



A bruised Church on the move

We are used to thinking of the Church as our mother, as holy, as a “perfect society” and as the guardian of eternal truth. Sexual abuse and financial scandals have shaken this idealistic image. We are a bruised Church, “hurting and dirty”. Yet, her source of life, Jesus Christ, is “always young”, a steady source of new life, always renewing her faithful. Pope Francis invites us break our “dull categories” with “the original freshness of the Gospel” and begin to become a “Church which goes forth”.

- ✿ **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... Let us go forth, then, let us go forth to offer everyone the life of Jesus Christ. (Evangelii Gaudium 46+49)
- ✿ **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. I do not want a Church concerned with being at the centre and which then ends by being caught up in a web of obsessions and procedures. If something should rightly disturb us and trouble our consciences, it is the fact that so many of our brothers and sisters are living without the strength, light and consolation born of friendship with Jesus Christ, without a community of faith to support them, without meaning and a goal in life. (49)
- ✿ **I want a Church which is poor and for the poor.** They have much to teach us... We need to let ourselves be evangelized by them... We are called 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. (198)
- ✿ **The Church is not a tollhouse; it is the house of the Father,** where there is a place for everyone, with all their problems. The Eucharist, although it is the fullness of sacramental life, is not a prize for the perfect but a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak. These convictions have pastoral consequences that we are called to consider with prudence and boldness. Frequently, we act as arbiters of grace rather than its facilitators. (47)
- ✿ **Christ... is for ever young and a constant source of newness...**
God constantly renews his faithful ones, whatever their age... Jesus can also break through the dull categories with which we would enclose him and he constantly amazes us by his divine creativity. Whenever we make the effort to return to the source and to recover the original freshness of the Gospel, new avenues arise, new paths of creativity open up, with different forms of expression, more eloquent signs and words with new meaning for today’s world. Every form of authentic evangelization is always “new”. (11)
- ✿ **Excessive centralization, rather than proving helpful, complicates the Church’s life** and her missionary outreach. (32)
Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of missionary vigour!" (109)



- Which „dull categories“ need to be renewed by the Spirit of Christ to bring forth a new missionary creativity?
- Where would a certain “decentralisation” of responsibility be meaningful and life giving in our own communities?