



THE JOY OF THE GOSPEL

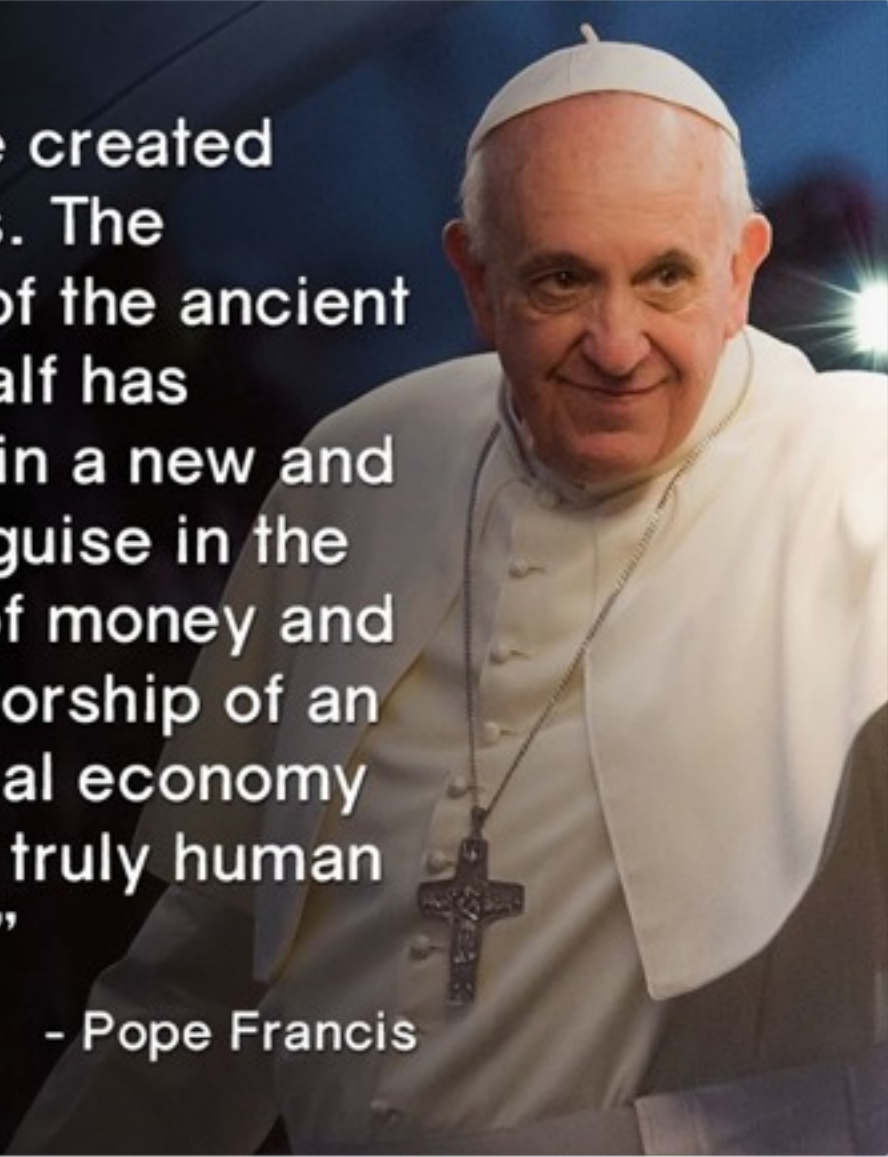
Chapter 2: Amid the Crisis of Communal Commitment



“GO FORTH”

The challenges of the context in which Evangelization takes place today:
‘a crisis of communal commitment’

ECONOMIC FACTORS

A portrait of Pope Francis, an elderly man with white hair, wearing a white zucchetto and a white cassock with a pectoral cross. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera.

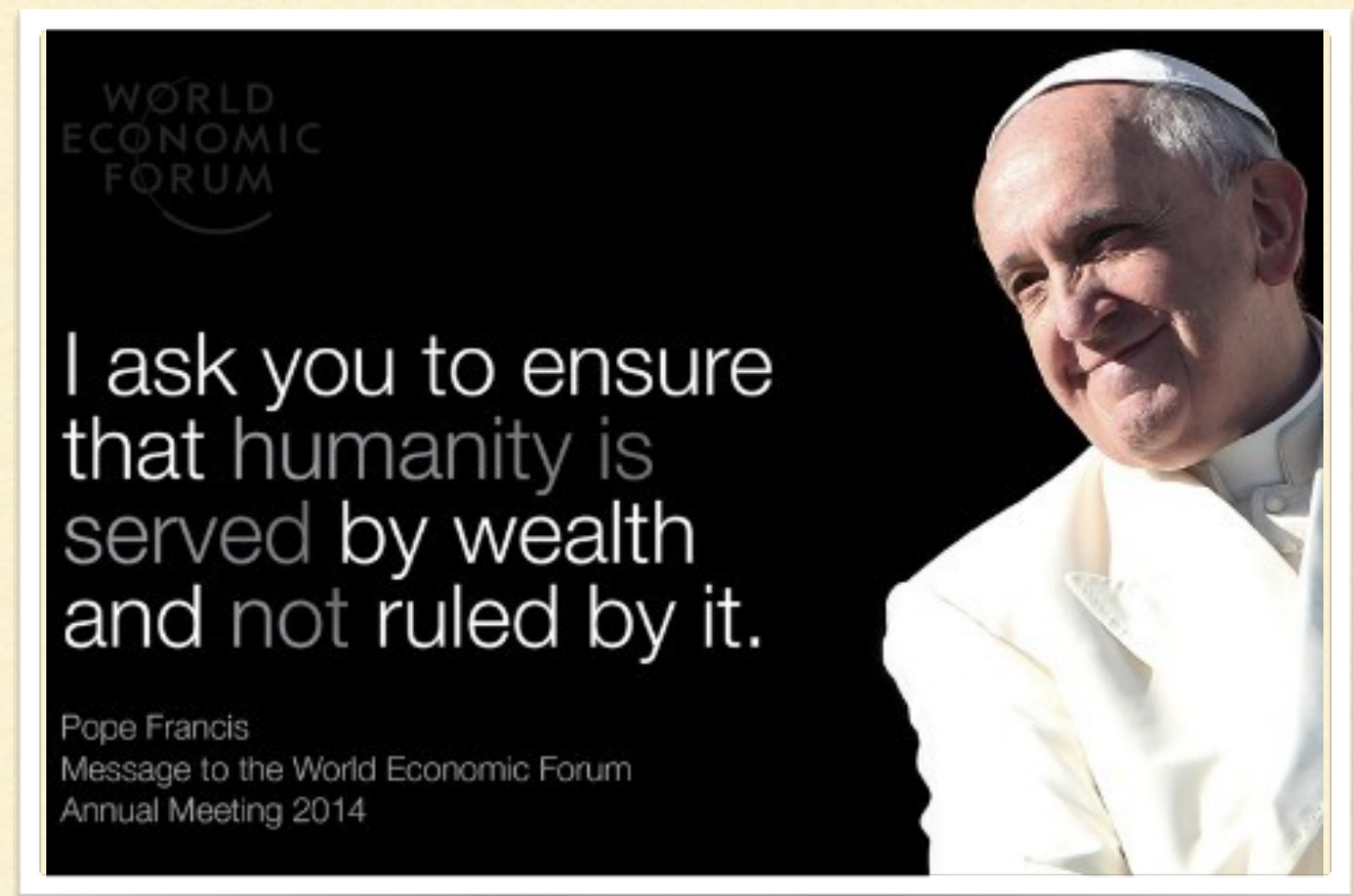
“We have created new idols. The worship of the ancient golden calf has returned in a new and ruthless guise in the idolatry of money and the dictatorship of an impersonal economy lacking a truly human purpose.”

- Pope Francis

- Gap between rich and poor is growing
- Economy of exclusion
- Thirst for power and possessions lacks no limits
- Idolatry of money: consumption the only value of the person
- Absolute autonomy of the market place
- Poverty breeds violence
- Corruption aggravated the situation
- Ethics are derided

“A financial reform
open to
such ethical
considerations
would require
a vigorous
change of approach
on the part of
political leaders..

Money must serve,
not rule.” (EG 58)





Church & Culture

A lack of
communal
commitment

CULTURE

- Indifference and relativism (61)
- Reaction to anything that might appear totalitarian (61)
- Difficult to devise a common plan which transcends individual gain and personal ambitions (61)
- Impact of globalisation on traditional values (62)

CULTURE

- Proliferation of new religious movements (EG 63)
- Attempts to restrict faith to the private and personal domain (EG 64)
- Individualism and the weakening of family bonds and committed relationships (EG 66-67)

“the weakening of these bonds
is particularly serious
because the family is the
fundamental cell of society
where we learn
to live with others
despite our differences
and to belong to each other.”

(EG66)

ENCULTURATING FAITH

- Where a Christian substratum exists, it can provide “a moral resource which preserves the values of an authentic Christian humanism” (EG 68)
- Cultures need ongoing evangelisation (EG 69)
- Warning on undue emphasis on local traditions or private revelations “which would replace all else” (EG 70)

CITIES



- New cultures constantly being born
- “This challenges us to imagine innovative spaces and possibilities for prayer and communion which are more attractive and meaningful for city dwellers” (EG 73)
- “What is needed is an evangelisation capable of shedding light on these new ways of relating to God, to others and the world around us.” (EG 74)
- Subcultures and social problems

PASTORAL WORKERS



“I feel tremendous gratitude to all those who are committed to working in and for the Church....

They help so many people...

This witness comforts and sustains me in my own effort to overcome selfishness and to give more fully of myself.” (EG 76)

CARE

I am aware that
we need to create spaces
where pastoral workers
can be helped
and healed
(EG 77)



Temptations: inadequate spirituality

“the spiritual life comes to be identified with a few religious exercises which can offer a certain comfort but which do not encourage

encounter with others,

engagement with the world

or a passion for evangelization” (EG 78)

- ❖ Individualism
- ❖ Cooling of fervour
- ❖ Crisis of identity
- ❖ Inordinate concern for personal freedom
- ❖ unhappiness
- ❖ lack of energy

“Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of the joy of evangelization!” (EG 83)

- ❖ “The problem is not always an excess of activity, but rather activity undertaken badly, without adequate motivation, without a spirituality which would permeate it and make it pleasurable.” (EG 82)
- ❖ And so the biggest threat of all gradually takes shape: “the gray pragmatism of the daily life of the Church, in which all appears to proceed normally, while in reality faith is wearing down and degenerating into small-mindedness”. (EG 83)



NO to sterile pessimism

- * See evils of the world not as excuses to diminish our fervour, but as challenges which can help us to grow. (EG 84)
- * In our times, divine Providence is leading us to a new order of human relations which, by human effort and even beyond all expectations, are directed to the fulfilment of God's superior and inscrutable designs, in which everything, even human setbacks, leads to the greater good of the Church". (EG 84)
- * One of the more serious temptations which stifles boldness and zeal is a defeatism which turns us into querulous and disillusioned pessimists, "sourpusses". (EG 85)
- * Thus in today's world there are innumerable signs, often expressed implicitly or negatively, of the thirst for God, for the ultimate meaning of life. And in the desert people of faith are needed who, by the example of their own lives, point out the way to the Promised Land and keep hope alive". (EG 86)
- * Let us now allow ourselves to be robbed of hope (EG 86)

COMMUNICATION AND ENCOUNTER



Communication is not always **ENCOUNTER**

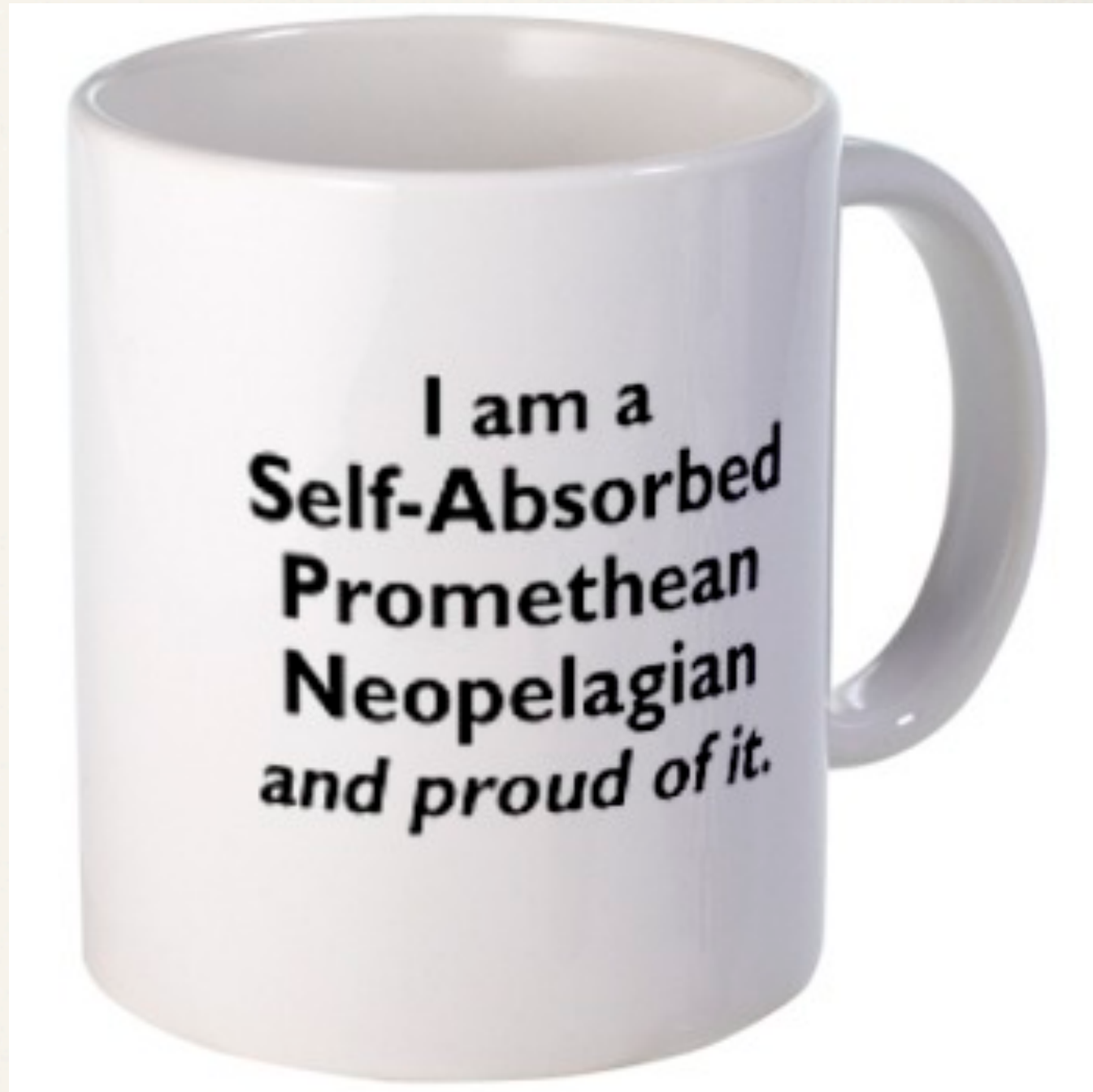
“The Gospel tells us constantly to run the risk of a face-to-face encounter with others, with their physical presence which challenges us, with their pain and their pleas, with their joy which infects us in our close and continuous interaction.” (EG 88)

“We need to help others to realize that the only way is to learn how to encounter others with the right attitude, which is to accept and esteem them as companions along the way, without interior resistance.” (EG 90)

“We are called to bear witness to a constantly new way of living together in fidelity to the Gospel. Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of community!” (EG 91)

Spiritual worldliness

- ❖ seeking not God's glory, but human glory and personal well-being
- ❖ gnosticism (elite)
- ❖ pelagianism (DIY spirituality)
- ❖ ostentatious preoccupation with liturgy
- ❖ fascination with social and political gain



- ❖ Business mentality where “the beneficiary is not God’s people but the Church as an institution” (EG 95)
- ❖ Evangelical fervour is replaced by the empty pleasure of complacency and self-indulgence” (EG 95)
- ❖ Elaborate pastoral projects in which “We engage in endless fantasies and we lose contact with the real lives and difficulties of people.” (EG 96)
- ❖ “Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of the Gospel” (EG 97)

DIVISIONS

“How many wars take place within the people of God and in our different communities! In our neighbourhoods and in the workplace, how many wars are caused by envy and jealousy, even among



“I especially ask Christians in communities throughout the world to offer a radiant and attractive witness of fraternal communion.....

Beware of the temptation of jealousy! We are all in the same boat and headed to the same port! Let us ask for the grace to rejoice in the gifts of each, which belong to all. (EG 99)



HISTORICAL DIVISIONS

“It always pains me greatly to discover how some Christian communities, and even consecrated persons, can tolerate different forms of enmity, division, calumny, defamation, vendetta, jealousy and the desire to impose certain ideas at all costs, even to persecutions which appear as veritable witch hunts. Whom are we going to evangelize if this is the way we act?”

(EG 100)

“We all have our likes and dislikes, and perhaps at this very moment we are angry with someone. At least let us say to the Lord: “Lord, I am angry with this person, with that person. I pray to you for him and for her”. To pray for a person with whom I am irritated is a beautiful step forward in love, and an act of evangelization. Let us do it today! Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of the ideal of fraternal love!” (EG 101)



✧ Laity

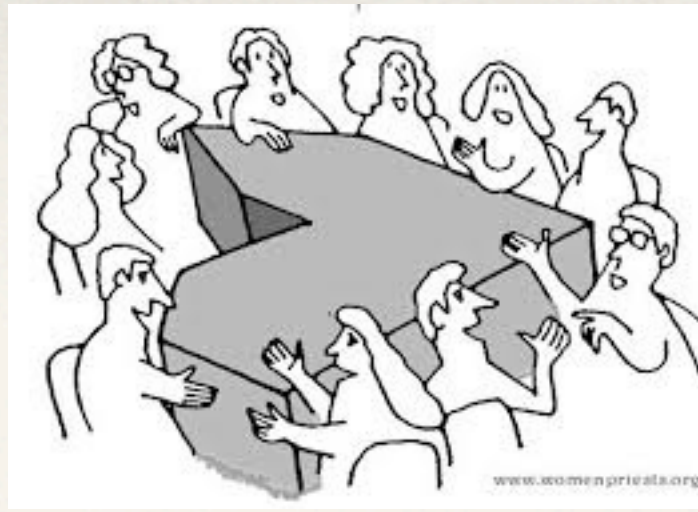
✧ Women

✧ Youth

✧ Vocations



LAITY



- ❖ Growing awareness of identity and mission of laity
- ❖ Awareness of this responsibility, based on Baptism, does not appear in the same way in all places
- ❖ Lack of formation contributes to this
- ❖ Excessive clericalism excludes laity
- ❖ “It often remains tied to tasks within the Church, without a real commitment to applying the Gospel to the transformation of society.” (EG 102)

WOMEN



- ❖ “We need to create still broader opportunities for a more incisive female presence in the Church.” (EG 103)
- ❖ “The reservation of the priesthood to males, as a sign of Christ the Spouse who gives himself in the Eucharist, is not a question open to discussion.” (EG 104)
- ❖ It must be remembered that when we speak of sacramental power ‘we are in the realm of function, not that of dignity or holiness’. (EG 104)
- ❖ This presents a great challenge for pastors and theologians, who are in a position to recognize more fully what this entails with regard to the possible role of women in decision-making in different areas of the Church’s life.” (EG 104)

YOUTH



- ❖ “Young people often fail to find responses to their concerns, needs, problems and hurts in the usual structures.” (EG 105)
- ❖ “Progress has been made in two areas:

the awareness that the entire community is called to evangelize and educate the young,

and the urgent need for the young to exercise greater leadership.” (EG 106)

VOCATIONS

- ❖ “a dearth of vocations to the priesthood often due to a lack of contagious apostolic fervour in communities.” (EG 107)
- ❖ “We are increasingly aware of the need for a better process of selecting candidates to the priesthood. Seminaries cannot accept candidates on the basis of any motivation whatsoever, especially if those motivations have to do with affective insecurity or the pursuit of power, human glory or economic well-being.” (EG 108)

INVITATION TO LISTEN TO YOUNG AND OLD

“I invite communities to complete and enrich these perspectives on the basis of their awareness of the challenges facing them and their neighbours.

It is my hope that, in doing so, they will realize that whenever we attempt to read the signs of the times **it is helpful to listen to young people and the elderly.**

The elderly bring with them memory and the wisdom of experience, which warns us not to foolishly repeat our past mistakes.

Young people call us to renewed and expansive hope, for they represent new directions for humanity and open us up to the future, lest we cling to a nostalgia for structures and customs which are no longer life-giving in today's world.” (EG 108)



“Challenges exist to be overcome!

Let us be realists,
but without losing our joy,
our boldness
and our hope-filled commitment.

Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of missionary vigour!”
(EG 109)