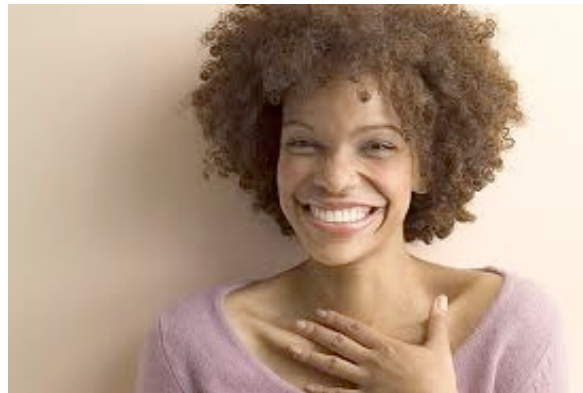


THE CHURCH IS CREDIBLE

The tide of secularism which has swept our societies, in many countries – even those where Christians are a minority – the Catholic Church is considered a credible institution by public opinion, and trusted for her solidarity and concern for those in greatest need. Again and again, the Church has acted as a mediator in finding solutions to problems affecting peace, social harmony, the land, the defense of life, human and civil rights, and so forth. And how much good has been done by Catholic schools and universities around the world! This is a good thing. Yet, we find it difficult to make people see that when we raise other questions less palatable to public opinion, we are doing so out of fidelity to precisely the same convictions about human dignity and the common good. # 65



Questions:

1. Do your fellow Catholics trust the social justice teachings of the Church?
2. What makes your relatives uncomfortable about the social justice teachings of the Church?

THE FAMILY IS UNDER FIRE

The family is experiencing a profound cultural crisis, as are all communities and social bonds. In the case of the family, 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 one another; it is also the place where parents pass on the faith to their children. Marriage now tends to be viewed as a form of mere emotional satisfaction that can be constructed in any way or modified at will. But the indispensable contribution of marriage to society transcends the feelings and momentary needs of the couple. As the French bishops have taught, it is not born “of loving sentiment, ephemeral by definition, but from the depth of the obligation assumed by the spouses who accept to enter a total communion of life.” # 66

Questions:

1. Where have you experienced the weakening of family life?
2. Do we live in a time when we do not speak enough about commitment to family life?



CHRISTIANS WITHOUT EASTER?

The individualism of our postmodern and globalized era favours a lifestyle which weakens the development and stability of personal relationships and distorts family bonds. Pastoral activity needs to bring out more clearly the fact that our relationship with the Father demands and encourages a communion which heals, promotes and reinforces interpersonal bonds.

In our world, especially in some countries, different forms of war and conflict are re-emerging, yet we Christians remain steadfast in our intention to respect others, to heal wounds, to build bridges, to strengthen relationships and to “bear one another’s burdens” (Gal 6:2). Today too, various associations for the defense of rights and the pursuit of noble goals are being founded. This is a sign of the desire of many people to contribute to social and cultural progress. # 67

Questions:

1. Where have you encountered a strong individualism in the last two months?
2. Can we counteract this tsunami of individualism that threatened to drown our society?



The process of secularization tends to reduce the faith and the Church to the sphere of the private and personal.

SUMMER WITH POPE FRANCIS August 31, 2014

This is the last of our nine bulletin inserts. Where have you gained new insights into the living and practice of our Christian faith? What has been challenging to you? the parish community? the Canadian society? Religion was never meant to make us feel comfortable. How has this moved you toward the edge of your comfort zone? *Google the full text at: APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION EVANGELII GAUDIUM*

HOW SECULAR ARE WE?

The process of secularization tends to reduce the faith and the Church to the sphere of the private and personal. Furthermore, by completely rejecting the transcendent, it has produced a growing deterioration of ethics, a weakening of the sense of personal and collective sin, and a steady increase in relativism.

These have led to a general sense of disorientation, especially in the periods of adolescence and young adulthood which are so vulnerable to change. As the bishops of the United States of America have rightly pointed out, while the Church insists on the existence of objective moral norms which are valid for everyone, “there are those in our culture who portray this teaching as unjust, that is, as opposed to basic human rights.

Such claims usually follow from a form of moral relativism that is joined, not without inconsistency, to a belief in the absolute rights of individuals.. #64

In this view, the Church is perceived as promoting a particular prejudice and as interfering with individual freedom”. [59] We are living in an information-driven society which bombards us indiscriminately with data – all treated as being of equal importance – and which leads to remarkable superficiality in the area of moral discernment. In response, we need to provide an education which teaches critical thinking and encourages the development of mature moral values # 64

Questions:

1. Are we living in a secular time (God is not needed)? Describe it.

