

Pope Francis on Prayer and Encounter

Gulf Coast Faith Formation
Conference 2017

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Goals

- Grow your understanding of Pope Francis
- Grow in prayer
- Discover link between prayer and a spirituality of encounter
- Consider challenge of encounter for you
- Have a good conversation

Sources for Information about Pope Francis

Vatican Radio

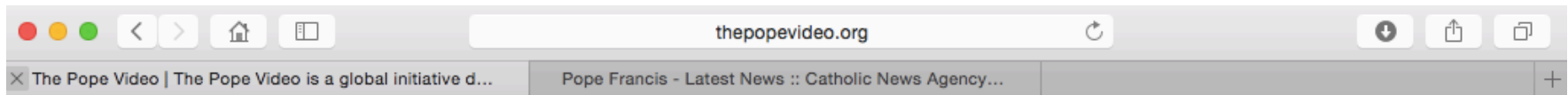
<http://en.radiovaticana.va/pope-francis>

Catholic News Agency

<http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/tags/pope-francis/>

Vatican

<http://w2.vatican.va/content/vatican/en.html>



THE POPE VIDEO

Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network



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ABOUT

I WANT TO GET INVOLVED

LANGUAGE ▾

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FEBRUARY | CARE FOR CREATION

MARCH | FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN DIFFICULTY

APRIL | SMALL FARMERS

MAY | RESPECT FOR WOMEN

JUNE | SOLIDARITY IN CITIES

JULY | INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

AUGUST | SPORTS, A CULTURE OF ENCOUNTER

SEPTEMBER | FOR A MORE HUMAN SOCIETY

OCTOBER | JOURNALISTS

NOVEMBER | COUNTRIES RECEIVING REFUGEES

DECEMBER | END TO CHILD-SOLDIERS

JANUARY 2017 | CHRISTIANS SERVING HUMANITY

thepopevideo.org

PRAYER

Problem and Response

But fear paralyzes us, it always paralyzes us; it makes us close in on ourselves, closed to God's surprises. This detail speaks to us of a constant temptation for the Church, that of closing in on herself in the face of danger. Prayer enables grace to open a way out from closure to openness, from fear to courage, from sadness to joy. And we can add: from division to unity. (Homily 6/29/16)

Prayer as Restorative Gift

If we had never sinned, then loving God and responding to God's words would be something natural for us. It is precisely after that original sin is committed that ... the history of this dialogue we call prayer [begins]. In prayer God makes it possible for us to draw close to God once again, for [counterintuitively] it is God who asks for us, it is God who calls out to us ("Pope Francis on Prayer," *US Catholic* 8/1/13).

Prayer

Prayer is not a magic wand! The goal of prayer is of secondary importance; what matters above all is the relationship with the Father (General Audience, 5/25/16).

Intercessory Prayer

A prayer that calls for an extraordinary action must be a prayer that involves all of us, as though our very life depends on it. In prayer, you have to put yourself to the test (Morning Meditation, 5/20/13).

Intercessory Prayer

Miracles happen. But they need prayer! A courageous prayer, that struggles for that miracle. Not like those prayers of courtesy: “Ah, I will pray for you! Followed by one Our Father, a Hail Mary and then I forget.” No! It takes a brave prayer like that of Abraham who was struggling with the Lord to save the city, like that of Moses who prayed, his hands held high when he grew weary (Morning Meditation, 5/20/13).

Reflection

- What have you learned about prayer?
- How will you pray differently?

ENCOUNTER

Key Result

Divinization/Deification/
Trinitarianization

“This personal encounter allows individuals to share in the Son's relationship with his Father and to experience the power of the Spirit” (Lineamenta, 2011, Synod on the New Evangelization 11).

Homily at Madison Square Gardens

Go, ... **go out**. [Jesus] urges [us] to **go out** and meet others where they really are, not where we think they should be. **Go out**, again and again, **go out** without fear, without hesitation. **Go out** and proclaim this joy which is for all the people.

Ite, missa est!

Go, mass is ended!

Implication of Encounter: Risk

Meanwhile, the Gospel tells us constantly to run the risk of a face-to-face encounter with others, with their physical presence which challenges us, with their pain and their pleas, with their joy which infects us in our close and continuous interaction. (EG 88).

Sustenance for Encounter

Without prolonged moments of adoration, of prayerful encounter with the word, of sincere conversation with the Lord, our work easily becomes meaningless; we lose energy as a result of weariness and difficulties, and our fervour dies out (EG 262).

Encounter and the Environment

The ecological crisis is ... a summons to profound interior conversion. ...Some committed and prayerful Christians ... tend to ridicule expressions of concern for the environment. Others ... choose not to change their habits and thus become inconsistent. So what they all need is an “ecological conversion”, whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them (*Laudato si'* 217).

A Spirituality of Encounter

- Begins with God
- Involves a kind of deification
- Is other-directed
- Involves risk
- Needs sustenance
- Has implications for our relationships in surprising ways, for example with creation

Pope Francis on Epiphany

The Magi did not set out because they had seen the star, but they saw the star because they had already set out. Their hearts were open to the horizon and they could see what the heavens were showing them, for they were guided by an inner restlessness. They were open to something new. The Magi thus personify all those who ... have not let their hearts be anesthetized (Epiphany Homily, 1/6/17).

Pope Francis on Epiphany

Longing for God draws us out of our iron-clad isolation, which makes us think that nothing can change. Longing for God shatters our dreary routines and impels us to make the changes we want and need. Longing for God has its roots in the past yet does not remain there: it reaches out to the future. (Epiphany Homily, 1/6/17).

Pope Francis on Epiphany

Believers who feel this longing are led by faith to ... go to the peripheries, to the frontiers, to places not yet evangelized, to encounter their Lord. Nor do they do this out of a sense of superiority, but rather as beggars who cannot ignore the eyes of those who for whom the Good News is still uncharted territory (Epiphany Homily, 1/6/17).

Pope Francis on Epiphany

[The Magi] had to discover that what they sought was not in a palace.... There, in the palace, they did not see the star guiding them to discover a God who wants to be loved. For only under the banner of freedom, not tyranny, is it possible to realize that the gaze of this unknown but desired king does not abase, enslave, or imprison us. To realize that the gaze of God lifts up, forgives and heals (Epiphany Homily, 1/6/17).

Pope Francis on Epiphany

The Magi experienced longing; they were tired of the usual fare. They were all too familiar with, and weary of, the Herods of their own day. But there, in Bethlehem, was a promise of newness, of gratuitousness. There something new was taking place. The Magi were able to worship, because they had the courage to set out. And as they fell to their knees before the small, poor and vulnerable Infant, the unexpected and unknown Child of Bethlehem, they discovered the glory of God (Epiphany Homily, 1/6/17).

Reflection

- What's one word that stood out for you?
- What have you learned about a spirituality of encounter?
- What will you do differently in light of Pope Francis's view of prayer and encounter?