



Pope Francis' Renewed Vision of the Church

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Abstract: Pope Francis is determined to change the deformed and sick Church with a radical vision. As against the institutional, clergy-centered, self-referential and self-glorifying Church, Francis envisions the Church to be an authentic People of God who are correlative in attitude, collaborative in action, collegial in spirit, radiating the light of Christ, going to the existential peripheries and becoming an 'evangelizing Church'.

This article first attempts at describing the new vision of the Church, as projected by Pope Francis through signs and symbols and words and actions and as expounded in his *Evangelii Gaudium*.

Keywords: Pope Francis, Church, *Evangelii Gaudium*, God's Reign

Introduction

Pope Francis has undoubtedly captured a unique position in the history of papacy. This can be indicated with reference to various counts. But for the purpose of this article it is sufficient to indicate some of those symbols that he sent out at the very beginning of his papacy to signify the new vision for the Church. And he has been consistently harping upon the important role of the laity. Once we grasp his radical vision of

the Church then we can easily draw out his views on the role of laity in the ‘new’ Church that he has envisioned. Hence, in the first part of this article, an attempt is made to describe the new vision of the Church by Pope Francis. Against the background of that vision, Part 2 tries to bring out the specific role the laity can play.

1. The Radical Vision of the Church by Pope Francis

In this section a modest attempt is made to portray the changed vision of the Church as projected by Pope Francis. This is done at three levels. First by picking up some signals that he sent out already at the time of his election as the Pope. Then by recalling the brief intervention Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio made just before the election. Thirdly by analyzing the clear cut vision that he has enunciated in his first major document released by him as Pope: *Evangelii Gaudium*.

1.1 The Distinctive Signals of Pope-elect for his New Vision of the Church

No one can propose a vision of anything in vacuum. Nor does any vision mushroom from one’s imagination purely, and all of a sudden. It is indeed an offshoot of the whole of the one’s personality. Often enough it is the pile of perceptions and other experiences one has accumulated over the years as well as the ideals and goals of life one cherishes that contribute to emergence of a particular vision. It is the ‘apperception’¹ of an individual that has a major say in the evolution of a vision. No doubt a particular occasion serves as a triggering point for spelling out the vision. But before articulating the vision in clear contours, one is bound to send out certain signals that indicate the salient features of his/her apperception. Hence there is a need to take note of the unusual symbols one emits at one’s critical point of life.

Viewed from this standpoint, it is quite interesting to recount some of the distinctive responses given by Cardinal Bergoglio immediately after the election as Pope. They are significant for understanding his unique convictions regarding Christ our Lord, the Church in general, and his own personal commitment in particular. It must be noted they were all spontaneous in the sense that they did not arise from deliberate attempts to do them in that way. In fact there was no time at all for the pope-elect to sit and to reflect upon what type of name one has to choose, which type of dress one wants, and which colour of the shoes one has to wear etc. Even then, if his gestures and postures, words and actions were unique, it only proves that the man was already filled with radical and revolutionary ideas and projections about the Church. They are all symbolic of the radical vision of the Church which he had been treasuring for quite some time and which he would clearly describe after assuming his office as Pope. It is significant to note that he hinted at it already during the pre-Conclave meeting. Let me mention some of the symbolic responses he gave just at the time of his election as a Pope.

- 1) On the fifth ballot, on 13 March 2013, when Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio secured 77 votes, it was decisively clear in the conclave that he is now the Pope. But after reading out the final vote (90 out of the 115) the one in charge approaches him to get his consent with this question: “Do you accept your canonical election as Supreme Pontiff?” The expected response would normally be: “I accept”. But his answer was: “Although I am a sinner, I accept it, trusting in the mercy and patience of God in suffering.” It is a clear sign of his extraordinary humility and trust in the providential care of the Father.
- 2) The next question is: “What name do you take?” Swiftly he replies: “I will be called Francis”. This name is quite unusual down the line. This was a clear indication that he would make a radical break with the past. No doubt his neighbour Cardinal in the conclave had whispered to him

‘to think of the poor’ which has inspired the new Pope to choose St. Francis of Assisi. But he had already described St. Francis of Assisi in his book of dialogue with Rabbi Abraham Skorka: “He brought to Christianity an entire new concept about poverty in the face of the luxury, rife and vanity of the civil and ecclesial powers of the time. He changed history.”²

- 3) Then, the Cardinal is led to the sacristy of the Sistine Chapel to be presented with Papal dress. While changing his scarlet robes into white, he is offered red *mozzetta*, the short elbow-length vestment that covers the shoulders and is buttoned over the frontal breast, usually worn by the Roman pontiff. But quietly he declines the offer. Here the message is clear: “He doesn’t like the trappings of monarchy that surrounded the papacy”.³
- 4) Now he is presented with the gold-jewelled pectoral cross. However, as a sign of his preference for utter simplicity of life style, he reaches out for his old silver metal cross which he has been wearing since he became a bishop in Argentina. Next the boxes of red leather shoes of different sizes are shown to him so that he would choose among them his proper size. But he calmly looks down at his battered black shoes and says: “These are fine with me”. Again it is clearly a break from the papal practice that goes back to the Byzantine era, when only three individuals were allowed to wear red footgear: the Emperor, the Empress and the Pope.
- 5) Meanwhile, the fellow-cardinals have lined up in the *Sala Clementina* to offer their congratulations and pledges to the new pontiff. In the traditional manner, the new pope was to sit on the papal throne. But, this pope is determined to drop the centuries-old symbol of the past in which the papacy saw itself as the equal of imperial power. He does not even stand on an elevated platform. But, on equal footing, he offers to greet them all one by one with a hug. When somebody insisted on bending to kiss his ring, he too bent to kiss the ring of the one who pays such a hom-

age. It is definitely a symbol of his rejection of the past notion that Pope was the Prince in the pyramid model of autocratic feudal monarchy. It was a clear sign that he will recover the authentic concept of collegiality in which pope would be seen merely as the first among equals. In fact he addressed them as ‘brother cardinals’ rather than ‘Lord Cardinals’.

- 6) It is time now for the new Pope to appear on the balcony to bless the people *urbi et orbi* (city and the world). However he prefers to call himself as the Bishop of Rome to the people of his diocese. Besides, he speaks in Italian, the language of the people. He even begins with informal and intimate, for this momentous of occasions: “*Buona Sera*” (Good evening). He also initiates the crowd to pray for his predecessor with the prayers best known to them: “the Our Father, the Hail Mary and the Glory be”. It is quite significant that he referred to his predecessor not as ‘Pope Emeritus’, but as the ‘Emeritus Bishop of Rome’. Again it is important to note his utterance: “Now let’s begin this journey, bishop and people, this journey of the Church of Rome, which is one that **presides in charity** over all the churches—a journey of brotherhood, love and trust among us.” Here the phrase “presides in charity’ is actually taken from the first century bishop Ignatius of Antioch, indicating a radical shift in the understanding of the Church: the community in which Pope is put back in the college, to **preside in love**.
- 7) While he was about to give the papal blessing, *urbi et orbi* (to the city and the world), he recognizes the extraordinary mutuality of the pope and the people: “Let us pray for one another. I will bless you, but I will ask you a favour, for your prayers to bless me as your bishop. Let’s pray silently”. It is remarkable that he could evoke a perfect silence even in such a big crowd of people counting more than a million in the piazza below. This is itself a clear manifestation of the power of spiritual aura of a great personality.
- 8) At the end of the blessing he tells them: “Brothers and

sisters, I'll leave you. Thank you so much for the welcome. Pray for me. We'll see each other soon. Good night and sleep well". It is again a wonderful sign of the loving concern of a good shepherd with his sheep. After the dinner the Pope is guided to the black Mercedes. Yet, he chooses to travel in the minibus that took the cardinals to return to their residence. At the residence, over there, when all the cardinals had retired to their beds, he asks the officials whether an ordinary Italian car was available. When the driver was found, the Pope who styled himself as the bishop of Rome goes for a drive into streets of the city of Rome, watching the people amused from the inside of a small, unmarked car. A clear sign of the new Pope being really the pastor of the people.

On the following morning, he is off to the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, in an ordinary car, not the papal limousine, to pray before an icon of the Virgin Mary, *Salus Populi Romani*, the Protectress of the Romans. The security officers try to close the basilica to the public, he waives them away telling them: "Leave them alone. I am a pilgrim too". Are they not extraordinary signs of revealing himself a true shepherd of the people, identifying with them?

- 9) On returning from the Basilica, the Pope-elect goes to collect his luggage at the hostel. There at the porter's desk he asks for a new bulb, because he remembers that bulb for the bedside lamp had blown. So it needs to be replaced. The surprised official gives him one. A short while later he comes down with his luggage, pays the bill, salutes everyone and returns to the Vatican, with a joy that 'the bulb had been changed'⁴ This is truly a symbolism unparalleled in history except perhaps that of St. John XXIII. Just as the 'good pope' opened the window to indicate the need of letting fresh breeze into the 'ghetto minded' Church before Vat.II, so also the present pope by changing the fused bulb, signified that the present church, which he is going to preside and guide, is in need of glowing the light of

Christ.

In sum,

The very beginning of Francis' papacy, packed with symbolism of so many kinds, signposts a new vision for the Church, signalling "that things were going to be rather different from now on."⁵ All the nine symbolic responses, put together, suggest a new vision of the Church, the head of which would be a humble pastor fully conscious of his frailties and wholly dependent on God's Providence, keeping the poor and the least in mind, entirely breaking away from the monarchical traces, totally collegial with the fellow bishops, and integrally related with the people at large, mutually praying for one another, even sharing in their popular religiosity, particularly devoted to Mother Mary and above all determined to change its blown bulb with the real light of Christ.

1.2 The New Vision Already Envisaged

Far beyond the symbolisms, Pope Francis had marked his uniqueness in respect of the vision for the Church in the brief intervention he made in the Cardinal's meeting two days before his election. In the pre-conclave period, *sede vacante*, the cardinals of the Church gathered in a series of meetings that are known 'general congregation of cardinals'. In order to prepare themselves for electing a worthy pope, each cardinal was supposed to make a brief intervention for five minutes. Those interventions were meant to shed light on the problems they feel need to be addressed in the Church and type of personality who could lead the Church appropriately.

The intervention by Cardinal Bergoglio lasted less than four minutes.⁶ But it was so impressive that Cardinal Jaime Ortega, Archbishop of Havana, Cuba, asked him a copy of his speech. But the speech had been given off the cuff, just with the help of a few hints jotted in a chit of paper. Anyway that night he got

a hand-written note from Cardinal Bergoglio, and circulated it as *aide memoir*, evidently hoping to influence his fellow cardinals. Later he also obtained Pope Francis's permission to share the small document, and to get it published too. It provides us with a valuable Preamble to his manifesto and a key to understand the vision of the Church which Cardinal Bergoglio had in mind. It reads as follows: ⁷

1. Evangelizing pre-supposes a desire in the Church to **come out of herself**. The Church is called to come out of herself and to go **to the peripheries**, not only geographically, but also the existential peripheries: the mystery of sin, of pain, of injustice, of ignorance and indifference to religion, of intellectual currents, and of all misery.
2. When the Church does not come out of herself to evangelize, she **becomes self-referential and then gets sick**. (cf. the deformed woman of the Gospel (Lk. 13:10-17). The evils that, over time, happen in ecclesial institutions have their root in self-referentiality and a kind of theological narcissism. In Revelation, Jesus says that he is at the door and knocks (Rev. 3:20). Obviously, the text refers to his knocking from the outside in order to enter but I think about the times in which Jesus knocks from within so that we will let him come out. The self-referential Church keeps Jesus Christ within herself and **does not let him out**.
3. When the Church is self-referential, inadvertently, she believes she has her own light; she ceases to be the *mysterium lunae* (Latin, "mystery of the moon," i.e., **reflecting the light of Christ** the way the moon reflects the light of the sun) and gives way to that very serious evil, spiritual worldliness (which according to de Lubac, is the worst evil that can befall the Church). It lives to give glory only to one another.

Put simply, there are two images of the Church: Church which evangelizes and comes out of herself, the *Dei Verbum religiose audiens et fidente proclamans* (Latin, “Hearing the word of God with reverence and proclaiming it with faith”); and the worldly Church, living within herself, of herself, for herself. This should shed light on the possible changes and reforms which must be done for the salvation of souls.

4. Thinking of the next pope: He must be a man who, from the contemplation and adoration of Jesus Christ, helps the Church to **go out to the existential peripheries** that helps her to be the fruitful mother, who gains life from “the sweet and comforting joy of evangelizing.”

In short, the predicted vision of the Church that Cardinal Jorge Brogoglio had before becoming Pope, may be formulated thus:

As against ‘the worldly Church’ which is self-referential and self-glorifying, we should think of an ‘evangelizing Church’ which, by getting back authentically to the Master, should reflect the light of Christ, go to the existential peripheries and prove thereby to be a fruitful mother who gains life from joy of evangelizing. That alone will save her from continuing to be sick and deformed.

True to this vision Pope Francis showed in words and actions that he was resolute to bring about changes in a big way. To begin with, he decided not to move to the Apostolic Palace, but to remain in the Casa Santa Marta. This was indeed a powerful signal to the world indicating that his papacy was not to be in the path of monarchic tradition but that it was clearly a poor Church for the poor.⁸ His appointment of the C9⁹, with commission to draw up a new apostolic constitution for the Vatican, incorporating the long awaited reform of the Roman curia was a further sign of his firmness to change the distorted image of the Church. It also indicated clearly that

the new Pope's focus was more on a decentralized Church. Subsequently in many of the Interviews Pope was candid in his remarks about the present state of the Church and the lines of change he wanted to bring about. The most important of such Interview was the one he gave to his fellow Jesuit, Rev. Fr. Antonio Spadaro S.J., editor in chief of *La Civiltà Cattolica*, the Italian Jesuit journal, in August 2013. Moreover, the radical ideas he expressed in public during his visit to USA were so impressive that the media over there came out with such headlines as "The remarkable new vision Pope has for Catholic Church". There also he gave an interview to "*America Magazine*," in which he made it clear that the "Church must not be obsessed with issues related to gay marriage or contraceptives. He called for new balance. He even warned that "if the Catholic Church doesn't make changes, it could fall like a house of cards."¹⁰

Finally, with the release of his Apostolic Exhortation ¹¹ which was indeed his manifesto, Pope Francis elaborated the details of his vision for the Church. It was ingenious of Pope Francis to have projected his own vision in and through the deliberations of the XIII Synod of Bishops¹² on the theme "The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith." Now it is necessary to glean some of the insights from it.

1.3 The Vision of the Church in *Evangelii Gaudium*

In pursuance of the vision prefigured in his intervention in the pre-conclave meeting, Pope Francis in his first major document, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (*The Joy of the Gospel*), elaborates that vision, chalking out even his agenda for Church reform and pastoral provisions. It engages the Church-world relationship in multiple constructive ways. It unveils Pope Francis's "blueprint for a de-centralized and more pastoral Church that is focused on the needs of those

within and outside it rather than preoccupied with its own prestige.”¹³

The document starts with a call for the Church to embrace the new evangelization with joy. In this connection it distinguishes between the real joy and pleasure. Moreover it points out that there is a great danger in today’s world in so far as it is suffering from various ills: “desolation and anguish, born of a complacent yet covetous heart, the feverish pursuit of frivolous pleasures, and a blunted conscience” (EG 2). On the one hand it points out that today’s world, pervaded by consumerism, suffers from the desolation and anguish born of a complacent yet covetous heart, the feverish pursuit of frivolous pleasures, and a blunted conscience, and is caught up in its own interests and concerns, with no place for others and the poor, with not much scope for hearing God’s voice, or feeling the quiet joy of his love, and even the desire to do good fading away. This is a very real danger for believers too. Many fall prey to it, and end up resentful, angry and listless. Worse still, the very same situation prevails in the Church because she too has been self-complacent, self-glorifying and hierarchical, and giving way to such serious evils like spiritual worldliness (EG 93).

Precisely as an antidote to this dangerous image of the Church, the *Evangelii Gaudium* affirms that the real source of joy lies in a *determination to a renewed* personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter us unfailingly each day (EG 3). The Lord never disappoints. Whenever we take a step towards Jesus, we come to realize that he is already there, waiting for us with open arms. Time and time again he bears us on his shoulders. He is always capable of restoring our joy, because he is risen. “The Gospel, radiant with the glory of Christ’s cross, constantly invites us to rejoice” (EG 5). Thus, it is only by returning to Jesus that the Church can really prove to be the *mysterium*

lunae (mystery of the moon), i.e., reflecting the light of Christ just as the moon reflects the light of the sun).

This joy is not to be individualistic. “Life grows by being given away, and it weakens in isolation and comfort. In fact the law of reality is that “life is attained and matures in the measure that it is offered up for giving life to others” (*EG 10*). And, those who **enjoy life most** are those who leave security on the shore and become excited by the mission of communicating life to others. Moreover, “Goodness always tends to spread. Every **authentic experience** of truth and goodness seeks by its very nature to grow within us, and any person who has **experienced a profound liberation** becomes more **sensitive to the needs of others**” (*EG 9*). In other words, the Church needs to go in search of the “existential peripheries.” Rightly therefore Pope Francis is rightly called the “Pope of the Peripheries.”¹⁴

So too is his vision of the Church!, because in this Pope suggests way forward to the existing Church. By connecting the necessary reform to the task of evangelization, he says that “would recall the Church to its purpose and the source of its life.”¹⁵ He is clear that the wellsprings of the Church are to be found precisely in the existential peripheries. The term ‘periphery’, in the Latin American vocabulary, means “outskirts” or “margins.” So by this phrase Pope Francis wants to convey that the Church must reach out to the poor, the suffering, and the oppressed. Within the Church, also, there are the existential peripheries, namely the laity, “God’s holy people,” including the women and young. That is why he calls for “a more incisive female presence” (*EG 103*) and opportunities for young Catholics to exercise greater leadership (*EG 106*). Even those who have been considered as the ostracized such as the gay people, divorcees and the so called ‘sinners’ are included in the new vision of Church. Regarding access to the sacraments, the document says the

doors of the sacraments should not be closed for “simply any reason”. (They) are “not a prize for the perfect but a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak,” (EG 47). It is these peripheries who bring back the Church to its first mission—to offer them the Gospel of hope and redemption even before they ask for it, and, in so doing, to rekindle the joy and the passion that comes with the sharing of one’s faith.

Francis’ vision of the Church calls for a “sound decentralization” in the way the Church is run. The conciliar vision of the “collegial spirit” is to be visibly found, whereby local bishops would take a greater share in decision-making (EG 32). The universal head of the Church openly declaring: “It is not advisable for the Pope to take the place of local bishops in the discernment of every issue which arises in their territory” (EG 16).

Francis also called for greater cultural diversity within the Church (EG 117), which he said should be tied to “modes of expression which European nations developed at a particular moment of their history” (EG 118). Missionaries should not “impose a specific cultural form” when reaching new peoples with the Gospel.

In fact, the different ideas of Pope Francis’ vision of the Church were all built on the image of the Church as ‘People of God’, already defined in Vat. II. It is not merely the clergy, bishops and religious that constitute the Church, but the whole people of God. To quote his own words he expressed in his Interview with Antonio Spadaro:

The image of the church I like is that of the faithful, holy people of God. This is the definition I often use, and then there is that image from the Second Vatican Council’s ‘Dogmatic Constitution on the Church’ (No. 12). Belonging to a people has a strong theological value. In the history of salvation, God has saved a people. There is no full identity without belonging to a people. No one is saved alone, as an isolated individual, but

God attracts us looking at the complex web of relationships that take place in the human community. God enters into this dynamic, this participation in the web of human relationships.¹⁶

Mission, therefore, never means to be self-complacent or self-boasting, neither to be dejected or discouraged, but **authentically experiencing** the joy of the risen Christ, and **spontaneously sharing** it with others, and deepening our enthusiasm and comforting joy of evangelizing, even when it is in tears that we must sow,” and becoming “ministers of the Gospel whose lives **glow with fervour**, who have first received the joy of Christ” (EG 10).

In this connection Pope Francis urges Catholics to guard against twofold dangers: on the one hand it may be a feeling of “defeatism which turns us into querulous and disillusioned pessimists, ‘sourpusses’ (EG 85)” and on the other hand it maybe the feeling of superiority some people cherish “because they observe certain rules or remain intransigently faithful to a particular Catholic style from the past”. Here the Pope points out that “a supposed soundness of doctrine or discipline leads one to a narcissistic and authoritarian elitism, whereby instead of evangelizing, one analyzes and classifies others, and instead of opening the door to grace, one exhausts his or her energies in inspecting and verifying,...In neither case is one really concerned about Jesus Christ or others ... It is impossible to think that a genuine evangelizing thrust could emerge from these adulterated forms of Christianity.” (EG 94).

How fittingly does John Thavis¹⁷ remark about the newness of the vision Pope Francis: “ He’s laying down some real markers about the kinds of reforms he expects to preside over, including greater decentralization, openness to diversity in the church, and a greater emphasis on the gospel message of salvation as opposed to church doctrines and rules.”¹⁸

In sum, the vision of the Church by Pope Francis is

determined to change the present image of deformed Church which is self-referent, self-complacent, self-glorifying and clerical-centered into an authentic spouse of the Master, concerned with recovering of the original Christ-experience and reflecting his light to the world, enthusiastic about sharing that joy with all, especially the existential peripheries, respecting decentralized structures, diversity of cultural forms so that she would be really a fruitful mother who gains life from joy of evangelizing Church.

[The next part, “Unique Place of Unity” has been omitted due to space constraints. It will be published in a separate boo.)

Conclusion

From the foregoing discussion it is evident that Pope Francis has a new vision for the Church and is determined to change the existing sick and deformed Church into a healthy and glowing Church. He is convinced that the main cause of the distortion is the wrong understanding of the Church, as an institution of clergy and the religious, ignoring their basic call to be people of God, and forgetting the identity and potentiality of laity and that it has failed to shine owing to its self-referent and self-glorifying and clergy-centered approach. Hence Pope Francis envisions a new Church in which the role of the laity, including the women and the young, will decisively be the central, and focal subject. In this vision, the laity’s call and mission, arising out of the baptismal vocation, determines even the role of the hierarchy.

So the need of the hour is a double pronged change of mind-set, required of both clergy and the laity. On the one hand there is urgency to evoke among the laity realization of their vocation and mission to be carried out on their own, and get themselves immersed in the struggle of transforming the world into the reign of God in the light of the Gospels. On the other

hand the clergy ought to accompany the laity, encourage them and work in their midst, far from separating themselves from the laity, and reflecting on the laity's problems independently of involvement in laity's struggles, still worse 'using them' for their own designs and according to their abstract reflections which are often cut off from their actual involvement.

Would that the whole Church cherish Francis' vision of Church as a correlative, cooperative, collaborative, collegial, and co-inclusive People of God with its task of 'mystery of moon,' and really radiating the light of her Master, outgoing and evangelizing the world. It is in realization of this vision that the laity play the key role. They are the basic, central and focal point. Hence Pope Francis proposes this dictum: "To evoke the faithful, holy people of God is to evoke the horizon to which they are invited to look and from whence to reflect."¹⁹ Moreover, Pope Francis is challenging all sections of laity: men, women, the young, the elderly, and the family as a whole, in season and out of season, while at the same time taking all efforts to reform the church structures! Not that there is no opposition to this visionary and a pastoral minded Pope²⁰. This impels the authentic faithful to pray that his Copernican revolution in the Church is accepted by all and that the laity pay heed to his call, and wake up from slumber and begin to play their rightful role effectively.

Notes

- 1 In Behavioural Psychology the term 'apperception' is used to mean "the process by which new experience is assimilated to and transformed by the residuum of past experience to form a new whole".
- 2 Paul Valley, *Pope Francis: Untying the Knots*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 160, emphasis added.
- 3 Paul Valley, *Pope Francis: Untying the Knots*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 162

- 4 Michael Collins, *Francis Bishop of Rome, A Short Biography*, (Bangalore: Claretian Publication, 2013) 90-99.
- 5 Paul Valley, *Pope Francis: Untying the Knots*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 167
- 6 See http://en.radiovaticana.va/storico/2013/03/27/bergoglios_intervention_a_diagnosis_of_the_problems_in_the_church/en1-677269, accessed 27 June 2017
- 7 See http://en.radiovaticana.va/storico/2013/03/27/bergoglios_intervention_a_diagnosis_of_the_problems_in_the_church/en1-677269, accessed 27 June 2017.
- 8 Paul Valley, *Pope Francis: Untying the Knots*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 177
- 9 After a month he assumed the office, Pope Francis appointed a group of eight cardinals “to help him reform the Roman Curia and to help him govern the Catholic Church”. A few months later, the group of eight cardinals welcomed a new member, the new Secretariat of State, Cardinal Pietro Parolin. Hence, they become known as the C9. The first group of eight cardinals consists of (1) Cardinal Oscar Andres Rodriguez Maradiaga of Honduras (2) Cardinal Francisco Javier Errázuriz, Chile (3) Cardinal Sean Patrick O’Malley of Boston (4) Cardinal Reinhard Marx, of Munich, (5) Cardinal Laurent Monsengwo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (6) Cardinal Oswald Gracias of Bombay (7) Cardinal George Pell, secretary for Economy and the Governor of Vatican, Giuseppe Bertello (8) Italian Bishop Marcello Semeraro acts as the coordinator and secretary.
- 10 As reported by Anne Thompson, NBC (National Broadcasting Company) The Nightly News, Sept. 19, 2013, <http://www.nbc-news.com/video/nightly-news/53056224/#53056224>, accessed 14th June, 2017.
- 11 Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium : Apostolic Exhortation on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today’s World* (Nov. 2013)
- 12 The XIII Synod of Bishops gathered from 7-28 October 2012.
- 13 Abigail Frymann Rouch “Pope Francis publishes radical vision for Church”, in *The Tablet: The International Catholic News Weekly*, 26 November 2013, <http://www.thetablet.co.uk/news/145/1/pope-francis-publishes-radical-vision-for-church>, accessed 6.6. 2017.

- 14 Randy David, “The pope of the peripheries”, in *Philippine Daily Inquirer* January 15, 2015, accessed 17.6.2017. See <http://opinion.inquirer.net/81724/the-pope-of-the-peripheries#ixzz4kgyhOXB6>, accessed 17.6. 2017.
- 15 Austen Ivereigh, *The Great Reformer: Francis and the Making of a Radical Pope*, (New York: Holt, Henry & Company, Inc.2014).
- 16 Antonio Spadaro, “A Big Heart Open to God”, in *Thinking Faith*, the online journal of the Jesuits in Britain 19th September 2013, http://www.thinkingfaith.org/articles/20130919_1.htm accessed 10.11.2016.
- 17 A former Vatican bureau chief for Catholic News Service, wrote “The Vatican Diaries
- 18 Laurie Goodstein and Elisabetta Povoledo, “Pope Sets Down Goals for an Inclusive Church, Reaching Out ‘on the Streets’”, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/27/world/europe/in-major-document-pope-francis-present-his-vision.html> NOV. 26, 2013, accessed 16 June, 2017. <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/27/world/europe/in-major-document-pope-francis-present-his-vision.html>. “Pope Sets Down Goals for an Inclusive Church, Reaching Out ‘on the Streets’” By, NOV. 26, 2013.
- 19 *L’Osservatore*, op.cit. p.4 Column1.
- 20 Myron J. Pereira, “Reforming the church: Inside the mind of the pope”, in UCAN India, posted on June 14, 2017, <http://www.ucanindia.in/news/reforming-the-church:-inside-the-mind-of-the-pope/34980/daily>, accessed 10.7.2017.

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