

“Fr. Gregory Heille’s poetic and personal book is an act of love for a master preacher that convincingly shows how Pope Francis exemplifies all that the church has called for in the renewal of preaching. With considerable experience as a preacher and teacher of preaching, Fr. Heille links Pope Francis’s homiletic practice with church documents on preaching in this beautiful, concise and heart-felt book.”

—Deacon Peter Lovrick
Professor of Homiletics
St. Augustine’s Seminary, Toronto

“Fr. Heille’s book provides a broad frame by which the student-preacher can gain substantial insights into the missionary nuance of Pope Francis’s preaching style. Both the new and experienced preacher will benefit from the way each chapter weaves together illustrations of Pope Francis’s homilies with good preaching theory and method. The attentive selection, reading, and interpretation of the homilies that Fr. Heille offers highlight the depth and universality of Pope Francis’s missionary discipleship. For those of us who may not readily label ourselves as preachers, the book gives us a rich meditation into the life of a pope who has captured our imagination.”

—F. Javier Orozco
Executive Director of Intercultural and Interreligious
Affairs
Archdiocese of St. Louis

“Pope Francis places emphasis on preaching as a way to form missionary disciples. As a pastor I identified with Fr. Heille’s point that: ‘Daily preaching is a choral exercise of daily prayer supported by lifelong practices of discipleship, study, reflection, and service.’ Proclaiming Good News to the poor is an essential part of the ‘social dimension of Evangelization.’”

—Msgr. Charles Kosanke, Pastor, St. Regis Parish,
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan
Chairman, Catholic Charities of Southeast Michigan

The Preaching of Pope Francis

Missionary Discipleship
and the Ministry of the Word

Gregory Heille



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To Fr. Paul Schumacher
*who announced the resurrection to me
as a catechist in a grade-school cafeteria
one Wednesday evening in the Easter season
when I was sixteen.
That was the most important preaching I ever heard.*

[W]e were gentle among you, as a nursing mother cares for her children. With such affection for you, we were determined to share with you not only the gospel of God, but our very selves as well, so dearly beloved had you become to us.

— 1 Thessalonians 2:7-8

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Prologue



Preaching and the Practice of Missionary Discipleship

Perhaps you have heard that it takes ten thousand hours to master a practice. Do you want to master painting, writing, running, prayer? Then give it ten thousand hours, and give it time every day. So, too, with the arts of ministry: do you want to be a counselor, a hospice chaplain, a church administrator, a pastor? Give it ten thousand hours and work at it every day.

Who do you know that has mastered the life practice of preaching? Do you think he or she has given it, say, three hours a day of preaching-related practices for ten years? That is what it takes.

Learning to preach takes much more effort than attending a few weekend workshops or a course at school. The preaching life is a practice, a way of life, and a way of discipleship. It is a whole-person commitment, and there is simply no one way to learn it or to do it or to master it. The authentic preaching life is a labor of love and a lifelong commitment.

Are you a preacher, or do you want to be? If so, what is your lifelong commitment, your practice, your labor of love, your preaching vocation? Be specific.

While relatively few of us in the church call ourselves preachers, all of us are nonetheless disciples. And Pope Francis reminds us that we all are called by virtue of our baptism and our missionary discipleship to testify to what we have heard

and seen and touched in Christ. Christ is risen and alive and active in our midst—that is to say, in us, the people of God, the discipleship community. For this reason, each of us needs to ask from time to time what the ten-thousand-hour practice of discipleship looks like in our life.

Christianity is a vocation—to teaching, nursing, parenting, prayer, ministry, and ten thousand other things—and these ten thousand things constitute the reign of God and the beloved community of which the Scriptures and the church speak.

Pope Francis invites us to join Christianity’s ten-thousand-hour club—to make a fundamental option for missionary discipleship and to take our lives to the foot of the cross and beyond, to the very peripheries of life where resurrection shines through. Pope Francis is speaking, and the whole of humanity is listening.

1

A Preacher as Pope



This is moving. Jesus, washing the feet of his disciples. Peter didn't understand it at all, he refused. But Jesus explained it for him. Jesus—God—did this! He himself explains to his disciples: "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you."

It is the Lord's example: he is the most important, and he washes feet, because with us what is highest must be at the service of others. This is a symbol, it is a sign, right? Washing feet means: "I am at your service." And with us too, don't we have to wash each other's feet day after day? But what does this mean? That all of us must help one another. Sometimes I am angry with someone or other . . . but . . . let it go, let it go, and if he or she asks you a favor, do it.

Help one another: this is what Jesus teaches us and this is what I am doing, and doing with all my heart, because it is my duty. As a priest and a bishop, I must be at your service. But it is a duty which comes from my heart: I love it. I love this and I love to do it because that is what the Lord has taught me to do. But you too, help one another: help one another always. One another. In this way, by helping one another, we will do some good.

Now we will perform this ceremony of washing feet, and let us think, let each one of us think: "Am I really willing, willing to serve, to help others?" Let us think about this, just this. And let us think that this sign is a

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caress of Jesus, which Jesus gives, because this is the real reason why Jesus came: to serve, to help us.

—Pope Francis, Mass of the Lord's Supper
Prison for Minors Casal del Marmo, Rome
Holy Thursday, 28 March 2013¹

An Authentic Messenger

There is a “show me, don't tell me” quality to good preaching. Part of this, of course, paradoxically has to do with the word-craft of good rhetoric—engaging the listeners' imagination with images that hit the metaphorical nail on the head by showing us what the Good News looks like in our complex and messy real lives.

As we are seeing, Pope Francis is a master of metaphor, and as a speaker he certainly captures the imagination of his listeners. But of course, there is something more.

Many of us can readily recall how the new Bishop of Rome captured our imagination on Holy Thursday a few days into his pontificate. He preached a brief homily (only 311 words in Italian) at Casal del Marmo, a youth prison in Rome. He told his listeners very simply that Jesus' example of washing feet is a symbol that says, “I am at your service.” As he turned to wash their feet, Pope Francis invited them to ask, “Am I really willing to serve, to help others?”

Which do you remember—the 311 words of that homily, or the image of this startling new pope washing the feet of Muslim and Christian boys and girls in a youth prison on Holy Thursday? We, the people of God throughout the world, were the adults listening in on this children's homily. The pope was preaching to us too, by example. We overheard, but we also saw. And what did we see? We saw an essential message of service, missionary discipleship, and the papacy.

After the Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord's Supper, a boy asked, “Why did you come here today to Casal del Marmo?” The pope replied, “It is a feeling that came from the heart.”²

Good preaching is so heartfelt because it is so incarnational. A young cellist once commented that she loves the way

the vibration of her instrument strikes a vibration within the innermost recesses of her body. The body of the preacher is a stringed instrument, and as words play forth from the strings and sounding chambers of the body of the speaker, resonant chords are sounded upon the delicate structures of the ear and the incarnational intelligence of the listener. In the miracle of communication, heart speaks to heart.

When a remarkable catechist and Scripture scholar from Rome, Dr. Sofia Cavalletti, reflected on the relationship between adult and child in her book *The Religious Potential of the Child*, she wrote of the heart-to-heart communication between adult and child as a mutually enriching experience of “choral listening.”³ What begins in earliest childhood in the physical resonance of body communicating to body is always and essentially a soul communication.

Look, for example, at American painter Mary Cassatt’s 1906 depiction of a young mother nursing her child, and see how mother and child are communicating through direct eye contact—and then consider that in his three-and-a-half-minute pre-conclave speech as one of the cardinal electors, Cardinal Borgoglio described the next pope as “someone who helps the Church surge forth to the peripheries like a sweet and comforting mother who offers the joy of Jesus to the world.”⁴ This image of comforting mother is one of his very favorite images.

A nursing mother once described the experience of breastfeeding her child as an experience of “prolonged conversation.” As the church in its communities and its members humbly acknowledges that God speaks through dialogue and choral listening, perhaps we will give greater value to fostering the art of prolonged conversation. As the church becomes skilled in conversation, its preaching too will take on an aspect of listening and dialogue.

Listening and dialogue are often found at the edges of monologue-laden and noisy culture. By its liminality at the permeable boundaries and edges of culture, authentic exchange opens us to the transforming influence of God’s Holy Spirit. In turn, renewed preaching, with its proclamation of Holy Scripture

and in its reflective practice from the pulpit, will provide ritual focus and stimulus to the choral listening and dialogue of the entire community—even to the peripheries (to use another favorite expression of Pope Francis). Choral listening, in its many contexts and forms of dialogue, is the constitutive speech of a believing community.

In his apostolic exhortation *The Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis says that the Gospel is communicated in hearing and seeing and touch (29–31).⁵ Gospel joy is communicated in the mutual transformation of hearing and speaking, seeing and showing, serving and accompanying. We, like the young people at Casal del Marmo, are called according to our baptism and our state of life to be reflective practitioners and proclaimers of the Gospel—missionary disciples and evangelists. And this missionary discipleship of service finds its authenticity in a choral listening of heart speaking to heart: *cor ad cor loquitur*.

By word and example, Pope Francis is a heartfelt reflective practitioner of the joy of the Gospel. In the authenticity of his day-to-day practice of the ministry, he also essentially and authentically communicates the pastoral heart of the Second Vatican Council and the council's intent to engage the modern world in dialogue. Theologians have been heard to say it can take a hundred years for an ecumenical council to make its impact. Halfway through this hundred-year arc of the most recent council's self-communication, Pope Francis lifts up Vatican II's pastoral torch by word and example as he calls and sends the people of God, by virtue of their baptism in Christ, as missionary disciples and evangelists (perhaps his most favorite expression).

A Day-to-Day Preacher

Whether at multiple Masses in a single parish or at multiple parishes—on Sundays and weekdays, at weddings and funerals and quinceañeras, and in schools and nursing homes—Catholic priests today not uncommonly preach a thousand times per year. Thank God, there are deacons and, in some settings, lay

ecclesial ministers to share the responsibility of proclaiming the Word. And thank God, too, that the cardinal electors have given us a preacher pope—a seasoned daily minister of the Word who knows what it means to sustain the nourishing discipline of daily preaching.

On most days, Pope Francis presides and preaches at daily Mass in the chapel that seats fifty at Domus Sanctae Marthae—the Vatican guest hotel in which from the beginning he has taken residence. His unscripted remarks are brief, closely tied to the Scriptures and the feasts and cycles of the liturgical year, and they are laced with imagery and metaphors that speak to faith, life, and current events. His daily homilies are unguarded, transparent, and often prophetic. And interestingly, while brief daily summaries are posted online by the Vatican⁶ and are closely followed by many bishops and clergy and laity alike, most often these homilies cannot be found in print—which seems to be just as the pope has intended it.

These little homilies are newsworthy and of great interest, yet the pope appears to understand the ephemeral nature of daily preaching. For both preacher and listener alike, daily preaching is an exercise in daily prayer and meditation—most often an unscripted engagement with the daily portion of the liturgy and with personal and communal and global events. Daily preaching is a choral exercise of daily prayer supported by lifelong practices of discipleship, study, reflection, and service. Daily preaching is best as unguarded speech, given in a communal circle of vulnerability and trust—open to life’s questions and sufferings and open to unexpected daily events and the promptings of the Holy Spirit. These words of countless daily homilies are not meant to be written down or even long remembered. Rather, they are a daily portion in the choral listening of a liturgical assembly turning its collective ear to God, who as the living Word is alive and active every day and for each moment, *cor ad cor loquitur*.

As busy pastors grapple to come to terms with a sustainable practice of day-in, day-out preaching, St. Augustine’s citation of the orator Cicero comes to mind:

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An eloquent man once said . . . and what he said was true, that to be eloquent you should speak “so as to teach, to delight, to sway.” Then he added, “Teaching your audience is a matter of necessity, delighting them a matter of being agreeable, swaying them a matter of victory.” Of these three, the one put first, that is the necessity of teaching, is to be found in the things we are saying, the remaining two in the way we say it. Therefore the person who is saying something with the intention of teaching should not consider he has yet said anything of what he wants to the person he wishes to teach, so long as he is not understood. Because even if he has said something he understands himself, he is not to be regarded as having said it to the person he is not understood by, while if he has been understood, he has said it, whatever his way of saying it may have been.

If on the other hand he also wishes to delight the person he is saying it to, or to sway him, he will not succeed in doing so whatever his way of saying it may have been; but in order to do so, it makes all the difference how he says it. Now just as the listener needs to be delighted if you are to hold his attention and keep him listening, so he needs to be swayed, if you are to move him to act.⁷

Daily preaching, to be sustained well by the preacher and by an assembly of listeners, must teach, delight, and persuade. A well-ordered palette of daily teaching tends over the long haul to interpret life and mediate meaning through the Scriptures (exegesis and hermeneutics), to interpret life and mediate meaning through the seasons, prayers, music, and symbols and gestures of the liturgy (mystagogy), and to interpret life and mediate meaning through such great theological themes as the Trinity or the paschal mystery (orthodoxy) and through group spiritual direction in Christian discipleship (orthopraxis). Pope Francis tends to all of these.

Sustainable daily preaching also takes delight in the authentic support found in the context of a loving, compassionate, and encouraging community and pastor. People respond joyfully and gratefully to a pastor who prayerfully enters into the liturgy, choosing prayers and making connections to support

a simple and direct Gospel message. A daily preaching that explores one point for a few minutes without many or any notes—gratefully and delightfully—can be plenty good enough.

The continuity of daily preaching can be very persuasive—as preacher and assembly together discover a weekly narrative of Old and New Testament readings, seasons and feasts, and personal and public events. In some measure, daily communicants are seeking a safe place to regulate daily stress and to ground their discipleship in reflection and right living.

Pope Francis is a day-to-day icon of “to teach, to delight, to persuade.” What we observe him doing each day in his Santa Marthae worshipping community plays out likewise in our experience of daily churches and chapels around the world. Day by day, faith communities are sustained as the church by Christ in word and sacrament. And day by day, we in turn as the Body of Christ sustain our families, our workplaces, and our world. We, too, are, as Pope Francis tells us, missionary disciples and evangelists. We, too, are called and sent to teach, to delight, and to persuade.

At the Pastoral Peripheries

Pope Francis feels drawn to the “peripheries.” This Argentinian bishop of the slums likes to eat in the cafeteria line and preach in prisons, and he likes to pick up the telephone or go to the back of the airplane for an interview. He is a pastor who wants to be with the folks, and he likes having friends in low places.

For Pope Francis, being Bishop of Rome means saying his daily Mass with his day-to-day worshipping community at the Vatican hotel, and it also means going outside the walls to visit the parishes of Rome. Each month when possible, he tries to make a pastoral visit to one of the parishes, presiding and preaching at a Sunday Eucharist. These preachings, posted in their entirety in multiple languages at the Vatican website, present us with a monthly snapshot of Pope Francis as a pastoral preacher to ordinary folk who most certainly live their lives outside the ecclesiastical perimeter of the Vatican.

These Sunday homilies range from seven- to eight-hundred words (one single-spaced page) and preach from seven to eight minutes. Pope Francis refrains from using these occasions as a soapbox for larger ecclesiastical or social issues. He likes to start directly from one of the Scriptures, paint a mental picture of Jesus, and ask questions—questions that engage a dialogue with the lives of ordinary parishioners.

Here, for example, is the first half of a homily that led into the confirmation of youngsters at St. Cyril of Alexandria Parish in Rome:

In the First Reading we heard the Prophet Isaiah speak to us about a journey, and he says that in the latter days, at the end of the journey, the mountain of the Lord's Temple shall be established as the highest mountain. He says this to tell us that our life is a journey: we must go on this journey to arrive at the mountain of the Lord, to encounter Jesus. The most important thing that can happen to a person is to meet Jesus: this encounter with Jesus who loves us, who has saved us, who has given his life for us. Encounter Jesus. And we are journeying in order to meet Jesus.

We could ask ourselves this question: But when do I meet Jesus? Only at the end? No, no! We meet him every day. How? In prayer, when you pray, you meet Jesus. When you receive Communion, you meet Jesus in the Sacraments. When you bring your child to be baptized, you meet Jesus, you find Jesus. And today, you who are receiving Confirmation, you too will encounter Jesus; then you will meet him in Communion. "And then, Father, after Confirmation, goodbye?" because they say that Confirmation is called "the sacrament of goodbye." Is this true or not? After Confirmation you never go back to Church: true or false? . . . so, so! However, after Confirmation even, our whole life is an encounter with Jesus: in prayer, when we go to Mass, and when we do good works, when we visit the sick, when we help the poor, when we think of others, when we are not selfish, when we are loving . . . in these things we always meet Jesus. And the journey of life is precisely this: journeying in order to meet Jesus.⁸

Pope Francis likes to keep his hand in as a priest and pastor. In the first half of his homily in a pastoral visit to San Tommaso Apostolo Parish in Rome, he preached similarly in what is becoming his familiar pastoral preaching style—a style laced with scriptural imagery, the inner struggles of life, and a line of questioning that enters into dialogue with real life and points to the more engaged discipleship:

One time, the disciples of Jesus were eating grain because they were hungry; but it was Saturday and on Saturday grain was not allowed to be eaten. Still, they picked it [rubbing his hands together] and ate the grain. And they [the Pharisees] said: “But look at what they are doing! Whoever does this breaks the Law and soils his soul, for he does not obey the Law!” And Jesus responded: “nothing that comes from without soils the soul. Only what comes from within, from your heart, can soil your soul.” And I believe that it would do us good today to think not about whether my soul is clean or dirty, but rather about what is in my heart, what do I have inside, what I know I have but no one else knows. Being honest with yourself is not easy! Because we always try to cover it up when we see something wrong inside, no? So that it doesn’t come out, don’t we? What is in our heart: is it love? Let us think: do I love my parents, my children, my wife, my husband, people in the [neighborhood], the sick? . . . Do I love? Is there hate? Do I hate someone? Often we find hatred, don’t we? “I love everyone except for this one, this one and that one!” That’s hatred, isn’t it? What is in my heart, forgiveness? Is there an attitude of forgiveness for those who have offended me, or is there an attitude of revenge—“he will pay for it!” We must ask ourselves what is within, because what is inside comes out and harms, if it is evil; and if it is good, it comes out and does good. And it is so beautiful to tell ourselves the truth, and feel ashamed when we are in a situation that is not what God wants, it is not good; when my heart feels hatred, revenge, so many situations are sinful. How is my heart?⁹

Oriented to Service and Evangelization

In February 2013, when Pope Benedict XVI announced his intention to resign the papacy, he clearly intended for a new pope to have the world stage during the upcoming Holy Week. Shortly thereafter, in his three-and-a-half-minute speech to the papal electors prior to the conclave, Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio said that the church is “too self-referential.”¹⁰ And from the moment he stepped onto the papal balcony on the evening of his election, he communicated a demeanor that said, “This is not about me.”

Six days after his election, at the Mass on the occasion of the inauguration of his pontificate, Francis preached on the true meaning of power:

Today, together with the feast of Saint Joseph, we are celebrating the beginning of the ministry of the new Bishop of Rome, the Successor of Peter, which also involves a certain power. Certainly, Jesus Christ conferred power upon Peter, but what sort of power was it? 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!¹¹

At his first chrism Mass, Pope Francis spoke to priests about a preaching ministry that takes them to the peripheries—and as with his preaching to the imprisoned youth at Casal del Marmo later that evening, we the people of God were listening in to an important message about vocation to the practice of service:

The priest who seldom goes out of himself, who anoints little—I won't say “not at all” because, thank God, the people take the oil from us anyway—misses out on the best of our people, on what can stir the depths of his priestly heart. Those who do not go out of themselves, instead of being mediators, gradually become intermediaries, managers. We know the difference: the intermediary, the manager, “has already received his reward,” and since he doesn't put his own skin and his own heart on the line, he never hears a warm, heartfelt word of thanks. This is precisely the reason for the dissatisfaction of some, who end up sad—sad priests—in some sense becoming collectors of antiques or novelties, instead of being shepherds living with “the [odor] of the sheep.” This I ask you: be shepherds, with the “[odor] of the sheep,” make it real, as shepherds among your flock, fishers of men. True enough, the so-called crisis of priestly identity threatens us all and adds to the broader cultural crisis; but if we can resist its onslaught, we will be able to put out in the name of the Lord and cast our nets. It is not a bad thing that reality itself forces us to “put out into the deep,” where what we are by grace is clearly seen as pure grace, out into the deep of the contemporary world, where the only thing that counts is “unction”—not function—and the nets which overflow with fish are those cast solely in the name of the One in whom we have put our trust: Jesus.¹²

That Saturday at the Easter Vigil, Pope Francis assumed the pastoral, dialogical style seen in his monthly pastoral visits to parishes in Rome. A pope of surprises spoke about a God of surprises, making it clear that like the women at the tomb of Jesus, we, too, are called to encounter Jesus and to proclaim resurrection:

In the Gospel of this radiant night of the Easter Vigil, we first meet the women who go to the tomb of Jesus with spices to anoint his body (cf. Lk 24:1-3). . . . We can imagine their feelings as they make their way to the tomb: a certain sadness, sorrow that Jesus had left them, he had died, his life had come to an end. Life would now

go on as before. Yet the women continued to feel love, the love for Jesus which now led them to his tomb. But at this point, something completely new and unexpected happens, something which upsets their hearts and their plans, something which will upset their whole life: they see the stone removed from before the tomb, they draw near and they do not find the Lord's body. It is an event which leaves them perplexed, hesitant, full of questions: "What happened?," "What is the meaning of all this?" (cf. Lk 24:4). Doesn't the same thing also happen to us when something completely new occurs in our everyday life? We stop short, we don't understand, we don't know what to do. Newness often makes us fearful, including the newness which God brings us, the newness which God asks of us. We are like the Apostles in the Gospel: often we would prefer to hold on to our own security, to stand in front of a tomb, to think about someone who has died, someone who ultimately lives on only as a memory. . . . [W]e are afraid of God's surprises! He always surprises us! The Lord is like that.

. . . And the two men in dazzling clothes tell them something of crucial importance: remember. "Remember what he told you when he was still in Galilee. . . ." This is the invitation to remember their encounter with Jesus, to remember his words, his actions, his life; and it is precisely this loving remembrance of their experience with the Master that enables the women to master their fear and to bring the message of the Resurrection to the Apostles and all the others (cf. Lk 24:9).¹³

This same invitation to all the faithful to encounter Jesus and to light a fire of resurrection faith for all the world is repeated forcibly and passionately a year later by Pope Francis at his second Easter Vigil: "For each of us, too, there is a 'Galilee' at the origin of our journey with Jesus. 'To go to Galilee' means something beautiful, it means rediscovering our baptism as a living fountainhead, drawing new energy from the sources of our faith and our Christian experience. To return to Galilee means above all to return to that blazing light with which

God's grace touched me at the start of the journey. From that flame I can light a fire for today and every day, and bring heat and light to my brothers and sisters."¹⁴

And fifty days later, on Pentecost, Pope Francis asserted that this baptism we share with the church is a baptism of the Holy Spirit that is born in going out to proclaim the Good News at the peripheries:

This remembrance in the Spirit and by virtue of the Spirit is not reduced to a mnemonic fact; it is an essential aspect of Christ's presence within us and within his Church. The Spirit of truth and charity reminds us of all that Christ said, and helps us to enter ever more fully into the meaning of his words. We all have this experience: one moment, in any situation, there is an idea and then another connects with a passage from Scripture. . . . It is the Spirit who leads us to take this path: the path of the living memory of the Church. And he asks us for a response: the more generous our response, the more Jesus' words become life within us, becoming attitudes, choices, actions, testimony. In essence the Spirit reminds of the commandment of love, and calls us to live it. . . .

The day of Pentecost, when the disciples "were all filled with the Holy Spirit," was the baptism of the Church, which was born in "going out," in "departure" to proclaim the Good News to everyone. The Mother Church, who departs in order to serve. Let us remember the other Mother, our Mother who sets out in haste to serve. Mother Church and Mother Mary: both virgins, both mothers, both women. Jesus was peremptory with the Apostles: do not depart from Jerusalem, but wait until you have received the power of the Holy Spirit from above (cf. Acts 1:4-8). Without Him there is no mission, there is no evangelization. For this, with the whole Church, with our Mother Catholic Church, let us implore: Come, Holy Spirit!¹⁵

A Homiletic Magisterium

Pope Francis's magisterial teaching about our baptismal call to be missionary disciples at the peripheries is grounded every

day in the authenticity of his preaching, both with and without words. The message, style, and contexts of his daily example and preaching are themselves an instruction in discipleship. The simplicity and relevancy of this daily message mediate meaning, and this cumulative overflow of daily meaning might be called Pope Francis's quotidian magisterium—an ordinary-time kind of teaching with day-in, day-out pastoral and doctrinal authority. The authenticity of Pope Francis's message reaches well beyond the walls of Vatican City to ordinary Catholics everywhere, and beyond Catholicism to believers and to people of goodwill everywhere. Pope Francis has captured the world's imagination with a meaningful message that conveys the joy of the Gospel.

As can be seen further in a close reading of his apostolic exhortation of that same name—*Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel)—Pope Francis, in the formal documents of his teaching office, likewise makes his consistent appeal to Christians in every station and circumstance of life: we are being called by virtue of our faith and baptism to be missionary disciples, and we are being sent to the peripheries as evangelists to testify with our lives to the joy of the Gospel.

This core message of the Bishop of Rome from the Argentinian periphery was conveyed beautifully in his weekly *Angelus* message in St. Peter's Square on January 6, 2014, the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord. These short weekly messages are homilies in themselves, and unlike his daily preaching at Domus Sanctae Marthae, these weekly messages are printed in full at the Vatican website. In his Epiphany message, Pope Francis said:

Thus, this Feast lets us see a double movement: in one direction, the movement of God towards the world, towards humanity—the whole of the history of salvation, which culminates in Jesus—and in the other, the movement of men towards God—let us think of religions, of the quest for truth, the journey of the nations toward peace, interior peace, justice, freedom. And this double movement is driven by a mutual attraction. What is it that draws

God? . . . The Prophet Isaiah said that God is like the flower of the almond tree. Why? Because in that region the almond is the first to flower. And God goes ever before, he is always the first to seek us, he takes the first step. God goes ever before us. His grace precedes us and this grace appeared in Jesus. He is the Epiphany. He, Jesus Christ, is the manifestation of God's love. He is with us.

The Church stands entirely within this movement of God toward the world: her joy is the Gospel, to mirror the light of Christ. The Church is the people who have experienced this attraction and bear it within, in their hearts and in their lives. I would like to say—sincerely—I would like to say to those who feel far from God and from the Church—I would like to say respectively—to all those who are fearful or indifferent: the Lord is also calling you to be a part of his people and he does so with deep respect and love! . . .

Let us ask God, on behalf of the whole Church, let us ask for the joy of evangelizing, for we were “sent by Christ to reveal and communicate the love of God to all men and to all peoples.” May the Virgin Mary help us all to be missionary-disciples, little stars that mirror his light. Let us pray too that hearts be open to receiving the proclamation, and that all men and women may be “partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel” (Eph 3:6).¹⁶