“I want a Church which is poor and for the poor”

Caritas Singapore Social Mission Conference
August, 2014
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President, Caritas Asia
Ghana, West Africa
From 1986 to 1994
Visiting out stations in Ghana
Rwanda Refugees camp, 1995

Everybody has forgotten us
Pondicherry, India, 2005

Everybody has Forgotten us
Gulu, Uganda, 2005

Everybody has Forgotten us
Tsunami in Tohoku Japan, 2011

Everybody has Forgotten us
Compassion fatigue

April, 2011 in Taro, Miyako
Lampedusa

14, April, 2013
The culture of comfort, which makes us think only of ourselves, makes us insensitive to the cries of other people, makes us live in soap bubbles which, however lovely, are insubstantial; they offer a fleeting and empty illusion which results in indifference to others; indeed, it even leads to the globalization of indifference. In this globalized world, we have fallen into globalized indifference.
Just as the commandment “Thou shalt not kill” sets a clear limit in order to safeguard the value of human life, today we also have to say “thou shalt not” to an economy of exclusion and inequality. Such an economy kills. How can it be that it is not a news item when an elderly homeless person dies of exposure, but it is news when the stock market loses two points? This is a case of exclusion. Can we continue to stand by when food is thrown away while people are starving? This is a case of inequality. (EG53)
"If the whole Church takes up this missionary impulse, she has to go forth to everyone without exception. But to whom should she go first?

When we read the Gospel we find a clear indication: not so much our friends and wealthy neighbors, but above all the poor and the sick, those who are usually despised and overlooked. (EG48)
"By his death, Christ liberates us from sin; by his Resurrection, he opens for us the way to a new life. As Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. (CCC:654)."
Sensitivity and compassion

A Church which “goes forth” is a Church whose doors are open. Going out to others in order to reach the fringes of humanity does not mean rushing out aimlessly into the world. Often it is better simply to slow down, to put aside our eagerness in order to see and listen to others, to stop rushing from one thing to another and to remain with someone who has faltered along the way (EG46).
I: THE REALITY OF THE MODERN WORLD.
20 versus 80

population, 7 billion
- Developed: 20%
- Developing: 80%

Private Consumption
- Developed: 23%
- Developing: 77%
II: OUR MOTIVATION OF HELPING OTHERS
The Church's deepest nature is expressed in her three-fold responsibility:

- of proclaiming the word of God (kerygma-martyria),
- celebrating the sacraments (leitourgia),
- and exercising the ministry of charity (diakonia).

These duties presuppose each other and are inseparable. For the Church, charity is not a kind of welfare activity which could equally well be left to others, but is a part of her nature, an indispensable expression of her very being.
The joys and the hopes, the sorrows and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the sorrows and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts (GS 1)
"Since all men possess a rational soul and are created in God's likeness, since they have the same nature and origin, have been redeemed by Christ and enjoy the same divine calling and destiny, the basic equality of all must receive increasingly greater recognition. (GS 29)"
"for excessive economic and social differences between the members of the one human family or population groups cause scandal, and militate against social justice, equity, the dignity of the human person, as well as social and international peace." (GS29)
"Development must not be understood solely in economic terms, but in a way that is fully human. It is not only a question of raising all peoples to the level currently enjoyed by the richest countries, but rather of building up a more decent life through united labour, of concretely enhancing every individual's dignity and creativity, as well as his capacity to respond to his personal vocation, and thus to God's call.

JPII Centesimus Annus (CA 29)"
III: POPE FRANCIS, THE POOR
CHURCH FOR THE POOR.
Pope Francis

Peripheries
"Abraham received the call to set out for a new land (cf. Gen 12:1-3). Moses heard God's call: “Go, I send you” (Ex 3:10) and led the people towards the promised land (cf. Ex 3:17). To Jeremiah God says: “To all whom I send you, you shall go” (Jer 1:7). (EG 20)."
“I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security”

(EG 49).
"Our faith in Christ, who became poor, and was always close to the poor and the outcast, is the basis of our concern for the integral development of society's most neglected members.”

(EG 186)
“For the Church, the option for the poor is primarily a theological category rather than a cultural, sociological, political or philosophical one.”

By bringing the poor to the center of the Church we are "to find Christ in them, to lend our voice to their causes, but also to be their friends, to listen to them, to speak for them and to embrace the mysterious wisdom which God wishes to share with us through them. (EG 198)"
"No one must say that they cannot be close to the poor because their own lifestyle demands more attention to other areas...While it is quite true that the essential vocation and mission of the lay faithful is to strive that earthly realities and all human activity may be transformed by the Gospel, none of us can think we are exempt from concern for the poor and for social justice. (EG 201)"
"in this context we can understand Jesus' command to his disciples: You yourselves give them something to eat!" (Mk 6:37): it means working to eliminate the structural causes of poverty and to promote the integral development of the poor", and he puts emphasis on the necessity of "daily acts of solidarity in meeting the real needs which we encounter." (EG 188)
"We are not simply talking about ensuring nourishment or a "dignified sustenance" for all people, but also their "general temporal welfare and prosperity." This means education, access to health care, and above all employment, for it is through free, creative, participatory and mutually supportive labour that human beings express and enhance the dignity of their lives." (EG 192)
"a better distribution of income, the creation of sources of employment and an integral promotion of the poor which goes beyond a simple welfare mentality."(EG 204)

"God to give us more politicians capable of sincere and effective dialogue aimed at healing the deepest roots - and not simply the appearances – of the evils in our world!"(EG 205)
"Small yet strong in the love of God, like Saint Francis of Assisi, all of us, as Christians, are called to watch over and protect the fragile world in which we live, and all its peoples. (EG 216)"
“One Human Family, Food for All”

Raises awareness of hunger crises, encourage ordinary people to learn more about hunger and ways to solve it, calls on governments around the world to guarantee a right to food for all and end systemic hunger by 2025.
“We are in front of a global scandal of around one billion people who still suffer from hunger today. We cannot look the other way and pretend this does not exist. The food available in the world is enough to feed everyone. The parable of the multiplication of the loaves and fish teaches us exactly this: that if there is the will, what we have never ends. On the contrary, it abounds and does not get wasted.”