



Feast of the Holy Child
January 18, 2015

Sunday Liturgy Guide for the Church of the Poor in the Spirit of the New Evangelization

The Church of the Poor, through the Basic Ecclesial Communities, realizes God's Reign in the innocence and simplicity of children and the loving wisdom of the adults.

In honor of Pope Francis' visit to Asia, this time, in particular, Sri Lanka and the Philippines, we dedicate this catechetical reflection to the exhortation of the Holy Father. In his Apostolic Exhortation, "The Joy of the Gospel", he says: "The joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. With Christ joy is constantly born anew." (1).

"The great danger in today's world, pervaded as it is by consumerism, is the desolation and anguish born of a complacent yet covetous heart, the feverish pursuit of frivolous pleasures, and a blunted conscience. Whenever our interior life becomes caught up in its own interests and concerns, there is no longer room for others, no place for the poor. God's voice is no longer heard, the quiet joy of his love is no longer felt, and the desire to do good fades." (2)

He looks at the world of today from the optic of evangelical discernment: "an ever watchful scrutiny of the signs

of the times" in the light of the gospel. He does so, focusing "on certain factors which can restrain or weaken the impulse of missionary renewal in the Church, either because they threaten the life and dignity of God's people or because they affect those who are directly involved in the Church's institutions and in her work of evangelization". (51)

So, he says "no to an economy of exclusion, no to the new idolatry of money, no to a financial system which rules rather than serves, no to inequality which spawns violence". Yet, he also says: "Yes to the challenge of a missionary spirituality, no to selfishness and spiritual sloth, no to sterile pessimism, yes to the new relationships brought by Christ, no to spiritual worldliness and no to warring among ourselves". At the root, Pope Francis re-proposes the task of the new evangelization to remedy the ills of our modern times. It is the task of bringing back Jesus Christ at the center of our lives. It is the missionary task of bringing back humanity into the center of history; specifically, the task of inclusion of the poor in society.

It is our suggestion that our families, BECs, our parishes, our churches, individually as well as collectively, study and reflect together the exhortation of Pope Francis: the Joy of the Gospel. ■

Introductory Rites

P: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen

P. Praised be God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has bestowed on us in Christ every spiritual blessing in the heavens. May his peace and love be always with you.

C: And with your spirit.

Introduction and Welcome

P: Dear brothers and sisters: we celebrate today the feast of the Holy Child. We thank God for the gift of children who are our models of innocence and simplicity fit for the Kingdom. We pray for our children that they may not lose their innocence and simplicity as they mature to become men and women of superior spiritual wisdom and of insightful compassionate hearts. Let us entrust our children and our society to the Holy Child, Jesus our Lord and Savior.

Penitential Act

P: Brothers and sisters: to celebrate worthily these sacred mysteries, let us now recall to mind our sins and ask God's loving forgiveness and compassion.

P: Lord Jesus, when you became a member of the human family, you sanctified all families: Lord, have mercy.

C: Lord, have mercy.

P: Christ Jesus, you grew up in Nazareth and worked in a carpenter's shop: Christ, have mercy.

C: Christ, have mercy.

P: Lord Jesus, you accepted to live under the authority of Mary and Joseph: Lord, have mercy.

C: Lord, have mercy.

P: May almighty God have mercy on

us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

Gloria

Glory to God in the Highest!

And on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father. Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Collect

P: Let us pray: Loving God, guardian of our homes, when you entrusted your Son to the care of Mary and Joseph, you did not spare them the pains that touch the life of every family. Make us ever thankful for the blessings you give us through Jesus Christ, your Word made flesh, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, in the splendor of eternal light, God for ever and ever.

C: Amen.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading: Is 9:1-6

L: A reading from the Prophet Isaiah

But there will be no gloom for her that was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will

make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined. Thou hast multiplied the nation, thou hast increased its joy; they rejoice before thee as with joy at the harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, thou hast broken as on the day of Midian. For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called “Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

L: The Word of the Lord.

C: *Thanks be to God.*

Commentary on Is 9:1-6:

This is a messianic prophecy. At the time of great despair, the prophet rises not so much as to gloat on a future victory but to highlight God’s promise of consolation to a people in need of redemption. There is a repetition of history articulated in this messianic prophecy. The fall of Samaria and the dispersion of the peoples to Assyria and other lands: they will be returned to their homeland. The fall of Israel to Babylon and the Babylonian exile and captivity: the people will be returned to their homeland. And their liberator-messiah, according to their customary tradition, will be king with many titles that speak of the deepest desire of the people, of the poor.

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 97:1.2-3. 3-4. 5-6

R: *The LORD reigns; let the earth rejoice; let the many coastlands be glad!*

Clouds and thick darkness are round about him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne. Fire goes before him, and burns up his adversaries round about.

R: *The LORD reigns; let the earth rejoice; let the many coastlands be glad!*

His lightnings lighten the world; the earth sees and trembles. The mountains melt like wax before the LORD, before the Lord of all the earth.

R: *The LORD reigns; let the earth rejoice; let the many coastlands be glad!*

The mountains melt like wax before the LORD, before the Lord of all the earth. The heavens proclaim his righteousness; and all the peoples behold his glory.

R: *The LORD reigns; let the earth rejoice; let the many coastlands be glad!*

Commentary on Ps 97:

This is a hymn to the royal majesty of God. The witnesses of God’s glorious reign and majesty are the earth and the heavens. The land of Israel and the coastlands of the Mediterranean testify to his glory. The reason for God’s royal majestic glory: his justice on earth.

Second Reading: Eph 1:3-6. 15-18

L: The second reading from the Letter to the Ephesians

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing

in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. He destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints.

L: The Word of the Lord.

C: *Thanks be to God.*

Commentary on Eph 1:3-6. 15-18

These verses combine benediction (vv. 3-6) and supplication (vv. 15-18). The first part has a beautiful cascade of blessings: the mouth from the earth blesses the Father, the Son and the Spirit whose graces are poured down upon humanity below. And then a new ascending movement follows, in the second part: from on earth, the supplication rises up to the heavens for the cause of the people below. The graces sought are superior wisdom and insightful hearts: two forces that can penetrate God's love and the richness of human destiny, in hope.

Alleluia Verse:

R: Alleluia, alleluia. The Word of God became flesh and came to dwell among us .. He enabled us to become the children of God.! **Alleluia, alleluia.**

Gospel: Mk 10:13-16

P: The Lord be with you.

C: *And with your spirit.*

P: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Mark.

C: *Glory to you, O Lord.*

And they were bringing children to him, that he might touch them; and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it he was indignant, and said to them, "Let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands upon them.

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: *Praise be to you, O Lord Jesus Christ.*

Commentary on Mk 10:13-16

The disciples believed that they were supposed to form a community around Jesus. But this self-centered favored belief made them an elitist group around Jesus. They failed to realize that their task is to bring people to Jesus; and not to cordon him off from the people, for themselves alone. When Jesus called the children to himself, the exclusive self-centeredness of the disciples was exposed. The children have become the models of those who could enter the kingdom of God, the reign of Jesus. The children's innocence and simplicity qualified them for heaven. The disciples ought to possess these qualities and traits as they gathered towards Jesus. They should not impede the others to come to Jesus to be touched by him.

Homily: The Church of the Poor, through the Basic Ecclesial Communities, realizes God’s Reign in the innocence and simplicity of children and the loving wisdom of the adults.

Summary of the Sunday Reading Message	Concrete description of the poor people and their situation	Reflection/ Points for reflection/ Call/ Challenge
The Church of the Poor, through the Basic Ecclesial Communities, realizes God’s Reign in the innocence and simplicity of children and the loving wisdom of the adults.	How do you care for the children in your home, BEC and parish? How do you encourage them to be good and obedient in their innocence and simplicity? How have your BEC, Parish and society violated your children in your midst?	“And the child will be called ‘Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace’.” As disciples, we should lead all people to Jesus by our innocence and simplicity.

Profession of Faith

A: I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was

buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayers of the Faithful:

P: Dear sisters and brothers: let us now elevate our hearts and minds to God our Father, and, with joy, humbly present to him our prayers. For every prayer let our response be: Lord, help us to love you in others.

R: Lord, help us to love you in others.

L: Let us pray for the Church: that, being a Church of the Poor spread all over the world, she may be strengthened by the Holy Spirit in her continuing missionary activity of proclaiming the Joy of Life for all in the Child Jesus. Let us pray to the Lord.

R: Lord, hear our prayer.

L: For our Holy Father, Pope Francis I, for the bishops, priests, deacons, for those in consecrated life and for all those who are entrusted with the care and administration of the church as People of God: that, by sharing the sentiments of the heart of Christ, they may continue to live the life of innocence and simplicity side-by-side with superior spiritual wisdom and compassionate heart. Let us pray to the Lord.

R: Lord, hear our prayer.

L: For world leaders and all those entrusted with governance and administration of the goods of the earth: that they may continue to promote the common good by defending the rights of the children and the unborn, by eliminating child trafficking and giving justice to the victims, and by providing welfare and refuge to the poor children, the orphan and the ill. Let us pray to the Lord.

R: Lord, hear our prayer.

L: For all of us, inhabitants of the earth and citizens of heaven: that we may inspire one another to envision and build a future human community as communion, by educating parents to Christian family life and parenthood, by making our homes schools of faith, hope and love for our children, and by rejoicing in the success of the children of others because they too are our children. Let us pray to the Lord.

R: Lord, hear our prayer.

L: For our beloved dead: that in the forgiveness of their sins, they may find eternal rest in the heart of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Let us pray to the Lord.

R: Lord, hear our prayer.

L: For our special intentions, in the silence of our hearts. *(pause)*... Let us pray to the Lord.

R: Lord, hear our prayer.

P: Lord God of love and compassion, listen to the prayers of your people. Help us to follow the way of your Son, the Holy Child, in our life here on earth as we journey towards you in the fullness of joy and life. We ask this through the Christ our Lord.

R: Amen

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Preparation of the Altar and the Gifts

P: Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation,

C: Blessed be God forever.

P: Pray, brethren (brothers and sisters), that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

C: May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

Prayer over the Offerings

P: Lord of All Creation, we are mindful that these gifts of bread and wine have already been blessed by sun, earth and rain. And we are grateful for all the Blessings of Life that you have given us. We pray that in our families we may be nurtured by forgiveness and understanding and nourished by friendship and care. All this we ask through Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

Prayer of the Eucharist

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And with your spirit.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them up to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right and just.

P: It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord.

For on the feast of this awe-filled mystery, though invisible in his own divine nature, he has appeared visibly in ours; and, begotten before all ages,

he has begun to exist in time; so that, raising up in himself all that was down, he might restore unity to all creation and call straying humanity back to the heavenly Kingdom.

And so, with all the Angels, we praise, as in joyful celebration we acclaim:

A: Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Acclamation

P: The mystery of faith.

We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

(Concluding the Eucharistic Prayer, the priest says:)

Through him, and with him, and in him, O God, almighty Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, for ever and ever.

C: Amen.

Communion Rite

The Lord's Prayer

Doxology

C: For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever and ever.

Sign of Peace

P: Lord Jesus Christ, who said to your Apostles; Peace ... Who live and reign for ever and ever.

C: Amen.

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: And with your spirit.

P: Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

Breaking of the Bread

A: Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world ... grant us peace.

Communion

P: Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

A: Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

Prayer after Communion

P: Let us pray: Creator God, you have nourished us at the banquet in honor of your Son Jesus. We pray that, like him, we may grow in wisdom and works of service, so that we may find favor in your sight. Grant this through the same Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

Final Blessing

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And with your spirit.

P: Bow down for the blessing: With St. Paul, I pray: 'May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give you a spirit of wisdom and insight to know God clearly'.

C: Amen.

P: "May God enlighten your inmost vision so that you may know the great hope to which he has called you."

C: Amen.

P: "May you also know what are the riches of Christ's glorious heritage to be distributed among the members of the Church".

C: Amen.

P: And may the blessings of almighty God, + the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, come down upon you and remain with you forever.

C: Amen.

Dismissal

P: Go in the peace and glorify God by your life.

C: Thanks be to God. ■

Join Fr. Ben Alforque, MSC of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in **GOSPEL BREAK**, a short yet entertaining and insightful discussion of this Sunday's Gospel on YouTube.

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