

## Pope Francis's *The Joy of the Gospel*: Is It All Good News?

Five chapters, 288 paragraphs, and more than 220 pages. This is the Apostolic Letter of Pope Francis, titled *The Joy of the Gospel* (*Evangelii Gaudium*). It is a programmatic statement of this Papacy: the Church cannot afford to stay in a “simple maintenance” mode. She needs to be in a “permanent state of mission” (25): going out, being always engaged in involving others and being constantly focused on reaching out.

But what does the Pope mean when he speaks of mission? Certainly he is using familiar language to evangelicals, but what does he mean when he refers to “evangelization”, “mission”, etc.? The talk will provide an overview of the papal document in the attempt to understand the heart of the Pope in his own terms and to provide an evangelical critique.

**Leonardo De Chirico** is the pastor of Breccia di Roma, a church that he helped plant in Rome in 2009, and Vice Chairman of the Italian Evangelical Alliance. Previously, Leonardo planted and pastored an evangelical church in Ferrara, Italy from 1997 to 2009. He earned degrees in history (University of Bologna), theology (ETCW, Bridgend, Wales) and bioethics (University of Padova). His PhD is from King's College (London); it was published as *Evangelical Theological Perspectives on Post-Vatican II Roman Catholicism*. In 2015, he published *A Christian Pocket Guide to Papacy* through Christian Focus. He is a lecturer of historical theology at Istituto di Formazione Evangelica e Documentazione in Padova, Italy. Additionally, Leonardo is the director of the Reformanda Initiative, which aims to equip evangelical leaders to better understand and engage with Roman Catholicism, and the leader of the Rome Scholars Network (RSN).

- I. Introduction: the programmatic document of Pope Francis
  
- II. Decoding “The Joy of the Gospel”
  - A. Exegeting words
  
  - B. Exegeting theological frameworks
  
- III. What does “missionary conversion” mean?
  - A. Away from maintenance mentality
  
  - B. Becoming more Catholic
  
- IV. What does “the conversion of the papacy” mean?
  - A. Conversion to synodality

- B. A less Roman but still Roman Catholic institution
- 
- V. What about the Non-Christians? Joy for them too!
    - A. All revolving around the circle of grace
  
    - B. No apologetics
- 
- VI. Conclusion: The Joy of the Gospel: a Real Reason to Rejoice?

***Suggested Readings:***

G. Pritchard and L. De Chirico, “What Do You Think About Pope Francis? (2015)  
<http://vaticanfiles.org/es/2015/09/113-what-do-you-think-about-pope-francis/>

L. De Chirico, “The Catholicity of Pope Francis” (2013)  
<http://vaticanfiles.org/es/2014/03/76-the-catholicity-of-pope-francis/>

L. De Chirico, “Ecumenism in all directions. Pope Francis and Unity” (2014)  
<http://vaticanfiles.org/es/2014/10/91-ecumenism-in-all-directions-pope-francis-and-the-unity-of-the-church/>

L. De Chirico, “Mission. Did Pope Francis say Mission?” (2018)  
<http://vaticanfiles.org/es/2018/01/145-mission-pope-francis-say-mission/>