



"EVANGELII GAUDIUM" BY THE POPE FRANCIS: THE JOY OF THE EVANGELIZATION

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For the Pope, *Evangelii Gaudium*, or "the joy of the Gospel", is a "new stage of evangelization". "This dense text, which has about 300 points, is intended to be a demanding and paternal setting in the mission, which must be a "permanent state" in every baptized person, and therefore must always be "news". To do this, it is first of all a matter of "rediscovering fervor" by returning to the source, Christ.

The Pope thus asks each particular Church to enter resolutely into a process of "discernment, purification and reform" through five points of attention that form the five parts of the document:

- the missionary reform of the Church,
- despite the challenges of today's world and the crisis of community participation;
- the various vectors for the proclamation of the Gospel, including the homily to which the Pope devoted a long time;
- the social repercussions of evangelization;
- and finally, a final, more mystical chapter on how to be "evangelizers with the Spirit" and the Virgin Mary.

The whole book has a strong originality, especially the part concerning the Church, with a leading thread: the joy of meeting and making Christ meet, as the first words of the exhortation show: *"The joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and the whole lives of those who meet Jesus". Those who allow themselves to be saved by him are freed from sin, from sadness, from inner emptiness, from isolation. With Jesus Christ, joy is always born and reborn.*"

EXTRACTS

The joy of the Gospel

"THE JOY OF THE GOSPEL fills the heart and the whole life of those who meet Jesus. Those who allow themselves to be saved by Him are freed from sin, from sadness, from inner emptiness, from isolation. With Jesus Christ, joy is always born and reborn. In this Exhortation I wish to address the Christian faithful to invite them to a new stage of evangelization marked by that joy, and to indicate ways for the Church's journey in the years to come".

The individualistic sadness of today's world

"The great risk of today's world, with its multiple and overwhelming offer of consumption, is an individualistic sadness that springs from the comfortable and greedy heart, from the sickly search for superficial pleasures, from isolated consciousness. When the interior life is closed in on its own interests, there is no longer room for others, the poor no longer enter, the voice of God is no longer heard, the sweet joy of his love no longer rejoices, the enthusiasm for doing good no longer palpates. Believers also run this risk, which is certain and permanent. Many fall into it and become resentful, complaining, lifeless beings. That is not the choice of a worthy and full life, that is not God's desire for us, that is not the life in the Spirit that flows from the heart of the Risen Christ.

Finding Christ personally

"I invite every Christian, wherever and whenever he is, to renew right now his personal encounter with Jesus Christ or, at least, to make the decision to let himself be found by Him, to try every day without rest. There is no reason for anyone to think that this invitation is not for him."

In the trials of life, the joy of faith

"I recognize that joy is not lived in the same way in all stages and circumstances of life, sometimes very hard. It adapts and transforms itself, and always remains at least as a bud of light that is born from the personal certainty of being infinitely loved, beyond all things. I understand people who tend to be sad because of the serious difficulties they have to suffer, but little by little we must allow the joy of faith to begin to awaken, like a secret but firm trust, even in the midst of the worst anguish".

Letting God lead us beyond ourselves

Only thanks to this encounter - or re-encounter - with God's love, which becomes a happy friendship, are we rescued from our isolated conscience and from self-referentiality. We become fully human when we are more than human, when we allow God to lead us beyond ourselves to reach our truest self. Therein lies the source of evangelizing action. Because, if someone has welcomed that love which gives back to him the meaning of life, how can he contain the desire to communicate it to others?

Evangelization, God's work

"While this mission calls for a generous commitment from us, it would be a mistake to understand it as a heroic personal task, since the work is first and foremost His, beyond what we can discover and understand. Jesus is "the first and greatest evangelizer"[9]. In any form of evangelization, the primacy always lies with God, who wanted to call us to collaborate with him and impel us with the strength of his Spirit".

Right to the Gospel

"Evangelization is essentially connected with the proclamation of the Gospel to those who do not know Jesus Christ or have always rejected him. Many of them seek God secretly, moved by nostalgia for his face, even in countries of ancient Christian tradition. Everyone has the right to receive the Gospel. Christians have the duty to proclaim it without excluding anyone, not as someone who imposes a new obligation, but as someone who shares a joy".

"Go and teach the nations," Jesus said

"In the Word of God there is permanently this dynamic of "going out" that God wants to provoke in the believers. Abraham accepted the call to go out into a new land (cf. Gen 12:1-3). Moses heard God's call: "Go, I am sending you" (Ex 3:10), and he led the people out to the promised land (cf. Ex 3:17). To Jeremiah he said: "Wherever I send you, you will go" (Jer 1:7). Today, in this "go" of Jesus, the ever new scenarios and challenges of the Church's evangelizing mission are present, and we are all called to this new missionary "going out". Every Christian and every community will discern which is the path the Lord is asking of them, but we are all invited to accept this call: to go out of our own comfort zone and to dare to reach all the peripheries that need the light of the Gospel".

Evangelization in the beauty of the liturgy

"Joyful evangelization becomes beauty in the liturgy, in the daily need to promote the good. The Church evangelizes and evangelizes itself through the beauty of the liturgy, which is also a celebration of evangelizing activity and the source of a renewed impulse to give oneself".

Mission: a permanent state

"I hope that all the communities will make every effort to initiate the necessary means to advance on the path of pastoral and missionary conversion, which cannot leave things as they are. It is not a "simple administration" that we need. Let us constitute in all regions of the earth a "state of permanent mission"."

Let the structures of the Church become more missionary!

"I imagine a missionary choice capable of transforming everything, so that habits, styles, schedules, language and every ecclesial structure become a suitable channel for the evangelization of today's world, rather than for self-preservation. The reform of structures, which requires a pastoral conversion, can only be understood in this sense: trying to make all of them more missionary".

Faith and Reason

"Faith does not fear reason; on the contrary, it seeks it and trusts it, because "the light of reason and the light of faith both come from God" and cannot be contradicted."

Ecumenical Dialogue

"Ecumenical commitment is a response to the prayer of the Lord Jesus that "they may all be one" (Jn 17:21). The credibility of the Christian proclamation would be much greater if Christians would overcome their divisions and if the Church would realize "the fullness of the catholicity that is proper to it in those of its sons and daughters who, although they belong to it by baptism, are separated from its full communion."

The Church and the Jewish People

"As Christians, we cannot consider Judaism as a foreign religion, nor can we classify Jews among those called to leave idols to convert to the true God (cf. 1Thess 1:9). (...) God continues to work in the people of the First Covenant and brings forth treasures of wisdom that arise from their encounter with the divine Word."

Those who seek truth, goodness, beauty...

"As believers, we also feel close to those who, without recognizing themselves in any religious tradition, sincerely seek truth, goodness and beauty, which for us have their full expression and source in God. We see them as valuable allies in our commitment to the defence of human dignity, the construction of peaceful coexistence among peoples and the protection of creation".

The Evangelizing Holy Spirit

"How I would like to find the words to encourage a more fervent, joyful, generous, daring period of evangelization, full of deep love and contagious life! But I know that no motivation will be enough if the fire of the Spirit does not burn in hearts!"

The love of Jesus the Savior

"The first motivation to evangelize is the love of Jesus that we have received the experience of being saved by Him that impels us to love Him more and more. If we do not feel the intense desire to communicate this, we must take the time to ask him in prayer to come and seduce us. We must implore Him every day, ask Him for His grace to open our cold heart and shake our warm and superficial life".

Enthusiasm for the mission

"Sometimes we lose enthusiasm for the mission, forgetting that the Gospel responds to the deepest needs of people, because we were all created for what the Gospel proposes to us: friendship with Jesus and brotherly love. (...) We have a treasure of life and love that cannot deceive, the message that cannot manipulate or disappoint. It is a response that occurs in the depths of the human being and that can sustain and elevate him".

Following Jesus Crucified

"Jesus' sacrifice on the cross is nothing but the culmination of that style that marked his whole life. Seduced by this model, we want to integrate ourselves deeply into society, share everyone's life and listen to their concerns, collaborate materially and spiritually with them in their needs, rejoice with those who are joyful, cry with those who cry, and commit ourselves to building a new world, shoulder to shoulder with others.

A personal mission

"I am a mission on this earth, and that is why I am in this world. I must acknowledge that I am as if marked with fire by this mission to enlighten, bless, revitalize, relieve, heal, liberate."