



CATECHESIS I: THE OFFICE OF THE POPE – CARRYING ON THE MISSION OF JESUS

Peter Becomes the Shepherd (John 21:15-17)

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these? He said to him, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Feed my lambs.” He then said to him a second time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Tend my sheep.” He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John do you love me?” Peter was distressed that he had said to him a third time, “Do you love me?” and he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” [Jesus] said to him, “Feed my sheep.”

And this is closeness: the shepherd close to his flock, close to his sheep,
whom he knows, one by one. (6/7/13 Sacred Heart)

IN HIS OWN WORDS: Jesus’ three questions to Peter about love are followed by three commands: feed my lambs, feed my sheep. Let us never forget that authentic power is service, and that the Pope too, when exercising power, must enter ever more fully into that service which has its radiant culmination on the Cross. He must be inspired by the lowly, concrete and faithful service which marked Saint Joseph and, like him, he must open his arms to protect all of God’s people and embrace with tender affection the whole of humanity, especially the poorest, the weakest, the least important, those whom Matthew lists in the final judgment on love: the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick and those in prison (cf. Mt 25:31-46). Only those who serve with love are able to protect! (Pope Francis 3/19/13)

FROM THE CATECHISM: In order that the mission entrusted to them might be continued after their death [the apostles] consigned, by will and testament, as it were, to their immediate collaborators the duty of completing and consolidating the work they had begun, urging them to tend the whole flock, in which the Holy Spirit had appointed them to shepherd the Church of God.

A Mission to Reveal the Father's love and the Forgiveness of Sins (John 20:2)

"Peace be with you, As the Father has sent me, so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retained are retained."

The more our mission calls us to go out into the peripheries of life, the more our hearts feel the intimate need to be united to the heart of Christ, which is full of mercy and love.

(9/21/14, Vespers)

IN HIS OWN WORDS: Dear brothers and sisters, being the Church, to be the People of God, in accordance with the Father's great design of love, means to be the leaven of God in this humanity of ours. It means to proclaim and to bring the God's salvation to this world of ours, so often led astray, in need of answers that give courage, hope and new vigor for the journey. May the Church be a place of God's mercy and hope, where all feel welcomed, loved, forgiven and encouraged to live according to the good life of the Gospel. And to make others feel welcomed, loved, forgiven and encouraged, the Church must be with doors wide open so that all may enter. And we must go out through these doors and proclaim the Gospel. (6/12/13)



CATECHESIS II: THE PRESENT PONTIFF – POPE FRANCIS: A BIG HEART OPEN TO GOD

Called by God (Isaiah 43:1a)

Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name: you are mine.

“Yes, perhaps I can say that I am a bit astute, that I can adapt to circumstances, but it is also true that I am a bit naïve. Yes, but the best summary, the one that comes more from the inside and I feel most true is this: I am a sinner whom the Lord has looked upon.”

(America Magazine, September 30, 2013)

FROM THE CATECHISM: All Christians in any state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of charity. All are called to holiness: “Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” In order to reach this perfection the faithful should use the strength dealt out to them by Christ’s gift, so that...doing the will of the Father in everything, they may wholeheartedly devote themselves to the glory of God and to the service of their neighbor. (cf 2013)

Three themes abound in the papacy of Pope Francis, our 266th pontiff:

A Church of Personal Encounter with the Saving Love of Jesus (John 5:41-42)

Many more began to believe in him because of his word, and they said to the woman, “We no longer believe because of your word; for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the savior of the world.

IN HIS OWN WORDS: I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unflinchingly each day. (The Joy of the Gospel, 3)

A Poor Church for the Poor (Luke 12:33-34)

Sell your belongings and give alms. Provide money bags for yourselves that do not wear out, an inexhaustible treasure in heaven that now thief can reach nor moth destroy. For where your treasure is, there also will be your heart

When the Cardinals elected me as Bishop of Rome and Universal Pastor of the Catholic Church, I chose the name of “Francis”, a very famous saint who loved God and every human being deeply, to the point of being called “universal brother”. He loved, helped and served the needy, the sick and the poor; he also cared greatly for creation. (Pope Francis, 7/10/13)

IN HIS OWN WORDS: A prayer that does not lead you to practical action for your brother — the poor, the sick, those in need of help, a brother in difficulty — is a sterile and incomplete prayer. But, in the same way . . . When time is not set aside for dialogue with him in prayer, we risk serving ourselves and not God present in our needy brother and sister. St. Benedict sums up the kind of life that indicated for his monks in two words: ora et labora, pray and work. It is from contemplation, from a strong friendship with the Lord that the capacity is born in us to live and to bring the love of God, his mercy, his tenderness, to others. And also our work with brothers in need, our charitable works of mercy, lead us to the Lord, because it is in the needy brother and sister that we see the Lord himself. (7/21/13)

A Church of Mercy - God Never Tires of Forgiving Us (Psalm 145:8)

The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness. The Lord is good to all and compassionate toward all his works.

IN HIS OWN WORDS: I am always struck when I reread the parable of the merciful Father. ... The Father, with patience, love, hope and mercy, had never for a second stopped thinking about [his wayward son], and as soon as he sees him still far off, he runs out to meet him and embraces him with tenderness, the tenderness of God, without a word of reproach. ... God is always waiting for us, He never grows tired. Jesus shows us this merciful patience of God so that we can regain confidence and hope — always! (Pope Francis, Homily on Divine Mercy Sunday, April 7, 2013)



CATECHESIS III: POPE FRANCIS AS BISHOP OF ROME, PASTOR OF THE ENTIRE CHURCH

You Are Rock (Matthew 16:18-19)

And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

FROM THE CATECHISM: The Lord made Simon alone, who he named Peter, the “rock” of his Church. He gave him the keys of his Church and instituted him shepherd of the whole flock. The office of binding and loosing which was given to Peter was also assigned to the college of apostles united to its head. This pastoral office of Peter and the other apostles belongs to the Church’s very foundation and is continued by the bishops under the primacy of the Pope. (881)

In doing so, Jesus entrusted his triple ministry – teaching, sanctifying and governing - to the Church.

Please pray for me.

(Pope Francis on the one year anniversary of election)

Perseverance in Teaching (2 Timothy: 4:2)

Proclaim the word; be persistent whether it is convenient or inconvenient; convince, reprimand, encourage through all patience and teaching.

IN HIS OWN WORDS: “God is love”. His is not a sentimental, emotional kind of love but the love of the Father who is the origin of all life, the love of the Son who dies on the Cross and is raised, the love of the Spirit who renews human beings and the world. Thinking that God is love does us so much good, because it teaches us to love, to give ourselves to others as Jesus gave himself to us and walks with us. Jesus walks beside us on the road through life. (5/26/13)

Sanctifying Grace: (Ephesians 1:9)

In him we have redemption by his blood, the forgiveness of our transgressions, in accord with his riches of his grace, that he lavished upon us.

IN HIS OWN WORDS: The Sacraments express and realize an effective and profound communion among us, for in them we encounter Christ the Savior and, through him, our brothers and sisters in faith. . . . When we

celebrate the Eucharist it is the living Jesus who brings us together, forms us into a community, allows us to adore the Father. Each one of us, in fact, through Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist, is incorporated into Christ and united to the entire community of believers. Therefore, if on the one hand it is the Church that “makes” the Sacraments, on the other, it is the Sacraments that “make” the Church, that build her up, by generating new children, by gathering them into the holy people of God, by strengthening their membership. (11/6/13)

Authority and Mission (Isaiah 9:5)

For a child is born to us, a son is given us; upon his shoulders dominion rests. They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace.

IN HIS OWN WORDS: Leadership also means making the most just decision after having considered all the options from the standpoint of personal responsibility and concern for the common good. . . . To act responsibly is to see one’s own actions in the light of other people’s rights and God’s judgment. This ethical sense appears today as an unprecedented historic challenge, we must search for it and we must enshrine it within our society. Beyond scientific and technical competence, the present situation also demands a sense of moral obligation expressed in a social and deeply fraternal exercise of responsibility. (Pope Francis, 7/27/13, To Leaders)