

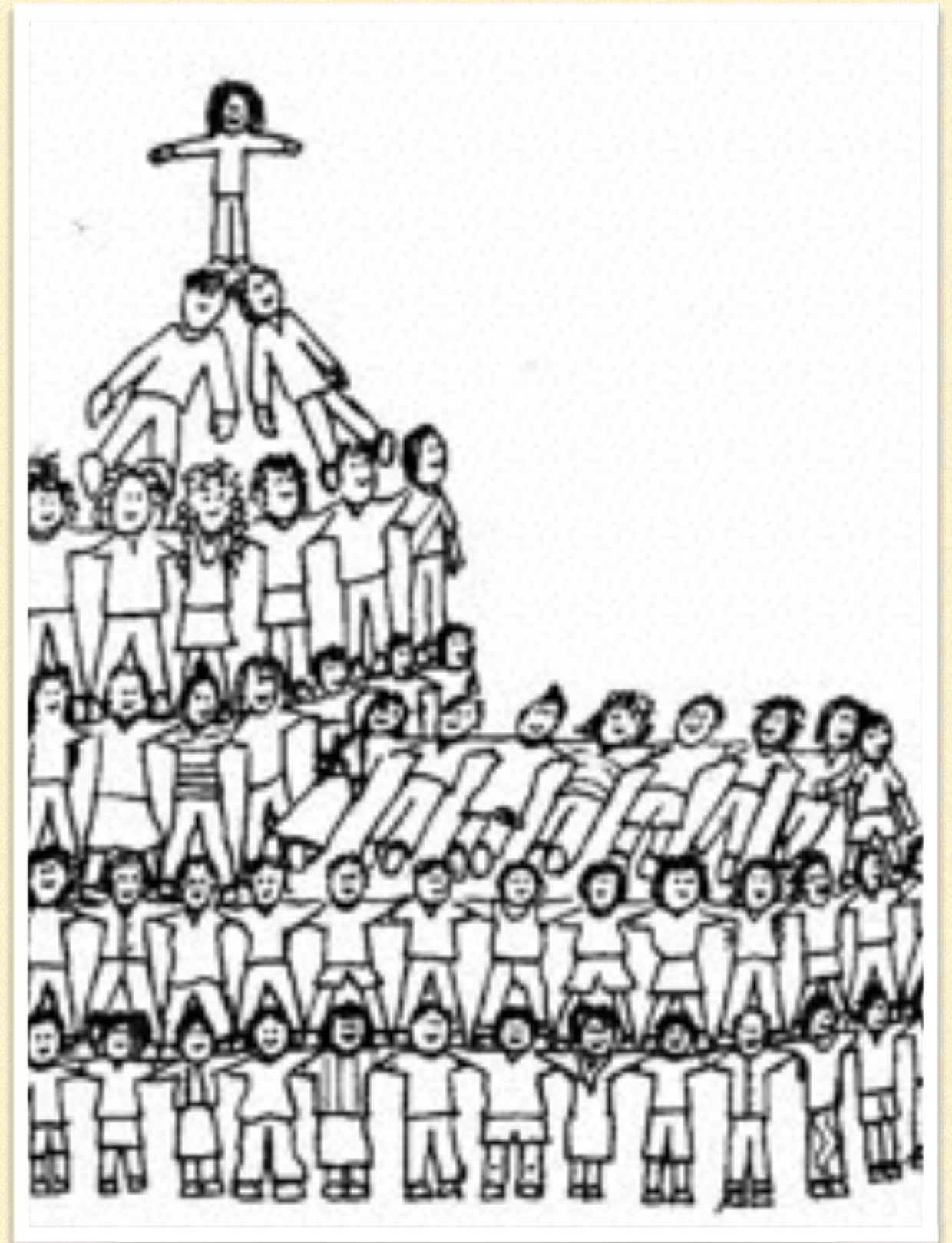


THE JOY OF THE GOSPEL

Chapter 3: The Proclamation of the Gospel

Part I

THE ENTIRE PEOPLE OF GOD PROCLAIMS THE GOSPEL



CALLED TO BE A PILGRIM PEOPLE

- “The Church is first and foremost a people advancing on its pilgrim way towards God” (EG 111)
- Salvation is a work of God’s mercy, with a social dimension: “the Lord, with great respect and love, is also calling you to be a part of his people!” (EG 113)
- Impacting on the world: “we are to be God’s leaven in the midst of humanity.” (EG 114)
- The Church must be a place of mercy freely given, where everyone can feel welcomed, love, forgiven and encouraged to live the good life of the Gospel.

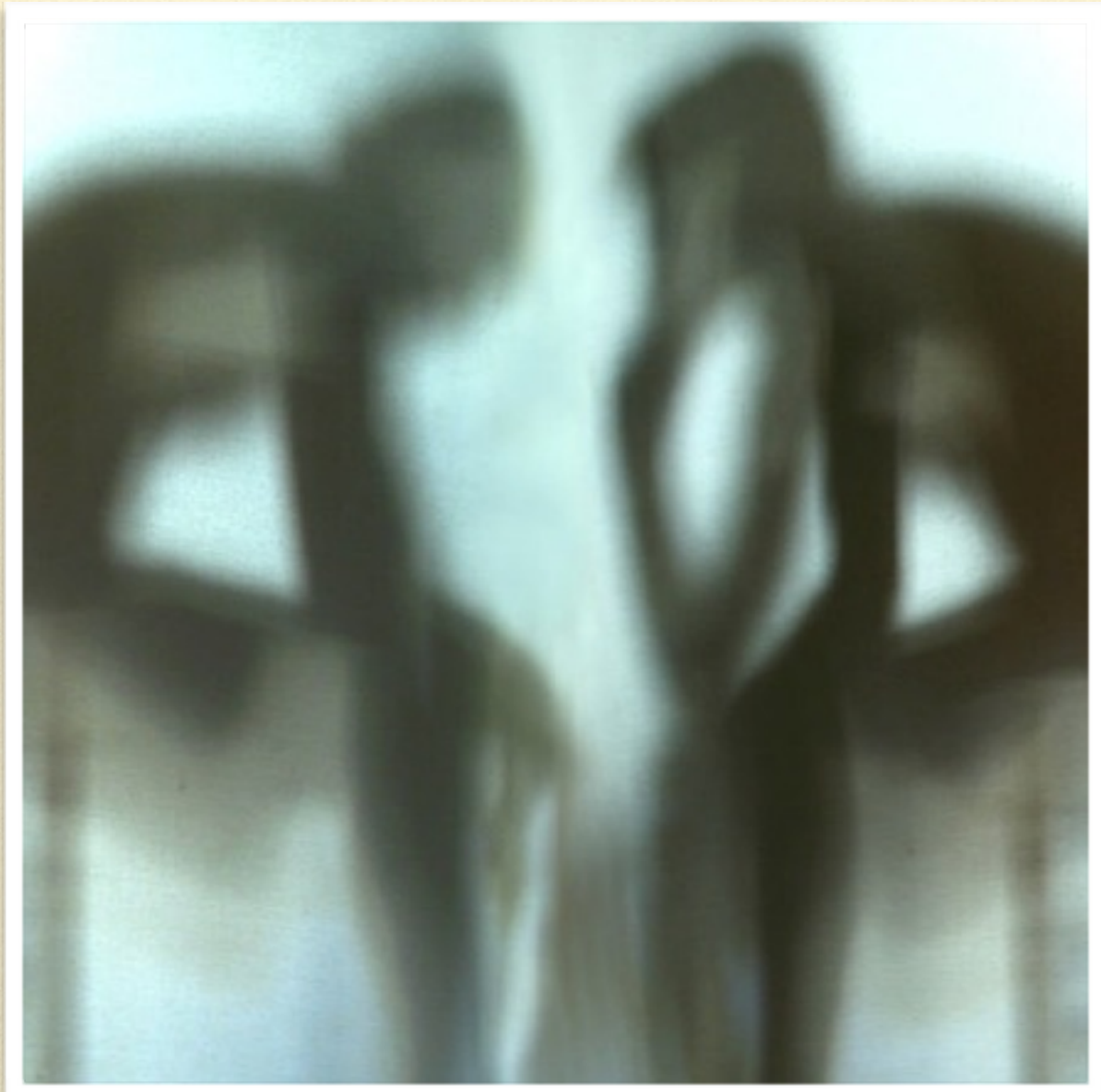
A MULTICULTURAL CHURCH



We would not do justice to the logic of the incarnation if we thought of Christianity as monocultural and monotonous. (EG 117)

We cannot demand that peoples of every continent, in expressing their Christian faith, imitate modes of expression which European nations developed at a particular moment of their history, because the faith cannot be constricted to the limits of understanding and expression of any one culture. It is an indisputable fact that no single culture can exhaust the mystery of our redemption in Christ. (EG 118)

ALL ARE MISSIONARY DISCIPLES



- All the baptized, whatever their position in the Church or their level of instruction in the faith, are agents of evangelization (EG 119)
- We need to mature as evangelisers, but even as we are we have something to offer:
- 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 (EG 121)

POPULAR PIETY

Our Lady, Untier of Knots

Gospel inculturated in a particular culture leads to popular piety “a true expression of the spontaneous missionary activity of the people of God. This is an ongoing and developing process, of which the Holy Spirit is the principal agent.” (EG 122)

Popular piety is not devoid of content “rather it discovers and expresses that content more by way of symbols than by discursive reasoning, and in the act of faith greater accent is placed on *credere in Deum* than on *credere Deum*.” (EG 124)





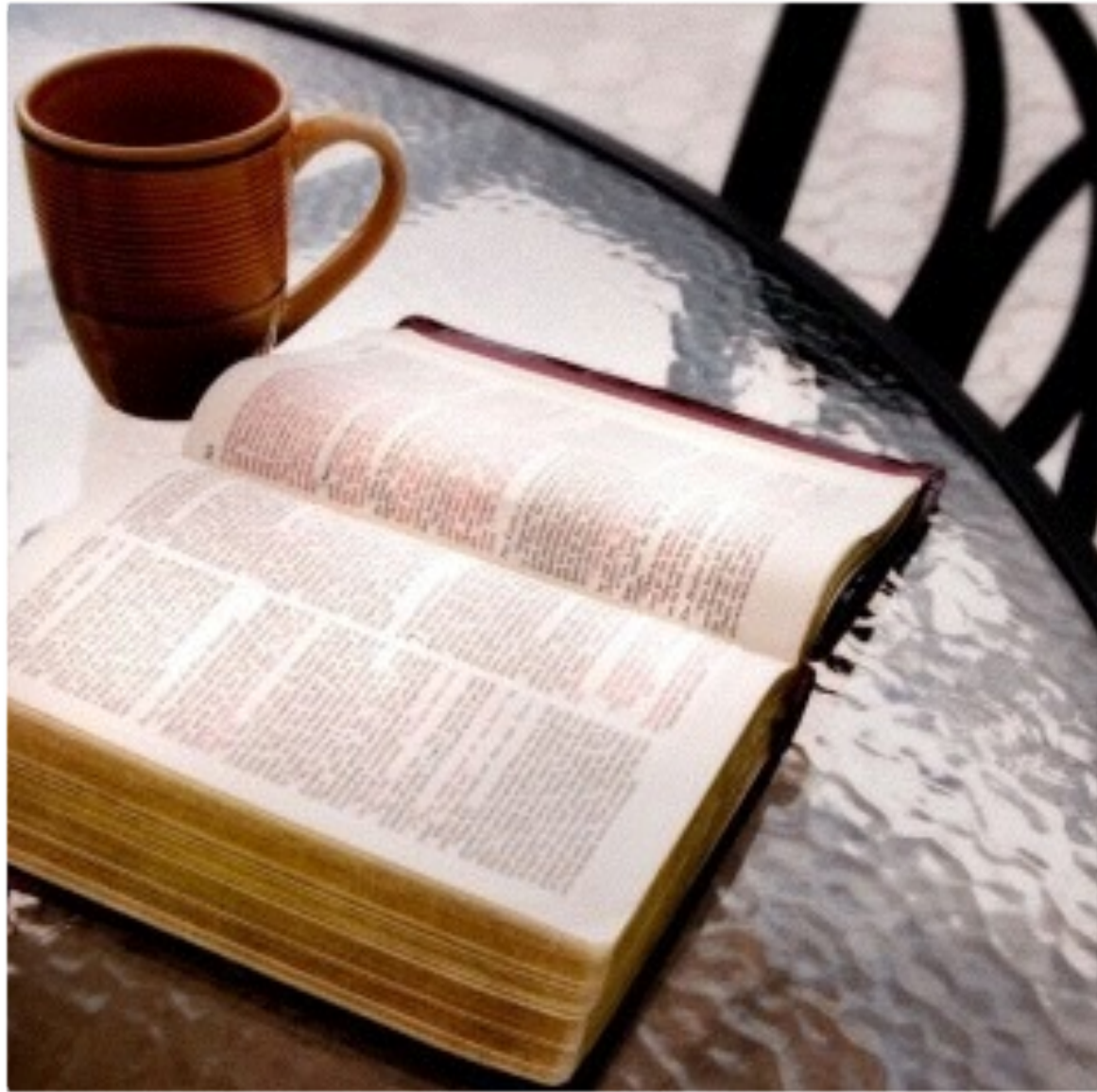
APARECIDA

**National Shrine of
Our Lady of Aparecida**

Brazil

- To understand this reality we need to approach it with the gaze of the Good Shepherd, who seeks not to judge but to love. Only from the affective connaturality (empathy?) born of love can we appreciate the theological life present in the piety of Christian peoples, especially among their poor. I think of the steadfast faith of those mothers tending their sick children who, though perhaps barely familiar with the articles of the creed, cling to a rosary; or of all the hope poured into a candle lighted in a humble home with a prayer for help from Mary, or in the gaze of tender love directed to Christ crucified. No one who loves God's holy people will view these actions as the expression of a purely human search for the divine. They are the manifestation of a theological life nourished by the working of the Holy Spirit who has been poured into our hearts (cf. *Rom* 5:5). (EG 125)
- “Expressions of popular piety have much to teach us; for those who are capable of reading them, they are a *locus theologicus* which demands our attention, especially at a time when we are looking to the new evangelization.” (EG 126)

PERSON TO PERSON



Being a disciple means being constantly ready to bring the love of Jesus to others, and this can happen unexpectedly and in any place: on the street, in a city square, during work, on a journey. (EG 127)

In this preaching, which is always respectful and gentle, the first step is personal dialogue, when the other person speaks and shares his or her joys, hopes and concerns for loved ones, or so many other heartfelt needs. (EG 128)

We should not think, however, that the Gospel message must always be communicated by fixed formulations learned by heart or by specific words which express an absolutely invariable content (EG 129)

CHARISMS - A GIFT OR A DANGER?



- “They [charisms] are not an inheritance, safely secured and entrusted to a **small group** for safekeeping; rather they are gifts of the Spirit integrated into the body of the Church, drawn to the centre which is Christ and then channelled into an evangelizing impulse. A sure sign of the authenticity of a charism is its ecclesial character, its ability to be integrated harmoniously into the life of God’s holy and faithful people for the good of all.” (EG 130)
- Danger of being exclusive and divisive, or wishing to impose monolithic uniformity (EG 131)

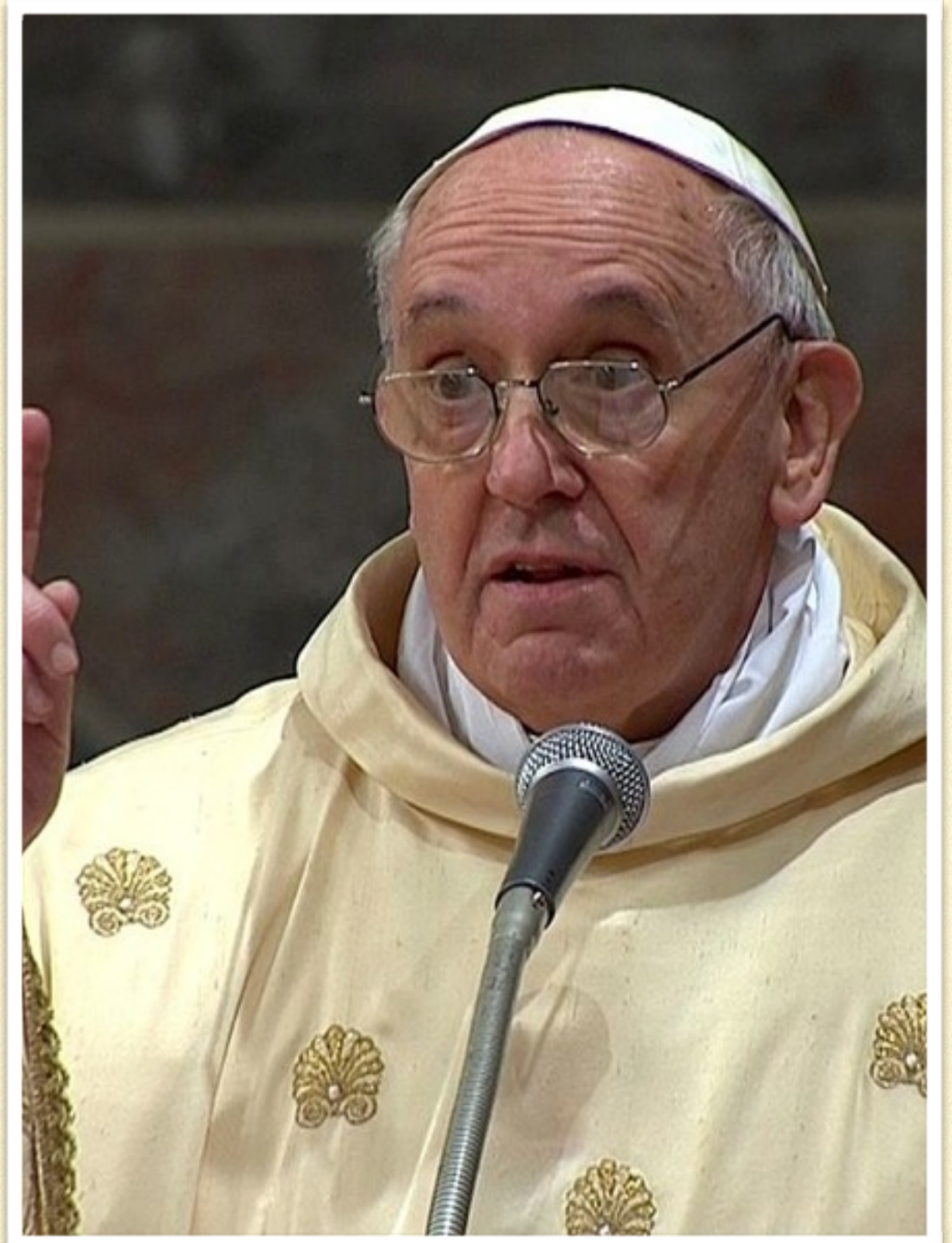
DIALOGUE WITH CULTURE

“A theology – and not simply a pastoral theology – which is in dialogue with other sciences and human experiences is most important for our discernment on how best to bring the Gospel message to different cultural contexts and groups..... [theologians] must always remember that the Church and theology exist to evangelise, and not be content with desk-bound theology.” (EG 133)

- dialogue with professional, scientific and academic circles
- dialogue with universities

Part 2

THE HOMILY



THE HOMILY



“The homily is the touchstone for judging a pastor’s closeness and ability to communicate to his people. We know that the faithful attach great importance to it, and that both they and their ordained ministers **suffer** because of homilies: the laity from having to listen to them and the clergy from having to preach them! It is sad that this is the case. **The homily can actually be an intense and happy experience of the Spirit, a consoling encounter with God’s word, a constant source of renewal and growth.**” (EG 135)

DIALOGUE

- A dialogue between God and people (EG 136)
- Preaching must know the heart of his community (EG 136)
- The Lord, rather than his ministers will be the centre of attention (EG 138)
- Quality of relationship with people like mother and child (EG 139), or Jesus looking at people. “The Lord truly enjoys talking with his people; the preacher should strive to communicate that same enjoyment to his listeners. (EG 141)

DIALOGUE IS MORE THAN THE COMMUNICATION OF A TRUTH



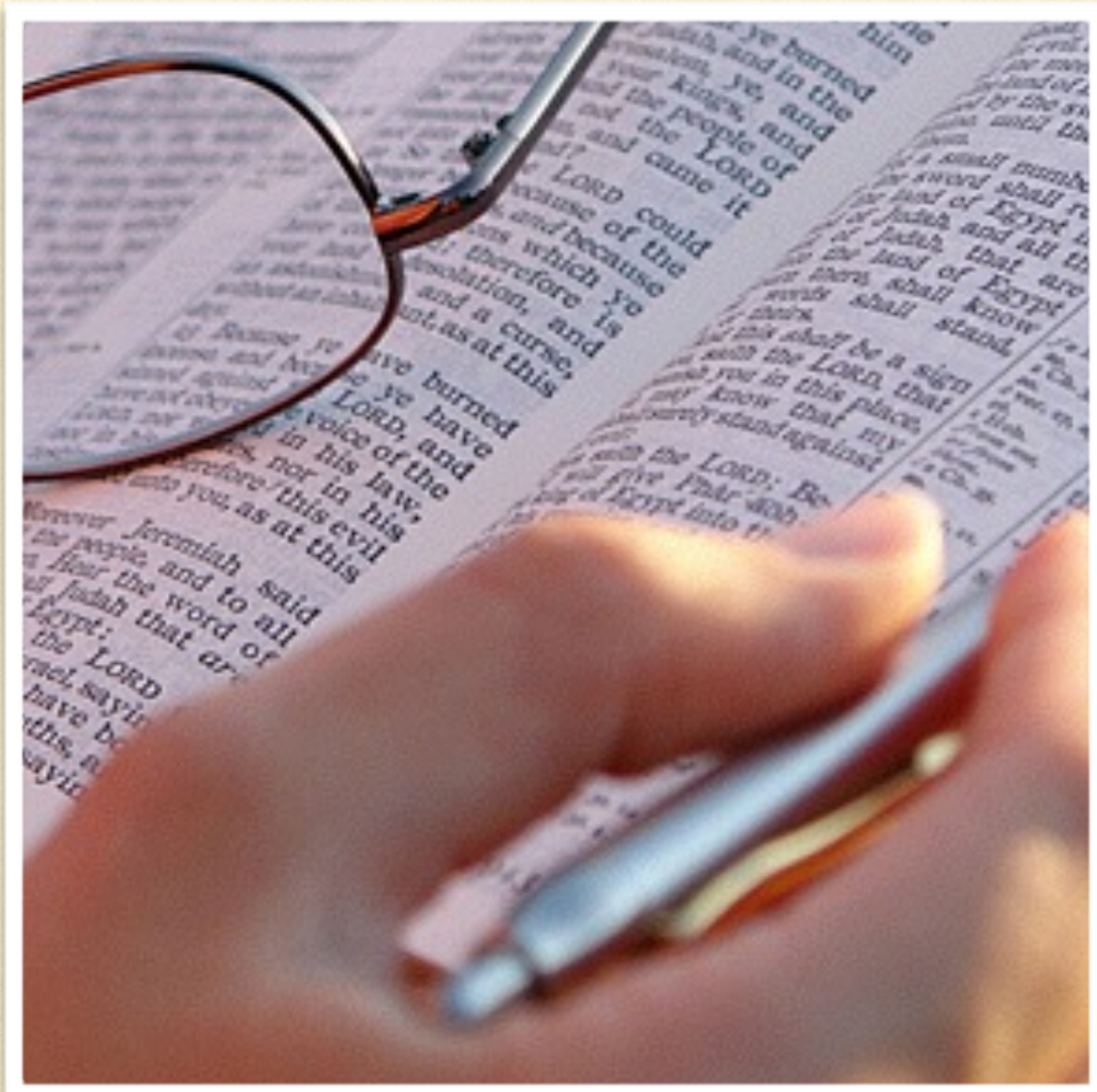
- It [dialogue] arises from the enjoyment of speaking and it enriches those who express their love for one another through the medium of words. (EG 142)
- Where your synthesis is, there lies your heart. The difference between enlightening people with a synthesis and doing so with detached ideas is like the difference between boredom and heartfelt fervour” (EG 143)
- To speak from the heart means that our hearts must not just be on fire, but also enlightened by the fullness of revelation and by the path travelled by God’s word in the heart of the Church and our faithful people throughout history (EG 144)

Part 3

HOMILY PREPARATION



TIME

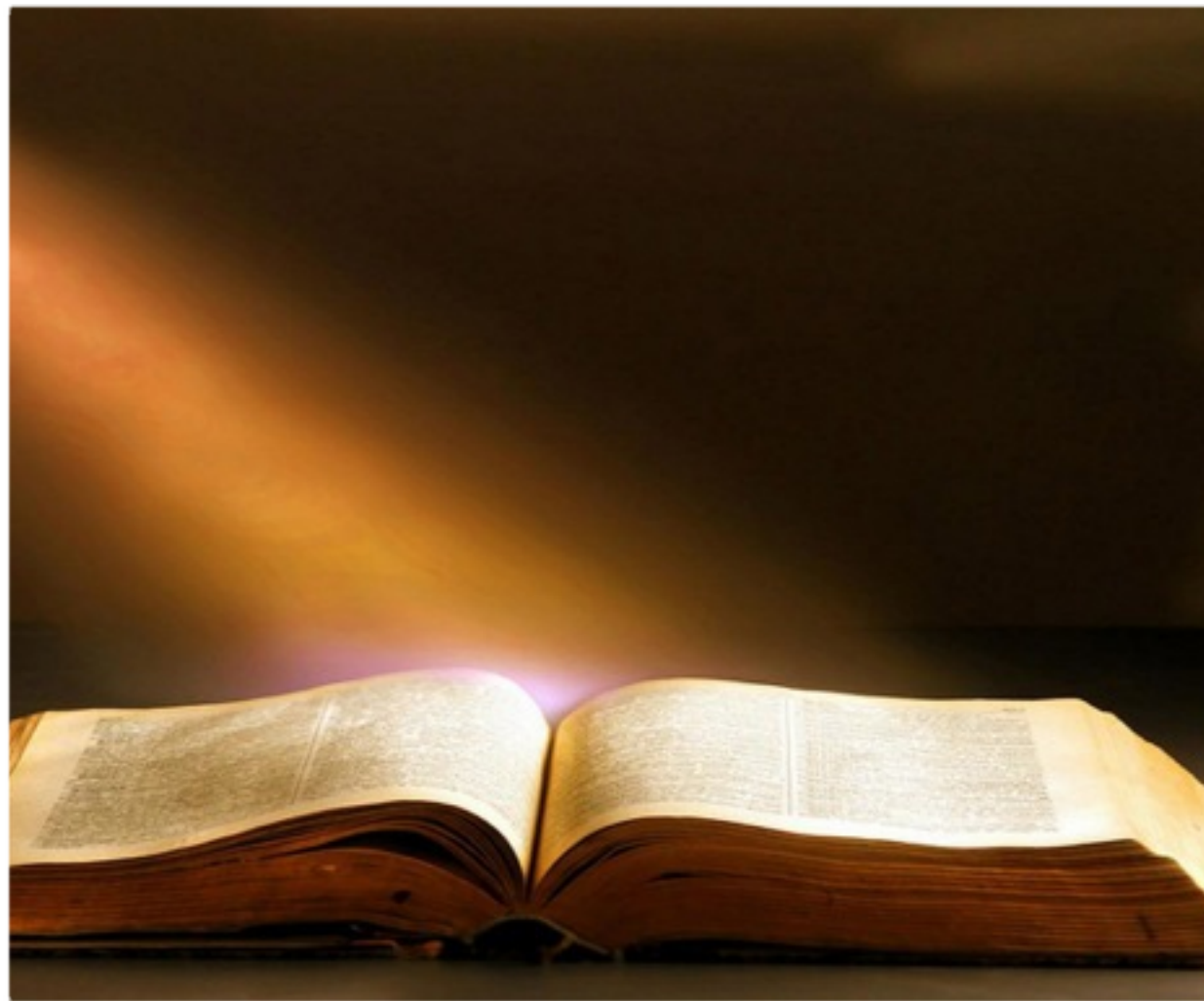


Preparation for preaching is so important a task that a **prolonged time** of study, prayer, reflection and pastoral creativity should be devoted to it.

The need to devote **quality time** to this precious ministry.

I presume to ask that each week a sufficient portion of **personal and community time** be dedicated to this task, even if less time has to be given to other important activities. (EG 145)

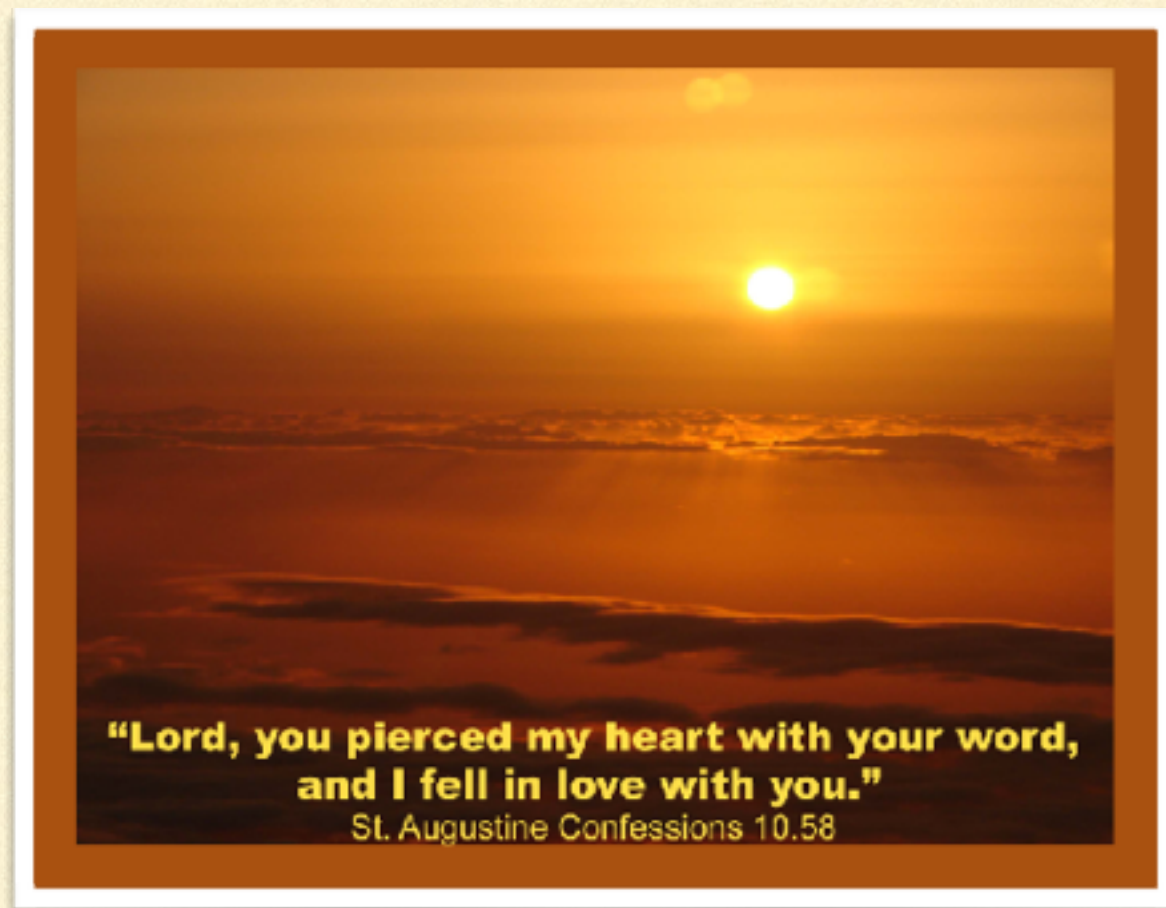
UNDERSTAND THE TEXT



“But our own aim is not to understand every little detail of a text; our most important goal is to discover its principal message....The central message is what the author primarily wanted to communicate; this calls for recognizing not only the author’s ideas but the effect which he wanted to produce.”

(EG 147)

PERSONALISE THE TEXT



- "Before preparing what we will actually say when preaching, we need to let ourselves be penetrated by that word which will also penetrate others,... Today too, people prefer to listen to witnesses: they "thirst for authenticity" and "call for evangelizers to speak of a God whom they themselves know and are familiar with, as if they were seeing him." (EG 150)

SPIRITUAL READING (LECTIO DIVINA)

In the presence of God, during a recollected reading of the text, it is good to ask, for example:

“Lord, what does this text say *to me*?
What is it about my life that you want to change by this text?
What troubles me about this text?
Why am I not interested in this?
Or perhaps: What do I find pleasant in this text?
What is it about this word that moves me?
What attracts me?
Why does it attract me?”
(EG 153)

AN EAR TO THE PEOPLE

- The preacher also needs to keep his ear to the people and to discover what it is that the faithful need to hear..... He needs to be able to link the message of a biblical text to a human situation, to an experience which cries out for the light of God's word..... Fundamentally it is a “spiritual sensitivity for reading God's message in events”, and this is much more than simply finding something interesting to say. What we are looking for is “what the Lord has to say in this or that particular circumstance” (EG 154)

QUALITIES OF A GOOD HOMILY

- “**Speak concisely**, say much in few words” (*Sir* 32:8). (EG 156)
- A good homily, an old teacher once told me, should have “an idea, a sentiment, an **image**.” (EG 157)
- “**Simple, clear, direct, well-adapted**”.... The greatest risk for a preacher is that he becomes so accustomed to his own language that he thinks that everyone else naturally understands and uses it....
- **Simplicity and clarity** are two different things. Our language may be simple but our preaching not very clear
- We need to ensure, then, that the homily has thematic unity, clear order and correlation between sentences, so that people can follow the preacher easily and grasp his line of argument. (EG 158)
- “Another feature of a good homily is that it is **positive**. Positive preaching always offers hope, points to the future, does not leave us trapped in negativity. How good it is when priests, deacons and the laity gather periodically to discover resources which can make preaching more attractive!” (EG 159)

Part 4

**EVANGELISATION
AND A
DEEPER
UNDERSTANDING OF
THE
KERYGMA
[*THE MESSAGE*]**



- The Lord's missionary mandate includes a **call to growth in faith** (EG 160)
- It would not be right to see this call to growth exclusively or primarily in terms of doctrinal formation.
- It means above all the new commandment, the first and the greatest of the commandments, and the one that best identifies us as Christ's disciples: "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you" (EG 161)
- Growth is preceded by the gift of God's grace which enables "that constant sanctification which pleases God and gives him glory. In this way, we allow ourselves to be transformed in Christ through a life lived "according to the Spirit" (*Rom 8:5*). (EG 162)

PROCLAMATION

- “On the lips of the catechist the first proclamation must ring out over and over: **“Jesus Christ loves you; he gave his life to save you; and now he is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen and free you.”** (EG 164)
- “All Christian formation consists of entering more deeply into the kerygma” (EG 165)



INITIATION



- Integration into community
- Appreciation of liturgical signs
- Role of beauty and the arts
- Moral dimension to be presented positively “Rather than experts in dire predictions, dour judges bent on rooting out every threat and deviation, we should appear as joyful messengers of challenging proposals, guardians of the goodness and beauty which shine forth in a life of fidelity to the Gospel.” (EG 168)

PERSONAL ACCOMPANIMENT

- Spiritual accompaniment must lead others ever closer to God (EG 170)
- We need to practice the art of listening, which is more than simply hearing. Listening, in communication, is an openness of heart which makes possible that closeness without which genuine spiritual encounter cannot occur. Listening helps us to find the right gesture and word which shows that we are more than simply bystanders. (EG 171)
- Non-judgmental (EG 172)
- Accompaniment in the service of evangelization “Missionary disciples accompany missionary disciples.” (EG 173)

CENTRED ON THE WORD OF GOD



The sacred Scriptures are the very source of evangelization. Consequently, we need to be constantly trained in hearing the word. The Church does not evangelize unless she constantly lets herself be evangelized. (EG 174)

The study of the sacred Scriptures must be a door opened to every believer (EG 175)