

## THE JOY OF THE GOSPEL: CONTEXT

- 1891 Leo XIII issues *Rerum Novarum* on the rights of workers, the role of private property, the duties of workers and employers, and care for the poor.
- 1931 Pius XI issues “*Quadragesimo Anno*,” updating the principles of *Rerum Novarum* and adapting them to the times: the rights of capital and labor, subsidiarity as a principle of social organization, a critique of both capitalism and socialism

### Post WWII:

1. The cold war and the arms race
2. Threat of nuclear annihilation
3. The rise of post-colonial, developing nations
4. Globalization of the world’s economies and systems of communication, which threaten traditional societies
5. An increased awareness of human rights for women, racial minorities, and national groups
6. A recognition of the need to overcome divisions within Christianity and to undertake inter-faith dialogue a contribution to world peace
7. A more public acceptance of atheism in theory and in practice, indifference to religion, and a relativistic, “whatever” attitude, toward truth and objective moral standards
8. A tendency to equate scientific and statistical ways of knowing with the only ways worth knowing = A culture of “nothing but” that is skeptical of news about “something else” or “something more”

1955 **General Conference of the Latin American and Caribbean Bishops #1: Rio**

1958 John XXII elected

1961 *Mater et Magistra*, on just remuneration for labor, the rights and duties of ownership of private property, the principle of subsidiarity, the need for international cooperation, and the need to teach Catholic social teaching and apply it

1962 Vatican II convened

1963 *Pacem in Terris* on the connection of rights and duties for the ordering of society in a changing world; on the common good and the duty of public authority to promote the inclusion of all; on the need to stop the arms race, foster international cooperation (for example, through the United Nations), and on uniting faith with action

John XXIII dies; Paul VI is elected

- 1964 The Vatican Council produces *Lumen Gentium: Constitution on the Church*
- The people of God
  - The Body of Christ

- The Temple of the Holy Spirit and the universal call to holiness
- 1965 The Vatican Council produces *Gaudium et Spes: Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*
- In the modern world, the church recognizes the effects of philosophical and practical atheism and addresses three human concerns in light of the gospel, the good news:
- The dignity of the human person in the light of the incarnation
  - The flourishing of the human community in light of the offer of salvation to all
  - The significance of human work in light of the victory of the resurrection and the transformation of the world

The church promises dialogue and service to the world as integral to the church's mission and as a sign of God's concern for the human family

- 1967 *Populorum Progressio*, On the "full" development of peoples, emphasizing that development cannot be limited to economic growth alone but must include other goods, including social, cultural, and spiritual. "Development" is the new name for "peace."
- 1968 **General Conference of the Latin American and Caribbean Bishops #2: Medellin**
- 1971 *Octagesima Adveniens*, New challenges for justice on the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*: urbanization and the "new poor" for whom there should be a "preferential option"; a critique of both Marxist and liberal ideologies.
- 1975 *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, On the evangelizing mission of the church and the need for a new evangelization, which includes both a personal and social dimension: human rights, peace, justice, development, liberation combating injustices.
- 1978 Paul VI dies; John Paul I elected; John Paul II elected
- 1979 *Redemptor Hominis*, On the dignity of the human person as revealed by Jesus Christ, on the human person as the "way" for the church, and on well-known threats to human dignity in the conditions of modern life.

**General Conference of the Latin American and Caribbean Bishops #3: Puebla**

- 1980 *Dives in Misericordia*, On God's merciful love as the message of the gospel, as a reciprocal gift between people, and as the basis for new relationships on which justice can be based.
- 1981 *Laborem Exercens*: On the dignity and fulfillment of human work and on the need for structural changes on the global scale so that the person is the subject,

not the mere instrument, of production; on the priority of labor over capital and of the person over things; on the right of suitable employment for all, just wages, and the right to form unions.

- 1987 *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, A Commentary on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Populorum Progressio*, analyzing the widening economic gap and specific signs of underdevelopment in the northern and southern hemispheres, exacerbated by the arms race between east and west, and a call for “authentic human development” with recommendations.
- 1990 *Redemptoris Missio*: A reflection on the missionary mandate of the church – to proclaim the kingdom of God – which involves all of the baptized and which means liberation from evil on all levels, with a focus especially on Asia. A recognition that most Christians are no longer in Europe.
- 1991 *Centessimus Annus*, on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, offering a new analysis of the economic and political landscape since 1989 (the fall of communism in Europe) with attention to the rights and the duties of private property and to the principle of “the universal destination of the earth’s goods”; re-affirmation of the church’s care for the human person and of social teaching as an instrument of evangelization for salvation.
- 1992 Publication of *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* to mark the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Vatican Council II: With teachings on the human community, social justice, the implications of loving one’s neighbor, and safeguarding peace.

**General Conference of the Latin American and Caribbean Bishops #4 Santo Domingo**

- 1993 *Veritatis Splendor*: On the objective nature of morally evil actions, known to be such through reason and revelation – a sure basis for establishing moral norms; on the relationship between authentic freedom and truth.
- 1995 *Evangelium Vitae*: An analysis of threats to human life (“a culture of death”) and a proposal to establish a “culture of life” through the proclamation of the gospel of life, with concrete and personal applications.
- 2004 Publication of *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*: “This document intends to present in a complete and systematic manner, even if by means of an overview, the Church’s social teaching, which is the fruit of careful Magisterial reflection and an expression of the Church’s constant commitment in fidelity to the grace of salvation wrought in Christ and in loving concern for humanity’s destiny” [#8].
- 2005 John Paul II dies; Benedict XVI elected

*Deus Caritas Est*: The first of three encyclicals on the three theological virtues: love, hope, and faith.

2007 *Spe Salvi*: On hope.

**General Conference of the Latin American and Caribbean Bishops #5:  
Aparacida**

2009 *Caritas in Veritate*: An explicit tribute to the entire social teaching of Paul VI in *Populorum Progressio* and elsewhere and of *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* of John Paul II: "Paul VI clearly presented the relationship between the proclamation of Christ and the advancement of the individual in society... The Church's social doctrine proclaims and bears witness to faith. It is an instrument and an indispensable setting for formation in faith" [#15].

2011 Benedict XVI declares a "Year of Faith" for Advent, 2012- Christ the King, 2013 and convenes a synod of bishops to discuss the new evangelization.

2013 Benedict XVI resigns; Francis is elected  
The synod on the new evangelization concludes

2013 *Lumen Fidei*: On faith.  
*Evangelii Gaudium*, an exhortation to sum up the work of the synod on the new evangelization

## QUESTIONS TO START DISCUSSION

### TALK ONE: Pope Francis in Context

1. What would you identify as some widely-held ways of thinking or living in the modern world? How do they help or challenge Christian life and belief?
2. What can the church say or do that the world needs to hear or to see happen?
3. How does the church differ from being merely another "NGO" (Non-Government Agency)? How can it be more completely and clearly itself?

### TALK TWO: Challenges to the New Evangelization

1. What is the "good news" and what do you think is most attractive about it? Do you find it so attractive that you speak about it to others in either word or deed?
2. Do you know examples of people who have "gone forth" in faith to distant places (literal or spiritual) – like Abraham, Moses, or Jesus himself? What has impressed you about their journey? Has it in some way(s) changed your life?
3. Why is Pope Francis upset with the attitudes of "neo-agnostics" and "neo-pelagians" in the church? Do you share his attitude? Why or why not?

### TALK THREE: Renewed Commitment to the Common Good

1. Where do you and your faith community find the tension between "finite embodiment" (what and where you are) and "infinite self-transcendence" (where you are called to be)? Where are you "stuck" and where are you being called to "more"?
2. What in the situations of others moves you toward solidarity with them? What do you experience in "going forth" to others?
3. How does your household budget and/or the federal budget reflect a commitment to "solidarity"? What do you think makes it difficult to achieve solidarity? Why is solidarity important to achieve?

### TALK FOUR: Resources for Renewal

1. What role can the people play in the "human formation" of clergy and church leadership: For example, in their availability to people, celebration of the sacraments, preaching of homilies, and showing a "human touch"? How might this formation be a resource for a new evangelization?
2. What challenges do you have in handing on the faith to others, including those in your immediate or extended family? What would help you to meet the challenge?
3. What do you see when you see the city – or the neighborhood – where you live? How is it life-giving? How does it wear you down? How do you experience the resources for evangelization named by Pope Francis: The impulse of the Holy Spirit, the example of the saints, the experience of salvation in the love of Jesus? Are there other resources that you draw on?

## FURTHER READING

Against the Tide: The Radical Leadership of Pope Francis, John Allen, Jr., Ligouri Press

Francis of Assisi: A New Biography, Augustine Thompson, Cornell University Press

Francis: A New World Pope, Michel Cool, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

Francis: Pope of a New World, Andrea Tornielli, Ignatius Press

Mercy: The Essence of the Gospel and the Key to Christian Life, Walter Kasper, Paulist Press

"On Evangelization in the Modern World," Pope Paul VI, Pauline Books and Media

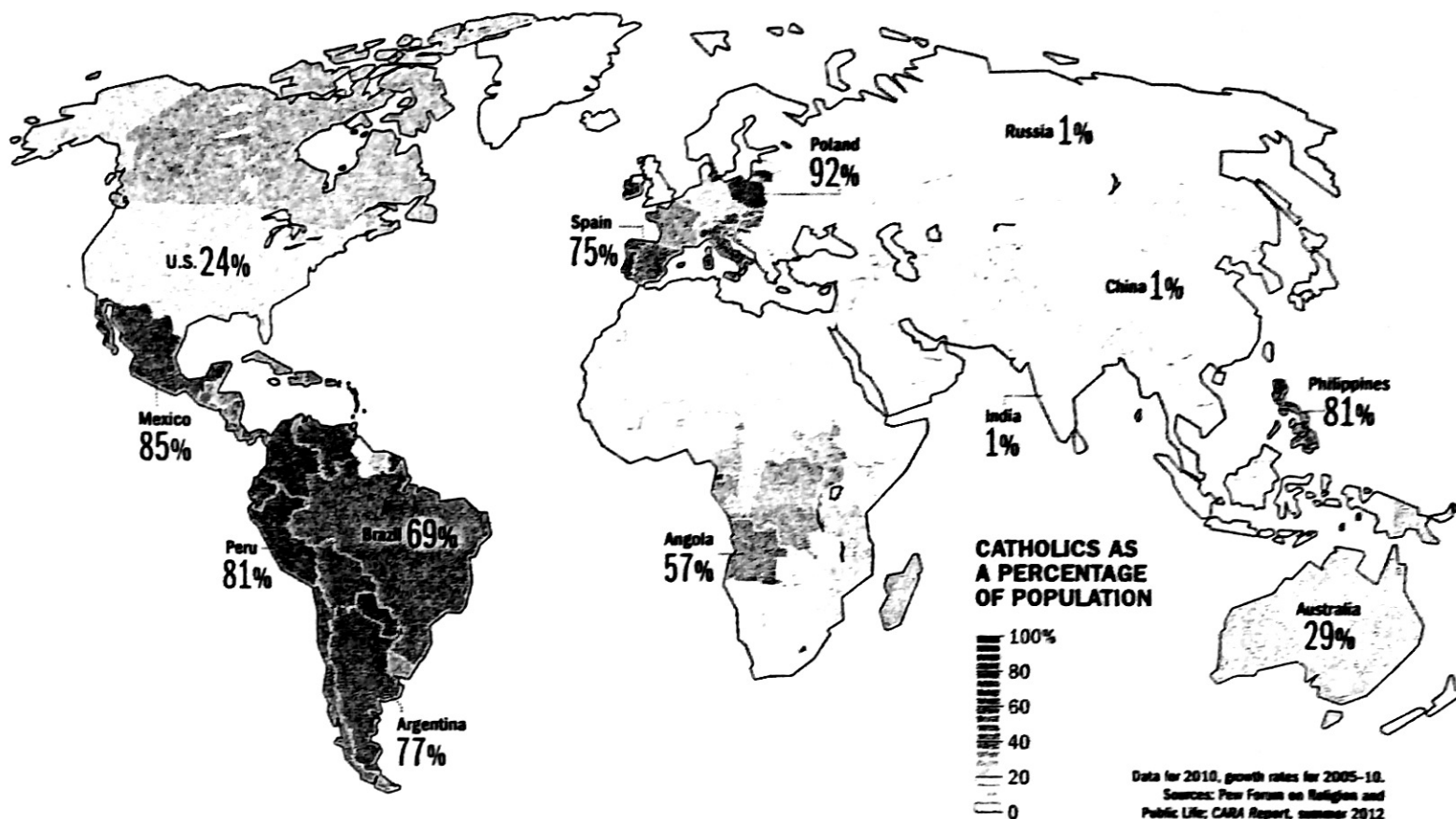
On Heaven and Earth: A Dialogue Between Pope Francis and Rabbi Skorka on Faith, Family, and the Church in the Twenty-First Century, Jorge Mario Bergoglio and Abraham Skorka, Image Press

Only Love Can Save Us, Pope Francis, Our Sunday Visitor

The Church of Mercy: A Vision for the Church, Pope Francis, Loyola Press

"The Joy of the Gospel," Pope Francis, The Word Among Us Press

V General Conference of the Bishops of Latin American and the Caribbean: Concluding Document, Aparecida, 13-31 May, 2007



### CATHOLICS BY REGION AND GROWTH RATE

