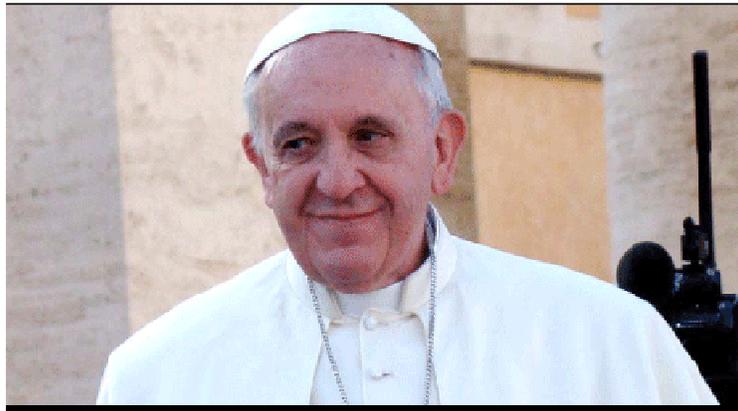


Evangelii Gaudium

The Joy of the Gospel



EXPLORING POPE FRANCIS' VISION FOR THE CHURCH

St. James Cathedral
Lent 2014
PARTICIPANT'S WORKBOOK

OPENING PRAYER

Prayed at the beginning of each session

Mary, Virgin and Mother,
you gave yourself completely to the Eternal One:
help us to say our own "yes"
to the urgent call, as pressing as ever,
to proclaim the good news of Jesus.

Mother of love, pray for the Church,
that she may never be closed in on herself
or lose her passion for establishing God's kingdom.

Help us to bear radiant witness
to communion, service, ardent and generous faith,
justice and love of the poor,
that the joy of the Gospel
may reach to the ends of the earth,
illuminating even the fringes of our world.
Mother of the living Gospel,
Wellspring of happiness for God's little ones,
pray for us. Amen.

Based on Pope Francis' prayer in Joy of the Gospel

Leader: Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful,

ALL: And kindle in them the fire of your love.

Leader: Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.

ALL: And you will renew the face of the earth.

Program Overview

The Joy of the Gospel is the first major document written by Pope Francis. This wide-ranging document has a lot to say to us as individuals and as a parish community. We will explore and engage with it this Lent through conversation with each other in small groups.

Events

The series begins with a keynote address by Father Ryan, on **Monday, March 3 at 7:00pm in Cathedral Place Hall**. After one year, Pope Francis has made an incredible impact. Father Ryan will highlight for us some key elements in the “Francis revolution.”

The heart of the program will be the five small-group gatherings for prayer and reflection. These gatherings will include prayer, scripture reflection, and most of all, discussion of *The Joy of the Gospel*. Each week will focus in on one chapter of the document. The document is quite long, so you’ll find notes on key paragraphs to focus on. All the numbers indicated in your guide refer to **paragraphs, not pages**, so that no matter which version of the document you are using – a bound book, a print-out from the Vatican website, or an electronic version—you can find the most important sections for discussion. **Please bring the document** with you each week.

Each session in the five-week series will last about 90 minutes.

Your participant’s workbook also includes a section called “On Your Own,” inviting your active engagement with the material during the week. Suggestions are provided for bringing *The Joy of the Gospel* to life in your own life—feel free to come up with ideas of your own!

The series concludes with an all-parish retreat on **Saturday, April 12 at 9:00am** in Cathedral Place Hall. This will be the perfect way to prepare for Holy Week, and strengthen our resolve to bring Pope Francis’ vision to life in our parish community.

Week One: Being a Missionary

Preparation

- *The Joy of the Gospel*, Introduction and Chapter One
- Focus on paragraphs 1-8, 13-14, 24, 28, 46-49
- What comes to mind when you think of a missionary? How does Pope Francis challenge you to change that image?

Scripture Reflection Matthew 4:1-11

Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was hungry. The tempter approached and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become loaves of bread." He said in reply, "It is written: 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.'"

- Where is the joy in this Gospel reading?
- Does God's word give me life?
- What is my relationship with the Scriptures?
- Is the Gospel only on Sundays for me?

Conversation about *The Joy of the Gospel*

- The Francis Effect. Pope Francis has appeared on the cover not only of Catholic magazines like *America* and *Commonweal*. He has appeared on the covers of *Time*, *The New Yorker*, and *Rolling Stone*. How has Francis surprised you? How has his election impacted you, made you think, made you feel differently about being Catholic?
- "If we have received the love which restores meaning to our lives, how can we fail to share that love with others?" (8) Who shared the Gospel with you? Who are the "ordinary people who were close to us and introduced us to the life of faith"? (13)
- What does it mean to evangelize? Are you excited or intimidated or both when you are told that you are called to evangelize?
- How often do you talk about your faith with others? What keeps you back or what impels you forward?

On Your Own

Reflection. Read the Gospel for the First Sunday of Lent and reflect on the power of God's word.

Create a place of prayer somewhere in your home, evoking the season of Lent and highlighting the Bible, the Word of God. Include a favorite image of Christ, whether a crucifix, an icon, or another picture. To this sacred space, add a picture, or some other reminder, of someone who led you to faith.

Action. Reflect on the Lenten practices of Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving. How do you hope to live out each of these practices this Lent? Participating in Operation Rice Bowl is an excellent way to practice these three steps. Consider adding your Rice Bowl to your prayer space, and contributing to your Rice Bowl what you save by eating more simply throughout Lent.

Preparation for Next Week

- Read *The Joy of the Gospel*, Chapter Two.
- Focus on 52-53, 61-67, 81-83, 85, 88-89, 102-109
- Take time to identify the passage you find most surprising / challenging / interesting / inspiring in the reading for this week and reflect on why.

Week Two: A Crisis of Commitment

Preparation

- Read *The Joy of the Gospel*, Chapter Two
- Focus on 52-53, 61-67, 81-83, 85, 88-89, 102-109
- Take time to identify the passage you find most surprising / challenging / interesting / inspiring in the reading for this week and reflect on why.

Scripture Reflection

Matthew 16:21-23, 17:1-9

Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer greatly from the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed and on the third day be raised.

Then Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, "God forbid, Lord! No such thing shall ever happen to you."

He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle to me. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do."....

After six days, Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, conversing with him.

Then Peter said to Jesus in reply, "Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud cast a shadow over them, then from the cloud came a voice that said,

"This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him."

....As they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, "Do not tell the vision to anyone until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

- Where is the joy in this Gospel reading?
- Just before the Transfiguration, Peter has a "crisis of commitment." Why?
- Why does Jesus tell Peter, James and John not to tell anyone what they have seen until after his resurrection?
- How does Jesus scandalize you?
- Who do you most identify with in this story?

Conversation about *The Joy of the Gospel*

- Pope Francis calls this chapter "Amid the crisis of communal commitment." What do you think he means by this? Do you sense a "crisis of commitment" in yourself or in the culture around you? Where? What causes it?
- "We calmly accept the dominion of money over ourselves and our societies" (55). What is your own relationship with money?
- "When a society... is willing to leave part of itself on the fringes, no political programs or resources spent on law enforcement or surveillance systems can indefinitely guarantee tranquility" (59). Who is on the fringes in our society?

- What evils are embedded in the structures of our own society? (59) How do they offend the dignity of the human person?
- Does our culture need “the transcendent” (64)? Does it need the Church?
- Pope Francis ends this chapter by speaking about the temptations faced by pastoral workers – those who work in the Church, both clergy and lay, but these words apply to all Christians. Which of the temptations highlighted by Francis in this chapter ring most true for you?

On Your Own

Reflection. We are presented with two contrasting images of Jesus in the Scripture reading: Jesus crucified, Jesus transfigured. Are there images of Jesus in the Gospel that you struggle with, as Peter struggled with the image of Jesus crucified?

Have you experienced a “crisis of commitment” in your own life?

Who is kept on the fringes of our society? Of your life? Place something representing them—a picture, a word, or some other symbol that has meaning for you—at your place of prayer and keep them at the center of your prayer this week.

Action. Identify one group of people who are on the margins of society, and learn something about their circumstances. Why are they on the margins? What keeps them there? Come prepared to share what you learned at your next group gathering.

Take a walk up to a high place—a mountain or hill, or the top of a tall building—and place yourself alongside Jesus in this week’s Gospel. If your ability to walk is limited, use your imagination to make the journey. What changes in you when you are on a hilltop?

Preparation for Next Week

- Read *The Joy of the Gospel*, Chapter Three.
- Focus on 110-131, 169-175
- Take time to identify the passage you find most surprising / challenging / interesting / inspiring in the reading for this week and reflect on why.

Week Three: Proclaiming the Gospel

Preparation

- Read *The Joy of the Gospel*, Chapter Three.
- Focus on 110-131, 169-175
- Take time to identify the passage you find most surprising / challenging / interesting / inspiring in the reading for this week and reflect on why.

Scripture Reflection

John 4:5-42

Jesus came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of land that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there. Jesus, tired from his journey, sat down there at the well. It was about noon.

A woman of Samaria came to draw water.

Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink."

The Samaritan woman said to him, "How can you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?"—For Jews use nothing in common with Samaritans.—

Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God and who is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."

The woman said to him, "Sir, you do not even have a bucket and the cistern is deep; where then can you get this living water?"

Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again; but whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may not be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water."

- Where is the joy in this Gospel reading?
- How do you react to the woman of Samaria? Do you identify with her?
- How does the dialogue between the woman of Samaria deepen as this Gospel reading unfolds?
- How does Jesus "accompany" the woman of Samaria to deeper faith?

Conversation about *The Joy of the Gospel*

- "Evangelization is the task of the Church" (111). Do you think the Church is focused on evangelization? If not, what are we focused on?
- Do you feel qualified to evangelize? Why or why not?
- Pope Francis speaks of the importance of Person to Person evangelizing (127-129). Has this ever happened to you? What was the result?
- What is the "art of accompaniment"? (169-173) Who has accompanied you to greater faith in Jesus Christ? Do you think you could accompany others? Why or why not?

On Your Own

Reflection. What gift (charism) of the Holy Spirit do you feel you have been given? How do you use this gift? Add something representing your own gifts to your place of prayer. Pray for discernment on how you can use your gifts in the service of the Gospel.

Action. Pope Francis talks a lot about liturgical preaching in this chapter, but we are all called to preach. As St. Francis of Assisi said: “Preach the Gospel at all times; if necessary, use words.” Plan one action you can take to preach the Gospel without words this week, and then do it! Come prepared to share what you did next week.

Preparation for Next Week

- Read *The Joy of the Gospel*, Chapter Four through paragraph 216.
- Focus on paragraphs 176-179, 193-195, 209-216.
- Take time to identify the passage you find most surprising / challenging / interesting / inspiring in the reading for this week and reflect on why.

Week Four: Building the Kingdom

Preparation

- Read *The Joy of the Gospel*, Chapter Four through paragraph 216.
- Focus on paragraphs 176-179, 193-195, 209-216.
- Take time to identify the passage you find most surprising / challenging / interesting / inspiring in the reading for this week and reflect on why.

Scripture Reflection

John 9:1-38

As Jesus passed by he saw a man blind from birth.

He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva, and smeared the clay on his eyes, and said to him, "Go wash in the Pool of Siloam" — which means Sent —. So he went and washed, and came back able to see.

His neighbors and those who had seen him earlier as a beggar said, "Isn't this the one who used to sit and beg?" Some said, "It is," but others said, "No, he just looks like him."

He said, "I am."

They brought the one who was once blind to the Pharisees. Now Jesus had made clay and opened his eyes on a sabbath. So then the Pharisees also asked him how he was able to see. He said to them, "He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and now I can see."

So some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, because he does not keep the sabbath."

But others said, "How can a sinful man do such signs?" And there was a division among them.

So they said to the blind man again, "What do you have to say about him, since he opened your eyes?"

He said, "He is a prophet."

They answered and said to him, "You were born totally in sin, and are you trying to teach us?"

Then they threw him out.

When Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, he found him and said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"

He answered and said, "Who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?"

Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he."

He said, "I do believe, Lord," and he worshiped him.

- Where is the joy in this Gospel reading?
- How does Jesus treat the man who was born blind? How is he treated by the Pharisees?
- For two thousand years the Church has read this passage with the Elect, those preparing for baptism. What does the Gospel account of the man born blind tell us about the Christian life?

Conversation about *The Joy of the Gospel*

- "To evangelize is to make the kingdom of God present in our world" (176). What is the kingdom of God? How do we know when it is present?

- “An authentic faith—which is never comfortable or completely personal—always involves a deep desire to change the world, to transmit values, to leave this earth somehow better than we found it” (183). By this measure, is your faith authentic? How do you long to make the earth better? Have you experienced the tension between the private and public dimensions of faith in your life?
- What keeps us from hearing the cry of the poor? (191)
- Pope Francis speaks about the importance of almsgiving (193). Do you find giving hard or easy? Do you believe you can make a difference?
- How is service of the poor a form of evangelization? How has interaction with the poor evangelized you? (198)
- Who are the vulnerable in our world? (210-215)

On Your Own

Reflection. Keep meditating on the Gospel of the man born blind. How has Jesus touched you—healed you? How has that experience of being loved by Jesus overflowed in your life?

Who are the poor and vulnerable around you whose presence you may not have been aware of? Bring an image, word, or symbol of them and add it to your place of prayer. Include them in your prayer throughout this week.

Action. Read a newspaper or online news service this week and note how many articles relate to the poor and vulnerable. How are the poor portrayed in the article? Were they portrayed as victims? Empowered? Involved in improving their own lives? Involved in affecting public policy? Come prepared to share what you learned.

Preparation for Next Week

- Read the rest of *Joy of the Gospel*.
- Focus on paragraphs 218-239, 264-274, 278-283, 288.
- Take time to identify the passage you find most surprising / challenging / interesting / inspiring in the reading for this week and reflect on why.

Week Five: Filled with the Spirit and Sent to Proclaim

Preparation

- Read the rest of *Joy of the Gospel*.
- Focus on paragraphs 218-239, 264-274, 278-283, 288.
- Take time to identify the passage you find most surprising / challenging / interesting / inspiring in the reading for this week and reflect on why.

Scripture Reflection

John 4:5-42

Now a man was ill, Lazarus from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who had anointed the Lord with perfumed oil and dried his feet with her hair; it was her brother Lazarus who was ill.

So the sisters sent word to him saying, "Master, the one you love is ill."

When Jesus heard this he said, "This illness is not to end in death, but is for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it." Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.

...When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, only about two miles away. And many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him; but Mary sat at home. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you."

Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise."

Martha said to him, "I know he will rise, in the resurrection on the last day."

Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

She said to him, "Yes, Lord. I have come to believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world."

- Where is the joy in this Gospel reading?
- How has faith changed Mary and Martha? What's different about them because of their relationship with Jesus?
- What surprises or shocks you in the story of the raising of Lazarus?
- Who do you most identify with in this Gospel passage?

Conversation about *The Joy of the Gospel*

- What is Francis' vision for handling conflicts? (226-228) How could this be translated into practice?
- What is the "path of dialogue" (238)? How might it impact us as a parish, as individuals?
- How can we be focused on Jesus and on others at the same time? (268)

- How has service of others brought you joy?
- “Our lives become wonderfully complicated” when we stop looking for safety from “the maelstrom of human suffering” (270). How can this be? How can it be wonderful to complicate our lives in this way?
- How does our faith need to be more fully integrated into who we are? (273)
- How is Mary a model of evangelization?

On Your Own

Reflection. Keep meditating on the story of the raising of Lazarus. As we approach Easter, do you feel you are becoming ready to rise again with Christ?

Add something that speaks of resurrection to your place of prayer this week—a flower about to bloom, an icon or another symbol that speaks to you. Pray for someone who is in need of resurrection.

Action. This week, take one action to “help at least one person to have a better life” (274). This action may be something small, but try to do something to improve the life of at least one other person. It may be some activity you’re already involved in, or it may be something new. Reflect on how this action made your life more “wonderfully complicated.”

Guidelines for Small Group Participation

God has created each of us uniquely, and I recognize that everyone comes to this experience with very different backgrounds, experiences and views. I commit to **honoring differences**, knowing they add to the richness of the group's experience.

God frequently speaks through the unfamiliar and different. I will **listen intently** in order to fully understand different points of view, realizing these other views will help with my own evolving journey.

Listening is an act of love and care. I will always **listen respectfully** and constructively (i.e., no side conversations, no interruptions).

How I treat another person is much more important than my opinions and perspectives. I recognize that we are looking for truthful insights within potentially different views. I will **respectfully seek clarification** of other perspectives to add to my understanding. If I choose to debate or disagree with a perspective that is different from mine, I will do this respectfully and lovingly.

Because God made us, all persons are of equal importance and value, and all voices are important. I commit to assuring that **everyone has an opportunity to speak**, and I will encourage others to speak before I speak again.

God has given each of us gifts that are given in the hope and expectation that these gifts will be shared. I will **participate fully** and share in the responsibility for the group's process and experience.

Trust and respect must be offered as the terms of being together in this journey of faith. I will honor that everything that is shared within this group is to stay within this group.