God, having hearts of stone and stiff necks, of having spiritual Alzheimer's, existential schizophrenics, gossipers, grumblers, back-biters, indifferent, glum and dour hoarders and exhibitionists, making it seem as if the Curia is a spiritual infectious disease unit. It's tough to here, especially in Christmas blessings, and many did begin to grumble.
- But it's important for us to ask what's behind this criticism of Pope Francis, which is obviously intended as constructive and done with affection. I think the answer can be found in a retreat Cardinal Bergoglio preached in 2006 to the Spanish Bishops that's now been published in English as "In Him Alone is Our Hope."
- He gave a conference there entitled, "The Lord who reprimands and pardons us," which started off by saying,
 - "As we read the Gospels, a paradoxical pattern emerges: the Lord is more inclined to warn, correct and reprimand those who are closest to him — his disciples and Peter in particular — than those who are distant. The Lord acts in this way to make it clear that ministry is pure grace; it does not depend on the merits or competencies of the one chosen for the mission. In this context of the Lord's gratuitous choice and his absolute fidelity, to be reprimanded by him means that one is receiving a sign of God's immense mercy."
- Jesus reprimands those closer to him more than those who are distant. These corrections are done out of love and help to remind them that their whole ministry is one of grace.
- The future Pope takes up several of the Lord's reprimands, which he applies to the life and ministry of priests and bishops:
 - The Lord reprimands us from our dismissive tendencies, which stem from our lack of charity, as he does at the feeding of the crowd, when the disciples wanted to dismiss the crowd rather than feed them themselves. He also rebukes them for not letting the children come to him, or when they wanted Jesus to get rid of the Canaanite woman. "With firmness and with patience the Lord corrects them. He is not in a hurry to dismiss the people nor is he bothered when they come close to him. The Lord does not put limits on the nearness of the people. He is the neighbor *par excellence*. ... He lets himself be touched by the people who clamor for his presence. ... This profound openness and availability reveals a total self-emptying that will find its most intense expression on the Cross, but which the Lord was living day after day. Conversion from our sins, from our egoism, leads us to being available for others."
 - The Lord reprimands us for the fears that arise from our lack of faith, like he reprimanded the apostles in the boat for their lack of faith during a storm. Their fear is because of their lack of faith. "He wants to persuade them that he is greater than every challenge, every trial, every temptation. And we are just like the Apostles in the storm! Dominated by fear, we too are more than capable of stumbling and falling into sin." Fear leads not only to cowardice but also to foolhardy temerity.
 - The Lord reprimands us for our weaknesses that come from a lack of hope, especially with regard to the salvific meaning of the Cross and of suffering. Jesus called Peter Satan and told him he was thinking not as God does but as men do because he couldn't look at the Lord's death or his own suffering with hope. Jesus firmly reprimands Peter. The essential cross Christ gives us is "the weight of the community entrusted to our care. ... It is the Lord who puts it on our shoulders and tells us 'Take up your Cross and follow me.' The Cross is a yoke carried in tandem and the Lord bears most of the weight. In order to carry his cross, the pastor will need the strength that comes from hope, which he should beg for in prayer. Then, for example, he will have the courage to make the necessary decisions, even if they are unpopular. He will also have the magnanimity to begin difficult enterprises in the service of God ... and to persevere in carrying them out without becoming discouraged when obstacles arise."

- The Lord reproaches us for our inability to keep watch with him, as he did with Simon, James and John in the Garden of Gethsemane. We must keep watch with Jesus in prayer, but also must watch out for the flock. “To supervise refers more to the concern for doctrine and ritual in their expression and practice, whereas to keep watch means making sure the people have enough salt and light in their hearts. To be vigilant means being on the lookout for danger, whereas to keep watch is more about patiently supporting the ways the Lord brings the salvation of his people to fruition. To be vigilant, it is enough to be awake, alert and shrewd. To keep watch requires meekness, patience and the constancy of tested charity. To supervise means carefully inspecting the whole, without overlooking any details. To keep watch means knowing how to see the essentials. To supervise and be vigilant both entail a certain degree of control. To keep watch, on the other hand, speaks of hope, ... the hope of the merciful Father who keeps watch over the hearts of his growing sons.” He proposes St. Joseph as a model: “In Joseph we encounter the faithful and foresighted *episkopos* ordained by the Lord to serve as head of his family. He is the man who watches over the child and his mother, even in his dreams, and with the tenderness of a faithful and discreet servant, he lives out and fulfills the Father’s role. From this profound watchfulness of Joseph springs that silent vision of the whole, capable of taking care of his little flock with meager means (he transforms a manger for animals into the crib of the Word incarnate!). From this watchfulness also comes the vigilant and shrewd vision that succeeded in avoiding all the dangers that threatened the child.”
- He then draws a conclusion about our own reprimands:
 - Let us review all the times the Lord has reprimanded us, and ask ourselves what he wishes to teach us through them. And let us reflect on ourselves in order to make amends. We should not be afraid of his reprimands, for they are proof of the Lord’s closeness to us, that he takes us seriously. That he corrects us, just as he corrected Peter, is a sign of our friendship with him and our apostolic zeal! ... He puts up with us and corrects us and always helps us grow, without ever belittling us or withdrawing his esteem and respect for us. Filled with contrition for our hardheadedness and our slowness to comprehend him, let us say like Peter, ‘Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.’ While we offer our contrition, we feel the Lord encouraging us again, and he says to us, ‘Feed my sheep!’
 - That’s what I think is behind Pope Francis’ approach with regard to his brother priests. There’s a special love, bond, closeness and friendship, not a negative attitude. I’d encourage us all to keep this in mind throughout the retreat, especially when we tackle what he teaches about priestly virtues and vices.
- Let’s get into the heart of the topic about the missionary metamorphosis of the Church.
 - Pope Francis said in EG 15 that preaching the Gospel is the “first task of the Church.” Indeed, he adds, “today missionary activity still represents the greatest challenge for the Church” and “the missionary task must remain foremost”. What would happen if we were to take these words seriously? We would realize that missionary outreach is *paradigmatic for all the Church’s activity.*”
 - The Church doesn’t just have a mission but *is* a mission and missionary outreach must become the standard for everything the Church does. I repeat his “I have a dream” section of the exhortation: “I dream of a ‘missionary option,’ that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church’s customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures, can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today’s world rather than for her self-preservation.” (EG 27)
 - This requires pastoral conversion to make ordinary pastoral activity more mission-oriented, seeking to invite others to friendship with Jesus. Otherwise there’s the danger of “ecclesial introversion.”
 - He specified several areas where that needs to take place. Especially relevant for us is what he says about parishes:
 - (28) “The parish is not an outdated institution; precisely because it possesses great flexibility, it can assume quite different contours depending on the openness and missionary creativity of the pastor and the community. While certainly not the only institution that evangelizes, if it proves capable of self-renewal and constant adaptivity, it continues to be

“the Church living in the midst of the homes of her sons and daughters”. This presumes that it really is in contact with the homes and the lives of its people, and does not become a useless structure out of touch with people or a self-absorbed cluster made up of a chosen few. The parish is the presence of the Church in a given territory, an environment for hearing God’s word, for growth in the Christian life, for dialogue, proclamation, charitable outreach, worship and celebration. In all its activities the parish encourages and trains its members to be evangelizers. It is a community of communities, a sanctuary where the thirsty come to drink in the midst of their journey, and a centre of constant missionary outreach. We must admit, though, that the call to review and renew our parishes has not yet sufficed to bring them nearer to people, to make them environments of living communion and participation, and to make them completely mission-oriented.”

- (29) Smaller Church communities, movements and associations frequently bring new evangelizing fervor and capacity for dialogue, but they need contact and integration with local parish and participation in overall pastoral activity of diocese to prevent their becoming “nomads without roots.”
- (30) Every diocese is called to missionary conversion. It’s the primary subject of evangelization. Must preach him in areas of greater need, outskirts of territory and new sociocultural settings. Francis encourages every Diocese to a “resolute process of discernment, purification and reform.”
- (31) Bishop must foster a dynamic, open missionary communion, sometimes going before his people, sometimes at their side, sometimes behind them, helping those who lag behind. Must listen not for organizational purposes but to fulfill missionary aspirations.
- (32) Conversion of the papacy also needed to make papacy more faithful to Jesus’ commission and to needs of evangelization. Vatican structures must have pastoral conversion. Excessive centralization complicates Church’s life and missionary outreach.
- (33) Missionary pastoral ministry will abandon the “We have always done it this way” complacency. It’s a call to be bold and creative in rethinking goals, structures, styles and methods of evangelization with communal search for means. He encourages everyone to apply the guidelines in this document “generously and courageously without inhibitions or fear.
- The New Evangelization is desperately needed
 - (With young of Umbria, Oct 4, 2013) The Gospel is God's message of **salvation for mankind**. When we say “message of salvation”, **this is not simply a way of speaking, these are not mere words or empty words like so many today. Mankind truly needs to be saved!** We see it everyday when we flip through newspapers or watch the news on television; but we also see it around us, in people, in situations; and we see it in ourselves! Each one of us needs to be saved! **We cannot do it alone! We need to be saved! Saved from what? From evil.** Evil is at work, it does its job. However, evil is not invincible and a Christian does not give up when confronted by evil. And you young people, do you want to give up in the face of evil, injustice and difficulty? Do you want to or not? The Gospel, then, this message of salvation, has two destinations that are connected: the first, to awaken faith, and this is evangelization; the second, to transform the world according to God’s plan, and this is the Christian animation of society. But these are not two separate things, they form one mission: to carry the Gospel by the witness of our lives in order to transform the world! This is the way: to bring the Gospel by the witness of our lives. Let us look to Francis: he did both of these things, through the power of the one Gospel. Francis made faith grow and he renewed the Church, and at the same time he renewed society, he made it more fraternal, but he always did it with the Gospel and by his witness. Do you know what Francis once said to his brothers? He said: “Always preach the Gospel and if necessary use words!” But how? Is it possible to preach the Gospel without words? Yes! By your witness! First comes witness, then come words!
- It’s a command of the Lord
 - (October 16, Audience) The Church is apostolic because she is sent to bring the Gospel to all the world. She continues in history the mission which Jesus entrusted to the Apostles: “Go therefore

and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age” (Mt 28:19-20). **This is what Jesus told us to do! I insist on this missionary aspect, because Christ invites all to “go out” and encounter others, he sends us, he asks us to move in order to spread the joy of the Gospel!** Once again let us ask ourselves: are we missionaries by our words, and especially by our Christian life, by our witness? Or are we Christians closed in our hearts and in our churches, sacristy Christians? Are we Christians in name only, who live like pagans? We must ask ourselves these questions, which are not a rebuke. I ask myself as well: what kind of Christian am I, is my witness true?

- Jesus trains and send us out:
 - (Angelus July 7) Jesus is not a lone missionary, he does not want to fulfill his mission alone, but involves his disciples. And today we see that in addition to the twelve Apostles he calls another 72, and sends them to the villages, two by two, to proclaim that the Kingdom of God is close at hand. This is very beautiful! Jesus does not want to act alone, he came to bring the love of God into the world and he wants to spread it in the style of communion, in the style of brotherhood. That is why he immediately forms a community of disciples, which is a missionary community. He trains them straight away for the mission, to go forth. But pay attention: their purpose is not to socialize, to spend time together, no, their purpose is to proclaim the Kingdom of God, and this is urgent! And it is still urgent today! There is no time to be lost in gossip, there is no need to wait for everyone's consensus, what is necessary is to go out and proclaim. To all people you bring the peace of Christ, and if they do not welcome it, you go ahead just the same. To the sick you bring healing, because God wants to heal man of every evil. How many missionaries do this, they sow life, health, comfort to the outskirts of the world. How beautiful it is! Do not live for yourselves, do not live for yourselves, but live to go forth and do good!
- And there's an urgency to it:
 - (June 15 daily homily) He based his reflection on the day's readings and in particular on St Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians. Christ's love possesses us, impels us, drives us on. **This speed is Paul in fourth gear: when he sees Christ's love he cannot stand still**". Paul's hurrying "reminds me of Mary the Pope said, setting out with haste to help her cousin. "This is the haste of the Christian message.... Here the message is, precisely, reconciliation". "Christian peace impels us and this is the beginning, the root of apostolic zeal". The Pope concluded : "the love of Christ possesses us, impels us, urges us on with the emotion we feels when we see that God loves us".
- We need to turn more specifically to what he says evangelization is. It is fundamentally about sharing our joy with others
 - Salvation of history is one great stream of joy (EG 4-5)
 - OT predicted joy of Messianic Times. Isaiah, Zechariah, Zephaniah all announce it. This is a joy we're meant to experience daily in the little things of life in response to love of God the Father. (EG 4)
 - Gospel constantly invites us to rejoice. Annunciation. Visitation. Jesus' ministry to bring his joy to us and make ours complete. He is the first and the greatest evangelizer (EG 12). Our Christian joy "drinks of his brimming heart." The disciples rejoiced at his resurrection, even in persecution. "Why shouldn't we also enter this great stream of joy?,"" Pope Francis asks (EG 5)
 - Not all Catholics have this joy. Some Christians' lives, he said, "seem like Lent without Easter." Joy flows from being infinitely loved. Even in suffering, we have to let the joy of faith slowly revive as a quiet yet firm trust. (EG 6).
 - EG 10: An evangelizer "must never look like someone who has just come back from a funeral!" World won't hear "dejected, discouraged, impatient, anxious" evangelizers but those whose lives glow with fervor and Christian joy.
 - Francis warns us not to give in to the "tomb psychology" and pessimism of the "prophets of doom" who think that the life of faith is on an inexorable decline. Rather, he urges us to rely on the power of the same Holy Spirit who helped Christians in generations before us

spread the faith, even during ages of persecution.

- That joy comes from the personal encounter with Christ
 - (264) The primary reason for evangelizing is the love and salvation of Jesus that we have received, urging us to greater love of him. “What kind of love would not feel the need to speak of the beloved, to point him out, to make him known?”
 - (265) Evangelization responds to that expectation. “We have a treasure of life and love that cannot deceive, and a message that cannot mislead or disappoint.” It ennobles us and is never out of date. This infinite love cures our infinite sadness.
 - (266) We must sustain this conviction through savoring Christ’s friendship and message. It’s impossible to persevere in fervent evangelization “unless we are convinced from personal experience that it is not the same thing to have known Jesus as not to have known him, not the same thing to walk with him as to walk blindly, not the same thing to hear his word as not to know it, and not the same thing to contemplate him, to worship him, to find our peace in him, as not to. . . . We know well that with Jesus life becomes richer and that with him it is easier to find meaning in everything. This is why we evangelize.” A true missionary doesn’t evangelize alone, but with Jesus. This helps us not to lose enthusiasm, passion and vigor.
 - (7) Sometimes we’re tempted to complain because we’re addicted to pleasure. But joy doesn’t come when conditions are met, but from an encounter with Christ, something the poor can teach us. (8) This (renewed) encounter alone can free us from self-absorption and God and bring us beyond ourselves to full truth of who we are. This inspires our evangelization. “If we have received the love that restores meaning to our lives, how can we fail to share that love with others?”
 - Evangelization should show our participation in Jesus’ joy
 - (Dec 6, 2013 Homily) Pope Francis then observed that, while we are accustomed to think of Jesus preaching, healing, walking through the streets speaking to people, or even being raised upon the Cross, “we are not accustomed to think of Jesus smiling, or joyful”. However, he said, “Jesus was full of joy”.
 - Jesus’ joy finds its source in intimacy with the Father, Pope Francis said. “His inner joy comes precisely from this relationship with the Father in the Holy Spirit. And this is the joy he gives to us, and this joy is true peace. It is not a static, quiet, tranquil peace: Christian peace is a joyful peace for Jesus is joyful, God is joyful”.
 - “A Church without joy is unthinkable”, the Pope said, since “Jesus has desired that his bride, the Church, be joyful”. “The joy of the Church is to announce the name of Jesus, and to proclaim: My spouse is the Lord, he is God who saves us and accompanies us”
 - We’ll have a chance to ponder this further later in the retreat when we discuss “Rejoice!,” the letter from the Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and the Societies of Apostolic Life in preparation for the Year of Consecrated life.
- Every Christian is called to be a missionary disciple, a believer with an apostolic heart.
 - (120) Through baptism, all, “without exception,” are missionary disciples and agents of evangelization, whatever the position in the Church or level of education. Evangelization is not the task of professionals while others are “passive recipients.” The new evangelization calls for “personal involvement on the part of each of the baptized.” Actively engaged here and now. “Anyone who has truly experienced God’s saving love does not need much time or lengthy training to go out and proclaim that love.” We are not disciples *and* missionaries, but always “missionary disciples.” First disciples immediately told others. “What are we waiting for?”
 - Our consciences should be justly disturbed, he says, 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.”
 - What’s needed is for all of us throughout the Church to stop living “as if people who have not received the Gospel did not exist.”
 - Sharing the faith is essential to our faith
 - (Catechists, Sept 27) The heart of a catechist always beats with this systolic and diastolic movement: union with Christ – encounter with others. Both of these: I am one with Jesus

and I go forth to encounter others. If one of these movements is missing, the heart no longer beats, it can no longer live. The heart of the catechist receives the gift of the kerygma, and in turn offers it to others as a gift. What a little word: “gift”! The catechist is conscious of having received a gift, the gift of faith, and he or she then gives that gift in turn to others. This is something beautiful. We don’t keep a percentage for ourselves! Whatever we receive, we give! This is not commerce! It is not a business! It is pure gift: a gift received and a gift given. And the catechist is right there, at the centre of this exchange of gifts. That is the nature itself of the kerygma: it is a gift that generates mission, that compels us to go beyond ourselves. Saint Paul says that “the love of Christ compels us”, but this “compels us” can also be translated as “possesses us”. And so it is: love attracts us and sends us; it draws us in and gives us to others. This tension marks the beating of the heart of the Christian, especially the heart of the catechist. Let us all ask ourselves: Is this what causes my heart to beat as a catechist, union with Christ and encounter with others? With this movement of “systole and diastole”? Are we being fed by our relationship with the Lord, so that we can bring him to others, and not to keep it for ourselves? I’ll tell you, I don’t understand how a catechist can remain stationary, without this movement. I don’t understand!

- We need formation to mature as missionary disciples
 - (121) Called to mature in work as evangelizers. Need for better training, deepening love and clearer witness. We need others to evangelize us, but shouldn’t postpone mission. Called to offer others an “explicit witness of the saving love of the Lord.”
 - On the one hand, he insists, there’s a need for better “formation” of the laity in general and “training” in evangelization in particular, especially at the level of parishes, so that people are equipped to share the faith more confidently and effectively at work, school and in their neighborhoods and social networks. At the same time, he adds, “Anyone who has truly experienced God’s saving love does not need much time or lengthy training to go out and proclaim that love!”
 - In the Aparecida document it focused on this formation. It listed five necessary aspects of formation to be missionary disciples in communion:
 - *The Encounter with Jesus Christ:* Those who will be his disciples are already seeking him (cf. Jn 1:38), but it is the Lord who calls them: “Follow me” (Mk 1:14; Mt 9:9). The deeper meaning of the search must be discovered, and the encounter with Christ that leads to Christian initiation must be fostered. This encounter must be constantly renewed by personal testimony, proclamation of the *kerygma*, and the missionary action of the community. The *kerygma* is not simply a stage, but the leitmotiv of a process that culminates in the maturity of the disciple of Jesus Christ. Without the *kerygma*, the other aspects of this process are condemned to sterility, with hearts not truly converted to the Lord. Only out of the *kerygma* does the possibility of a true Christian initiation occur. Hence, the Church should have it present in all its actions
 - *Conversion:* It is the initial response of those who have listened to the Lord in wonder, who believe in Him through the action of the Spirit, and who decide to be His friend and go with him, changing how they think and live, accepting the cross of Christ, conscious that dying to sin is attaining life. In Baptism and the sacrament of Reconciliation Christ’s Redemption is actualized for us.
 - *Discipleship:* The person constantly matures in knowledge, love, and following of Jesus the master, and delves deeper into the mystery of His person, his example, and his teaching. Ongoing catechesis and sacramental life are of fundamental importance for this stage; they strengthen initial conversion, and enable missionary disciples to persevere in Christian life and mission in the midst of the world that challenges them.
 - *Communion:* There can be no Christian life except in community: in families, parishes, communities of consecrated life, base communities, other small communities, and movements. Like the early Christians who met in community, the disciples take part in the life of the Church, and in the encounter with brothers and sisters, living the love of Christ in solidarity, in fraternal life. They are also accompanied and encouraged by the community and its shepherds as they mature in the live of the Spirit.

- *Mission:* As they get to know and love their Lord, disciples experience the need to share with others their joy at being sent, at going to the world to proclaim Jesus Christ, dead and risen, to make real the love and service in the person of the neediest, in short, to build the Kingdom of God. Mission is inseparable from discipleship, and hence it must not be understood as a stage subsequent to formation, although it is carried out in different ways, depending on one's own vocation and on the moment in human and Christian maturation at which the person stands.
- It called on priests in a particular way to impart this formation:
 - Priestly identity
 - 192. A glance at our actual moment shows us situations that affect and challenge the life and ministry of our priests. These include the theological identity of the priestly ministry, how they fit into contemporary culture, and situations that affect their life.
 - 193. The first challenge has to do with the theological identity of the priestly ministry. Vatican II establishes the ministerial priesthood at the service of the common priesthood of the faithful; each participates in the single priesthood of Christ, although in a qualitatively different way. Christ, High and Eternal Priest, has redeemed us and has shared his divine life with us. In Him we are all children of the same Father, and brothers and sisters of each other. The priest cannot fall into the temptation of regarding himself as a mere delegate or simply a representative of the community; rather he is a gift to it by the anointing of the Spirit, and by his special union with Christ the head. “Every high priest is taken from among men and made their representative before God” (Heb 5:1).
 - 194. The second challenge has to do with the priest's ministry inserted in contemporary culture. The priest is called to be **familiar with it** in order to sow the seed of the Gospel within it, that is, so that the message of Jesus may become a valid, comprehensible, hope-filled, and relevant interpretation for the life of man and woman today, and particularly for youth. This challenge includes the need to suitably enhance the initial and ongoing formation of priests in its four dimensions (human, spiritual, intellectual, pastoral).
 - 195. The third challenge has to do with vital and affective aspects, **celibacy**, and an **intense spiritual life** grounded in pastoral charity, which draws nourishment from personal experience with God and in communion with the brethren. It likewise has to do with cultivating **fraternal relations with the bishop**, the other priests of the diocese, and lay people. In order for the priest's ministry to be coherent and give witness, he must love and carry out his pastoral task in **communion with the bishop and with the other priests of the diocese**. The priestly ministry that springs from Holy Orders has a “**radical communal shape**” and can only be carried out as a “**collective work**.” The priest must be a **man of prayer**, mature in his choice of life for God, and must make use of the **means of perseverance**, such as the sacrament of confession, devotion to the Blessed Virgin, mortification, and fervent dedication to his pastoral mission. The priest is particularly invited to cherish celibacy as a gift from God that allows him a special configuration with Christ's own lifestyle and makes him a sign of pastoral charity in surrender to God and to human beings with a full and undivided heart. “This choice on the part of the priest expresses in a special way the dedication which conforms him to Christ and his exclusive offering of himself for the Kingdom of God.” The celibate seeks to assume his own affectivity and sexuality with maturity, living them serenely and joyfully on a shared journey.
 - Becoming a disciple-priest

- 199. The People of God feel the need for disciple-priests: those who have a deep experience of God, are configured to the heart of the Good Shepherd, docile to the motions of the Spirit, who are nourished by the Word of God, the Eucharist and prayer; for missionary-priests: who are moved by pastoral charity which leads them to care for the flock entrusted to them and to seek out who have strayed furthest, preaching the Word of God, always in deep communion with their bishop, priests, deacons, men and women religious, and lay people; for servant-of-life-priests: who are alert to the needs of the poorest, committed to the defense of the rights of the weakest, and promoters of the culture of solidarity. The need us also for priests full of mercy, available to administer the sacrament of Reconciliation.
- 201. Parish renewal requires new attitudes in pastors and in the priests who are in its service. The first requirement is that the pastor be an authentic disciple of Jesus Christ, because only a priest in love with the Lord can renew a parish. But he must likewise be an ardent missionary who lives in constant yearning to seek out those who are separated and is not satisfied with mere administration.
- Living the Mass and thereby helping others to appreciate it.
 - 191. We are joyfully appreciative and grateful that the immense majority of priests live out their ministry faithfully and are a model for others, that they take time for their own ongoing formation, that they cultivate a spiritual life that encourages other priests, centered on hearing the Word of God and on daily celebration of the Eucharist. “My mass is my life and my life is a prolonged mass!” (St. Alberto Hurtado, SJ, of Chile). We also thank those who have been sent to other churches prompted by an authentic missionary spirit.
- Offering Confessions — We can’t help people adequately on the road to conversion without offering the graces necessary, and that begins with our receiving God’s mercy and making it available to others.
 - 177. We live in a culture marked by strong relativism and a loss of the sense of sin that leads us to forget the need for the sacrament of Reconciliation in order to worthily approach receiving the Eucharist. **As pastors, we are called to encourage frequent confession.** We invite our priests to devote sufficient time to offering the sacrament of Reconciliation with pastoral zeal and merciful hearts, and to prepare worthily the places of celebration, so that they may express the meaning of this sacrament. Likewise, we ask our faithful to appreciate this marvelous gift of God and to approach it in order to renew baptismal grace and to live more authentically the call of Jesus to be his disciples and missionaries. We bishops and priests, ministers of reconciliation, are particularly called to live intimately with the Master. We are conscious of our weakness and of the need to be purified by the grace of the sacrament which is offered to us so that we may identify ever more with Christ, Good Shepherd, and missionary of the Father. As it is our joy to be fully available as ministers of reconciliation, we ourselves must also frequently approach, on our penitential journey, the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
 - 202. But the commitment of the priest and communities of religious is clearly not enough. All lay people should feel jointly responsible for the formation of disciples and in mission. This means that parishes must promote and foster missionary diversity and generously devote time to the sacrament of Reconciliation. A renewed parish multiplies persons who provide services and add ministries. Imagination is likewise required in this field to find a response to the many and ever changing challenges posed by the situation, requiring new services and ministries. Combining all of them in the unity of a single evangelizing project is essential for assuring missionary communion.
- The Missionary Transformation of Parish bodies led by the priest
 - 203. **A parish, community of missionary disciples,** needs committees that move

beyond any sort of bureaucracy. Parish Pastoral Councils will have to be formed by missionary disciples continually concerned to reach out to all. The Economic Concerns Committee, together with the entire parish community, will work to obtain necessary funding, so that the mission may advance and become a reality in all environments. These and all such committees must be by a spirituality of missionary communion: Unless we follow this spiritual path, external structures of communion will serve very little purpose. They would become mechanisms without a soul, "masks" of communion rather than its means of expression and growth.

- 204. Within the parish boundaries, the Christian family is the first and most basic ecclesial community. That is where the fundamental values of Christian life are lived and passed on. It is called "domestic church." In it the parents are the primary transmitters of the faith to their children, teaching them through example and word to be true missionary disciples. Likewise, when this experience of missionary discipleship is authentic, "a family becomes the evangelizer of many other families, and of the neighborhood of which it forms part." This operates in daily life in and through the events, problems, difficulties and circumstances of everyday life. The Spirit who makes everything new, acts even within abnormal situations in which a process of transmission of faith takes place, but we must recognize that under current circumstances, this process sometimes faces considerable difficulties. The parish intends to reach not only isolated individuals but the life of all families, to enhance their missionary dimension.
- The Message we give must be kerygmatic. It must focus first on the transmitting the joy of our faith. We'll have a chance to focus on this later on during this retreat in depth.
 - EG 34: "If we attempt to put all things in a missionary key, this will also affect the way we communicate the message. In today's world of instant communication and occasionally biased media coverage, the message we preach runs a greater risk of being distorted or reduced to some of its secondary aspects. In this way certain issues which are part of the Church's moral teaching are taken out of the context which gives them their meaning. The biggest problem is when the message we preach then seems identified with those secondary aspects which, important as they are, do not in and of themselves convey the heart of Christ's message. We need to be realistic and not assume that our audience understands the full background to what we are saying, or is capable of relating what we say to the very heart of the Gospel which gives it meaning, beauty and attractiveness."
 - (35) Pastoral ministry in missionary style has a message concentrating on the essentials, simplifying the message without losing depth or truth, rather than "disjointed transmission of a multitude of doctrines."
 - (36) Some truths give more direct expression to the heart of the Gospel: beauty of the saving love of God manifest in Jesus who died and rose. Hierarchy of truths in dogma and morals.
 - (164) In catechesis, there's the fundamental role of the kerygma, or first announcement. Kerygma is Trinitarian. Catechists must proclaim: "Jesus Christ loves you; he gave his life to save you; and now he is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen and free you." Kerygma is first not just at the beginning, but also because it's principal.
 - In a 2010 book length interview with Sergio Rubin entitled *El Jesuita*, the future Pope stressed that conversion has to begin with making Jesus come alive in people's lives, rather than with particular moral issues. "The most important thing in preaching," he emphasized, "is to proclaim Jesus Christ, what in theology is called the kerygma, that Jesus Christ is God, became man to save us, lived in the world like any one of us, suffered, died, was buried and rose. ... [This] provokes astonishment, and brings one to contemplation and to faith. ... After the encounter with Jesus comes reflection, ... where one can deduce the principles of religious and moral behavior." He expressed his concern that sometimes there can be a "degrading reductionism" in the preaching of the Church, focusing above all on sexual morality and what's licit and illicit. "When this happens," he stated, "we bury the treasure of the living Jesus, the treasure of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, the treasure of the project of Christian life that has many other aspects beyond sexual questions. We push to the side a rich

catechesis, with the mysteries of faith and the Creed, and we center ourselves on whether we should organize a rally against a political proposal to legalize condoms.”

- (165) Formation involves entering more deeply into the kerygma, which stresses those elements most needed today: God’s saving love before any moral and religious obligation on our part. It appeals to freedom, doesn’t impose the truth. It’s marked by joy and doesn’t reduce preaching to a few doctrines that are more philosophical than evangelical.
- In order to proclaim that kerygma, we have to be aware of the wounds that are present:
 - “I see clearly,” the pope said in the Sept. 19 interview with Jesuit publications, “that the thing the church needs most today is the ability to heal wounds and to warm the hearts of the faithful; it needs nearness, proximity. I see the church as a field hospital after battle. It is useless to ask a seriously injured person if he has high cholesterol and about the level of his blood sugars! You have to heal his wounds. Then we can talk about everything else. **Heal the wounds, heal the wounds....** The church’s ministers must be merciful, take responsibility for the people and accompany them like the good Samaritan, who washes, cleans and raises up his neighbor. This is pure Gospel. God is greater than sin.”
- The Church must first be a house with open doors, a mother with an open heart
 - (46) An evangelizing Church, the house of the Father of the Prodigal Son, has open doors.
 - (47) One concrete sign of this openness is that Church doors should be opened. Doors of the sacraments shouldn’t be closed for simply any reason, especially baptism. These convictions have “pastoral consequences” that we have to consider with prudence and boldness, so that we are facilitators rather than arbiters of grace. Church is not a tollhouse, but a place for everyone with all their problems.
- But that Church must also go for those on the peripheries, not just waiting for them to come and knock.
 - (48) Church should go first not to our friends and wealthy neighbors but to the poor and sick, the despised and overlooked, who can’t repay. No room for weakening this message. Can’t mince words: there is an inseparable bond between our faith and the poor.
- In going out, the Church must be willing to take some risks in spreading the faith
 - (49) “**I prefer a Church that 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.**” More than fear of going astray, we should fear remaining shut up in structures, within rules making us harsh judges, habits that make us feel safe, while people are starving. We should be disturbed 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.”
 - (259) We need Spirit-filled evangelizers are fearlessly open to the Holy Spirit, like the apostles. Parrhesia. Must pray for Holy Spirit’s help to proclaim Gospel not just with words but by a life transfigured by God’s presence.
 - In his Sept 19 interview with Jesuit publications, he said, “Religious men and women are prophets. ...A religious must never give up prophecy.” As a Jesuit he takes this prophetic dimension seriously and then gives it greater definition. “Being prophets may sometimes imply making waves. I do not know how to put it.... Prophecy makes noise, uproar, some say ‘a mess.’”
 - When he spoke to Argentinian youth in Rio on July 25, he said, “Let me tell you what I hope will be the outcome of World Youth Day: I hope there will be a noise [a mess, *hacer lío*]. Here there will be noise, I’m quite sure. Here in Rio there will be plenty of noise, no doubt about that. But I want you to make yourselves heard in your dioceses, I want the noise to go out, I want the Church to go out onto the streets, I want us to resist everything worldly, everything static, everything comfortable, everything to do with clericalism, everything that might make us closed in on ourselves. ... May the bishops and priests forgive me if some of you create a bit of confusion afterwards. That’s my advice. Thanks for whatever you can do.”
 - There’s obviously a risk in making a mess and encouraging others to make a mess. But Pope Francis says that it’s a risk worth taking. To the members of new movements on the Vigil of Pentecost, May 18, he said: “But what happens if we step outside ourselves? The same as can happen to anyone who

comes out of the house and onto the street: an accident. But I tell you, I far prefer a Church that has had a few accidents to a Church that has fallen sick from being closed.”

- He stressed in a Sept 27 Year of Faith celebration: If a Christian goes to the streets, or to the outskirts, he or she may risk the same thing that can happen to anyone out there: an accident. How often have we seen accidents on the road! But I am telling you: I would prefer a thousand times over a bruised Church than an ill Church!”
- (263) Early Christians were filled with joy, unflagging courage and zeal in proclaiming the Gospel. Some say things aren’t as easy today, but we know “that the Roman empire was not conducive to the Gospel message, the struggle for justice, or the defense of human dignity.” Every age faces challenges of weakness, selfishness and complacency. Saints always confront the day’s difficulties.
- Evangelizers need to draw close to people
 - (268) Evangelizers need to be close to people’s lives. Mission is a passion for Jesus and for his people. Jesus burns with love to embrace all people and wants to use us to draw closer to others. Our deepest identity involves being called from among his people and sent to his people.
 - (269) Jesus is the model of evangelizing closeness. See it with rich young man, blind man, his meals with sinners, the forgiving of the woman in Simon’s house, Nicodemus. Moved by his example, we want to share the lives of all, listen to their concerns, help them materially and spiritually in their needs, rejoice and weep with them and build a new world with them. This is not an obligation as a personal decision bringing joy and giving meaning.
 - (270) Sometimes Christians keep the Lord’s and others’ wounds at arm’s length. Jesus wants us to touch human misery with the power of his tenderness.
 - Pope Francis gave the greatest application of this drawing near in a talk to the Bishops in Brazil toward the end of World Youth Day (July 27).
 - Let us read once again, in this light, the story of Emmaus (cf. Lk 24:13-15). The two disciples have left Jerusalem. They are leaving behind the “nakedness” of God. They are scandalized by the failure of the Messiah in whom they had hoped and who now appeared utterly vanquished, humiliated, even after the third day (vv. 17-21). Here we have to face the difficult mystery of those people who leave the Church, who, under the illusion of alternative ideas, now think that the Church – their Jerusalem – can no longer offer them anything meaningful and important. So they set off on the road alone, with their disappointment. Perhaps the Church appeared too weak, perhaps too distant from their needs, perhaps too poor to respond to their concerns, perhaps too cold, perhaps too caught up with itself, perhaps a prisoner of its own rigid formulas, perhaps the world seems to have made the Church a relic of the past, unfit for new questions; perhaps the Church could speak to people in their infancy but not to those come of age. It is a fact that nowadays there are many people like the two disciples of Emmaus; not only those looking for answers in the new religious groups that are sprouting up, but also those who already seem godless, both in theory and in practice.
 - Faced with this situation, what are we to do? We need a Church unafraid of going forth into their night. We need a Church capable of meeting them on their way. We need a Church capable of entering into their conversation. We need a Church able to dialogue with those disciples who, having left Jerusalem behind, are wandering aimlessly, alone, with their own disappointment, disillusioned by a Christianity now considered barren, fruitless soil, incapable of generating meaning....
 - Since there is no one to accompany them or to show them with his or her own life the true way, many have sought shortcuts, because the standards set by Mother Church seem to be asking too much. There are also those who recognize the ideal of man and of life as proposed by the Church, but they do not have the audacity to embrace it. They think that this ideal is too lofty for them, that it is beyond their abilities, and that the goal the Church sets is unattainable. Nonetheless they cannot live without having at least something, even a poor imitation of what seems too grand and distant. With disappointed hearts, they then go off in search of something that will lead them even further astray, or which brings them to a partial belonging that, ultimately, does not fulfill their lives.

- From this point of view, we need a Church capable of walking at people's side, of doing more than simply listening to them; a Church which accompanies them on their journey; a Church able to make sense of the "night" contained in the flight of so many of our brothers and sisters from Jerusalem; a Church which realizes that the reasons why people leave also contain reasons why they can eventually return. But we need to know how to interpret, with courage, the larger picture. Jesus warmed the hearts of the disciples of Emmaus.
 - **I would like all of us to ask ourselves today: are we still a Church capable of warming hearts? A Church capable of leading people back to Jerusalem?** Of bringing them home? Jerusalem is where our roots are: Scripture, catechesis, sacraments, community, friendship with the Lord, Mary and the apostles... Are we still able to speak of these roots in a way that will revive a sense of wonder at their beauty?
 - Let us recover the calm to be able to walk at the same pace as our pilgrims, keeping alongside them, remaining close to them, enabling them to speak of the disappointments present in their hearts and to let us address them. They want to forget Jerusalem, where they have their roots, but eventually they will experience thirst. We need a Church capable of accompanying them on the road back to Jerusalem! ... We need a Church that kindles hearts and warms them. We need a Church capable of restoring citizenship to her many children who are journeying, as it were, in an exodus
- The new evangelization seeks to bring about communion
 - (May 22, 2013 Audience) This is one of the first important effects of the action of the Holy Spirit who guides and brings to life the proclamation of the Gospel: unity, communion. It was in Babel, according to the Biblical account, that the dispersion of people and the confusion of languages had begun, the results of the act of pride and conceit of man who wanted to build with his efforts alone, without God, "a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens" (Gen 11:4). At Pentecost these divisions were overcome. There was no longer conceit with regard to God, nor the closure of some people to others; instead, there was openness to God, there was going out to proclaim his word: a new language, that of love which the Holy Spirit pours out into our hearts (cf. Rom 5:5); a language that all can understand and that, once received, can be expressed in every life and every culture. The language of the Spirit, the language of the Gospel, is the language of communion that invites us to get the better of closedness and indifference, division and antagonization.
- This communion happens by means of a double-encounter with God and with others
 - In his May 18 meeting with the members of the new movements, Pope Francis stressed how important he deems the concept and reality of encounter for the whole Church. "In this 'stepping out' it is important to be ready for encounter. For me this word is very important. Encounter with others. Why? Because faith is an encounter with Jesus, and we must do what Jesus does: encounter others. We live in a culture of conflict, a culture of fragmentation, a culture in which I throw away what is of no use to me, a culture of waste. Yet on this point, I ask you to think — and it is part of the crisis — of the elderly, who are the wisdom of a people, think of the children... the culture of waste! However, we must go out to meet them, and with our faith we must create a "culture of encounter", a culture of friendship, a culture in which we find brothers and sisters, in which we can also speak with those who think differently, as well as those who hold other beliefs, who do not have the same faith."
 - In Rio on July 27, he stressed that all of us are "called to promote the culture of encounter" and wants us to become "obsessed" about it in a good way. "In many places, generally speaking, due to the economic humanism that has been imposed in the world, the culture of exclusion, of rejection, is spreading. There is no place for the elderly or for the unwanted child; there is no time for that poor person in the street. ... Encountering and welcoming everyone, solidarity – a word that is being hidden by this culture, as if it were a bad word – solidarity and fraternity: these are what make our society truly human. Be servants of communion and of the culture of encounter! I would like you to be almost obsessed about this."
 - There are two dimensions of this encounter, he told seminarians and novices on July 6 in Rio: vertical and horizontal that are intrinsically united: "I would like to tell you: come out of yourselves

to proclaim the Gospel, but to do this you must come out of yourselves to encounter Jesus. There are two ways out: one towards the encounter with Jesus, towards transcendence; the other towards others in order to proclaim Jesus. These two go hand in hand. If you only take one of them, that is no good! I am thinking of Mother Teresa of Calcutta. She was a fantastic sister.... She was not afraid of anything. She went about on the roads.... This woman was not even afraid of kneeling for two hours before the Lord. Do not fear to step out of yourselves in prayer or in pastoral action. Be brave, in order to pray and in order to go and proclaim the Gospel.”

- We have to bring about that encounter especially with those who are marginalized, who are on the outskirts (Assisi October 4 to Clergy, Consecrated and Diocesan PCs)
 - Therefore: to listen, to walk, and the third aspect is missionary: to proclaim even to the outskirts. ... I wish to emphasize it, because it is something I also experienced a great deal when I was in Buenos Aires: the importance of going out to meet the other in the outskirts, which are places, but which are primarily people living in particular situations in life. This was true in my former diocese, that of Buenos Aires. The outskirts that hurt me a great deal was to find children in middle class families who didn't know how to make the Sign of the Cross. But you see, this is an outskirts! And I ask you, here in this diocese, are there children who do not know how to make the Sign of the Cross? Think about it. These are true outskirts of existence where God is absent.
 - In one sense, the outskirts of this diocese, for example, are the areas of the diocese that risk being left on the margins, beyond the street lights. But they are also people and human realities that are marginalized and despised. They are people who perhaps live physically close to the “center” but who spiritually are very far away.
 - Do not be afraid to go out and meet these people and situations. Do not allow yourselves to be impeded by prejudice, by habit, by an intellectual or pastoral rigidity, by the famous “we've always done it this way!”. However, we can only go to the outskirts if we carry the Word of God in our hearts and if we walk with the Church, like St Francis. Otherwise, we take ourselves, not the Word of God, and this isn't good, it doesn't help anyone! We are not the ones who save the world: it is the Lord himself who saves it!
- But we have to confront and overcome the self-centeredness and selfishness that hinders our spreading the faith
 - “At a time when we most need a missionary dynamism that will bring salt and light to the world, many lay people fear that they may be asked to undertake some apostolic work and they seek to avoid any responsibility that may take away from their free time,” whether as volunteer catechists, door-to-door evangelizers, or participants in the Church’s institutional charities.
 - Francis encourages each of us to set out on this missionary transformation with such achievable goals in mind. “Every person is worthy of our giving,” he affirms. “If I can help at least one person to have a better life, that already justifies the offering of my life!”
 - That’s the type of missionary reform he’s trying to bring about in each of us.
- Aparecida Document and the Formation to be Missionary Disciples in Communion
 - The greatest pastoral achievement of Cardinal Bergoglio before his election to the papacy was the Aparecida document from 2007.
 - Cardinal Bergoglio was the chairman of the team of CELAM bishops to put together the 2007 concluding document of the Aparecida Conference, the fifth General Assembly of the Bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean, which is one of the most significant documents ever published by the Church. It’s the master plan for the New Evangelization in Latin America. But it also gives crucial insights for the new evangelization anywhere.
 - In a classic passage it sums up the problem and the response:
 - The church is called to a deep and profound rethinking of its mission and relaunch it with fidelity and boldness in the new circumstances of Latin America and the world. It cannot retreat in response to those who see only confusion, dangers, and threats, or those who seek to cloak the variety and complexity of situations with a mantle of worn-out ideological slogans, or irresponsible attacks. What is required is confirming, renewing, and revitalizing the newness of the Gospel rooted in our history, out of a personal and community

encounter with Jesus Christ that raises up disciples and missionaries. That depends not so much on grand programs and structures, but rather on new men and women who incarnate that tradition and newness, as disciples of Jesus Christ and missionaries of his Kingdom, protagonists of new life for a Latin America that seeks to be rediscovered with the light and power of the Spirit.

- A Catholic faith reduced to mere baggage, to a collection of rules and prohibitions, to fragmented devotional practices, to selective and partial adherence to the truths of faith, to occasional participation in some sacraments, to the repetition of doctrinal principles, to bland or nervous moralizing, that does not convert the life of the baptized would not withstand the trials of time. . . . We must all start again from Christ, recognizing [with Pope Benedict XVI] that “being Christian is . . . the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction.”
- We Christians must start over from Christ, from contemplation of Him who has revealed to us in his mystery, the complete fulfillment of the human vocation and its meaning. We need to become docile disciples, to learn from Him, in following him, the dignity and fullness of life. We likewise need to be consumed by missionary zeal, to bring to the heart of the culture of our time that unifying and full meaning of human life that neither science, nor politics, nor economics, nor the media can provide. In Christ the Word, God’s Wisdom (cf. 1 Cor. 1:30), culture can again find its center and depth, from which reality may be viewed with all its aspects together, discerning them in the light of the Gospel and granting to each its place and proper dimension.
- The point is to configure disciples to Jesus, the Master, the Way, the Life, by the power of his Holy Spirit, to the acceptance of his commandment to live, to practice the Beatitudes, his own style of life, including sharing his fate, and living as members of his body in communion, nourished by God’s word and the Eucharist.

- Conclusion

- We finish with some thoughts with which Pope Francis finished World Youth Day in Brazil last July, which are a fitting summary of everything he’s said tonight:
- (WYD July 28) The experience of this encounter must not remain locked up in your life or in the small group of your parish, your movement, or your community. That would be like withholding oxygen from a flame that was burning strongly. Faith is a flame that grows stronger the more it is shared and passed on, so that everyone may know, love and confess Jesus Christ, the Lord of life and history (cf. Rom 10:9) Careful, though! Jesus did not say: “Go, if you would like to, if you have the time”, but he said: “Go and make disciples of all nations.” Sharing the experience of faith, bearing witness to the faith, proclaiming the Gospel: this is a command that the Lord entrusts to the whole Church, and that includes you; but it is a command that is born not from a desire for domination, from the desire for power, but from the force of love, from the fact that Jesus first came into our midst and did not give us just a part of himself, but he gave us the whole of himself, he gave his life in order to save us and to show us the love and mercy of God. Jesus does not treat us as slaves, but as people who are free, as friends, as brothers and sisters; and he not only sends us, he accompanies us, he is always beside us in our mission of love. Where does Jesus send us? There are no borders, no limits: he sends us to everyone. The Gospel is for everyone, not just for some. It is not only for those who seem closer to us, more receptive, more welcoming. It is for everyone. Do not be afraid to go and to bring Christ into every area of life, to the fringes of society, even to those who seem farthest away, most indifferent. The Lord seeks all, he wants everyone to feel the warmth of his mercy and his love.
- Let’s ask the Lord to fill us with that warmth on the feast of the Apostles Simon and Jude so that we can, like they did, go out with him to bring the fire of his love to all those we meet!