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## Chancellor's Update

### Pope Francis – Teaches the Faith

Ever since the election of Pope Francis, we have received an avalanche of comments from the extreme traditional members, the conservatives to the liberal modernists of the Faith complaining about the pope. Whether the argument is about we have no pope since Pius XII, washing the feet of women to not allowing birth control or married priests, they seem to forget that Christ commissioned the Pope to encourage and then strengthen his brethren. “And the Lord said, ‘Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith may not fail; and do thou when once thou hast turned again, **strengthen thy brethren.**” (Luke XXII v 31 – 32)

Please note how Pope Francis has been carefully and simply teaching the Faith. On April 18, 2013, Vatican City/ 9:47 AM (CAN/EWTN News), the Pope said: If Catholics do not proclaim Jesus with their lives, then the Church becomes “not the mother, but the babysitter,” Pope Francis cautioned in a homily and a separate letter to his brother bishops in Argentina.

When believers share their faith, “the Church becomes a mother church that produces children (and more) children, because we, the children of the Church, we carry that. But when we do not, the Church is not the mother, but the babysitter, that takes care of the baby – to put the baby to sleep. It is a Church dormant,” Pope Francis stated.

The solution to this is “to proclaim Christ, to carry the Church – this fruitful motherhood of the Church – forward,” he said.

The Pope first mentioned the importance of being spiritually fruitful during the April 16 Mass he celebrated for employees of the Vatican’s Institute for Works of Religion in St. Martha’s residence.

He based his homily on a reading from the Acts of the Apostles, which recalled the lives of the first Christians.

“They left their homes,” he recalled, “they brought with them only few belongings, and going from place to place proclaiming the Word.

“They were a simple faithful, baptized just a year or so – but they had the courage to go and proclaim,” the Pope said.

Pope Francis then turned to a point that he emphasized frequently in Buenos Aires.

The early Christians, he stressed, had nothing but “the power of baptism,” which “gave them apostolic courage, the strength of the Spirit.”

But, he asked, do Christians today really believe in the power of their baptism?

“Is it sufficient for evangelization? Or do we rather ‘hope’ that the priest should speak, that the bishop might speak?”

This way of seeing Christianity often carries with it the attitude of, ‘I was baptized, I made Confirmation, First Communion ... I have my identity card, alright.’ And now, go to sleep quietly, you are a Christian,” the Pope explained.

Instead, he said that believers must be “faithful to the Spirit, to proclaim Jesus with our lives, through our witness and our words.” Pope Francis repeated this message in a letter he sent to his fellow Argentinean bishops who are meeting for their annual full assembly in Pilar, Argentina.

“Mission,” he underlined, “is key to ministry.”

“A Church that does not go out of itself, sooner or later, sickens from the stale air of closed rooms,” the Pope wrote.

He acknowledged that in going out the Church runs risks, but “I prefer a thousand times over a Church of accidents than a sick Church.”

The Church, the Holy Father observed, typically suffers from being self-referential, only looking to and relying

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on itself.

This kind of self-centeredness “leads to a routine spirituality and convoluted clericalism” and prevents people from experiencing the sweet and comforting joy of evangelization, he warned.

Pope Francis finished his letter by greeting the Argentinean people and asking his fellow bishops to pray “I do not grow proud and always know how to listen to what God wants and not what I want.”

**He has set the stage for us to go out and evangelize the world.** On April 24, Vatican city (CNA/EWTN News), the pope said: Christians should not be frightened of the final judgment but should let it affect how they live, Pope Francis told the 100,000 pilgrims who filled St. Peter's Square.

"Human history begins with the creation of man and woman in the image and likeness of God and concludes with the final judgment of Christ. We often forget these two poles of history, and above all faith in the return of Christ and the final judgment is sometimes not so clear and strong in the hearts of Christians," Pope Francis said April 24.

The crowd that turned out for the Wednesday audience was one of the largest yet, with the attendance reportedly surpassing expectations by about 25,000 people.

The Pope dedicated his address to the phrase from the Creed, "He will come again in glory, to judge the living and the dead," continuing a series started by Benedict XVI for the Year of Faith.

He began by noting that Jesus "often focused on the reality of his final coming" during his public ministry.

"Today I would like to reflect on three Gospel texts that help us to enter into this mystery: that of the ten virgins, the talents and that of the final judgment. All three are part of Jesus' discourse on the end times in the Gospel of St. Matthew," he explained. At the present moment humanity is living between the moment of Christ's Ascension and his final return, and this is the context Jesus used when he told the parable of the 10 virgins, the Pope said.

The parable involves 10 virgins who were awaiting the arrival of a bridegroom to his wedding feast. Five of them were wise and had extra lamp oil to provide light until he arrived, but five were foolish, having brought no extra oil.

The foolish virgins were not able to notice the arrival of the bridegroom with their lamps out, and so they were left knocking on the door of the house where the feast was being held.

"They were knocking insistently, but it was too late, the bridegroom responds, I do not know you," the Pope recalled.

The Holy Father said that the time of waiting for the bridegroom, who is Jesus, is a period granted by God in his "mercy and patience," and Christians should not fall asleep, keeping their faith alive through prayer and the sacraments. Turning to the parable of the talents, Pope Francis recalled how Jesus warned people against letting fear prevent them from using the gifts God gave them.

"A Christian who withdraws into himself, hiding all that the Lord has given him, is not a Christian!" the Pope stated. "I would ask the many young people present to be generous with their God-given talents for the good of others, the Church and our world," he added.

Pope Francis then spoke about the final parable, in which Jesus describes the final judgment as being like a shepherd who divides his flock into sheep and goats. Those on the right are those who followed the will of God in their lives, while those on the left did not.

"This tells us that we will be judged by God on charity, on how we loved him in our brothers, especially the most vulnerable and needy," he explained.

"Of course," the Pope qualified, "we must always keep in mind that we are justified, we are saved by grace, by a free act of the love of God, which always precedes us, we alone cannot do anything. Faith is first of all a gift that we have received."

"Looking to the final judgment must never frighten us," Pope Francis concluded.

"Rather, it urges us to live the present better. With mercy and patience, God offers us this time so that we might learn every day to recognize him in the poor and the small, might strive for the good, and might be vigilant in prayer and love," so that when he comes he will find us his good and faithful servants, he said.

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