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## WHAT IS POPE FRANCIS DOING TO THE CHURCH?

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Let me start by sharing a story about Pope Francis. The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops sends its president, vice-president and secretary general to Rome once a year to meet with various departments of the curia, share information with them, clarify any concerns and identify areas of collaboration. A private audience is usually arranged with the Pope, and 2014 was no exception. As president of the Conference that year, I led the audience in which the assistant secretary general had to replace the secretary general who was dealing with some health problems.

Traditionally, our secretary general is a priest while our assistant secretary general is a layman. When it came time to meet the Pope, we were told that the assistant secretary general could be presented to him, shake his hand and have his photo taken, but was not to participate in the audience. When the vice-president and I insisted, we were told that the Pope would be advised. I was very glad when we entered the room to see that enough chairs had been set up to include our whole delegation. As we sat down, Pope Francis turned to me and said in Italian something to this effect: "They asked if your assistant secretary general could sit in on our meeting. I asked why not? They answered that he wasn't ordained. I asked: 'Is he baptized? Of course he can be part of the meeting.'" He continued: "I am glad that your Bishops' conference entrusts such a position of high responsibility to a layman. Clericalism is a disease in our Church which needs to be stamped out. All laypeople need to take the place which is rightfully theirs." Then, turning to our assistant secretary general, he said in English, with great enthusiasm: "I am glad you are a layman!" To which our layman responded: "And I am glad YOU are the Pope!" At which we all burst out laughing. Needless to say, our meeting with the Pope was wonderful and a memory I will always cherish.

Many such anecdotes are told of Pope Francis. It's as if everyone who meets him has a story to tell. This one highlights his general dislike of protocol, the freedom that allows him to follow his convictions and his desire to see laymen

and women become fully involved in the Church. I could continue this talk by sharing similar anecdotes and teasing out what they imply about the Pope's personality and the direction in which he wants to direct the Church.

However, I would rather focus on a few key experiences in Pope Francis's life which can help us understand where he wants to bring the Church. I will focus on four such experiences: his teenager's experience of God's mercy; his experience as a young priest of Jesuit spirituality; his experience of the poor as a middle-aged bishop; and, finally, his experience as an elder statesman at the conference of Aparecida in 2007.

## I. THE TEENAGED LAYMAN'S EXPERIENCE OF GOD'S MERCY

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In an interview with the Italian reporter Andrea Tornielli, Pope Francis said: "I don't have any particular memories of mercy as a young child. But I do as a young man. I think of Fr Carlos Duarte Ibarra, the confessor I met in my parish church on September 21, 1953, the day the Church celebrated St Matthew, the apostle and evangelist. I was 17 years old. On confessing myself to him, I felt welcomed by the mercy of God. Ibarra ... was in Buenos Aires to receive treatment for leukaemia. He died the following year. I still remember how when I got home after his funeral and burial, I felt as though I had been abandoned. And I cried a lot that night, really a lot, and hid in my room? Why? Because I had lost a person who helped me feel the mercy of God."

Elsewhere, Pope Francis explains how that one experience of mercy in the confessional changed his life. He says he doesn't remember the details, only that God reached out and touched him. He was convinced of his own unworthiness of God's love, yet even more deeply convinced that God did indeed love him. He was supposed to meet a group of friends that evening. He never did. He was too caught up in the experience which eventually led him to consider the priesthood and become a Jesuit.

As a young seminarian, Jorge Bergoglio would have started praying the Liturgy of the Hours, including the daily Office of Readings. Every year on September 21, during the Office of Readings for the feast of Saint Matthew, he would have read an excerpt of a homily by an eighth-century English monk we know as the Venerable Bede. Concerning the passage of the Gospel narrating how Jesus called the publican Matthew—a public sinner—to become his disciple, Bede wrote: "Jesus saw Matthew not so much with his bodily eyes as with the interior gaze of his mercy. He saw the publican, and because he saw him with a gaze that is merciful and that chooses, he said: 'Follow me,' that is to say, imitate me. In calling him to follow him, he was not so much inviting him to walk behind him as to live like him. For,"—Bede here quotes the first letter of John—"whoever says, 'I abide in him,' ought to walk just as he walked."

When he was elected as Pope, Jorge Bergoglio had to choose a motto. He decided to keep the motto he had chosen as an auxiliary bishop in Buenos Aires: *miserando atque eligendo*. This expression is at the heart of Venerable Bede's homily, describing Jesus' gaze on Matthew, a gaze that has mercy and that chooses. During his pastoral visit to the Philippines, Pope Francis told a group of young people, "That morning, when Matthew was going off to work and said goodbye to his wife, he never thought that he was going to return in a hurry, without money, to tell his wife to prepare a banquet. The banquet for the one who loved him first, who surprised him with something important, more important than all the money he had." As a cardinal often called to Rome, he would stay at a residence from priests informally called the Casa Paolo Sesto, in the historic centre of Rome. I myself often stayed there when I was president of the CCCB. Next door is the Church of Saint Louis des Français, which houses a great painting by Caravaggio entitled *The Call of Saint Matthew*. In it, we see Jesus and Saint Peter about to walk out of a dark room where five tax collectors are gathered counting their money. Jesus's hand is stretched out and pointing at one of the tax collectors, Matthew, who has a look of astonishment and worry on his face. One of his hands is on the money, while the other points at himself as if to say, "Who, me?" It is a remarkable painting, one I have often admired while in Rome, one that Cardinal Bergoglio often contemplated on his visits to Rome.

Austin Ivereigh, the London-based Roman Catholic journalist, reports that, on the first evening of the conclave in which Jorge Bergoglio was elected Pope, he met Cardinal Walter Kasper of Germany who handed him his most recent book simply titled *Barmherzigkeit—Mercy*. Cardinal Bergoglio's reaction? He simply said, "Ah, mercy, this is the name of God." At his first Angelus greeting on the Sunday after his election, Pope Francis told the crowd that reading Cardinal Kasper's book during the conclave had done him great good. He continued, and I quote, "Cardinal Kasper says that hearing the word mercy changes everything... It changes the world by making it less cold and more fair."

Mr. Ivereigh goes on to recall: "In his first airborne press conference, Pope Francis noted how clergy sex abuse, corruption and clericalism had hurt so many, and said: "The Church is a mother: she has to go out to heal those who are hurting, with mercy... She must travel this path of mercy. And find a form of mercy for all." Citing the Father's embrace of the prodigal son as the model

for the Church, Pope Francis said: “I believe that this is a kairos: this time is a kairos of mercy.”

And in his Angelus on Jan. 11, 2015, the Pope stated: “There is so much need of mercy today, and it is important that the lay faithful live it and bring it into different social environments. Go forth! We are living in the age of mercy; this is the age of mercy.”

On October 8, 2013, Pope Francis called two assemblies of the Synod of Bishops to address the issue of marriage and family life. In preparation for the first of those assemblies, he called the Cardinals to a special meeting—a consistory—to discuss these issues. Knowing what we know, it is not surprising that he invited Cardinal Kasper to give the main talk. Cardinal Kasper spoke about many issues in family life, but the one issue that caused controversy arose was when he invited the Cardinals to consider the pain of divorced and remarried Catholics and to find ways of helping them experience God’s mercy.

I was a delegate to both of those synodal assemblies, and I can say that I witnessed a unanimous desire on the part of the bishops present to help couples discover, experience and sustain the joy that can be found in a marriage relationship and in family life. Truly, we are convinced that marriage is a gift that, when understood as a living sign of God’s love for all people and of Christ’s particular love for the Church, can be a covenantal space for grace to flow, for mercy to be shared and for love to grow. Simultaneously, all the bishops recognized that such is not the experience of many married couples who, instead, find their relationship to be riddled with doubt, assailed by temptation, stifled by jealousy and selfishness and, ultimately, killed by indifference or outright hostility. What can we do to help them? I remember Pope John Paul II asking me this in conversation when I met him as a young bishop. I had just told him how so many of my friends entered marriage with hope and faith, only to discover suffering and pain and, finally, breakdown. The Pope looked at me and earnestly asked: “What can we do to help them?” This was the question Pope Francis put to the bishops at the synod, and it is a question the bishops honestly tried to answer.

Many bishops felt that the Church's discipline forbidding divorced and civilly remarried Catholics from celebrating the sacraments was too harsh. They heard the voices of many saying that this discipline leads to feelings of exclusion, of unworthiness and of rejection. At a time when they are trying to rebuild their lives, and that of their children, they feel that they have no place in the Christian community and that they are cut off from God's love. Certainly, this is not what the Church wants. Already in 1981, Pope John Paul II had written, "I earnestly call upon pastors and the whole community of the faithful to help the divorced, and with solicitous care to make sure that they do not consider themselves as separated from the Church, for as baptized persons they can, and indeed must, share in her life. They should be encouraged to listen to the word of God, to attend the Sacrifice of the Mass, to persevere in prayer, to contribute to works of charity and to community efforts in favour of justice, to bring up their children in the Christian faith, to cultivate the spirit and practice of penance and thus implore, day by day, God's grace. Let the Church pray for them, encourage them and show herself a merciful mother, and thus sustain them in faith and hope." (*Familiaris consortio*, 84)

For many in the Church—including many bishops at the Synod—the problem lies in the subsequent sentences, where he wrote: "However, the Church reaffirms her practice, which is based upon Sacred Scripture, of not admitting to Eucharistic Communion divorced persons who have remarried. They are unable to be admitted thereto from the fact that their state and condition of life objectively contradict that union of love between Christ and the Church which is signified and effected by the Eucharist. Besides this, there is another special pastoral reason: if these people were admitted to the Eucharist, the faithful would be led into error and confusion regarding the Church's teaching about the indissolubility of marriage."

So the Synod grappled with the issue of squaring the Church's discipline with the principle of inclusion of the divorced and civilly remarried. And it continues to grapple with this thorny challenge. The Synod spoke eloquently about the need to welcome all people, including those who did not live up to Christ's teaching about marriage and divorce; about our responsibility as pastors to both educate and respect individual consciences; about the community's responsibility to integrate all people into their midst. Pope Francis's own letter, following the Synod, opens up to the possibility of access

to the sacraments for people in this situation. He writes: “Because of forms of conditioning and mitigating factors, it is possible that in an objective situation of sin—which may not be subjectively culpable, or fully such—a person can be living in God’s grace, can love and can also grow in the life of grace and charity, while receiving the Church’s help to this end.” (*Amoris Laetitia*, 305) In a footnote to this sentence, he adds: “In certain cases, this can include the help of the sacraments.” The Pope further counsels that, that when priests have to make judgments in concrete cases such as pastoral care of divorced and civilly remarried Catholics, they are to do so “according to the teaching of the Church and the guidelines of the bishop.” (*Amoris Laetitia*, 300)

Some bishops have published such guidelines, some of them quite restrictive in their application of the possibility opened up by the Pope, others more welcoming of this possibility and outlining the principles governing these cases and the process to be followed. So we now have a situation where the doctrine is clear—Marriage is indissoluble, and divorce is not an alternative—, but the discipline surrounding those who cannot live up to the doctrine is fuzzy.

What is not fuzzy is the Pope’s call for the Church to reflect God’s mercy to all people. During the synod, many discussions centred on the seeming conflict between God’s justice, on the one hand, and God’s mercy on the other. Too often, it seems to me that we see God’s mercy as mitigating God’s justice, as if the fundamental stance of God is in favour of justice, while mercy only occasionally intercedes to soften the blow that justice would deliver.

This makes me think of the old Roman gladiator movies I used to watch as a child. In them, the emperor would be drinking wine and watching from his box as two gladiators fought to the death for the pleasure of the crowd. When one of them finally got the upper hand and managed to get his opponent under his feet, he would look up to the emperor: would it be thumbs down—“Kill him as the weakling deserves,”—or thumbs up—“I’m in a good mood, let’s let him live”?

Is this the image of God we carry with us: the distant, uninvolved sovereign who, in all justice, should condemn us to hell but occasionally—as long as we recognize our unworthiness and bow at his feet—is touched by mercy and chooses to forgive?

I believe that in Jesus, God has manifested himself in a radically different way. It's as if the emperor set aside his crown, stripped off his magnificent robes, descended into the arena and walked over to the gladiators. He gives his hand to the loser, helps him up, then lies down under the sword of the victor and says to him: I forgive you, for you do not know what you do!

In Jesus, we discover that mercy beats in the very heart of God. Where then does justice come in? A rabbi recently said to me: Justice is what a parent does when their child runs into the street without looking and is nearly run over by a car. The parent, in his or her great love for the child, runs out, picks up their child, gives him or her a big hug, then a smack across the bottom. The smack is there to let the child know there is a limit set in order to protect him or her, whether they understand or not. Justice flows out of mercy, justice is mercy in action protecting the other so that the other might live and flourish. Mercy does not mitigate a more foundational justice, but rather justice is one form that mercy takes in certain circumstances.

What is the Pope doing to the Church? The Pope is asking the Church to rediscover the mercy that flows from the very heart of God. The Pope is asking all of us to rediscover that mercy for ourselves, in our prayer, our study of Scripture and our celebration of the Sacrament of reconciliation. The Pope is asking all of us to mirror God's mercy in the way we welcome each other, forgive each other and care for each other.

This is the meaning of the Jubilee Year of Mercy which is coming to an end next Sunday. The doors of mercy were closed last weekend in our dioceses, and the Holy door at St. Peter's Basilica will be closed this Sunday to mark the end of this Jubilee. The doors will close, but our hearts must remain open. For we are called to embody mercy, not only for divorced and civilly remarried Catholics, but for refugees, victims of clergy sexual abuse, homosexuals and transgendered people, the mentally ill, and particularly, particularly for the poor.

For Francis connects mercy and poverty in a remarkable way. As Professor Mark Slatter of Saint Paul's University in Ottawa said last week in an insightful conference:

Among the poor is made visible our inadequacy, our shame, our need to fit in and our dependence on systems of approval. It challenges our conventional thinking and feeling about moral boundaries and what they mean. It forces us to carry contradictory elements, and more than anything else, to see how messy and tragic life can be. And the only way we can bear to stay is to become merciful. This is a painful kenosis that is potentially transformative. The revelation of God's mercy occurs in the last place many religious people would expect. To paraphrase Jürgen Moltmann, "Jesus wasn't crucified in a cathedral between two candles, but on a cross between two thieves."

## II. THE YOUNG PRIEST'S JESUIT EXPERIENCE

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At the heart of the Jesuit tradition lies the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius. All Jesuits go through the experience of the Spiritual Exercises in their journey towards perpetual vows, and many do them again later in their lives. Allow me to briefly describe these exercises for those of you who may not know them.

They were developed by Saint Ignatius of Loyola, the 16th-century Spanish founder of the Jesuits. They grew out of his own conversion experience and the deep wisdom he garnered from reflecting on it over the years. They consist of a series of meditations, prayers, and contemplative practices to help people deepen their relationship with God, traditionally experienced in the context of a “long retreat” of about 30 days in solitude and silence. Recently, they have been adapted in various ways to allow those who cannot set aside a whole month to go through the process while continuing with their daily lives. I myself went through these exercises during my last two years of seminary formation, and they were instrumental in leading me to recognize God’s call to celibacy and priesthood in my life.

The core of the Spiritual Exercises lies in the a discernment process which can be broken down into seven steps (at least, that’s one way of looking at this process). I believe this process has been so integrated into Pope Francis’s life that it impacts the whole style of his papacy. Let me try to explain, referring to my own experience of the Ignatian method.

**Step I: The Preparation.** I was invited to clearly identify what I needed to be discerned, what is the true, deep question that I had to answer. This involved a long time of introspection and insight, where I had to let myself be shaped by prayer and silence. I needed God’s Spirit even in this first step if I was to successfully identify God’s will for me.

Pope Francis wakes up at 4:30 a.m. every day. He dedicates the first two hours of his day to prayer and meditation. He takes up the readings of the day and prepares the homily he will share at morning Mass. These two hours allow him to ponder events in the world, the Church and his own life. It gives him the time and space to clearly identify the deep questions that need to be

answered and maintain a truly discerning attitude in his own life, seeking God's action and will in everything that will happen to him during the day. He invites us all to take this stance—if not this schedule—in our daily lives. Let me tell you, I still find that to be quite the challenge today.

**Step II: Praying for Holy Indifference to the Outcome.** As I went through the spiritual exercises, I found this second step to present an even greater challenge. I needed to come to the point where everything would pale in the light of God's will. It meant really letting go of my preferences and comforts in order to deeply desire what God desires. It meant taking Jesus's words quite literally: "Seek first the kingdom [of God] and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides." (Mt 6.33) However, I discovered that such holy indifference leads to incredible freedom. Once I came to believe that God was calling me to a precise decision, then all other considerations lost their influence on me.

I see this kind of freedom in the way Pope Francis chooses his cardinals, determines the countries he will visit, sets up his appointments and decides whom to visit on a Friday afternoon. This is the kind of freedom that allowed him to wash the feet of men and women, including some Muslims, on his first Holy Thursday as a Pope, breaking a minor liturgical rule in the process. This is the kind of freedom that permitted him to break protocol at the Synod and stand at the entrance door himself to greet all the participants individually. This is the kind of freedom that lets him enter into spontaneous conversation with all kinds of reporters, at the risk of sometimes making statements that can easily be misinterpreted. These are not whims and fancies that push him: he believes that God is calling him to wash these feet, to greet these Synod delegates, to speak to these reporters. There is great freedom in setting God's kingdom first in one's life.

**Step III: Practical Considerations.** At this step, I had to bring my reasoning and judgment to bear on the issue at hand. I had to identify the facts involved, and list all the possible options. I needed to gather as much information as I could, leaving no stone unturned. I considered the pros and the cons of each option, identifying the beliefs and values involved in each. It was like spiritual brainstorming where we I had to consider all options in the fear that, by setting one aside prematurely, I might be closing myself to God's will. I had to remain open to God's surprises.

I believe that Francis considers this third step crucial, and it's the step that creates the greatest anxiety in people who are not at ease with his papacy. Let's take one example: women's diaconate. I came to public attention last year when, during my three-minute intervention before the Synod, I raised this possibility. By the way, each delegate gets to make a similar three-minute intervention on whatever topic in the working document he finds important.

People have asked me why I decided to dedicate my three minutes to the question of women deacons when the Synod was about the family. In fact, my intervention was not dedicated to this issue. In the months preceding the Synod, I changed my mind quite a few times before deciding which issue to address. I had whittled my choices down to three: the impact of social media on family life, the scourge of pornography on the web and its devastating consequences for healthy, holy sexuality, and the ongoing victimization of so many women within their marriages. The balance tipped to the third topic when I read a report from the World Health Organization revealing that, still today, close to one third of all women will be subjected to violence at the hands of their spouse during their married life. This statistic is astounding and totally unacceptable. I felt I needed to bring this to the attention of my brother Bishops and invite them to address this pressing issue in our deliberations. This was the central topic of my intervention.

However, I felt that we could not really speak with credibility on this issue if we were not willing within our own Church structures to recognize and celebrate the inherent dignity of all women. So I suggested we seek ways to listen to the voices of women in our reflections on scripture, in our governance structures and, finally, by studying the possibility of ordaining women to the permanent diaconate. The media focused on the last line of my intervention, creating a flurry of requests for interviews which I declined because I believed they were leading us off topic. But in my discussion group was the president of the UISG, the international union of superiors general of Catholic women religious, and we talked about this a bit. A few months later, she brought it up with Pope Francis during a question and answer session between him and the general assembly of superiors general. She suggested that a commission be set up to study the possibility, and the Pope agreed.

I would not be surprised that the Pope's personal inclination does not lead him in this direction. He agrees that women should be involved in decision-making processes and structures within the Church, but this is in line with his rejection of clericalism and applies not only to women, but also to laymen. For him, it is the baptismal character that enables one to participate in decision-making, not the priestly character. So ordination to diaconate and decision-making are two separate questions for the Pope.

However, I think that Pope Francis, knowing that the question of women deacons in the Church is still an open one, does not want to shut the door too quickly on what might be God's will. Step three of the discernment process pushes him to consider all options. I think that it is in this spirit that he has agreed to set up this committee. It's as if he's saying, "Let's open this up, let's talk about, let's see where God might lead us."

As I said earlier, this approach does not sit well with some members of the Church, including some bishops and cardinals. They feel it is better to hedge the living Tradition of the Church with many safeguards, including not discussing certain issues that, in and of themselves, have not been settled. They feel this creates confusion among the faithful and can give rise to false expectations. But this is not the way of the Spiritual exercises, and it is not the way of the Pope. He believes that it is only in considering all options and weighing them in the light of the Gospel that we, as a Church, will be able to discern God's will for us.

This attitude is also typical of the whole synodal process that Pope Francis dreams of. In his homily at a prayer vigil the evening before the opening of the Synodal assembly, he said:

"For the Synod Fathers we ask the Holy Spirit first of all for the gift of listening: to listen to God, so that with him we may hear the cry of his people; to listen to his people until we are in harmony with the will to which God calls us".

This is one reason he gives such importance to national conferences of Bishops. He sees in each such conference a space where local realities can be brought to the fore, studied, interpreted and acted upon. This is where true listening can happen and real discernment initiated. In the few major documents he has published, he quotes national conferences a surprising

number of times, an indication of the esteem in which he holds such regional groupings of Bishops.

This is why he has created a consultative body of nine bishops from around the world to help him adapt the Roman Curia to the needs of the Church today. He felt he needed to consider this issue from many perspectives, not only the perspective of the Curia itself. Some feel that he should pay more attention to this perspective, but after decades of complaints from outside Rome about the way the Curia functions, it's understandable that the balance should tip a bit to the other side. Lest you conclude that I am suggesting that the reform of the Curia is an adversarial exercise, I know many people within the Curia who long for this reform, just as I know many from outside the Curia who would prefer the status quo. What is important to note is that Pope Francis, good Jesuit that he is, knows that he needs to listen to many voices if he is to discern among them the voice of God.

This explains why he insisted on a broad and deep consultative process as a preparatory step to the Synodal meetings. And I think this is why he also decided, at the end of the extraordinary assembly of the Synod in 2014, to let stand in the final document those paragraphs which had not received the traditional two-thirds support of the delegates. Pope Francis does not want to shut out possible options, not before having truly discerned God's will for the Church.

**Step IV: Intuitive Considerations.** Typically, this involved considering non-intellectual feelings that arose in the course of my meditations. They could be physical feelings, or hunches that things were not quite right or, on the contrary, that they were exactly right. Difficult to put into words, I also needed to consider such feelings as I sought God's will.

I think we see this intuitive sense reflected in Pope Francis's openness to the immediate moment. He seems stifled by protocol and ceremonies, but alive and energized in the unplanned, improvised situation. He often sets aside a prepared text, relying more on the feeling of the moment and on the connections arising through concrete interaction. I remember being at the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia last year and listening to him speak off the cuff to a million people gathered to see and hear him. He made us laugh, he brought tears to our eyes, he led us in prayer, he lifted our spirits.

The connection with the crowd was magical. This is the Jesuit Pope who follows the intuitive connections his feels in his daily ministry.

**Step V: Imaginative Considerations.** If Step III was focused on the intellectual process, Step V was concerned with the imagination. Saint Ignatius was daring in his way of approaching the Gospel stories. He invited his followers to close their eyes and imagine themselves IN the Gospel scene, standing with the disciples, smelling their sweat, hearing their coughs and grunts, bearing the heat of the day and sharing their emotions. This way of integrating the imagination, symbolic language and feelings into one's prayer life was quite original and to this day is a characteristic mark of Jesuit spirituality. I must admit I found this approach to prayer quite stimulating, and still do.

This typical Jesuit trait might explain Pope Francis's fondness for striking images and telling phrases. Who can forget gems like these:

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.

God's grace comes alive and flourishes to the extent that clergy are among their flocks giving themselves and the gospel to others. This I ask of you: you must be shepherds who smell like your sheep.

Look at the peacock: it's beautiful if you look at it from the front. But if you look at it from behind, you discover the truth.

The confessional is not a torture chamber, but the place in which the Lord's mercy motivates us to do better.

I prefer a church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security.

I have friends who miss Pope Benedict's insightful, theologically rich homilies and writings. However, Pope Francis's more imaginative language probably connects more quickly with his listeners and speaks immediately to the heart. This is the way he wishes all preaching was done in our Churches.

**Step VI: Make the choice.** The moment has arrived, God's will has been made as clear as possible in this life. Now is the time to choose and to commit. This entails a radical engagement of one's whole being in carrying out what has been discerned. The choice will entail sacrifice? So be it! It will mean suffering? Bring it on! In Jesuit spirituality, all is to be given up for the greater glory of God.

Many of Pope Francis's friends say that becoming pope has changed him. The quiet, introspective priest has become a lively social butterfly, reaching out to all he meets, laughing with them, crying with them, totally given to his ministry as chief shepherd in the Church. The American journalist John Allen has written about the moments immediately following Bergoglio's election as Pope. He refers to an interview given by Msgr. Dario Viganò, who was filming those moments.

Viganò was inside the Vatican in the moments immediately after Francis's election and before the new pope stepped out to greet the world. He says when Francis left the Sistine Chapel to walk toward the balcony, he had his eyes down, he wasn't smiling, he didn't say anything to the cardinals, and was as if he were carrying "an enormous burden."

Then, however, Francis stepped into the Pauline Chapel, where a throne had been set up for him to use for prayer. Instead, Francis asked the two cardinals walking with him to sit with him in the chapel's back pew. The pope had a few moments of silent prayer and, according to Viganò, describing what he saw, "he stands up, turns around, and at that moment he's a different person. It's as if God had said to him personally, 'Don't worry, I'm here with you,'" Viganò said.

Allen concludes: Something happened to the new pope that night, whether we call it a mystical experience or not, that gave him a feeling of calm, and it's stayed with him afterward.

I would suggest that what happened was that the man who knelt was Cardinal Bergoglio, still asking himself what had just happened. And in that moment of prayer, being the Jesuit he is, he recognized that God had spoken in the choice of the conclave. Recognizing that will, he embraced it wholly and made it his own. The man who stood up was now Pope Francis.

However, we should not only see in this story a personal experience, but a template for the whole Church, for you and for me. At least, this what Pope Francis proposes: that we all radically embrace God's will and that the whole Church be single-minded in carrying it out. For our pope, this is the key to Church's renewal. As he writes in *The Joy of the Gospel*,

I dream of a "missionary option", that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church's customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channelled for the evangelization of today's world rather than for her self-preservation. The renewal of structures demanded by pastoral conversion can only be understood in this light: as part of an effort to make them more mission-oriented, to make ordinary pastoral activity on every level more inclusive and open, to inspire in pastoral workers a constant desire to go forth and in this way to elicit a positive response from all those whom Jesus summons to friendship with himself.

*(Evangelii gaudium, 27)*

### **Step VII: Seek confirmation in fruitfulness**

All project managers will tell you that, having made a decision and acted upon it, it's important to evaluate it in order to learn from it and improve your next project, whatever it may be. And project managers will teach you that, in order to evaluate, you need to have given yourself a clear, measurable and verifiable goal. But if your goal is to simply do God's will, how can you evaluate that you have done so? I remember reading a prayer composed by the American Trappist monk Thomas Merton that spoke deeply to me:

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so.

This can be a depressing consideration. However, Merton continues with a consoling thought:

But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road though I may know nothing about it.

The Jesuit tradition does go a bit further. It suggests that we can judge whether we are doing God's will by the fruitfulness of our actions: not so much by their efficacy as judged according to secular standards, but by the gifts of the Spirit they produce in us and in others, particularly peace and joy.

How do we judge whether our Pope is actually doing God's will? How does he himself judge that? These questions are worth asking, but the answering of them is not obvious. Certainly, we should not judge according to the length of the line-ups in St. Peter's square or by the number of visitors to Rome during the Jubilee year of mercy, as many commentators and even members of the Curia are wont to do. Perhaps we need to look inside ourselves, and ask whether our Pope's actions and words are stirring up anything that is of the Spirit. Each of us will need to answer that for himself or herself. As for me, I can assure you that Pope Francis has awakened my desire to serve God's people and all of humanity with greater zeal, humility and creativity. And I like to think that this is from the Spirit.

### III. THE MIDDLE-AGED BISHOP'S EXPERIENCE OF THE POOR

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The British author Paul Vallely believes that Jorge Bergoglio underwent a certain transformation during his years as an auxiliary bishop of Buenos Aires. To understand this transformation, some historical background is necessary. Before Father Bergoglio was named auxiliary bishop at the age of fifty-five, he had served as a teacher of theology in a Jesuit college for a few years, been elected provincial superior of the Jesuit order in Argentina at the absurdly young age of 36, removed from that position and named rector of a Jesuit college, and then removed from that college and sent to Germany to study, and then to a Jesuit guest-house where he was told the only thing he could do was to hear confessions. Those years were not easy for Father Bergoglio. What's behind this up and down trajectory?

Jorge Bergoglio was known as a rather traditionalist priest, a prayerful, devotional man attached to popular piety. He was not a friend of the type of liberation theology that used Marxist analysis to understand the reality of the poor and to determine the projects and efforts that other Jesuits felt should to be supported. As provincial superior, he was heavy-handed in dealing with his brothers who were involved in this kind of liberation theology. It was not that Father Bergoglio did not care about the poor, to the contrary. But he felt that the Church's approach should focus more on caring for their needs than on trying to foment a social revolution that would change the political and economic system. Though he would go work in soup kitchens and send clothes to people in the slums, he disassociated himself from the more radical, political elements in the Church that sought to bring about social change. Instead, he embraced what is today known as "theology of the people", an approach that saw the poor as embodying the best cultural traits of a nation, and popular piety as the best incarnation of the Church's faith. This "theology of the people" was considered by many of his Jesuit brothers as a watered-down version of liberation theology. When the latter gained ascendancy in Argentina and throughout the Jesuit order, their disagreements with Bergoglio led to his removal as provincial and, ultimately, to his banishment to a remote convent where he remained for two years in relative isolation.

He came to the attention of the Archbishop of Buenos Aires, who wanted him as an auxiliary bishop. Pope John Paul II agreed, and to everyone's surprise, Father Bergoglio became Bishop Bergoglio. However, he did not approach his new position the way most priests would have. Instead of setting up an office and spending his time in meetings and solemn religious ceremonies, he started walking the streets of the shantytowns and slums that were in his district. He would simply stop and chat with people, visit their homes, listen to their problems, drink maté with them. He would drop in on the priests who lived in these poor neighbourhoods and learn about their challenges, hopes and efforts. Not only did he support soup kitchens and dispensaries, he started helping groups that were trying to change the social situation they were caught in. He supported non-governmental organizations and community groups, workers' unions and associations. In other words, he was growing closer in outlook to those whom, as a provincial, he had tried to reign in. His "theology of the people" was starting to look more like "liberation theology". When in turn he became Archbishop of Buenos Aires, he brought these new convictions with him. He spoke out against unjust social structures and called on government to change policies that were hurting the poor. He condemned unbridled capitalism that set the creation of profits over the care of human beings. He became known as the bishop of the poor, the bishop of the slums.

The night of his election as pope, one of his friends, the Brazilian Cardinal Claudio Hummes, bent over to him as the votes were being counted. As the tally progressed, it was becoming clear that Jorge Bergoglio would get the two-thirds majority needed. Cardinal Hummes whispered into his ear, "Don't forget the poor." A few moments later, when Bergoglio was declared the new pope and asked which name he would take, he answered, "Francis".

I remember watching him appear on the balcony of Saint Peter's Basilica, this new pope named "Francis", and asking myself, "Why did he take this name?" No Pope had ever been called Francis. I thought of the famous saints named Francis. There was Saint Francis of Sales, an early seventeenth-century French bishop, known for his deep spirituality focused on the love of God, the simplicity of his lifestyle and the clarity of teaching. There was Saint Francis-Xavier, the great sixteenth-century Jesuit, missionary to India and southeast Asia, who gave all he had in preaching the Gospel. And there was Saint Francis of Assisi, the "poverello" of Italy, the "poor little brother" who abandoned his

wealth, clothed himself in sackcloth and dedicated himself to caring for the poorest of the poor. Looking back, I now see that our Pope Francis embodies the best traits of these three great saints: deep spirituality, ardent zeal for evangelization and love of the poor. But according to him, it was Francis of Assisi that inspired his name. It was his way of telling Cardinal Hummes that we would not forget the poor.

We all know the stories: how in those first days he refused to take the limousine reserved for him and chose a simple car; how he decided to stay in the guest house of the Vatican rather than move into the traditional palatial apartment; how he chose to keep his simple ecclesiastical garments instead of the resplendent vestments typical of the Vatican. More telling, though, was his first trip outside the Vatican: he went to Lampedusa, the Italian island in the Mediterranean where refugees tend to wash up, both living and dead. He went there to show his solidarity with the poorest of the poor, men, women and children who had left everything behind to try to build a more hope-filled life, and found themselves exploited, rejected and hopeless. And that was just the beginning. How often has he called on nations to open their hearts and their homes to the refugees of the world? How often has he spoken up against unjust economic and political systems that deny the dignity of each human being? How often has he met with men and women who are committed to changing such degrading situations? His care and concern for refugees is but one more aspect of his deep concern for the poor of the world.

Pope Francis sums up this concern in a famous expression: “We must become a poor Church for the poor”. He didn’t create this saying. Pope John XXIII said something similar at the opening of the Second Vatican Council in 1962. The great French theologian Yves Congar published a book at the same time entitled “A Poor, Servant Church”, a text that had a huge impact on the bishops gathered for the Council. And we have to recognize that Pope Paul VI did a lot to simplify the pomp and circumstance attending many Roman functions and ceremonies after the Council. But Pope Francis calls members of the Church—both clergy and laity—to much more than a simple lifestyle. He is calling the whole Church to embrace the poor as a sacrament of Christ. For him, to reach out to the poor is to reach out to Christ. And in doing so, we become as Christ.

We need to understand Pope Francis's efforts to clean up Vatican finances in this light. He does not spurn money, but he insists that money's value lies in its ability to lift the poor out of their misery. The Vatican needs greater transparency and accountability in its financial undertakings precisely in order that they become a means to achieve the greater end of promoting the common good.

To take Pope Francis seriously means to really look at our own lifestyles and to wonder what we could change in order to bring greater equality to our world. Do we actually know any poor people? Do we know in our guts what it is they live? Do we share their world? Do we share our world with them? This is the litmus test for the Church: how can we claim to follow the Saviour who made himself poor for our sake, while hoarding our own wealth and refusing to share it with the poor?

Let me make one more observation in connection with Pope Francis's experience as the bishop of the poor. It has to do with his attention to the ecological question, and the crisis of climate change in particular. The ecological movement in general sets the welfare of the earth as its ultimate value: everything is judged according to its impact on our natural environment. In his ground-breaking encyclical *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis does not follow this trend. For him, the ultimate value is not the welfare of the earth, but the welfare of human beings, particularly the poor. He sees the earth not as a reality separate from humanity, but as humanity's home, a common home we need to care for if we are to live in harmony with one another. As he says:

A sense of deep communion with the rest of nature cannot be real if our hearts lack tenderness, compassion and concern for our fellow human beings. It is clearly inconsistent to combat trafficking in endangered species while remaining completely indifferent to human trafficking, unconcerned about the poor, or undertaking to destroy another human being deemed unwanted. This compromises the very meaning of our struggle for the sake of the environment. It is no coincidence that, in the canticle in which Saint Francis praises God for his creatures, he goes on to say: "Praised be you my Lord, through those who give pardon for your love". Everything is connected. Concern for the environment thus needs to be joined to a sincere love for our fellow human beings and an

unwavering commitment to resolving the problems of society. (*Laudato Si'*, 91)

This is why in the fourth chapter of this encyclical he proposes a remarkable programme which he calls “integral ecology”, a program that considers not only environmental issues, but social, cultural and economic ones. For Pope Francis, all these issues are intimately related and need to be considered in the light of the common good. The ecological crisis, for him, is a deeply moral crisis, and he calls all members of the Church, indeed all members of humanity, to respond to this crisis by developing a truly caring attitude that will change our ways of living and of interacting as well as our policies, laws and principles of governance. Allow me to recall the following words from the homily of the inaugural Mass of his pontificate, in which he called the Church to imitate St. Joseph, the protector of Christ:

Let us protect Christ in our lives, so that we can protect others, so that we can protect creation! The vocation of being a “protector”, however, is not just something involving us Christians alone; it also has a prior dimension which is simply human, involving everyone. 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. It means protecting people, showing loving concern for each and every person, especially children, the elderly, those in need, who are often the last we think about. It means caring for one another in our families: husbands and wives first protect one another, and then, as parents, they care for their children, and children themselves, in time, protect their parents. It means building sincere friendships in which we protect one another in trust, respect, and goodness. In the end, everything has been entrusted to our protection, and all of us are responsible for it. Be protectors of God’s gifts!

Pope Francis continually surprises us with the concrete examples he gives us. He has set up shower stalls in the piazza of St. Peter’s Basilica so that homeless people can wash up. Every Monday, Roman barbers answer his invitation to come and cut their hair for free. He has served pizza to hundreds of the homeless on various occasions. He visits jails, talks with and encourages the prisoners, prays with them and advocates against capital punishment and

life sentences. He visits the poorest places on earth that he can find, making a point of spending more time with them than with the rich and powerful. And he continues to keep contact with some of the poor men and women he got to know in Buenos Aires when he was the bishop of the poor. He is showing us how to be a poor Church for the poor.

#### IV. THE ELDER STATESMAN'S EXPERIENCE AT APARECIDA

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In 2007, Bishops from all over Latin America and the Caribbean gathered for their fifth General Conference of the Episcopacy. The first, in 1955, led to the creation of CELAM. Afterwards, they would continue every dozen years or so to study the life of the Church in their particular context and give themselves a few pastoral guidelines for the following years. The General Conferences had previously been held in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), in Medellin (Colombia), in Puebla (Mexico) and in Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic). Moving back to Brazil for the 2007 meeting, the Bishops chose to gather at the Marian shrine of Aparecida. The huge basilica of Our Lady of Aparecida can hold 45,000 pilgrims at a time, and it is often full. It is one of the places where the popular piety so dear to Pope Francis can be witnessed in all its diversity and power.

Contrary to previous general conferences, the organizers of the 2007 meeting decided not to produce a draft document to be discussed during the eighteen-day meeting, but to use the conference itself to draft and finalize a document that would be presented to Pope Benedict XVI for his approval. Whom did they choose to be the chief writer of this document? Our friend, the archbishop of Buenos Aires, Jorge Bergoglio.

In an article published in June of 2012, a year before Pope Francis's election, the Catholic American essayist George Weigel wrote about a meeting he had with then Cardinal Bergoglio. (At the time, Weigel called him "one of the world Church's great leaders".) The author was deeply impressed by the Aparecida document: its focus on Jesus Christ, its realism in assessing the state of the Church in Latin America, its call for all the baptized to become missionary disciples and for a new evangelization of the land. He asked the Cardinal how the Aparecida Document had happened. The Cardinal gave three reasons, and here I quote Weigel quoting Cardinal Bergoglio:

First, Aparecida is a Marian shrine, and meeting there oriented the bishops' reflections in two directions: toward the traditional piety of Latin America and toward Our Lady as the Star of the New Evangelization (as Blessed John Paul II had named her). In that intersection between past and future, and under Mary's protection,

there was an opportunity for real creativity in facing the truth of the Church's situation and prospects.

Second, the bishops had regular contact with the throngs that came to Aparecida on pilgrimage: it was as if CELAM was meeting, not in some convention centre or monastic enclosure, but right in the middle of the People of God on their pilgrimage through the early 21st century, a pilgrimage in which both popular piety and new missionary initiatives will be part of the New Evangelization and in which lay Catholics will be the Church's primary evangelists.

And third, the cardinal replied, the bishops were surrounded by prayer: as they discussed the future of the Church in Latin America and the Caribbean at the shrine of Aparecida, they could hear their people praying around them. Thus the fifth CELAM conference became, not another bureaucratic exercise, but a kind of retreat.

We can hear in these remarks the future Pope's attachment to a "theology of the People". We get an inkling of his own devotion to Mary, Mother of God, as is testified by his frequent trips to the Basilica of Saint Mary Major since his election as Pope. But what is new is his conviction that the Church has to face its own shortcomings and, in a creative burst, embark on a new missionary adventure.

Indeed, the Aparecida document called for a missionary and pastoral conversion of the whole Church. The Bishops felt that the lay faithful had fallen into a kind of passivity regarding the Church's mission, as if that mission were simply a priestly concern while they went their quiet, devotional way. And the Bishops worried that the priests liked it this way, since it left them the monopoly of power and decision-making in the Church. Aparecida wanted to change this, and called for a continental mission to shake things up and help all the baptized realize that they were equally responsible for the mission Christ had entrusted to the Church. It was not enough that they were disciples, listening to Christ's words and celebrating the Church's sacraments. They had to become missionaries, witnessing by their lives and their words to the beauty of the Gospel, reaching out to brothers and sisters, neighbours and foreigners, in an effort to make Christ's love real in the lives of others.

How much of Bergoglio is in Aparecida, and how much of Aparecida is in Pope Francis is a good question. However, it is clear that there is a straight line from the Aparecida document to *The Joy of the Gospel*, the Pope's exhortation on evangelization. In this exhortation, he echoes the call of Aparecida to all of Christ's faithful to become missionary disciples.

In virtue of their baptism, all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciples. All the baptized, whatever their position in the Church or their level of instruction in the faith, are agents of evangelization, and it would be insufficient to envisage a plan of evangelization to be carried out by professionals while the rest of the faithful would simply be passive recipients. The new evangelization calls for personal involvement on the part of each of the baptized. Every Christian is challenged, here and now, to be actively engaged in evangelization; indeed, anyone who has truly experienced God's saving love does not need much time or lengthy training to go out and proclaim that love. Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus: we no longer say that we are "disciples" and "missionaries", but rather that we are always "missionary disciples". (*Evangelii gaudium*, 120)

He continues in the next section:

Each of us should find ways to communicate Jesus wherever we are. All of us are called to offer others an explicit witness to the saving love of the Lord, who despite our imperfections offers us his closeness, his word and his strength, and gives meaning to our lives. In your heart you know that it is not the same to live without him; what you have come to realize, what has helped you to live and given you hope, is what you also need to communicate to others. Our falling short of perfection should be no excuse; on the contrary, mission is a constant stimulus not to remain mired in mediocrity but to continue growing. (*Evangelii gaudium*, 121)

I believe his decision to call a Jubilee year of mercy was his way of kick-starting this conversion process in the universal Church. But it is far from over. As Christ's faithful, it is so easy to be lulled by the consumer mentality into thinking and acting as if our parish is a purveyor of spiritual goods where I occasionally show up to take what I need. Priests and their assistants are reduced to so many public servants whose job is to answer our needs and to

do so in as harmless and pleasant a way possible. This is the clericalism Pope Francis so vociferously condemns. In a recent letter to Cardinal Marc Ouellet, president of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America, the Pope starts by spelling out the negative consequences of clericalism:

This approach not only nullifies the character of Christians, but also tends to diminish and undervalue the baptismal grace that the Holy Spirit has placed in the heart of our people. Clericalism leads to a homologation of the laity; treating the laity as “functionaries” limits the diverse initiatives and efforts and, dare I say, the necessary boldness to enable the Good News of the Gospel to be brought to all areas of the social and above all political sphere. Clericalism, far from giving impetus to various contributions and proposals, gradually extinguishes the prophetic flame to which the entire Church is called to bear witness in the heart of her peoples. Clericalism forgets that the visibility and sacramentality of the Church belong to all the People of God, not only to the few chosen and enlightened.

Further in his letter, he describes what attitudes priests and bishops should be embracing. He writes:

It means finding a way to be able to encourage, accompany and inspire all attempts and efforts that are being made today in order to keep hope and faith alive in a world full of contradictions, especially for the poor, especially with the poorest. It means, as pastors, committing ourselves among our people and, with our people, supporting their faith and hope. Opening doors, working with them, dreaming with them, reflecting and above all praying with them... It is not the pastor to tell lay people what they must do and say, they know this better than we do. It is not the pastor to establish what the faithful must say in various settings. As pastors, united with our people, it does us good to ask ourselves how we are encouraging and promoting charity and fraternity, the desire for good, for truth and for justice; how we can ensure that corruption does not settle in our hearts.

He goes further:

Often we have given in to the temptation of thinking that committed lay people are those dedicated to the works of the Church and/or the matters of the parish or the diocese, and we have reflected little on how to accompany baptized people in their public and daily life; on how in their daily activities, with the responsibilities they have, they are committed as Christians in public life. Without realizing it, we have generated a lay elite, believing that committed lay people are only those who work in “priestly” matters... and we have forgotten, overlooked, the believers who very often burn out their hope in the daily struggle to live the faith. These are the situations that clericalism fails to notice, because it is more concerned with dominating spaces than with generating initiatives. Therefore we must recognize that lay people—through their reality, through their identity, for they are immersed in the heart of public, social and political life and participate in cultural forms that are constantly generated—need new forms of organization and of celebration of the faith.

Whew! As I read this, and think back to the story I told at the beginning of this talk about our non-ordained assistant general-secretary and the Pope’s joy that he was a layman, I am overwhelmed by how far we have to go if we are to give flesh and bones to Pope Francis’s vision. I believe this vision to be biblically grounded, theologically justified and faithful to the Second Vatican Council. I also believe this vision, coordinated with the Pope’s call to be a Church for and with the poor, a merciful Church, a listening and discerning Church, is breathtakingly audacious and breath-savingly energizing.

I do not believe I will live long enough to see this vision enfolded in all of the Church’s realities, but I do believe it is taking root in a quiet, fruitful way. Many episcopal conferences in the world are catching up to CELAM’s work at Aparecida. In Quebec, we have just produced a guiding document entitled “The Missionary Shift of Christian Communities” that all of our dioceses are studying and seeking to implement. In my own diocese, we launched a multi-year diocesan priority whose motto is “Free the Gifts. Share the Word.” As the old song says, “We’ve only just begun!”

## IN CONCLUSION

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In conclusion, I'd like to share with you the little talk Cardinal Bergoglio gave to the other Cardinals assembled for the election of the new Pope after Pope Benedict XVI's surprising resignation. He gave the outline from which he spoke to Cardinal Jaime Lucas Ortega y Alamino, the archbishop of Havana, Cuba. Cardinal Ortega then obtained Pope Francis's permission to share the content of the document, and it was published in the press.

Here is the full text:

### Evangelizing Implies Apostolic Zeal

1. Evangelizing presupposes a desire in the Church to come out of herself. The Church is called to come out of herself and to go to the peripheries, not only geographically, but also the existential peripheries: the mystery of sin, of pain, of injustice, of ignorance and indifference to religion, of intellectual currents, and of all misery.

2. When the Church does not come out of herself to evangelize, she becomes self-referential and then gets sick. (cf. The deformed woman of the Gospel [Luke 13:10–17]). The evils that, over time, happen in ecclesial institutions have their root in self-referentiality and a kind of theological narcissism. In Revelation, Jesus says that he is at the door and knocks [Rev. 3:20].

Obviously, the text refers to his knocking from the outside in order to enter but I think about the times in which Jesus knocks from within so that we will let him come out. The self-referential Church keeps Jesus Christ within herself and does not let him out.

3. When the Church is self-referential, inadvertently, she believes she has her own light; she ceases to be the *mysterium lunae* [Latin, "mystery of the moon," i.e., reflecting the light of Christ the way the moon reflects the light of the sun] and gives way to that very serious evil, spiritual worldliness (which according to de Lubac, is the worst evil that can befall the Church). It lives to give glory only to one another.

Put simply, there are two images of the Church: Church which evangelizes and comes out of herself, the *Dei Verbum* *religiose audiens et fidente proclamans* [Latin, “Hearing the word of God with reverence and proclaiming it with faith”]; and the worldly Church, living within herself, of herself, for herself. This should shed light on the possible changes and reforms which must be done for the salvation of souls.

4. Thinking of the next pope: He must be a man who, from the contemplation and adoration of Jesus Christ, helps the Church to go out to the existential peripheries, that helps her to be the fruitful mother, who gains life from “the sweet and comforting joy of evangelizing.”

Many believe that it was this intervention that brought many electors at the Conclave to vote for Cardinal Bergoglio. I’m not sure they knew what they were getting. Perhaps this evening’s presentation will help you make the connections between the man, the short talk I just quoted, and the Pope who now leads us.

Be that as it may, I hope this presentation has prodded you to answer for yourselves the question: What is Francis doing to the Church? I invite you to continue your reflection and to share your thoughts, insights and questions with those around you. As the Pope once said, this is not a time for change, it is a change in time. How will we grasp this change, make it our own and make it Christ’s? This the question Pope Francis continually asks each of us. Let us hearken to his call and answer with all our hearts.