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Evangelii Gaudium: Pope Francis and the Joy-Filled Missionary Metamorphosis of the Church

- Preface
 - It's a great joy for me to be with you for this Portsmouth Institute Conference on Understanding the Francis Papacy. When I was asked to speak several months back, I was pastor of a parish literally five minutes up the road and looking forward to participating in the entire weekend. Since then I was asked to go to serve the Church at the United Nations and that meant that I was driving up here earlier this morning in the delightful company of Rusty Reno with one consequence being I don't really know what any of the other speakers other than Rusty have said. So I apologize if I repeat anything that the other speakers, especially Cardinal O'Malley, unwittingly stole from my ideas.
- The Missionary Metamorphosis of the Church
 - Twenty-five months 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. To one degree or another, every pope is elected with a reform agenda.
 - 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 the banks, or butlers, and bumbling bureaucracies that were so much in the news two years ago. The chief reform the Church needed, Cardinal Bergoglio declared to his brother cardinals on March 7 during their pre-conclave meetings, was to address what he called the principal 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 reshaping the Church needed, he emphasized, was to overcome this “theological narcissism” and ecclesial introversion. 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, Cardinal Bergoglio, she's simply sick.
 - The Archbishop of Buenos Aires then 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 Argentina 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.” 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.

- Taking the missionary metamorphosis of the Church seriously
 - 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.” But then he poignantly asks: “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. Pope Francis’ goal, which he expressed in his “I have a dream” section of the exhortation, was a missionary fervor that would transform and channel everything in the Church for the evangelization of today’s world.” (EG 27)
 - This requires, he says, 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:
 - (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.”
 - (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.
- Pope Francis wants us to examine ourselves on whether we are taking this missionary transformation seriously.

- (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?
- Pope Francis stresses that this missionary transformation is desperately needed because the stakes cannot be higher.
 - (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. ... 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.
- 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”.
- Jesus calls us, commissions us and trains us for this task. He entrusts to us his mission for the salvation of the world:
 - (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!
- And the task is obviously needed:
 - Here in the United States we have a growing percentage of “nones,” those who do not practice any faith. Ten percent of Americans — 30 million — define themselves ex-Catholics. Of those who still identify as Catholic, sixty percent barely practice, and only a quarter come to worship God on the Lord's day. Of those that do, there are many who are not fully evangelized, who don't pray much during the week, who rarely if at all frequent the Sacrament of God's mercy, who don't know what the Church believes or why about many issues or when they do think the Church is wrong and popular culture right, and various other pieces of evidence of partial adhesion. And the statistics in the United States are much better than in many other parts of the globe. Most of us know what is happening with the Church in Western Europe. We know that in Latin America we're hemorrhaging

Catholics. In Honduras alone, the percentage of Catholics has dropped from 75 to 48 percent in a generation. And then we still have much of Asia that is yet to hear the Gospel.

- What is the new evangelization — and evangelization proper — all about? What would the Church Pope Francis is trying to reform look like? It would be a Church in which we are sharing the joy of the faith with others. Evangelization is sharing our joy.
 - Pope Francis says that 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, he says, 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) "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. But we first have to see the joy of Jesus, who came so that his joy might be in us and our joy be brought to perfection.
 - (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"

- He says that every Christian is called to share this joy, 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!
- But to share the faith well, to become missionary disciples, we need some formation, but we shouldn't wait for the formation to start sharing the joy.
 - (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 life 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.
- The Message we give must be kerygmatic. It must focus first on the transmitting the joy of our faith.
 - 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 that, 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.”
 - This is where mercy fits in.
 - One of the aspects of the coverage of Pope Francis’ “Who am I to judge comments?” on the plane returning from Brazil is how many people were surprised. Yes, many took his comments out of context, thinking he was somehow saying that same-sex sexual activity wasn’t a big deal whereas what he clearly said was that if someone had converted from previous behavior, if someone had gone to receive God’s mercy and turned one’s life around, how could any of us without what the Lord had given? The Lord, after all, he continued, had forgiven Peter of his three-fold apostasy on Holy Thursday and made him the rock on whom he would build his Church. But the reason why I think this phrase captured the attention of so many is because they — perhaps with consciences that prick them about some of the things they’re doing or failing to do — think “good Catholics” judge them for their behavior. They think that Catholics look at them and see invisible scarlet letters. They don’t think good Catholics look at them first with loving mercy. That’s one of the reasons why they have responded so heartily to Pope Francis because they think that the one who calls himself “a sinner whom the Lord has looked upon with love” looks upon them, even in their sins, with love.”
- In going out, the Church should go to the peripheries and 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 lìo*]. 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 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.
- *Laudato Si* in this missionary transformation of the Church
 - 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. 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.”

- 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.”
- In *Laudato Si* on the care of our common home, 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 but a gift that links us to the Creator and to others. 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.
- And in it, I believe, he’s preaching the Gospel to those who are spiritual but not religious, who recognize that there’s something sacred in nature but don’t recognize the source of that holiness, and seeking by beauty to connect them from the created world to the Creator.

- 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 so that we, like the first apostles, like the great missionaries, like Pope Francis, can go out with him to bring the fire of his love to all those we meet!