Evangelii Gaudium!

*The Joy of the Gospel, Part 3*

Pope Francis’ Apostolic Exhortation

*by Bryan Reising*

Now on to the 3rd installment of this apostolic exhortation by Pope Francis... The following are some excerpts, some gems I found in reading this document. Let us continue to explore this apostolic exhortation:

**On the kerygma, our belief, and our response in society**

“To believe in a Father who loves all men and women with an infinite love means realizing that ‘he thereby confers upon them an infinite dignity.’ To believe that the Son of God assumed our human flesh means that each human person has been taken up into the very heart of God. To believe that Jesus shed his blood for us removes any doubt about the boundless love which ennobles each human being. Our redemption has a social dimension because ‘God, in Christ, redeems not only the individual person, but also the social relations existing between men.’ To believe that the Holy Spirit is at work in everyone means realizing that he seeks to penetrate every human situation and all social bonds: ‘The Holy Spirit can be said to possess an infinite creativity, proper to the divine mind, which knows how to loosen the knots of human affairs, even the most complex and inscrutable.’ Evangelization is meant to cooperate with this liberating work of the Spirit. The very mystery of the Trinity reminds us that we have been created in the image of that divine communion, and so we cannot achieve fulfillment or salvation purely by our own efforts. 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.” (EG, 178)

**On the Kingdom and its challenge**

“Reading the Scriptures also makes it clear that the Gospel is not merely about our personal relationship with God. Nor should our loving response to God be seen simply as an accumulation of small personal gestures to individuals in need, a kind of ‘charity à la carte,’ or a series of acts aimed solely at easing our conscience. The Gospel is about the kingdom of God (cf. Lk 4:43); it is about loving God who reigns in our world. To the extent that he reigns within us, the life of society will be a setting for universal fraternity, justice, peace, and dignity. Both Christian preaching and life, then, are meant to have an impact on society.” (EG, 177)

**On the poor and the rich**

“Sometimes it is a matter of hearing the cry of entire peoples, the poorest peoples of the earth, since ‘peace is founded not only on respect for human rights, but also on respect for the rights of peoples.’ Sadly, even human rights can be used as
a justification for an inordinate defense of individual rights or the rights of the richer peoples. With due respect for the autonomy and culture of every nation, we must never forget that the planet belongs to all mankind and is meant for all mankind; the mere fact that some people are born in places with fewer resources or less development does not justify the fact that they are living with less dignity. It must be reiterated that ‘the more fortunate should renounce some of their rights so as to place their goods more generously at the service of others’. ” (EG, 190)

On God’s special love for the poor
“God’s heart has a special place for the poor, so much so that he himself ‘became poor’ (2 Cor 8:9). The entire history of our redemption is marked by the presence of the poor. Salvation came to us from the ‘yes’ uttered by a lowly maiden from a small town on the fringes of a great empire. The Savior was born in a manger, in the midst of animals, like children of poor families; he was presented at the Temple along with two turtledoves, the offering made by those who could not afford a lamb (cf. Lk 2:24; Lev 5:7); he was raised in a home of ordinary workers and worked with his own hands to earn his bread. When he began to preach the Kingdom, crowds of the dispossessed followed him, illustrating his words: ‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor’ (Lk 4:18). He assured those burdened by sorrow and crushed by poverty that God has a special place for them in his heart: ‘Blessed are you poor, yours is the kingdom of God’ (Lk 6:20); he made himself one of them: ‘I was hungry and you gave me food to eat,’ and he taught them that mercy towards all of these is the key to heaven (cf. Mt 25:5ff.).” (EG, 197)

On the spiritual care of the poor
“Since this Exhortation is addressed to members of the Catholic Church, I want to say, with regret, that the worst discrimination which the poor suffer is the lack of spiritual care. The great majority of the poor have a special openness to the faith; they need God and we must not fail to offer them his friendship, his blessing, his word, the celebration of the sacraments, and a journey of growth and maturity in the faith. Our preferential option for the poor must mainly translate into a privileged and preferential religious care.” (EG, 200)

On the dignity of the unborn human person
“Among the vulnerable for whom the Church wishes to care with particular love and concern are unborn children, the most defenseless and innocent among us. Nowadays efforts are made to deny them their human dignity and to do with them whatever one pleases, taking their lives and passing laws preventing anyone from standing in the way of this. Frequently, as a way of ridiculing the Church’s effort to defend their lives, attempts are made to present her position as ideological, obscurantist, and conservative. Yet this defense of unborn life is closely linked to the defense of each and every other human right. It involves the conviction that a human being is always sacred and inviolable, in any situation and at every stage of development. Human beings are ends in themselves and never a means of resolving other problems. Once this conviction disappears, so do solid and lasting foundations for the defense of human rights, which would always be subject to the passing whims of the powers that be.” (EG, 213)

On God’s creation
“There are other weak and defenseless beings who are frequently at the mercy of economic interests or indiscriminate exploitation. I am speaking of creation as a whole. We human beings are not only the beneficiaries but also the stewards of other creatures. Thanks to our bodies, God has joined us so closely to the world around us that we can feel the desertification of the soil almost as a physical ailment, and the extinction of a species as a painful disfigurement. Let us not leave in our wake a swath of destruction and death which will affect our own lives and those of future generations.” (EG, 215)
specific principles which can guide the development of life in society and the building of a people where differences are harmonized within a shared pursuit. I do so out of the conviction that their application can be a genuine path to peace within each nation and in the entire world.” (EG, 221 – and those principles are time, unity, realities, and the whole)

(In this chapter, he continues to write about peace in relationship to social dialogue. This dialogue includes faith, reason, and science; ecumenical dialogue; Judaism; inter-religious dialogue with a focus on Islam; and social dialogue in the context of religious freedom.)

In February, I will continue sharing about this apostolic exhortation filled with rich and wonderful insights regarding the new evangelization. To read the entire document, go to: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/francesco/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium_en.pdf

**UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES**

**Sat, Jan 20 2018**  Called, Formed, and Sent Day – A Day for Those Who Serve in the Areas of Evangelization and Catechesis CFS 2018 Theme: Living as Missionary Disciples @ Our Mother of Mercy, Beaumont beginning at 10:00 am and ending with the 4:30 pm Mass (see attached flyer and registration form)

PCLs: Make sure you register yourself, your catechists, and other interested adults to this important day of formation! And then, send in the registration form by: Friday, January 12, 2018

**PCL Gatherings**

**Thur, Feb 15**  PCL Retreat – Langtree Duck Farm

**Thur, March 22**  Fundamentals of the RCIA by Luisa Negret and Twyla Satterthwaite; sponsored by Pflaum – Diocesan Pastoral Center

**Thur, April 19**  Curriculum Day – sponsored by the diocese - Diocesan Pastoral Center, Beaumont

**Thur, May 12**  sponsored by Loyola Press at the Diocesan Pastoral Center, Beaumont

**Parish Visits**

Bryan has been on the road starting in July for some parish visits. He can visit on the day of your Faith Formation. Or he can also do visits with pastors and catechetical leaders. Please arrange a time that you can invite him to your parish by contacting him via email: breising@dioceseofbmt.org or calling his office at 409-924-4323. He will not get to all places during the catechetical year, but he would like to get to all regions of the diocese.

What will happen with these visits? The following are some possibilities: an observation of your faith formation during the time of instruction, perhaps an in-service with your catechists, or even a catechetical presentation – guest catechist for adults, youth, or children.

**CEMI Courses and Confirmation Preparation for Adults**

Upcoming courses offerings are found at https://www.eventbrite.com/o/diocece-of-beaumont-evangelizationcatechesis-7578878365

**RCIA in the Diocese of Beaumont**

TeamRCIA rescheduled their Making Disciples Institute for Friday, April 13, 2018 and Saturday, April 14, 2018 at the Church of St. Jude Thaddeus in Beaumont. For further information and to sign up: https://www.dobgifts.org/events/making-disciples/

**University of Dayton’s Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation (VLCCF)**

**Cycle 1: January 14 - February 17, 2018**

(Registration: Opens Oct 25, 2017; Closes Jan 10, 2018)

- A Vision for Catholic Youth Ministry
- Advanced Catholic Social Teaching
- Autism in Faith Formation (SN 4)
Catechetical Planning

For those who are catechetical leaders, Bryan Reising can provide a closed course on “Designing a Parish Catechetical Plan.” Other catechetical leaders who have taken this three-week seminar found it very helpful in looking at all aspects of planning for catechesis for their AFC or parish. Please contact Bryan at breising@dioceseofbmt.org if you are interested. The course is scheduled for Cycle 2: March 4 - March 24, 2018 (seminars only) (Registration: Opens Jan 17, 2018; Closes Feb 28, 2018)

ACTS

To find out about upcoming ACTS Retreat and Activities: https://beaumontacts.org/

Safe Environment Compliance Reminders

The deadline to return the reporting forms to the diocese, along with the form noting children’s attendance and absence was December 15, 2017. If you have any concerns about the deadline please contact Sr. Esther.

edunegan@dioceseofbmt.org

An opt out form called Keeping Kids Safe is available in both English and Spanish. This is provided to the parent/guardian who prefers to do their own Safe Environment training of their children. This form must be signed and returned before your training in the fall.

In signing the Opt Out form, the parent/guardian is agreeing to train their own child. Use the opt out form provided by the diocese. Do not change the content of the form. Any opt out forms signed by the parent/guardian are turned in to you (the DRE) before the training in the fall.

Any DRE, youth minister, catechist, adults helping with youth ministry, or anyone who may be in a ministry with minors is required to

Adult Faith Formation


Formed.org is a subscription service by parish that includes adult faith formation offerings, movies, and podcasts, and ebooks: https://formed.org/
be in total compliance with safe environment requirements.
To be in compliance, one must have attended in person a Protecting God’s Children (PGC) session. After 5 years from the initial training participation, a rectification is required. This can be done either through the diocesan website online module, or by attending another in person PGC session.
If you have any questions regarding Safe Environment Training, you may contact the diocesan Safe Environment Coordinator through the following information:
Paul J Thomas
pthomas@dioceseofbmt.org
409-924-4315

Remember to abide by all the deadlines for Safe Environment. Thank you!

PGC Trainings
Protecting God’s Children for Adults

Monday January 15, 2018 @ 6:00pm
St. Francis, Orange
Facilitator: Jackie Spears
Contact: Jonnie 409-883-8232

Thursday January 25, 2018 @ 6:00pm
St. Mark, Silsbee
Facilitator: Kathy Watson
Contact: Kathy 409-781-7356

Monday January 29, 2018 @ 6:00pm
Infant Jesus Religious Education Building
Facilitator: Stacy Keen
Contact: Stacy 409-755-1734 ext.114

Monday February 5, 2018 @ 6:00pm
Lamar University Catholic Student Center
Facilitator: Kelly de la Rosa
Contact: Kelly 409-924-4360

Tuesday February 6, 2018 @ 6:00pm
Catholic Pastoral Center Conf. Room 1
Facilitator: Paul Thomas
Contact: Joseph 409-924-4309

Lent
By Twyla Satterthwaite
Lent will be here before we know it, Feb 14th!

Now is the time to be planning your Lenten activities. Our focus on “Living as Missionary Disciples” extends to your students. How do they proclaim and live out the teachings of Jesus? We must teach them what it means to live His way. Time, Talent and Treasure is always a good formula to use. Start reflecting on and preparing ways your students can use their time to help others. There are sure to be multiple opportunities in your community to reach out. We are meant to use our talents and gifts to help others. Do any of your students have special talents or does your parish have a special charism in which all can participate? Opportunities such as Living Stations of the Cross, baked goods for the hungry, visits to the homebound or creating cards to send to them. Treasures can be money collected, canned goods, or used clothing. How can your program teach the lessons of giving and service to others? Plan it now before it is too late.

Another area to consider is your catechists. Do they need a retreat? A time to reflect on their special ministry. How do they live out the call to be Missionary Disciples? If you don’t have time for a retreat how about a Lenten meditation booklet or some type of online prayer group with them. Be creative and walk through Lent with them.
**Interested in a Bachelors or Masters in Theology**

St. Thomas University in Houston:
https://www.stthom.edu/Academics/School-of-Arts-and-Sciences/Undergraduate/Theology/Index.asp

**National Conference for Catechetical Leadership (NCCL) Membership**

Join NCCL and receive *CL (Catechetical Leader) online Magazine*, CL Weekly from Margaret Matijasevic, discounts on resources, and information on the national conference and regional workshops! The cost of an individual membership to NCCL is only $75.00. This is only $6.25 a month. For further information about membership, check out the Web site: www.nccl.org. For information on the national conference (Chicago: May 30-June 2, 2018), go to www.ncc.us.

**Parish Catechesis Question**

What does Pope Francis say about Catholic Social Teaching? About the poor, the economy, the unborn, creation, and peace?