

## DOORS ALWAYS WIDE OPEN??

The Church is called to be the house of the Father, with doors always wide open. One concrete sign of such openness is that our church doors should always be open, so that if someone, moved by the Spirit, comes there looking for God, he or she will not find a closed door. There are other doors that should not be closed either.

Everyone can share in some way in the life of the Church; everyone can be part of the community, nor should the doors of the sacraments be closed for simply any reason. This is especially true of the sacrament which is itself "the door": baptism. The Eucharist, although it is the fullness of sacramental life, is not a prize for the perfect but a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak. These convictions have pastoral consequences that we are called to consider with prudence and boldness.

Frequently, we act as arbiters of grace rather than its facilitators. But the Church is not a tollhouse; it is the house of the Father, where there is a place for everyone, with all their problems. # 47



### Questions:

1. Are there ways that we keep the doors of the church shut?
2. Who among your friends most needs to enter the doors of the church?

## THE POOR BELONG

If the whole Church takes up this missionary impulse, she has to go forth to everyone without exception. But to whom should she go first? When we read the Gospel we find a clear indication: not so much our friends and wealthy neighbours, but above all the poor and the sick, those who are usually despised and overlooked, "those who cannot repay you" (Lk 14:14). There can be no room for doubt or for explanations which weaken so clear a message.

Today and always, "the poor are the privileged recipients of the Gospel", and the fact that it is freely preached to them is a sign of the kingdom that Jesus came to establish.

We have to state, without mincing words, that "there is an inseparable bond between our faith and the poor". May we never abandon them.

#48

### Questions:

1. Why would Francis speak "without mincing words"? What does that mean?
2. Why must we go to the poor first and foremost?



## WHAT IS A CHURCH BRUISED, HURT AND DIRTY?

Let us go forth, then, let us go forth to offer everyone the life of Jesus Christ. Here I repeat for the entire Church what I have often said to the priests and laity of Buenos Aires: I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security. I do not want a Church concerned with being at the centre and then ends by being caught up in a web of obsessions and procedures. If something should rightly disturb us and trouble our consciences, it is the fact that so many of our brothers and sisters are living without the strength, light and consolation born of friendship with Jesus Christ, without a community of faith to support them, without meaning and a goal in life. More than by fear of going astray, my hope is that we will be moved by the fear of remaining shut up within structures which give us a false sense of security, within rules which make us harsh judges, within habits which make us feel safe, while at our door people are starving and Jesus does not tire of saying to us: "Give them something to eat" (Mk 6:37). # 49



Questions:

1. What kind of feel do you get when you read about living in a church that is bruised, hurt and dirty?
2. What should cause us problems in the church?

# SUMMER WITH POPE FRANCIS

## August 17, 2014

This is our seventh bulletin: we want you to study and reflect some of the insights of Pope Francis' apostolic letter (a policy teaching) *The Joy of the Gospel*. Can you sense the new pastoral direction Pope Francis is leading the Church. In what ways does his teachings make you uncomfortable? challenged? or affirmed in your own conclusions about where the Church should be going?

Google the full text at: *APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION  
EVANGELII GAUDIUM*

### A CHURCH WITH THE DOOR OPEN

The great danger in today's world, . A Church which "goes forth" is a Church whose doors are open. Going out to others in order to reach the fringes of humanity does not mean rushing out aimlessly into the world. Often it is better simply to slow down, to put aside our eagerness in order to see and listen to others, to stop rushing from one thing to another and to remain with someone who has faltered along the way. At times we have to be like the father of the prodigal son, who always keeps his door open so that when the son returns, he can readily pass through it.

#46

Questions:

1. What does it mean to be a church with the door open?
2. How is your parish reaching out to the fringes of humanity?



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