

Talk for the Cursillo (SHORT)

PRAYER: Pope Francis' Prayer for the Joy of the Gospel

Star of the new evangelization, 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. Alleluia! (Pope Francis, [Evangelii Gaudium](#), 11/24/13)

I. What is an Encyclical.

Introduction: The Church is often described as the “Barque of Peter,” with the pope as the captain. Pope as the Shepherd...to lead, guide and serve...the ship especially through the turbulent waves of the world to reach the eternal shores of Heaven.

One way the pope has guided the Church throughout the centuries is through papal documents: All for the Christina faithful.

We have the different papal documents: Papal Bull, Encyclicals, Apostolic Constitution, Muto Proprio, Apostolic Letter, Apostolic Exhortation.

a) Encyclical - began as sort of the e-mail of the early Church. They get their name from the Greek word for *circle*, or *circular*. Important letters from the pope would be forwarded to bishops and local churches...then spread to the faithful.

-Papal encyclicals are papal letters of a pastoral nature, used in their current form since 1740. It is one of the highest forms of communication by the pope and usually deals with some aspect of Catholic teaching — clarifying, amplifying, enlighten, counsel and shed light on existing doctrine as part of the Holy Father's ordinary teaching authority.

-Encyclicals are not necessarily “[infallible](#)” statements—although they can be if the pope wants to go through that process. That doesn't happen often. Normally encyclicals offer important guiding principles for the faithful to reflect on. This doesn't mean that Catholics can ignore an encyclical if they reflect on it and don't like what it says. Papal encyclicals are indeed to be taken very seriously and should challenge us all to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Q. How are encyclicals used within the Catholic faith? The encyclical will stimulate homilies and discussions in parishes around the world. It will become a source of inspiration and ideas for pastors, preachers, priests, teachers, theologians and authors who will echo and develop the pope's message.

Encyclicals had served to address global issues of the day and faith and morals

Q. Why is it important to learn about Pope Francis' encyclicals? (Why does the encyclical matter? What impact will it have? Why is it getting all this attention?)

Pope Francis, the Encyclicals are getting lots of attention for two reasons: First, the relevance of the issues like climate. Second, Pope Francis is admired, respected, and even loved all over the world by Catholics and non-Catholics alike. His ability to communicate in simple language that average people can understand.

II. ENCYCLICALS – THERE ARE THREE ENCYCLICALS OF POPE FRANCIS

1. Encyclical Letter *Lumen Fidei* (6-29-2013) to the bishops priests and deacons consecrated persons and the lay faithful on faith.
- 2) Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* (5-24-2015) - on care for our common home
- 3) Encyclical Letter *Fratelli Tutti* (10-3-2020) - on fraternity and social friendship

DETAILED

1) *Lumen Fidei*: The Light of Faith - (6-29-2013).

Background: Pope Francis turns to that most basic foundation of all, faith itself...very first words of his encyclical. Written for the church leaders and faithful. It was primarily written by Pope Benedict XVI and was completed and signed by Francis.

Three Pointers

#1 What is Faith – Faith “listening” to the word of God, the “call” to come out from the isolated self and to open oneself to a new life and the “promise” of the future.

-Faith also has a connotation of “paternity”, because the God who calls us is not a stranger, but is God the Father...the wellspring and origin of the goodness

-Faith is trust in God's merciful love, which always welcomes and forgives. Allowing oneself to be transformed anew by “God's free gift, which

calls for humility and the courage to trust and to entrust....lead to an encounter.

-Faith in the person of the risen Jesus Christ. He is a worthy witness. Faith calls us not only to look at Jesus but also participation in His way of seeing". The need for the Holy Spirit (N.21). Without the presence of the Spirit it is impossible to confess the Lord...like the apostles and disciples. This Faith is confessed within the body of the Church, as the "concrete communion of believers". Christians are "one" without losing their individuality and in the service of others they come into their own. Thus, "faith is not a private matter, a completely individualistic notion or a personal opinion", but rather "it comes from hearing, and is meant to find expression in words and actions.

#2 Faith is the enemy/problem - The world carries on "as if God does not exist," and often declares faith in God to be against human progress. Faith is equated by some with darkness, an unwillingness to step into the light of reason and scientific truth. On the contrary, faith, in reality, is a necessary path to truth. It elevates our minds and our very lives to higher things, to the highest truth of all, to God himself. Faith moves us to reach above and beyond ourselves toward the One who has made us. It calls us to exceed the limits that we have set for ourselves and to seek the highest truth, good, and beauty that can be found in God alone.

-Faith in God impels us to look at one another in a different way. Faith allows us to see one another more deeply, more charitably, to recognize each other as children of God, and therefore as brothers and sisters. Faith, in short, calls us to be more perfectly human, that is, to be more like Christ, the incarnate Son of God. So faith is not the enemy or hindrance. There should be dialogue between faith and reason.

#3 Keep the Faith - Pope Francis reaffirms **faith is a gift**. It is a grace given to us so that we might know the truth, and know it more fully and clearly. But faith can be diminished, or even lost, if it is ignored or smothered by lesser goods. Faith must be actively cultivated...**TO BE SHARED AND TO BE WITNESSED...no hesitation**

Go deeper –a more complete understanding of our faith by entering to a love relationship with God that arouses and strengthens our faith...in every encounter: sacraments, reading and reflecting the Scriptures, The Catechism, and the Compendium of the Catechism)

Faith draws us into the great family of believers that Jesus himself established, the Church. And it is within the Church that the truth of the Gospel is received, where the faith is fostered and nourished.

HUMAN SITUATIONS AND SUFFERING -reminds that through the struggles and travails of history, faith endures and brings the light of Christ. It calls for together in unity, but it also sends us forth in charity to carry out the mission.

2) Laudato SI – On Care for Our Common Home (2015)

Background: The title is taken from the first line of the encyclical, "Laudato si', mi Signore," or "Praise be to you, my Lord." ...like St Francis...calls brother and sister. It's a wake up call for the whole humanity.

3 Pointers

#1 God's Creation and Care - God created the world and entrusted it to us as a gift. Now we have the responsibility to care for and protect it and all people. Protecting human dignity is strongly linked to care for creation.

If not...impact on the environment and esp. the poor

people...disproportionately impacted on the poor. By the wealthy nations...pollution, hunger and lack of water.

#2 The Challenge - Called to solidarity -- We are one human family and have a shared responsibility for others and for creation. The Wealthy countries have a responsibility to reduce consumption and help the poor people/countries.

-Technological and economic development must serve human beings and enhance human dignity, instead of creating an economy of exclusion...authentic human development.

-Supporting life, protecting creation -- Concern for nature is incompatible with failure to protect vulnerable human beings, such as unborn children, people with disabilities, or victims of human trafficking.

#3 Call to Conversion and Renewal - A time to act -- Pope Francis calls for a change in lifestyle and consumption. We can make important changes as individuals, families, and communities, and as civil and political leaders.

-Hope and Joy -- "Injustice is not invincible" (no. 74) and we act knowing that we seek to live out God's vision of renewed relationships with God, ourselves, one another, and creation.

-The goal of the dialogue: "I urgently appeal, then, for a new dialogue and conversation the includes everyone

-NEED FOR INTERIOR CONVERSION...CHURCH....It must be said that some committed and prayerful Christians, with the excuse of realism and pragmatism, tend to ridicule expressions of concern for the environment...Others are passive

No matter who you are or where you find yourself in relation to protecting the environment, Pope Francis has this message for you: "I invite all

3) **Fratelli Tutti – On Fraternity and Social Friendship (2020)**

Background: Inspired by Saint Francis of Assisi in greeting and treating his brothers,

3 Pointers

#1 The concept of *fraternitas*

-Pope Francis picks up on this Franciscan tradition of St Francis/Franciscan Order of *fraternitas* (Chapter 3) which is more expansive and it has to do with the kind of relationship with one another. St Francis sees himself related with all people even non-human creatures. This fraternity enhances freedom and equality (paragraph 103)

Pope Francis uses the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) to show how the Christian notion of relationship with others transcends the limits and qualifications we are quick to use in isolating ourselves from solidarity with others. By contrast, if we recognize that we are all sisters and brothers to one another, then we have an inherent bond with each other that demands something of us — our love, respect and care.

-Francis highlights the demands that a spirit of fraternity places on us in relationship to one another in human society. Too often, the pope says, "we are constantly tempted to ignore others, especially the weak." He notes that, "for all the progress we have made, we are still 'illiterate' when it comes to accompanying, caring for, and supporting the most frail and vulnerable members of our developed societies. We have become accustomed to looking the other way, passing by, ignoring situations until they affect us directly" (Paragraph 64).

Christians should live according to his distinctive vision "walking in the footprints of our Lord Jesus Christ." Living like Jesus means prioritizing relationship above all else; it means caring for those in need, regardless of their identity or what affiliations they might have. And the way we form our

worldviews, make decisions, engage in the public square, and interact with one another at all levels should be grounded in our inextricable *fraternitas* with all.

#2 Crossing borders, building bridges

-Pope Francis stressed the importance of interreligious dialogue and friendship across differences in the global effort to promote human solidarity is no small gesture. Francis, taking seriously the prioritization of fraternal and sororal relationship with all people modeled by St. Francis, describes this social teaching as directed not only to his Christian sisters and brothers, but also addressed to all women and men of good will.

This expansive audience reflects the inclusive vision which was geared not only to Catholics and other Christians but also all people of good will.

He said like St. Francis, we have to cross many borders and built many bridges that transgress the social, civil and ecclesial borders of our community to embrace all.

-The pope points to love as the necessary ground for our building a "culture of encounter," which "means that we, as a people, should be passionate about meeting others, seeking points of contact, building bridges, planning a project that includes everyone" (Paragraph 216).

He speaks throughout *Fratelli Tutti* of the evils of apathy and indifference. These attitudes not only prevent us from the capacity for compassion — the ability to suffer with others in solidarity — but they also promote an individualism that creates separation and prohibits authentic relationship. What results is not only social division, but also tremendous suffering, which is felt most acutely by the poor and vulnerable.

The imposition of physical and ideological borders does great harm to human dignity, particularly for migrants and immigrants, which is why Francis strongly emphasizes the need for "fraternal gratuitousness" or the building of bridges to a better life for those who suffer the most without asking the costs (Paragraph 140).

3 Peacemaking and reconciliation

-Francis writes: "In many parts of the world, there is a need for paths of peace to heal open wounds...to be peacemakers...to work boldly and creatively to initiate processes of healing and renewed encounter" (Paragraph 225).

-Francis stresses the need for another kind of being in the world, one that is more human, one that returns to this foundational vocation wherein God calls all people to be peacemakers and reconcilers.

-Authentic peacemaking requires truth telling and a shared commitment to the good of the other. It also requires recognizing how decisions have consequences — sometimes dramatically negative ones — for "the more vulnerable members of society" (Paragraph 234). He adds: "Those who work for tranquil social coexistence should never forget that inequality and lack of integral human development make peace impossible" (Paragraph 235).

-Agents of Reconciliation. In the final chapter of the encyclical, the pope appeals to all religious believers, regardless of their tradition, to be agents of reconciliation, recognizing the fundamental commitment we all have to promote the common good.

- It is a call to love others as brothers and sisters, even when they are far from us; it is a call to open fraternity (FT 1), to recognizing and loving every person with a love without borders; it is a call to encounter others in a way that is capable of overcoming all distance and every temptation to engage in disputes, impositions, or submissions (FT)

-Speaking from the Christian perspective, Francis ties together the importance of the example of Jesus Christ and *fraternitas* as the foundation for our universal human vocation to be peacemakers and reconcilers. "For us the wellspring of human dignity and fraternity is in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. From it, there arises, for Christian thought and for the action of the Church, the primacy given to relationship, to the encounter with the sacred mystery of the other, to universal communion with the entire human family, as a vocation of all" (Paragraph 277).

III. What is our challenge as Cursillistas in terms of learning about Pope Francis' encyclicals?

1. Call to Holiness – Faith
2. Call to Encounter God in the world

3. Call to Action – Fratelli Tutti

Ending Prayer – Glory be to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

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A prayer to the Creator

(Pope Francis, *Fratelli tutti*, 287)

Lord, Father of our human family,

you created all human beings equal in dignity:

pour forth into our hearts a fraternal spirit

and inspire in us a dream of renewed encounter,

dialogue, justice and peace.

Move us to create healthier societies

and a more dignified world,

a world without hunger, poverty, violence and war.

May our hearts be open

to all the peoples and nations of the earth.

May we recognise the goodness and beauty

that you have sown in each of us,

and thus forge bonds of unity, common projects,

and shared dreams. Amen.