

A poor Church with & for the poor

Pope Francis first reaction

- "reading the Scriptures also makes it clear that the Gospel is not merely about our personal relationship with God" EG 180
- Being Christian "means working to eliminate the structural causes of poverty and to promote the integral development of the poor" EG 188



Mission with > for the poor

- "They have much to teach us. We need to let ourselves be evangelized by them." EG 198
- We should draw near to them, "to the homeless, the addicted, refugees, indigenous peoples, the elderly who are increasingly isolated and abandoned, and many others." EG 210

Power is dangerous

- Jesus' major criticisms were for the rich & powerful
- We never had it so good or is it so *dangerous*?
- Power & affluence can stifle the Spirit
- "The weak are very conscious of their weakness and the powerful are rarely conscious of their strength". Paul Tournier. *The Violence Inside*
- The powerful often hurt without intending to and often cannot hear or understand the weak, the vulnerable & poor
- Power can blind us as much as corrupt us

Opting for the poor

- We believe in the present order of things
- In opting for the poor we are opting against ourselves and the current order
- Befriend the poor as victims: they unmask our idolatries; they reveal our lack of responsibility; and they make us aware of our own vague sense of dissatisfaction and the shallowness of our lives.
- God takes their side not because they deserve it but because they need it
- Power & affluence can stifle the Spirit

Exclusion of the poor

- Francis reminds us that we often sustain our life style, our economy, our politics by excluding people from our minds our calculations.
- "Almost without being aware of it, we end up being incapable of feeling compassion at the outcry of the poor, weeping for other people's pain, and feeling a need to help them, as though all this were someone else's responsibility and not our own. The culture of prosperity deadens us; we are thrilled if the market offers us something new to purchase; and in the meantime all those lives stunted for lack of opportunity seem a mere spectacle; they fail to move us." LS 54

Today's Lazarus



Francis' radical call

- "Let us begin by acknowledging that change is needed. Do we realize that something is wrong in a world where there are so many farmworkers without land, so many families without a home, so many labourers without rights, so many persons whose dignity is not respected? So let's not be afraid to say it: we need change; we want change....."



Poor - essential part of the solution

- "You, the lowly, the exploited, the poor and underprivileged, can do, and are doing, a lot. I would even say that the future of humanity is in great measure in your own hands.....Don't lose heart!"



Know the names & faces

"When we look into the eyes of the suffering, when we see the faces of the endangered campesino, the poor labourer, the downtrodden native, the homeless family, the persecuted migrant, the unemployed young person, the exploited child, the mother who lost her child in a shootout because the barrio was occupied by drug dealers, the father who lost his daughter to enslavement.... when we think of all those names and faces, our hearts break because of so much sorrow and pain."

Painful awareness

- "Our goal is not to amass information or to satisfy curiosity, but rather to become painfully aware, to dare to turn what is happening to the world into our own personal suffering and thus to discover what each of us can do about it." (LS 19)
- Taking the suffering of others into ourselves can open our eyes and lead to real engagement, solidarity and building virtues such as mercy and compassion.

Redeemed and yet weeping

