



**A Summary of Pope Francis'  
Exhortation  
Evangelii Gaudium**

## Summary of Evangelii Gaudium

The Pope invites the reader to **“recover the original freshness of the Gospel”**, finding **“new avenues”** and **“new paths of creativity”**, **without enclosing Jesus in our “dull categories”**. There is a need for a **“pastoral and missionary conversion**, which cannot leave things as they presently are” and a **“renewal” of ecclesiastical structures** to enable them to become **“more mission-oriented”**.

A sign of God’s openness is **“that our church doors should always be open”** so that those who seek God **“will not find a closed door”**; **“nor should the doors of the sacraments be closed** for simply any reason”. **The Eucharist “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”. He repeats that **he prefers “a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets**, rather than a Church ... concerned with being at the centre and then ends by being caught up in a web of obsessions and procedures. If something should rightly disturb us ... it is the fact that **many of our brothers and sisters are living without ... the friendship of Jesus Christ”**.

He highlights **the need to promote the growth of the responsibility of the laity, often kept “away from decision-making”** by **“an excessive clericalism”**. He adds that there is a need for **“still broader opportunities for a more incisive female presence in the Church”**, in particular **“in the various settings where important decisions are made”**. **“Demands that the legitimate rights of women be respected ... cannot be lightly evaded”**. The **young should “exercise greater leadership”**. With regard to the scarcity of vocations in many places, he emphasizes that **“seminaries cannot accept candidates on the basis of any motivation whatsoever”**.

With regard to the theme of **inculturation**, he remarks that **“Christianity does not have simply one cultural expression”** and that **the face of the Church is “varied”**. **“We cannot demand that peoples of every continent, in expressing their Christian faith, imitate modes of expression which European nations developed at a particular moment of their history”**. **The Pope reiterates that “underlying popular piety ... is an active evangelizing power”** and encourages the research of theologians, reminding them however that **“the Church and theology exist to**

evangelize” and urging them not to be “content with a desk-bound theology”.

**The family, the Pope continues, “is experiencing a profound cultural crisis”.** Reiterating the indispensable contribution of marriage to society”, he underlines that “the individualism of our postmodern and globalized era favors a lifestyle which ... distorts family bonds”.

He re-emphasizes “the profound connection between evangelization and human advancement” and the right of Pastors “to offer opinions on all that affects people’s lives”. “No one can demand that religion should be relegated to the inner sanctum of personal life, without a right to offer an opinion on events affecting society”. **He quotes John Paul II, who said that the Church “cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice”.** “For the Church, the option for the poor is primarily a theological category” rather than a sociological one. **“This is why I want a Church that is poor and for the poor.** They have much to teach us”. “As long as the problems of the poor are not radically resolved ... no solution will be found for this world’s problems”. “Politics, although often denigrated”, he affirms, “Remains a lofty vocation and one of the highest forms of charity”. I beg the Lord to grant us more politicians who are genuinely disturbed by ... the lives of the poor!”. He adds an admonition: **“Any Church community”, if it believes it can forget about the poor, runs the risk of “breaking down”.**

The Pope urges **care for the weakest members of society: “the homeless, the addicted, refugees, indigenous peoples, the elderly** who are increasingly isolated and abandoned” and **migrants**, for whom the Pope exhorts “a generous openness”. He speaks about the **victims of trafficking** and new forms of slavery: “This infamous network of crime is now well established in our cities, and many people have blood on their hands as a result of their comfortable and silent complicity”. “Doubly poor are those women who endure situations of exclusion, mistreatment and violence”. “Among the vulnerable for whom the Church wishes to care with particular love and concern are **unborn children**, the most defenseless and innocent among us. Nowadays efforts are made to deny them their human dignity”. “The Church cannot be expected to change her position on this question ... it is not ‘progressive’ to try to resolve problems by eliminating a human life”. The Pope makes an appeal for respect for all creation: we “are called to watch over and protect the fragile world in which we live”.

The final chapter is dedicated to “spirit-filled evangelizers”, who are those who are “fearlessly open to the working of the Holy Spirit” and who have “the courage to proclaim the newness of the Gospel with boldness (parrhesía) in every time and place, even when it meets with opposition”. These are “evangelizers who pray and work”, in the knowledge that “mission is at once a passion for Jesus and a passion for his people”: “Jesus wants us to touch human misery, to touch the suffering flesh of others”. He explains, “In our dealings with the world, we are told to give reasons for our hope, but not as an enemy who critiques and condemns”. “Only the person who feels happiness in seeking the good of others, in desiring their happiness, can be a missionary”; “if I can help at least one person to have a better life, that already justifies the offering of my life”. The Pope urges us not to be discouraged before failure or scarce results, since “fruitfulness is often invisible, elusive and unquantifiable”; we must know “only that our commitment is necessary”. The Exhortation concludes with a prayer to Mary, “Mother of Evangelization”. “There is a Marian “style” to the Church’s work of evangelization. Whenever we look to Mary, we come to believe once again in the revolutionary nature of love and tenderness”.

