

“Pope Francis, the Gospel, and Catholic Social Teaching”

- Introduction
 - Thank you for coming this morning to this talk on Pope Francis, the Gospel and Catholic Social Teaching. It’s a very broad topic that necessarily we’re going to have to narrow. But before we narrow the scope, I’d like to situate what we will discuss within the larger context of his papacy and within the Church’s social doctrine, so that we know where the parts we’ll tackle fit into the whole.
 - First, How does Pope Francis envision his papacy? I think we can see it clearly in two fonts.
 - One is the speech he gave to his brother Cardinals six days before they elected him. It was within what’s called the “General Congregation,” the closed-door meetings the Cardinals of the world have to discuss the major issues facing the Church, begin to think about the qualities they believe they need in the next pope, and then begin to scan the room to try to spot someone God might be pointing out who has those qualities. On March 7, 2013, Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio spoke very briefly about what he saw was the chief corruption the Church needed to reform and what job criteria were most necessary for the next bishop of Rome. He said that the chief sickness the Church faced was a “theological narcissism,” an ecclesial introversion, a self-referentialism, in which the Church lives “within herself, of herself, for herself.” And therefore what was most needed was a pope who “from the contemplation and adoration of Jesus Christ, helps the Church to go out to the existential peripheries, who helps her to be a fruitful mother who gains life from the sweet and comforting joy of evangelizing.” The Church is always in need of going from maintenance to mission, from caring for those who are already coming to find the lost, to find those who have wandered, those who have been left on the margins. His brother Cardinals evidently agreed with him and thought that he was the most capable among them to lead that reform.
 - The second source where we see how Pope Francis envisions his papacy is in his programmatic apostolic exhortation *The Joy of the Gospel*, published eight months into his papacy, in which he tried to describe the the missionary metamorphosis, the evangelical rebuilding of the Church, that he had been elected to effectuate. “I dream of a . . .missionary impulse,” he wrote, “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.” Everything the Church is and does, every institution in the Church, every member of the Mystical Body, every school, every parish, every hospital, every food pantry, must find its root in contemplation and adoration of Christ and go out as a mother find, heal, and nourish her children.
 - For Pope Francis, who teaches the faith fundamentally by showing it, whose witness is more compelling than his words, this missionary metamorphosis will be evidenced in the way the Church lives out the Church’s social teaching. As we’ll have a chance to examine in greater depth later, he wrote in *The Joy of the Gospel*, “To evangelize is to make the Kingdom of God present in the world” (176). “The kerygma,” he continued, “has a clear social content: at the very heart of the Gospel is life in community and engagement with others. The content of the first proclamation has an immediate moral implication centered on charity” (177). “From the heart of the Gospel we see the profound connection between evangelization and human advancement, which must necessarily find expression and develop in every work of evangelization. Accepting the first proclamation, which invites us to receive God’s love and to love him in return with the very love which is his gift, brings forth in our lives and actions a primary and fundamental response: to desire, seek and protect the good of others.”

- Therefore, not just studying or knowing the Church’s social teaching, but living it to the full, is an indispensable part of the reshaping of the Church and one of the immediate consequences of men and women, boys and girls having been evangelized is that they will seek to en flesh the love of the Lord by crossing the road to help those in need. That’s where Church social teaching fits into his whole papal program.
 - The second thing I want to ponder in overview is where what we’ll cover today in depth fits into the overall picture of the Church’s social teaching. In the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church*, published during the Pontificate of St. John Paul II by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace in 2004, there are seven main domains of the Church’s social teaching, each of which has been getting attention from Pope Francis:
 - There’s the domain of Marriage and Family
 - This has been one of Pope Francis’ major concerns for which he made the first priority of the restructured Synod of Bishops.
 - This is what he has been doing a catechesis on for the past several months. He has made this the goal of the Extraordinary and Ordinary Synod.
 - He wrote in EG that the family is in crisis and that’s why it needs this attention. “The family is experiencing a profound cultural crisis, as are all communities and social bonds. In the case of the family, the weakening of these bonds is particularly serious because the family is the fundamental cell of society, where we learn to live with others despite our differences and to belong to one another; it is also the place where parents pass on the faith to their children. Marriage now tends to be viewed as a form of mere emotional satisfaction that can be constructed in any way or modified at will. But the indispensable contribution of marriage to society transcends the feelings and momentary needs of the couple” (66).
 - There’s human Work (the dignity of work, right to work, rights of workers, solidarity)
 - From before the papacy and during, he has focused on unemployment and the need for work as a crucial aspect of human dignity. In a pre-papal book length interview in 2010, answering a question about those who are unemployed, he said that they “don’t feel like they really exist. No matter how much help they might have from their family or friends, they want to work, they want to earn their daily bread with the sweat from their own brow. The thing is, at the end of the day work anoints a person with dignity. ... Dignity comes solely from work. We eat what we earn, we support our families with what we earn. It doesn’t matter if it’s a little or a lot. If it’s more, all the better. We can own a fortune, but if we don’t work, our dignity plummets. A typical example is that of the immigrant who arrives with nothing, struggles, works hard, and achieves the ‘American Dream.’ But they have to be careful, because their children or grandchildren might become spoiled if they are not instilled with a good work ethic. ... Work opens a door to realism and in itself constitutes a clear mandate from God: ‘Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it.’ That is to say, be masters of the earth: work. What happens is that the unemployed, in their hours of solitude, feel miserable because they are not ‘earning their living.’ That’s why it’s very important that governments of all countries ... cultivate a culture of work, not of charity. ... They have to cultivate sources of work because, and I never tire of repeating this, work confers dignity.”
 - The first time he celebrated the feast of St. Joseph the Worker, he reiterated these themes, “Expounding on the theme of the dignity of work, Francis said: “We do not get dignity from power or money or culture. We get dignity from work.” He noted: “Work is fundamental to the dignity of the person. Work, to use an image, ‘anoints’ with dignity, fills us with dignity, makes us similar to God who has worked and still works, who always acts.”
 - There’s the political community (authority, democratic system, civil society, interaction with religious communities)

- In this sphere, he has had various diplomatic conversations with heads of state both in the Vatican and in foreign trips, but most of his interventions have been focused on thundering against corruption and making sure those in political office use them for the common good rather than for their own aggrandizement.
- On January 16 in the Philippines, he focused on the necessity of integrity in leaders as one of society's most important resources to move society forward. The "example of solidarity in the work of rebuilding teaches us an important lesson. Like a family, every society draws on its deepest resources in order to face new challenges. Today the Philippines ... faces the challenge of building on solid foundations a modern society ... and to confront new and complex political and ethical questions. As many voices in your nation have pointed out, it is now, more than ever, necessary that political leaders be outstanding for honesty, integrity and commitment to the common good. ... Thus will they be able to marshal the moral resources needed to face the demands of the present, and to pass on to coming generations a society of authentic justice, solidarity and peace."
- There's the International Community (fundamental rules, organization, cooperation for development).
 - When he visited the European Union on November 25, 2014, he pondered the role of government in fostering transcendent dignity, on the importance of the rule of law against tyranny, on the right of religious freedom, on how to keep democracy alive against what he called "political nominalism" and "many globalizing tendencies to dilute reality: namely, angelic forms of purity, dictatorships of relativism, brands of ahistorical fundamentalism, ethical systems lacking kindness, and intellectual discourse bereft of wisdom."
- Peace (fruit of justice and love, war)
 - He has gotten involved as a peacemaker with Cuba and the United States, with Israel and Palestine.
 - He has given a peace message to the diplomatic corps each year.
 - In 2014 he spoke about the importance of genuine fraternity and a culture of solidarity in a globalized world that often makes us neighbors but not brothers. He stressed that "fraternity is the foundation and pathway of peace" and interpreted the social magisterium within this lens."
 - In 2015, he built on the message by focusing on the negation of fraternity in the many forms of modern slavery that work against peace. He mentioned migrants "who, in their dramatic odyssey, experience hunger, are deprived of freedom, robbed of their possessions, or undergo physical and sexual abuse," others who because of poverty become part of a system of "slave labor" even when young, "of persons forced into prostitution, many of whom are minors, as well as male and female sex slaves," "of all those persons, minors and adults alike, who are made objects of trafficking for the sale of organs, for recruitment as soldiers, for begging, for illegal activities such as the production and sale of narcotics, or for disguised forms of cross-border adoption," and "of all those kidnapped and held captive by terrorist groups, subjected to their purposes as combatants, or, above all in the case of young girls and women, to be used as sex slaves."
- Environment
 - He's been speaking about environmental concerns from his inaugural homily as Pope in which he focused on how we're all called to be protectors like St. Joseph and specified that we have to protect the gift of Creation God has given us: "It means protecting all creation, the beauty of the created world, as the Book of Genesis tells us and as Saint Francis of Assisi showed us. It means respecting each of God's creatures and respecting the environment in which we live. ... In the end, everything

has been entrusted to our protection, and all of us are responsible for it. Be protectors of God's gifts! ... I would like to ask all those who have positions of responsibility in economic, political and social life, and all men and women of goodwill: let us be 'protectors' of creation, protectors of God's plan inscribed in nature, protectors of one another and of the environment."

- Tomorrow he will release his encyclical letter *Laudato Si* on the care of our common home. This theme is not a new one, but Pope Francis is making an appeal to every single person to care for the gift of Creation and not to look at it as merely a resource to be exploited. He's said in an interview that the environment is not something we receive from our ancestors but a loan we have received from future generations and that we need to keep whole for them with gratitude. In the encyclical, he has a very rich section on the Gospel of Creation and another on an ecological spirituality based on a reverence for the gift of creation God has given us all to subdue, steward, and increase and multiply. He unites environmental ecology with human and social ecology and connects the link we see in the Book of Genesis between God, each other, and the gift of creation.
 - Economic Life (morality and the economy, private initiative and business initiative)
 - This is where we're going to spend our time today, because it is the part of his burgeoning papal corpus that is most controversial here in the United States and would probably most repay our study.
- The main point I'd like to stress before we move on, however, is that Pope Francis is focused on all of these various domains of Catholic Social Teaching as part of his missionary reform of the Church. If someone is truly evangelized to the extent that one is moved to share the Gospel joyfully with others, it will impact the way he or she approaches one's own marriage and family and marriage and family in general, one's approach to one's own work and that of others, one's involvement in politics and concern for others good at a local, state, national and international level, one's becoming not just a peace-wisher but a peace-prayer and a peace-maker, the way one cares for the gift of Creation God has given as a precious inheritance to pass on with love to others, and how one makes economic choices and sets up economic systems since these choices express our deep values. Pope Francis has been trying to lead a missionary reform that embraces and transforms everything, including all of these pillars of Catholic Social Teaching.
- Pope Francis and Catholic Social Teaching with Regard to the Economic Reality
 - Now I'd like to turn to the main body of the talk, which is on Pope Francis, the Gospel and Economics within the missionary transformation of the Church.
 - The most controversial part of *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation describing the Missionary Transformation of the Church was its section on economics. It's what captured all of the headlines when the exhortation appeared. "Pope Francis Denounces Market Based Capitalism," was one representative above-the-fold summary. Many of the articles, rather than focusing on all that the Holy Father had said about evangelization, gave most or all of their copy to what he said about free markets and economics. They regularly repeated some eye-raising statements, especially for many of us here in the States:
 - "Some people continue to defend trickle-down theories which assume that economic growth, encouraged by a free market, will inevitably succeed in bringing about greater justice and inclusiveness in the world. This opinion, which has never been confirmed by the facts, expresses a crude and naïve trust in the goodness of those wielding economic power and in the sacralized workings of the prevailing economic system." (54)
 - "The socioeconomic system is unjust at its root" (60)
 - "The economy of exclusion and inequality ... kills"
 - There is a need to "reject the absolute autonomy of markets and financial speculation" (202)
 - "Inequality is the root of social ills" (202)
 - "We can no longer trust in the unseen forces and the invisible hand of the market"(204)

- Even though elsewhere in the document Pope Francis praised “business” as a “noble vocation” (203), many businessmen on these shores took what Pope Francis was saying as a direct attack. Cardinal Dolan of New York said that some major donors to the capital campaign to renovate St. Patrick’s Cathedral expressed serious concerns and some hesitancy to follow through on all of their efforts for the Church. Some wondered how Pope Francis’ words meshed with his dependence on international business leaders and business consultants to revamp and lead the Vatican bank, to reorganize Vatican Communications, to examine the flow chart of Vatican dicasteries.
- Some theologians wondered how some of the statements were consistent with St. John Paul II’s *Centesimus Annus* that the free market appears to be the “most efficient instrument for utilizing resources and effectively responding to [solvent] needs” at the level of individual nations and international relations (34) and that the “business” or “market” or “free economy” understood as “an economic system which recognizes the fundamental and positive role of business, the market, private property and the resulting responsibility for the means of production, as well as free human creativity in the economic sector” is “certainly” “the model that ought to be proposed to the countries of the Third World that are searching for the path to true economic and civil progress” (42).
- What Pope Francis was not trying to do, he said in the exhortation, was to propose an economic model because that is not the Church’s “ambition” “mission” or competence (184). He says that his exhortation “is not a social document” (184). But he adds that pastors “have the right to offer opinions” and “proposals” and to “draw practical conclusions” “lest the great social principles remain mere generalities that challenge no one” (182, 184)
- Scholars can justly question whether his critique applies more to the Gilded Age than the present age, when, especially in the United States, there are very few, except anarcho-capitalists, who think that supply side economics alone will “inevitably” succeed in bringing about greater justice and inclusiveness, whether there are those who support the unregulated “absolute autonomy of markets and financial speculation,” whether there is a “crude and naïve trust” in the “unseen forces and invisible hand of the market” or in CEOs and major economic actors, and whether businessmen treat as sacred the inner workings of the economic system. There have been several scholarly articles that have made cases that Pope Francis really has in his cross-hairs the crony capitalism that has destroyed the economy in Argentina since Peronism began in 1946, rather than the economic system that has led millions in China, India, Japan, Singapore and other East Asian countries out of poverty. They doubt very much that it applies *en masse* to the real economic set-up in the United States.
- But these considerations, as important as they are, are missing the main point that I think Pope Francis was trying to get to in the exhortation and in many of his other statements during his papacy up until now. Even if he had in mind the corrupt economic system in Argentina that has led to massive unemployment and the creation of a situation in which so many people have been left behind and abandoned in poverty as a few have gotten much richer — corrupt politicians very prominent among them — the main lines of his moral critique apply to all situations and whether economic set-ups “rule instead of serve.”
- So what I’d like to do is to focus on seven aspects of his particular take on the Church’s social teaching with regard to the economy necessary to contextualize all of his comments.
- “A poor Church for the poor”
 - Three days after the white smoke emanated from the roof of the Sistine Chapel, Pope Francis met with journalists present in Rome. I was fortunate to be there. He explained a little bit of what happened in the election and why he ended up choosing as his papal moniker the nickname of the *poverello* of Assisi. He said, “Some people wanted to know why the Bishop of Rome wished to be called Francis. Some thought of Francis Xavier, Francis De Sales, and also Francis of Assisi. I will tell you the story. During the election, I was seated next to the Archbishop Emeritus of São Paolo and Prefect Emeritus of the Congregation for the Clergy, Cardinal Claudio Hummes: a good friend, a good friend! When things were looking dangerous, he encouraged me. And when the votes reached two thirds, there was the usual applause, because the Pope had been elected. And he gave me a hug and a kiss, and said: “Don't forget the poor!” And those words came to me: the poor, the poor. [He began to tap his forehead with his index finger at this time, suggesting he was trying to

drill it into a reluctant and perhaps somewhat fearful head.] Then, right away, thinking of the poor, I thought of Francis of Assisi. ... That is how the name came into my heart: Francis of Assisi. For me, he is the man of poverty ... How I would like a Church which is poor and for the poor!"

- This was not a new thought for Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio, as Cardinal Hummes was reminding him. This was something that was essential to his whole life as a priest and as a bishop. To grasp him and his perspective we have to understand what he did in Argentina in the sprawling slums all around Buenos Aires called the *villas miserias* (villas of misery).
 - There are 20 of these slums in which most of the people are forgotten, where drug users and local mafia dons and gangs rule and police normally stay out. Each of them has the population of small cities. Most of the villas are called simply by numbers rather than names because they really have no identity.
 - When Jorge Bergoglio became Archbishop, there were only six heroic priests who were living in these bad neighborhoods, despite the obvious need. Many priests didn't want to go. Cardinal Bergoglio began to lead by example, taking the bus there himself, walking the streets, entering homes, celebrating Masses for prostitutes, visiting AIDS patients, keeping contact with the families of the *desparecidos*, confirming all the children one-by-one, entering homes, taking photos, drinking *mate* with them, talking to people about the books they were reading, showing them that even though many in the society and particularly in the government had forgotten about them, he and the Church had not. Even though most were treating them like an "existential garbage heap," the Church was treating them as a treasure, like St. Lawrence treated the poor in Rome. He recognized that drugs and violence were both symptoms of the same disease of marginalization from life with God, from others, from society as a whole and he wanted to replace that culture of exclusion with one of encounter. As one priest who was sent there said to journalist John Allen, "Basically, what society is telling these people is, 'We don't want you to exist.' The work we're doing here is to try to tell them instead, 'It's good that you exist.'"
 - The priests who work there say that it was in the *villas miserias* that the future Pope Francis began to crystalize his thinking about how the Church needs to be poor and for the poor, about to how to cure their worst poverty — spiritual — but also to help them fight drugs and violence, receive an education and provide job training and means of self-sufficiency, help the elderly, and give the people a voice. The people of these slums call him now "the Pope of the Villa," treating him as one of them. He sees himself as their voice and their protector.
 - We can also see how as a priest, bishop and now as Pope he has always lived in a spirit of poverty not just to identify with the poor but to accompany them. He didn't live in the Archbishop's residence in Buenos Aires near the Presidential Palace but lived in a simple apartment next to the Cathedral, cooking his own noodles, eschewing a car and a driver in order to take public transportation, not buying cardinal vestments but having the cassocks of his rotund predecessor tailored to fit him. His choices as Pope about where to live and the car in which to be transported continue not just the "symbolism" of poverty but the actual life of simplicity toward which he is trying to summon the whole Church to emulate.
 - He has called us Christians to become examples of the first beatitude for all the people, so show what poverty of spirit is and how it leads to the kingdom.
- In *Evangelii Gaudium*, he sketched out in depth where the section on poverty and the economy fits into *Evangelii Gaudium* and the missionary transformation of the Church.
 - Pope Francis writes that care for the poor is a fruit of the evangelization of individuals and societies. To form someone in the life of the Gospel, to unite someone to Jesus Christ as a member of his body, to allow people to live within the communion of Persons who is our triune God, must have consequences in the way we relate to others, especially the poor.
 - He says with regard to the poor, "Each individual Christian and every community is called to be an instrument of God for the liberation and promotion of the poor, and for enabling them to be fully a part of society. This demands that we be docile and attentive to the cry of the poor and to come to their aid." He mentions how God was always concerned with the

poor in the Mosaic law and how God never ceases to hear the cry of the poor. He cites St. James, “The old question always returns: ‘How does God’s love abide in anyone who has the world’s goods, and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?’ (1 Jn 3:17) (187). He adds that this is “not a question of a mission reserved only to a few.” Jesus’ command to his disciples: “You yourselves give them something to eat!” (Mk 6:37) “means working to eliminate the structural causes of poverty and to promote the integral development of the poor, as well as small daily acts of solidarity in meeting the real needs which we encounter. The word ‘solidarity’ is a little worn and at times poorly understood, but it refers to something more than a few sporadic acts of generosity. It presumes the *creation of a new mindset* which thinks in terms of community and the priority of the life of all.”

- Christians, with the help of their pastors, are called to hear the cry of the poor and should be scandalized that people starve when there’s plenty of food that is wasted. (192).
- (193) We hear the cry of the poor when we are moved by their suffering, he added. We need to show mercy to receive it. Fathers of the Church gave counter-cultural resistance to self-centered hedonism of paganism.”
- (194) “This message is so clear and direct, so simple and eloquent, that no ecclesial interpretation has the right to relativize it.” We need to accept exhortations with courage and zeal, without complicating “something so simple” or clouding “something so clear.” We should be concerned with remaining faithful to this call and not just with maintaining doctrinal fidelity.
- He said that the poor have a special place in God’s people. “God’s heart has a special place for the poor, so much so that he himself “became poor” (2 Cor 8:9). The entire history of our redemption is marked by the presence of the poor. Salvation came to us from the ‘yes’ uttered by a lowly maiden from a small town on the fringes of a great empire. The Savior was born in a manger, in the midst of animals, like children of poor families; he was presented at the Temple along with two turtledoves, the offering made by those who could not afford a lamb (cf. Lk 2:24; Lev 5:7); he was raised in a home of ordinary workers and worked with his own hands to earn his bread. When he began to preach the Kingdom, crowds of the dispossessed followed him, illustrating his words: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor” (Lk 4:18). He assured those burdened by sorrow and crushed by poverty that God has a special place for them in his heart: “Blessed are you poor, yours is the kingdom of God” (Lk 6:20); he made himself one of them: “I was hungry and you gave me food to eat”, and he taught them that mercy towards all of these is the key to heaven (cf. Mt 25:5ff).
- (198) “For the Church, the option for the poor is primarily a theological category [one in which God speaks to us and we see God] rather than a cultural, sociological, political or philosophical one. God shows the poor “his first mercy.” This divine preference has consequences for the faith life of all Christians, since we are called to have “this mind... that was in Jesus Christ” (Phil 2:5). Inspired by this, the Church has made an option for the poor that is understood as a “special form of primacy in the exercise of Christian charity, to which the whole tradition of the Church bears witness”. This option – as Benedict XVI has taught – “is implicit in our Christian faith in a God who became poor for us, so as to enrich us with his poverty”. **This is why I want a Church which is poor and for the poor.** They have much to teach us. Not only do they share in the *sensus fidei*, but in their difficulties they know the suffering Christ. We need to let ourselves be evangelized by them. The new evangelization is an invitation to acknowledge the saving power at work in their lives and to put them at the center of the Church’s pilgrim way. We are called to find Christ in them, to lend our voice to their causes, but also to be their friends, to listen to them, to speak for them and to embrace the mysterious wisdom that God wishes to share with us through them.” *We receive more than we give.*
- In the Aparecida document (2007) of which he was the principle author, he wrote, “We commit ourselves to work so that our Latin American and Caribbean Church will continue

to be, with even greater determination, a traveling companion of our poorest brothers and sisters, even as far as martyrdom.”

- (200). “The worst discrimination which the poor suffer is the lack of spiritual care. The great majority of the poor have a special openness to the faith; they need God and we must not fail to offer them his friendship, his blessing, his word, the celebration of the sacraments and a journey of growth and maturity in the faith. Our preferential option for the poor must mainly translate into a privileged and preferential religious care.”
- So, in sum, the proclamation of Jesus and the Good News he enfleshes to the poor is an essential, not an optional part of the Church’s mission, equally as important, as Pope Benedict wrote in *Deus Caritas Est*, as the teaching of the faith and the celebration of the Sacraments. Scripture will not be fulfilled in our hearing unless Jesus is made present in these ways in his Mystical Body, bringing glad tidings to the poor, proclaiming liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, letting the oppressed go free, and announcing a year acceptable to the Lord.
- What’s stopping the Church from becoming a poor church for the poor and sensitizing the whole world to join us in this service? That leads us to the next point.
- The Globalization of Indifference
 - Pope Francis has spoken out a lot about what he terms the “globalization of indifference.”
 - He spoke about it very powerfully On July 7, 2013 when he went to Lampedusa, where 20,000 people have perished over the last 25 years trying to flee persecution and poverty in northern Africa
 - (Lampedusa, July 8, 2013) God’s two questions echo even today — Adam, where are you? And Where is Your Brother? — as forcefully as ever! How many of us, myself included, have lost our bearings; we are no longer attentive to the world in which we live; we don’t care; we don’t protect what God created for everyone, and we end up unable even to care for one another! And when humanity as a whole loses its bearings, it results in tragedies like the one we have witnessed.
 - “Where is your brother?” His blood cries out to me, says the Lord. This is not a question directed to others; it is a question directed to me, to you, to each of us. These brothers and sisters of ours were trying to escape difficult situations to find some serenity and peace; they were looking for a better place for themselves and their families, but instead they found death. How often do such people fail to find understanding, fail to find acceptance, fail to find solidarity. And their cry rises up to God! Once again I thank you, the people of Lampedusa, for your solidarity. I recently listened to one of these brothers of ours. Before arriving here, he and the others were at the mercy of traffickers, people who exploit the poverty of others, people who live off the misery of others. How much these people have suffered! Some of them never made it here.
 - “Where is your brother?” Who is responsible for this blood? In Spanish literature we have a comedy of Lope de Vega that tells how the people of the town of Fuente Ovejuna kill their governor because he is a tyrant. They do it in such a way that no one knows who the actual killer is. So when the royal judge asks: “Who killed the governor?”, they all reply: “Fuente Ovejuna, sir”. Everybody and nobody! Today too, the question has to be asked: Who is responsible for the blood of these brothers and sisters of ours? Nobody! That is our answer: It isn’t me; I don’t have anything to do with it; it must be someone else, but certainly not me. Yet God is asking each of us: “Where is the blood of your brother which cries out to me?” Today no one in our world feels responsible; we have lost a sense of responsibility for our brothers and sisters. We have fallen into the hypocrisy of the priest and the levite whom Jesus described in the parable of the Good Samaritan: we see our brother half dead on the side of the road, and perhaps we say to ourselves: “poor soul...!”, and then go on our way. It’s not our responsibility, and with that we feel reassured, assuaged. The culture of comfort, which makes us think only of ourselves, makes us insensitive to the cries of other people, makes us live in soap bubbles which, however lovely, are insubstantial; they offer a fleeting and empty illusion which results in indifference to others; indeed, it even leads to the globalization of indifference. In this globalized world, we have fallen into globalized

indifference. We have become used to the suffering of others: it doesn't affect me; it doesn't concern me; it's none of my business

- "Adam, where are you?" "Where is your brother?" These are the two questions which God asks at the dawn of human history, and which he also asks each man and woman in our own day, which he also asks us. But I would like us to ask a third question: "Has any one of us wept because of this situation and others like it?" Has any one of us grieved for the death of these brothers and sisters? Has any one of us wept for these persons who were on the boat? For the young mothers carrying their babies? For these men who were looking for a means of supporting their families? We are a society that has forgotten how to weep, how to experience compassion – "suffering with" others: the globalization of indifference has taken from us the ability to weep! ... Let us ask the Lord for the grace to weep over our indifference, to weep over the cruelty of our world, of our own hearts, and of all those who in anonymity make social and economic decisions which open the door to tragic situations like this. "Has any one wept?" Today has anyone wept in our world?
- The Kingdom of God is a culture of Good Samaritans that Take Responsibility for Others
 - The response to the Globalization of Indifference has to be the Gospel of Christ-like Love. It's the living out of the kingdom, for the kingdom, with the King.
 - (Syria Vigil, Sept 7) God's world is a world where everyone feels responsible for the other, for the good of the other. This evening, in reflection, fasting and prayer, each of us deep down should ask ourselves: Is this really the world that I desire? Is this really the world that we all carry in our hearts? But then we wonder: Is this the world in which we are living? ... When man thinks only of himself, of his own interests and places himself in the center, when he permits himself to be captivated by the idols of dominion and power, when he puts himself in God's place, then all relationships are broken and everything is ruined; then the door opens to violence, indifference, and conflict. This is precisely what the passage in the Book of Genesis seeks to teach us in the story of the Fall. It is exactly in this chaos that God asks man's conscience: "Where is Abel your brother?" and Cain responds: "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?" (Gen 4:9). We too are asked this question, it would be good for us to ask ourselves as well: Am I really my brother's keeper? Yes, you are your brother's keeper! To be human means to care for one another! But when harmony is broken, a metamorphosis occurs: the brother who is to be cared for and loved becomes an adversary to fight, to kill.
 - We must make our neighbor's welfare part of our business
 - (July 24, Visit to St. Francis of Assisi Hospital in Rio) In the Gospel, we read the parable of the Good Samaritan, that speaks of a man assaulted by robbers and left half dead at the side of the road. People pass by him and look at him. But they do not stop, they just continue on their journey, indifferent to him: it is none of their business! How often we say: it's not my problem! How often we turn the other way and pretend not to see! Only a Samaritan, a stranger, sees him, stops, lifts him up, takes him by the hand, and cares for him (cf. Lk 10:29-35)
 - As I mentioned in the overview, in *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis speaks about how living in the Kingdom means extending his charity, seeking genuine human advancement:
 - "To evangelize is to make the Kingdom of God present in the world" (176).
 - "The kerygma has a clear social content: at the very heart of the Gospel is life in community and engagement with others. The content of the first proclamation has an immediate moral implication centered on charity" (177).
 - "Reading the Scriptures also makes it clear that the Gospel is not merely about our personal relationship with God. Nor should our loving response to God be seen simply as an accumulation of small personal gestures to individuals in need, a kind of "charity à la carte", or a series of acts aimed solely at easing our conscience. **The Gospel is about the kingdom of God (cf. Lk 4:43); it is about loving God who reigns in our world.** To the extent that he reigns within us, the life of society will be a setting for universal fraternity, justice, peace and dignity. Both Christian preaching and life, then, are meant to have an impact on society" (181).

- “Our redemption has a social dimension because God, in Christ, redeems not only the individual person, but also the social relations existing between men. ... The very mystery of the Trinity reminds us that we have been created in the image of that divine communion. ... From the heart of the Gospel we see the profound connection between evangelization and human advancement, which must necessarily find expression and develop in every work of evangelization. Accepting the first proclamation, which invites us to receive God’s love and to love him in return with the very love which is his gift, brings forth in our lives and actions a primary and fundamental response: to desire, seek and protect the good of others.”
- Pope Francis says that the “inseparable bond between our acceptance of the message of salvation and genuine fraternal love appears in several scriptural texts ... that we often take for granted, and can repeat almost mechanically, without necessarily ensuring that [they have] a real effect on our lives and in our communities. ... God’s word teaches that our brothers and sisters are the prolongation of the incarnation for each of us: ‘As you did it to one of these, the least of my brethren, you did it to me (Mt 25:40). The way we treat others has a transcendent dimension: ‘the measure you give will be the measure you get’ (Mt 7:2). It corresponds to the mercy that God has shown us: ‘Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.’ ... For this reason, ‘the service of charity is also a constituent element of the Church’s mission and an indispensable expression of her very being’. By her very nature the Church is missionary; she abounds in effective charity and a compassion which understands, assists and promotes.”
- Spiritual Worldliness rather than a spirituality of the Kingdom
 - To have the spirituality of the kingdom, we must overcome a spiritual worldliness.
 - Pope Francis has been speaking about spiritual worldliness since before his papacy. It’s one of the main categories of a typical Ignatian retreat on the spiritual exercises. When he gave his pre-conclave intervention to his brother Cardinals, he cited the great Jesuit theologian Henri De Lubac who talked about the cancer of a worldly spirit instead of the Spirit of God. “When the Church is self-referent without realizing it,” Cardinal Bergoglio state, “she believes she has her own light. She ceases to be the *mysterium lunae* [the mystery of the moon reflecting the light of the sun (God)] and gives way to that very great evil which is spiritual worldliness (which according to [the great 20th century theologian Cardinal Henri] De Lubac, is the worst evil that can come upon the Church). The self-referent Church lives to give glory only to one another.” The fundamental corruption is spiritual worldliness, “living within herself, of herself and for herself.”
 - He mentioned these thoughts at a Pentecost Vigil— “However there is one problem that can afflict Christians: the spirit of the world, the worldly spirit, spiritual worldliness. This leads to self-sufficiency, to living by the spirit of the world rather than by the spirit of Jesus.”
 - Spiritual worldliness is when we place our faith, hope and love in mammon, in the things of this world, in our own and others’ efforts, rather than in God. When this happens within the Church, he told the Bishops of CELAM in Rio: “She becomes increasingly self-referential and loses her need to be missionary. From an “institution” she becomes a “enterprise”. She stops being a bride and ends up being an administrator; from being a servant, she becomes an “inspector”.
 - He pondered this in depth in *Evangelii Gaudium*.
 - (93) “Spiritual worldliness, which hides behind the appearance of piety and even love for the Church, consists in seeking not the Lord’s glory but human glory and personal well-being. ... It is a subtle way of seeking one’s “own interests, not those of Jesus Christ” (*Phil 2:21*). It takes on many forms. ... Since it is based on carefully cultivated appearances, it is not always linked to outward sin; from without, everything appears as it should be. But if it were to seep into the Church, ‘it would be infinitely more disastrous than any other worldliness which is simply moral.’
 - (94) “This worldliness can be fuelled in two deeply interrelated ways. One is the attraction of gnosticism, a purely subjective faith whose only interest is a certain experience or a set of ideas and bits of information which are meant to console and enlighten, but which ultimately keep one imprisoned in his or her own thoughts and feelings. The other is the self-

absorbed promethean neopelagianism of those who ultimately trust only in their own powers and feel superior to others because they observe certain rules or remain intransigently faithful to a particular Catholic style from the past. A supposed soundness of doctrine or discipline leads instead to a narcissistic and authoritarian elitism, whereby instead of evangelizing, one analyzes and classifies others, and instead of opening the door to grace, one exhausts his or her energies in inspecting and verifying. In neither case is one really concerned about Jesus Christ or others. These are manifestations of an anthropocentric immanentism. It is impossible to think that a genuine evangelizing thrust could emerge from these adulterated forms of Christianity.

- (95) “This insidious worldliness is evident in a number of attitudes that appear opposed, yet all have the same pretense of “taking over the space of the Church”. In some people we see an ostentatious preoccupation for the liturgy, for doctrine and for the Church’s prestige, but without any concern that the Gospel have a real impact on God’s faithful people and the concrete needs of the present time. In this way, the life of the Church turns into a museum piece or something which is the property of a select few. **In others, this spiritual worldliness lurks behind a fascination with social and political gain, or pride in their ability to manage practical affairs, or an obsession with programs of self-help and self-realization.** It can also translate into a concern to be seen, into a social life full of appearances, meetings, dinners and receptions. It can also lead to a business mentality, caught up with management, statistics, plans and evaluations whose principal beneficiary is not God’s people but the Church as an institution. The mark of Christ, incarnate, crucified and risen, is not present; closed and elite groups are formed, and no effort is made to go forth and seek out those who are distant or the immense multitudes who thirst for Christ. Evangelical fervor is replaced by the empty pleasure of complacency and self-indulgence.
- (96) “This way of thinking also **feeds the vainglory** of those who are content to have a modicum of power and would rather be the general of a defeated army than a mere private in a unit which continues to fight. How often we dream up vast apostolic projects, meticulously planned, just like defeated generals! But this is to deny our history as a Church, which is glorious precisely because it is a history of sacrifice, of hopes and daily struggles, of lives spent in service and fidelity to work, tiring as it may be, for all work is “the sweat of our brow”. Instead, we waste time talking about “what needs to be done” – in Spanish we call this the sin of “*habriaqueísmo*” – like spiritual masters and pastoral experts who give instructions from on high. We indulge in endless fantasies and we lose contact with the real lives and difficulties of our people.”
- (97) “Those who have fallen into this worldliness look on from above and afar, they reject the prophecy of their brothers and sisters, they discredit those who raise questions, they constantly point out the mistakes of others and they are obsessed by appearances. Their hearts are open only to the limited horizon of their own immanence and interests, and as a consequence they neither learn from their sins nor are they genuinely open to forgiveness. **This is a tremendous corruption disguised as a good.** We need to avoid it by making the Church constantly go out from herself, keeping her mission focused on Jesus Christ, and her commitment to the poor. God save us from a worldly Church with superficial spiritual and pastoral trappings! This stifling worldliness can only be healed by breathing in the pure air of the Holy Spirit who frees us from self-centeredness cloaked in an outward religiosity bereft of God. Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of the Gospel!
- One application of this spiritual worldliness is what he calls the Ferocious Idolatry of Money
 - (55) “One cause of this situation is found in our relationship with money, since we calmly accept its dominion over ourselves and our societies. The current financial crisis can make us overlook the fact that it originated in a profound human crisis: the denial of the primacy of the human person! We have created new idols. The worship of the ancient golden calf (cf. *Ex* 32:1-35) has returned in a new and ruthless guise in the idolatry of money and the dictatorship of an impersonal economy lacking a truly human purpose. The worldwide crisis affecting finance and the economy lays bare

their imbalances and, above all, their lack of real concern for human beings; man is reduced to one of his needs alone: consumption.”

- In a July 27, 2013 television interview with the Brazilian network *O Globo* he said: “The world in which we’re living has fallen into a ferocious idolatry of money. There is a world wide policy dominated by the pursuit of money. What’s in control now is money. These means that there is a world wide economy policy without any ethical control whatever, a self-sufficient economic system that is arranging social groups in accordance with this idolatry. What is happening as a result? When this world of the ferocious idolatry of money reigns, everything focuses for the most part in the center. Those on the extremes of society [the young who don’t work yet, seniors who are too old to work, and the handicapped who can’t work] are badly taken care of, neglected and discarded.”
- He reiterated the point in Cagliari, Sardinia, stressing that it endangers man’s future: “An economic system ... leads to this tragedy; an economic system centered on an idol called “money”. God did not want an idol to be at the center of the world but man, men and women who would keep the world going with their work. Yet now, in this system devoid of ethics, at the center there is an idol and the world has become an idolater of this “god-money”. Money is in control! Money lays down the law! It orders all these things that are useful to it, this idol. And what happens? To defend this idol all crowd to the center and those on the margins are done down, the elderly fall away, because there is no room for them in this world! Some call this habit “hidden euthanasia”, not caring for them, not taking them into account... “No, let’s not bother about them...”. And the young who do not find a job collapse, and their dignity with them. Do you realize that in a world where youth — two generations of young people — have no work that this world has no future.”
- This idolatry of money leads to a “new tyranny ... invisible and often virtual, which unilaterally and relentlessly imposes its own laws and rules.” He cites crippling international debt, widespread corruption, tax evasion, thirst for power, and destruction of the environment, which he says “is defenseless before the interests of a deified market, which become the only rule” (56).
- This ferocious idolatry of money leads to a financial system that rules rather than serves because it has lost a sense of God and what his expectations are for all of us.
- (57) “Behind this attitude lurks a rejection of ethics and a rejection of God. Ethics has come to be viewed with a certain scornful derision. It is seen as counterproductive, too human, because it makes money and power relative. It is felt to be a threat, since it condemns the manipulation and debasement of the person. In effect, ethics leads to a God who calls for a committed response that is outside of the categories of the marketplace. When these latter are absolutized, God can only be seen as uncontrollable, unmanageable, even dangerous, since he calls human beings to their full realization and to freedom from all forms of enslavement. Ethics – a non-ideological ethics – would make it possible to bring about balance and a more humane social order.”
- (58) “A financial reform open to such ethical considerations would require a vigorous change of approach on the part of political leaders. I urge them to face this challenge with determination and an eye to the future, while not ignoring, of course, the specifics of each case. Money must serve, not rule! The Pope loves everyone, rich and poor alike, but he is obliged in the name of Christ to remind all that the rich must help, respect and promote the poor. I exhort you to generous solidarity and a return of economics and finance to an ethical approach that favors human beings.”
- This Ferocious Idolatry of Money is connected to a consumerism that helps drive a throw away culture
 - He says in the second paragraph of the exhortation: “The great danger in today’s world, pervaded as it is by consumerism, is the desolation and anguish born of a complacent yet covetous heart, the feverish pursuit of frivolous pleasures, and a blunted conscience. Whenever our interior life becomes caught up in its own interests and concerns, there is no longer room for others, no place for the poor. God’s voice is no longer heard, the quiet joy of his love is no longer felt, and the desire to do good fades. This is a very real danger for believers too. Many fall prey to it, and end up resentful, angry and listless.”
 - 2007 Aparecida document:
 - 50. The greed of the market unleashes the desires of children, youth, and adults. Advertising creates the illusion of distant make-believe worlds where every desire can be satisfied by products that are of an effective, ephemeral, and even messianic nature. The notion that

desires should turn into happiness is condoned. Since only the here-and-now is needed, happiness is sought through economic well-being and hedonistic satisfaction.

- 51. The younger generations are those most affected by this consumer culture in their deep personal aspirations. They grow up under the thrust of a pragmatic and narcissistic individualism, which arouses in them special imaginary worlds of freedom and equality. They affirm the present because the past ceased being relevant in the face of so much social, political, and economic exclusion.
- 357. Hedonistic and individualistic consumerism, which jeopardizes human life for the sake of immediate unbridled pleasure, obscures the meaning of life and degrades it. The vitality offered by Christ invites us to expand our horizons and recognize that by embracing the daily cross, we enter into the deeper dimensions of existence. The Lord, who invites us to appreciate things and to make progress, also warns us of the danger of the obsession to accumulate: “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth” (Mt 6:26). “What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? Or what can one give in exchange for his life?” (Mt 16:26). Jesus Christ offers us a great deal, in fact much more than we expect. He gives the Samaritan woman more than the water from the well, he offers the hungry multitude more than relief from hunger. He surrenders Himself as life in abundance. The new life in Christ is participation in the triune God’s life of love
- All of this leads to what he describes as an economy of exclusion rather than one of encounter.
 - (53) “Just as the commandment ‘Thou shalt not kill’ sets a clear limit in order to safeguard the value of human life, today we also have to say ‘thou shalt not’ to an economy of exclusion and inequality. Such an economy kills. How can it be that it is not a news item when an elderly homeless person dies of exposure, but it is news when the stock market loses two points? This is a case of exclusion. Can we continue to stand by when food is thrown away while people are starving? This is a case of inequality. Today everything comes under the laws of competition and the survival of the fittest, where the powerful feed upon the powerless. As a consequence, masses of people find themselves excluded and marginalized: without work, without possibilities, without any means of escape.
 - Francis repeatedly cites in his preaching an old tale of rabbis. “Several times he’s returned to the story of a medieval rabbi speaking about the building of the tower of Babel to illustrate this profound human crisis that flows from the savage cult of mammon and leads to slavery. He told students in Jesuit schools: “I once read a story about a medieval rabbi in the year 1200. This rabbi explained to the Jews of that time the history of the Tower of Babel. Building the Tower of Babel was not easy. They had to make bricks; and how is a brick made? Mud and straw must be fetched, they must be mixed and the bricks brought to the kiln. It involved a lot of work. And after all this work a brick became a real treasure! They then had to hoist the bricks in order to build the Tower of Babel. If a brick fell it was a tragedy! But if a man fell nothing happened! It is this crisis that we are living today, this same crisis. It is the crisis of the person. Today the person counts for nothing, it is coins, it is money that count. And Jesus, God, gave the world, the whole creation, to the person, to men and women that they might care for it; he did not give it to money. It is a crisis, the person is in a crisis because today — listen carefully, it is true — the person is a slave! We must liberate ourselves from these economic and social structures that enslave us. This is your duty.”
 - Within this context comes his criticism of “trickle-down economic theories.”
 - (54) “Some people continue to defend trickle-down (*derrame*) theories which assume that (*all*) economic growth, encouraged by a free market, will inevitably (rather, *by itself*) succeed in bringing about greater justice and inclusiveness in the world. This opinion, which has never been confirmed by the facts, expresses a crude and naïve trust in the goodness of those wielding economic power and in the sacralized workings of the prevailing economic system.”
 - The main point that he wants to make here is not economic analysis but moral analysis and it ties back to the spiritual issues to which we’ve already alluded: “To sustain a lifestyle which excludes others, or to sustain enthusiasm for that selfish ideal,” he goes on to say, “a globalization of indifference has developed. Almost without being aware of it, we end up being incapable of feeling compassion at the outcry of the poor, weeping for other people’s pain, and feeling a need to help them, as though all this were someone else’s responsibility

and not our own. The culture of prosperity deadens us; we are thrilled if the market offers us something new to purchase; and in the meantime all those lives stunted for lack of opportunity seem a mere spectacle; they fail to move us.”

- Concluding thoughts

- Before wrapping up, I'd like to say that Pope Francis is one of the most provocative popes we've ever had. He was a retreat master for many years who sought to help people to come to conversion, to repent and believe again and again and again. That comes out in his papacy. He doesn't show the same attention to balancing one side against another when he speaks lest any partial thoughts be taken for the whole. He speaks forthrightly to those on one side seeking to provoke them to conversion, and then a few days later, he'll speak to the other side seeking to do the same thing. Many Catholics are not used to this style of leadership. Likewise, as the Jesuits are wont to do in their spiritual direction, he often can be very critical, to break us down, so that then he can build us up again. In these first two years of his papacy, and we see it especially in his daily Mass homilies, he analyzes more than he synthesizes, he criticizes more than he praises, but this is all in view of the ecclesial conversion he seeks to bring about.
- With regard to economic realities within the social teaching of the Gospel, Pope Francis says in EG: “If anyone feels offended by my words, I would respond that I speak them with affection and with the best of intentions, quite apart from any personal interest or political ideology. My words are not those of a foe or an opponent. I am interested only in helping those who are in thrall to an individualistic, indifferent and self-centered mentality to be freed from those unworthy chains and to attain a way of living and thinking which is more humane, noble and fruitful, and which will bring dignity to their presence on this earth.” (208)
- He added, “I fear that these words too may give rise to commentary or discussion with no real practical effect. That being said, I trust in the openness and readiness of all Christians, and I ask you to seek, as a community, creative ways of accepting this renewed call.”
- He is hoping on us to lead that charge and change, in cooperation and response to God's grace, saying, “Any Church community, if it thinks it can comfortably go its own way without creative concern and effective cooperation in helping the poor to live with dignity and reaching out to everyone, will also risk breaking down, however much it may talk about social issues or criticize governments. It will easily drift into a spiritual worldliness camouflaged by religious practices, unproductive meetings and empty talk” (207).
- His reform involves a poor Church for the poor so that we may all the better give witness to the treasure of heaven, to the pearl of great price, to Jesus who himself chose to become poor to enrich us and then joyfully turns to all of us and says first, “Come, follow me!” and then, “Go!” go to the whole world — even to the extremes and peripheries — and proclaim the Gospel, teaching them to carry out everything I have commanded you. He never calls us to anything unless he's prepared to give us all the help he knows we need to do it. Through his earthly vicar, he is trying to give us some of that assistance.