



Pope Francis publishes the Apostolic Encyclical "Evangelii gaudium" (the joy of the Gospel)

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The demand for a fairer world, for a church in the service of the poor, are at the center of the first teaching letter of Pope Francis.

In his Apostolic Letter "Evangelii gaudium" (The joy of the Gospel), which the Vatican published on November 26, 2013, Francis denounces the excesses of the global economic system and develops lines for a contemporary proclamation of the Christian message as well as for a reform of church structures "at all levels."

In the Encyclical Francis also warns against unrealistic expectations of the papacy: he does not believe "that the papal magisterium should be expected to offer a definitive or complete word on every question which affects the Church and the world."

Francis warns, "nor should the doors of the sacraments be closed for simply any reason. This is especially true of the sacrament which is itself "the door": baptism. 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."

According to his demand for a poor Church for the poor, the Pope points in his latest letter to a 'turning towards people in need,' as a basic duty of every Christian: "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."

Against this background, he also criticizes the current economic system: "A new tyranny is thus born, invisible and often virtual, which unilaterally and relentlessly imposes its own laws and rules. Debt and the accumulation of interest also make it difficult for countries to realize the potential of their own economies and keep citizens from enjoying their real purchasing power. To all this we can add widespread corruption and self-serving tax evasion, which have taken on worldwide dimensions. The thirst for power and possessions knows no limits."

According to Francis' conviction, the laity should bear more responsibility in the Church. This should not be prevented by a partially "excessive clericalism." Also women should be given more space in the Church. Nevertheless, the Church's position on abortion remains clear: "Precisely because this involves the internal consistency of our message about the value of the human person, the Church cannot be expected to change her position on this question. I want to be completely honest in this regard. This is not something subject to alleged reforms or "modernizations." It is not "progressive" to try to resolve problems by eliminating a human life." Even the question of women's ordination as priests receives Francis' clear rejection: "The reservation of the priesthood to males, as a sign of Christ the Spouse who gives himself in the Eucharist, is not a question open to discussion."

In the document Francis calls unequivocally for further efforts in the Christian ecumene and in dialogue with Jews and Muslims.

The central tenets of the Encyclical concerning dialogue with Judaism and Islam and interreligious dialogue in total can be found in this website:

[Evangelii gaudium](#) - Relations with Judaism / Interreligious dialogue

The complete Encyclical in English can be found on the pages of the Vatican:

[Evangelii gaudium](#)