

THE VARIETY IS FOR SERVICE

The Church is herself a missionary disciple; she needs to grow in her interpretation of the revealed word and in her understanding of truth. It is the task of exegetes and theologians to help “the judgment of the Church to mature”

Within the Church countless issues are being studied and reflected upon with great freedom. Differing currents of thought in philosophy, theology and pastoral practice, if open to being reconciled by the Spirit in respect and love, can enable the Church to grow, since all of them help to express more clearly the immense riches of God’s word.

For those who long for a monolithic body of doctrine guarded by all and leaving no room for nuance, this might appear as undesirable and leading to confusion. But in fact such variety serves to bring out and develop different facets of the inexhaustible riches of the Gospel.
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Questions:

1. Where are you experiencing the variety of experiences and ?
2. Are we a better church because we have different prayer styles, concern about the environment and concerns about justice issues ?



HOW IT IS EXPRESSED

At the same time, today’s vast and rapid cultural changes demand that we constantly seek ways of expressing unchanging truths in a language which brings out their abiding newness. “The deposit of the faith is one thing... the way it is expressed is another”.

There are times when the faithful, in listening to completely orthodox language, take away something alien to the authentic Gospel of Jesus Christ, because that language is alien to their own way of speaking to and understanding one another. With the holy intent of communicating the truth about God and humanity, we sometimes give them a false god or a human ideal which is not really Christian.

In this way, we hold fast to a formulation while failing to convey its substance. This is the greatest danger. Let us never forget that “the expression of truth can take different forms. The renewal of these forms of expression becomes necessary for the sake of transmitting to the people of today the Gospel message in its unchanging meaning.” # 41

Questions:

1. Are we being faithful to the message by paying attention to how we express the message of the Gospel?
2. Have you ever experienced the Gospel message being distorted?



THE TRUTH IS IN THE LIVING

All of this has great relevance for the preaching of the Gospel, if we are really concerned to make its beauty more clearly recognized and accepted by all.

Of course, we will never be able to make the Church's teachings easily understood or readily appreciated by everyone. Faith always remains something of a cross; it retains a certain obscurity which does not detract from the firmness of its assent.

Some things are understood and appreciated only from the standpoint of this assent, which is a sister to love, beyond the level of clear reasons and arguments.

We need to remember that all religious teaching ultimately has to be reflected in the teacher's way of life, which awakens the assent of the heart by its nearness, love and witness. # 42

Questions:

1. Should the people of the church be more concerned about the living of the faith rather than spelling out the correct doctrines of the faith?
2. Where do people have difficulty accepting different points of our faith?



The integrity of the Gospel message must not be deformed. # 39



SUMMER WITH POPE FRANCIS

August 10, 2014

This is now our sixth bulletin that is trying to work through the apostolic letter of Pope Francis. When you read each paragraph (with its specific number) use a highlighter to underline words and phrase that are significant. Often, in a papal document a singular phrase might open new doors that you have never thought possible. Google the full text at: *APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION EVANGELII GAUDIUM*

MERCY IS SUPERIOR

Thomas Aquinas taught that the Church's moral teaching has its own "hierarchy", in the virtues and in the acts which proceed from them. What counts above all else is "faith working through love" (Gal 5:6). Works of love directed to one's neighbour are the most perfect external manifestation of the interior grace of the Spirit: "The foundation of the New Law is in the grace of the Holy Spirit, who is manifested in the faith which works through love".

Thomas thus explains that, as far as external works are concerned, mercy is the greatest of all the virtues: "In itself mercy is the greatest of the virtues, since all the others revolve around it and, more than this, it makes up for their deficiencies. This is particular to the superior virtue, and as such it is proper to God to have mercy, through which his omnipotence is manifested to the greatest degree." # 37

Questions:

1. Is your fellow Catholic convinced that works of love manifest the Holy Spirit within us?
2. Where have you experienced mercy being practiced within your parish community?

