

Fr. Roger J. Landry
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Pope Francis, the Reform of the Church and the Reform of the Priesthood

- Introduction
 - Very happy to be with you for these days of retreat, when Jesus says to us what he said to the apostles after they had done and taught so much on one of their missions that they didn't have time even to eat, "Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while," and he took them on a boat with him away from the crowds. Well, the Alverna Center isn't exactly one of Peter's fishing vessels, but it will do. Elsewhere Jesus would teach them and us how he seeks to give us the rest we need, telling us, "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light." We find the rest and refreshment we need from yoking ourselves to Jesus, from responding to his invitation to unite ourselves more to him and learn from him on the inside his meekness and humility, so that no matter what challenges we're facing personally or pastorally, we know that we're facing them with him. Every retreat is an opportunity for us to yoke ourselves anew to the Lord Jesus, to the power of his resurrection living in us from within, raising us from the dead.
 - The theme of this retreat will be "Pope Francis, the Reform of the Church and the Reform of the Priesthood." If we had made a retreat last year at this time, little would we have known the changes that were about to occur in the Church with Pope Benedict's shocking announcement February 11 that he was going to resign the papacy and then the equally shocking, rapid election on March 13 of Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio as Pope Francis. In the last ten months, Pope Francis has gotten down to work and is working with the energy of a man far younger than 77, because I believe he is firmly yoked to Jesus. Msgr. Dario Viganò's story of Pope Francis' "resurrection" on the day of the election, coupled to Pope Francis' own words of experiencing some darkness. We may have come here to retreat likewise looking at the ground, weighed down by years and struggles of one sort or another. The Lord wants to give us a similar grace to the one he gave Pope Francis. The problems we confront in our own situations are less formidable than the ones Pope Francis is addressing with great vigor, and so his example gives us hope!
- How to live a good retreat
 - A few weeks ago, I was on Long Island preaching a retreat to about 70 college seminarians. Because of the audience, at the beginning of the retreat I gave them some principles on how to make a retreat well because I knew that for some of them it was the first lengthy retreat they had ever made. I was surprised that after that conference two of the priests on faculty told me that they, too, found those basic orientations a helpful reminder to them as well, because over the course of time they had begun to look at retreats a little bit more as a time for "rest and relaxation" in general than the particular type of rest Christ wants to give us by yoking us to him. So, for whatever it's worth, I'd like to share a few of those principles.
 - A retreat is a time fundamentally of persevering prayer. Persevering prayer is hard work. It requires a commitment. Some days prayer may be easy, full of consolation. Other days our prayer will be as arid as the Sahara. But the key is to keep going, to fight off distractions by uniting ourselves with the Lord.
 - To receive these graces, God wants our free cooperation. That requires preparation. Parable of the Sower and Seed. Four types of soil, all found in priests:
 - Hardened soil of the one already set firmly in his ways, or of the know-it-all or of the inveterate sinner
 - Superficial soil of the one who is looking to be entertained and fight off boredom, but the one who's not really interested in a deep change of life, who doesn't want the seed to go to

the core of his being. Seed will get scorched as soon as a pleasant or unpleasant distraction arises.

- Thorny soil. Worldly cares and anxieties, lure of riches and pleasures. Definitely chokes the word. Priests are not immune from these types of thorns. We need to throw our cares on the Lord. We need to place the treasure of our heart in him.
- Good soil. Bears fruit. Not just “some” fruit, but abundant fruit, 30, 60 or 100 fold. One seed of the Lord well planted ought to be able to change our life in 30 or 100 ways or more. That’s the power of the word of God. Received with faith the size of a mustard seed, it can translate the Catskill mountain range.
- Pope Francis, on whose words and work this retreat will be based, commented on this parable back in June at daily Mass that to bear fruit we need to be prepared (June 8, 2013):
 - What does it mean to guard the Word of God? It means “opening our hearts” to the Word, “as the earth opens to the seed”. Some seeds scatter and “are eaten by birds,” and this happens when the Word is not guarded. It means that some hearts “do not know how to receive it”. Sometimes the seed falls “on earth with many rocks and the seed cannot take root and dies.” That is, they are not capable of guardianship because they are inconstant. “The Word can also fall on unprepared ground”, he added, “where there are thorns and in the end it dies” because “it is not guarded”. But what are these thorns? Jesus says it is our “attachment to wealth, vice”. To guard the Word is to receive it, but we must “prepare our hearts to receive it. Meditate on what the Word tells us today, watching what happens in life.” This is what Mary did, ... she pondered these events. Here lies the task for Christians: to welcome the Word of God and to think about what it means today.
- So we need to prepare our hearts for what the Lord wants to do in us during these days.
- For this to happen, we need to talk about a few things.
 - Conferences and Homilies
 - I’d encourage you to take notes if it will help you to retain the material and nourish your prayer. Eventually I’m going to put up my outlines for the conferences as well as audio recordings on catholicpreaching.com, so don’t think you have to get it all down. We’ll be collating and covering a great deal of Pope Francis’ pre-papal and papal writings, homilies, speeches, and other sources — way too much for anyone to keep up with, but I’ll provide them all to you for further prayer and study. I’d encourage you to take down the phrases, the words, in which you know that the Lord is speaking directly to your heart, when he’s encouraging you, when he’s calling you to conversion. Then after the conferences, you can continue your conversation with the Lord about those things in prayer.
 - We’ll talk over the course of this retreat on what Pope Francis says about sacred preaching. He says the point is to invigorate that covenantal dialogue with the Lord. It’s supposed to start it, or reignite it, or strengthen it. Try to leave with one or a few points to continue the conversation going, focusing on how the Lord wants to help you bear fruit from that word.
 - Silence
 - We’re not going to bear good fruit if we’re giving it to thorns or to superficiality.
 - Ponder the medicinal punishment of Zechariah. To help him become more like Mary.
 - Mary’s heart. Putting together and treasuring things in her heart.
 - So at a practical level, I’m going to invite you to keep a reverential silence, to vacate from normal conversations, throughout the entire retreat *except at meals*. This is to open our ears to hear the Lord speak to us in gentle breezes. Be respectful that others are having a conversation. We all know that in priestly life, we’re constantly being interrupted. A retreat is a chance for a lengthy, far less interrupted

conversation with the Lord. Be jealous of this time just with Him. We need to cultivate this habit of silence if we're ever going to be contemplatives on the street.

- Also love each other enough as true brothers not to try to steal them from the Lord. If they're weak, strengthen them by your good example to persevere on retreat just like you want to help them persevere in Christian fidelity and in their vocation.
- Likewise, I'm going to invite you to leave the world behind until Friday afternoon. Shut off your cell phone if you can or only check it to see if you've gotten emergency calls. Unplug the TV in your room. Don't access the web or the news. If you use your phone or your Tablet to pray, put it on airport mode.
- We're in an age in which it's increasingly hard for people to be silent. We're supposed to be teachers of that silence and if we can't do it for five days, we're never going to help our people by our example.

- Confession

- Every retreat we should go to confession, but that's not enough.
- Pray for the grace to make the best confession of your life. Get it all out. Hide nothing.
- General confession, where we really look to the roots are, the idols I have, the compromises, the places I'm making peace with.
- A general confession, as you know, doesn't have to be long. It can still be done in about five minutes with greater preparation. Perhaps you can examine on the seven capital sins, or the beatitudes, or the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.
- This afternoon we'll have a conference on Pope Francis' principal message in his reform of the Church, which is a message of mercy. He says priests are to be "ministers of mercy above all." For us to be effective ministers, we must first be grateful recipients.

- The Fundamental Reform of the Church

- Let's get into the theme of the retreat on Pope Francis, the Reform of the Church and the Reform of the Priesthood.
- Before and after the election of Pope Francis, there has been much talk about the reform of the Vatican. Francis gave some witness that reform was on the mind of the cardinals who elected him when he joked with journalists on March 16 that some had suggested he take the name "Adrian" after Adrian VI, a pope who ferociously reformed the Church's central administration after the beginning of the Protestant Reformation.
- But the reform that Francis seems intent on carrying out is much broader than a reform of the Vatican curia. What needs to be fixed in the Vatican, he recognizes, is just one symptom of a much larger problem plaguing the Church as a whole.
- To re-form means to bring something back into the shape it ought to have and Francis is already at work, in his words and in his personal witness, at trying to lead that much more important, and widespread, renewal.
- Four days before his election, he gave an address in the cardinals' general congregation meetings that several of them noted totally changed the dynamics of the Conclave. It got many of them to think that not only this cardinal "from the end of the earth" diagnose profoundly the fundamental corruption afflicting the Church but also had the vision and the passion to lead the Church back to shape.
- What did he say was the reform the Church most needed? Thanks to the work of Cardinal Jaime Ortega of Havana, we know. The Cuban cardinal was so impressed by what Cardinal Bergoglio had said that he asked if he could have a copy of his address. Cardinal Bergoglio replied that he had spoken without notes and apologized for having nothing to give him.
- During the night, however, Cardinal Bergoglio decided to write out for his confrère what he had said earlier — clearly a sign of his charity — and gave the hand-written copy to a grateful Cardinal Ortega when he saw him in the morning. Cardinal Ortega asked if he could have it published, and the Argentine prelate consented. A few days later, after Pope Francis' election, Cardinal Ortega

asked him the same question again, now that they had obviously taken on larger significance. Pope Francis agreed and the handwritten sheets were published in “Palabra Nueva,” the Catholic magazine of the Archdiocese of Havana.

- Cardinal Bergoglio told the cardinals that the Church exists and is impelled by Jesus to evangelize, to come out of herself and go to the ends of the earth — not just geographically but also to those at the periphery of existence, who are alienated from God and others through sin, pain, injustice, ignorance, ideology, material and spiritual poverty, and other types of misery.
- When those in the Church lose this “apostolic zeal,” when the Church doesn’t come out of herself to bring Christ to others, she becomes self-referential and sick. “The evils that over the course of time happen in ecclesial institutions,” he said, “have their root in a self-reference and a sort of theological narcissism. . . . The self-referent Church keeps Jesus Christ within herself and does not let him come out.”
- The chief corruption of the Church, he underlined, happens when she becomes narcissistic, when she starts looking at herself rather than looking toward God and toward others Jesus came from heaven and died to save.
- We saw this corruption among the apostles who on several occasions began to focus on jockeying for position in an earthly kingdom they presumed Jesus had come to inaugurate rather than on denying themselves, picking up their cross and follow Jesus to all those on the periphery.
- We’ve seen it throughout Church history when some have fought more for benefices and sinecures or cushy assignments than for the towel to wash others’ feet.
- We see it in segments of the Church bureaucracy — from chanceries to the Roman Curia — when priests and prelates use their positions to try to advance their own “careers” or the careers of friends.
- And we see it in Church institutions — dioceses, parishes, schools, hospitals, charities — that begin to focus all of their efforts on those who are already coming, rather than getting outside of themselves to serve all those for whom Jesus gave his life.
- “When the Church is self-referent without realizing it,” Cardinal Bergoglio went on to say, “she believes she has her own light. She ceases to be the *mysterium lunae* and gives way to that very great evil which is spiritual worldliness (which according to [the great 20th century theologian Cardinal Henri] De Lubac, is the worst evil that can come upon the Church). The self-referent Church lives to give glory only to one another.”
- Several fathers of the early Church used to refer to the Church as the *mysterium lunae*, the “mystery of the moon,” because the Church was called to reflect the light of Christ in the same way that the moon is illuminated by reflecting the light of the sun.
- Cardinal Bergoglio was saying that when the Church becomes corrupt, spiritually worldly and in need of reform, those in the Church begin to think that the Church gives off her own light, rather than is meant to reflect Christ. The Church ceases to some extent to think, speak, behave and love like Christ, but rather begins to think and speak of herself, as if she is an end in herself. From the parish level to the Vatican Curia, she begins to focus more on her institutional make-up than her Founder, Origin, Guide and Goal.
- The fundamental choice that the Church must make, he said, is whether we are going to be an “evangelizing Church that comes out of herself,” hearing the Word of God and faithfully proclaiming it, or a “worldly Church that lives within herself, of herself, for herself.” That distinction — and the importance of choosing the former — “must give light to the possible changes and reforms that must be made for the salvation of souls.”
- He then gave what he believed were the essential job qualifications for the next pope, qualities that the other cardinals evidently thought he met: “The next pope,” he declared, must be a man who “from the contemplation of Jesus Christ and from worshiping Jesus Christ will help the Church get out of herself and go to those on the outskirts of existence.”
- That is what Pope Francis has been trying to do, going from his intense relationship with Christ out to those on the periphery, kissing children and the handicapped, washing the feet of incarcerated teens, wading into the crowds, paying his own bills, calling the man who used to deliver his newspaper and so many other similar actions.

- He's also giving what he thinks is a description of the priests Christ needs today, those who from his own prayerful contemplation and worship of the Lord will help lead the Church out of herself to bring Christ and his healing, his passionate warmth, his truth to others, rather than waiting for the world to come to him.
- The fundamental corruption of the Church that needs to be reformed, Pope Francis has been saying by his actions, is not about butlers' stealing papal documents, questionable financial practices, lavender mafias, or bureaucratic inefficiency. It's about focusing too much on self-referential institutional concerns and too little on having all parts of the institution participate fully in the Church's evangelical mission, in reflecting Christ's light to illumine a world walking in darkness.
- Pope Francis is seeking to lead the entire Church — not only priests and curial officials, but the faithful everywhere — on a spiritual exodus.
- "It's key that we Catholics, both clergy and laity, go out to meet the people," he stressed in the 2010 book-length interview, *El Jesuita*. This is "not only because the Church's mission is to announce the Gospel, but because failing to do so harms us. ... A Church that limits herself to administering parish work, that lives enclosed within a community, experiences what someone in prison does: physical and mental atrophy." A Church that merely protects its small flock, that gives all or most of its attention to its faithful clientele, he believes, "is a Church that is sick."
- He wants to help the entire Church, beginning with the clergy, to recover its full health, by yoking ourselves to the Divine Physician as he goes out to the peripheries to make house calls to every lost sheep.
- The Reform of the Priesthood
 - Every major reform in Church history has begun with a reform of the priesthood, and the reform that Pope Francis was elected to carry out involves very much this dimension, as we'll be able to ponder in depth during our time together. I want to tackle one of the most important parts of that reform at the end of this conference, but before I get there, I'd like to confront one of the issues that has been percolating to the surface from many priests, including many great priests. It's that Pope Francis seems to be really critical of his brother priests.
 - One of my best priest friends, Fr. Raymond de Souza of the Archdiocese of Kingston, Ontario, summed up the sentiment in an article for the National Catholic Register back in October:
 - "Pope Francis is capable of speaking with great tenderness about those far from the Church. When discussing his brother Jesuits, even those who sent him into exile and were active obstacles to the mission of Jesus Christ and the Ignatian charism, the Holy Father speaks with nuance and delicacy. Yet when he speaks of the parish clergy, his remarks are almost always critical, inveighing against the lazy priest in his rectory, unmoved by the suffering of the afflicted in need of mercy, reduced to a functionary who has become an obstacle rather than a conduit of God's grace. Priests need to hear that to be challenged and corrected, but fallen men that we are, it is not easy. The Holy Father intends his criticisms ... for the whole Church, not just the priests and bishops. Yet, often, the clergy feel singled out for criticism or feel underappreciated. Perhaps they ought to stop feeling sorry for themselves and 'man up,' but the phenomenon is real and explains part of the uneasiness" some have with him."
 - It is true that Pope Francis has spent more time calling priests to conversion than patting them on the back. In an affirmation age this has been a little jolting. For me, I've been a little frustrated by his mentioning on three separate occasions those priests who turn the confessional into a "torture chamber." I've gone to confession weekly for 25 years, lived in various countries, probably confessed to 300 priests in six different languages and in the thousands of confessions I've made, I can only recall three occasions when a priest turned it into a torture chamber. I can't speak to the situation in Argentina, but I doubt that there are many sacramental sadists hiding behind purple stoles in reconciliation rooms. The Pope's essential point, of course, is to call all priests to be merciful representations of the Father of the Prodigal Son in the confessional, rather than harsh judges, a point that every pope should insist upon, but regularly mentioning priests who turn the confessional into a torture chamber hinders the work of merciful priests who are trying to get people back to confession but who are afraid because of one bad experience in the past.

- But it's important for us to ask what's behind this criticism of Pope Francis, which is obviously intended as constructive and done with affection. I think the answer can be found in a retreat Cardinal Bergoglio preached to the Spanish Bishops that's now been published in English as "In Him Alone is Our Hope."
- He gave a conference there entitled, "The Lord who reprimands and pardons us," which started off by saying,
 - "As we read the Gospels, a paradoxical pattern emerges: the Lord is more inclined to warn, correct and reprimand those who are closest to him — his disciples and Peter in particular — than those who are distant. The Lord acts in this way to make it clear that ministry is pure grace; it does not depend on the merits or competencies of the one chosen for the mission. In this context of the Lord's gratuitous choice and his absolute fidelity, to be reprimanded by him means that one is receiving a sign of God's immense mercy."
- Jesus reprimands those closer to him more than those who are distant. These corrections are done out of love and help to remind them that their whole ministry is one of grace.
- The future Pope takes up several of the Lord's reprimands, which he applies to the life and ministry of priests and bishops:
 - The Lord reprimands us from our dismissive tendencies, which stem from our lack of charity, as he does at the feeding of the crowd, when the disciples wanted to dismiss the crowd rather than feed them themselves. He also rebukes them for not letting the children come to him, or when they wanted Jesus to get rid of the Canaanite woman. "With firmness and with patience the Lord corrects them. He is not in a hurry to dismiss the people nor is he bothered when they come close to him. The Lord does not put limits on the nearness of the people. He is the neighbor par excellent. ... He lets himself be touched by the people who clamor for his presence. ... This profound openness and availability reveals a total self-emptying that will find its most intense expression on the Cross, but which the Lord was living day after day. Conversion from our sins, from our egoism, leads us to being available for others."
 - The Lord reprimands us for the fears that arise from our lack of faith, like he reprimanded the apostles in the boat for their lack of faith during a storm. Their fear is because of their lack of faith. "He wants to persuade them that he is greater than every challenge, every trial, every temptation. And we are just like the Apostles in the storm! Dominated by fear, we too are more than capable of stumbling and falling into sin." Fear leads not only to cowardice but also to foolhardy temerity.
 - The Lord reprimands us for our weaknesses that come from a lack of hope, especially with regard to the salvific meaning of the Cross and of suffering. Jesus called Peter Satan and told him he was thinking not as God does but as men do because he couldn't look at the Lord's death or his own suffering with hope. Jesus firmly reprimands Peter. The essential cross Christ gives us is "the weight of the community entrusted to our care. ... It is the Lord who puts it on our shoulders and tells us 'Take up your Cross and follow me.' The Cross is a yoke carried in tandem and the Lord bears most of the weight. In order to carry his cross, the pastor will need the strength that comes from hope, which he should beg for in prayer. Then, for example, he will have the courage to make the necessary decisions, even if they are unpopular. He will also have the magnanimity to begin difficult enterprises in the service of God ... and to persevere in carrying them out without becoming discouraged when obstacles arise."
 - The Lord reproaches us for our inability to keep watch with him, as he did with Simon, James and John in the Garden of Gethsemane. We must keep watch with Jesus in prayer, but also must watch out for the flock. "To supervise refers more to the concern for doctrine and ritual in their expression and practice, whereas to keep watch means making sure the people have enough salt and light in their hearts. To be vigilant means being on the lookout for danger, whereas to keep watch is more about patiently supporting the ways the Lord brings the salvation of his people to fruition. To be vigilant, it is enough to be awake, alert and shrewd. To keep watch requires meekness, patience and the constancy of tested charity.

To supervise means carefully inspecting the whole, without overlooking any details. To keep watch means knowing how to see the essentials. To supervise and be vigilant both entail a certain degree of control. To keep watch, on the other hand, speaks of hope, ... the hope of the merciful Father who keeps watch over the hearts of his growing sons.” He proposes St. Joseph as a model: “In Joseph we encounter the faithful and foresighted *episkopos* ordained by the Lord to serve as head of his family. He is the man who watches over the child and his mother, even in his dreams, and with the tenderness of a faithful and discreet servant, he lives out and fulfills the Father’s role. From this profound watchfulness of Joseph springs that silent vision of the whole, capable of taking care of his little flock with meager means (he transforms a manger for animals into the crib of the Word incarnate!). From this watchfulness also comes the vigilant and shrewd vision that succeeded in avoiding all the dangers that threatened the child.”

- He then draws a conclusion about our own reprimands:
 - Let us review all the times the Lord has reprimanded us, and ask ourselves what he wishes to teach us through them. And let us reflect on ourselves in order to make amends. We should not be afraid of his reprimands, for they are proof of the Lord’s closeness to us, that he takes us seriously. That he corrects us, just as he corrected Peter, is a sign of our friendship with him and our apostolic zeal! ... He puts up with us and corrects us and always helps us grow, without ever belittling us or withdrawing his esteem and respect for us. Filled with contrition for our hardheadedness and our slowness to comprehend him, let us say like Peter, ‘Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.’ While we offer our contrition, we feel the Lord encouraging us again, and he says to us, ‘Feed my sheep!’
- That’s what I think is behind his approach with regard to his brother priests. There’s a special love, bond, closeness and friendship, not a negative attitude. I’d encourage us all to keep this in mind throughout the retreat, especially when we tackle what he teaches about priestly virtues and vices.
- Spiritual Worldliness
 - I’d like to finish this conference by focusing on what he called during his pre-conclave intervention “the worst evil that can come upon the Church,” what most “deforms” priests and faithful and what therefore most needs to be reformed. It’s spiritual worldliness.
 - At the Pentecost Vigil on May 18, he described what it leads to: “There is one problem that can afflict Christians: the spirit of the world, the worldly spirit, spiritual worldliness. This leads to self-sufficiency, to living by the spirit of the world rather than by the spirit of Jesus.”
 - Spiritual worldliness is when we place our faith, hope and love in mammon, in the things of this world, rather than in God. We seek our own glory, rather than God’s.
 - In his apostolic exhortation, the Joy of the Gospel, he gave a lengthy description of how the cancer of spiritual worldliness metastasizes.
 - EG 93: “Spiritual worldliness, which hides behind the appearance of piety and even love for the Church, consists in seeking not the Lord’s glory but human glory and personal well-being. ... It is a subtle way of seeking one’s “own interests, not those of Jesus Christ” (Phil 2:21). It takes on many forms. ... Since it is based on carefully cultivated appearances, it is not always linked to outward sin; from without, everything appears as it should be. But if it were to seep into the Church, ‘it would be infinitely more disastrous than any other worldliness which is simply moral.’
 - EG 95: “This insidious worldliness is evident in a number of attitudes that appear opposed, yet all have the same pretense of “taking over the space of the Church”. In some people we see an ostentatious preoccupation for the liturgy, for doctrine and for the Church’s prestige, but without any concern that the Gospel have a real impact on God’s faithful people and the concrete needs of the present time. In this way, the life of the Church turns into a museum piece or something which is the property of a select few. In others, this spiritual worldliness lurks behind a fascination with social and political gain, or pride in their ability to manage practical affairs, or an obsession with programs of self-help and self-realization. It can also translate into a concern to be seen, into a social life full of appearances, meetings, dinners and receptions. It can also lead to a business mentality, caught up with management,

statistics, plans and evaluations whose principal beneficiary is not God's people but the Church as an institution. The mark of Christ, incarnate, crucified and risen, is not present; closed and elite groups are formed, and no effort is made to go forth and seek out those who are distant or the immense multitudes who thirst for Christ. Evangelical fervor is replaced by the empty pleasure of complacency and self-indulgence.

- In his retreat for Spanish bishops prior to his election, he meditated on spiritual worldliness in their presence. In the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, in all that he's written about the discernment of spirits, being able to distinguish the spirit that comes from God versus the spirit of the world is one of the most important things that should happen during the spiritual exercises of a retreat. It's also one of the most important skills a priest needs to have in leading others to God.
 - He gave a conference entitled "The spirit of the world or the 'anti-kingdom.'"
 - He began with St. John's first letter in which he tells us, "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life is not of the Father but is of the world."
 - He tells us, "St. John exhorts us not to love the world, this world that seeks autonomy from God, this world that is an object of possession in every sense of the word. This world, which was created to lead us to God, has turned in upon itself, turning away from the Lordship of Christ, and thus turning into an evil 'world.' Such degradation is the daughter of lust: when 'desire' turns into lust, then, indeed, we can speak of the 'spirit of the world.'"
 - Jesus, Cardinal Bergoglio tells us, warns us against the spirit of the world, defining it as a spirit that chokes the Word (Mt 13:22), like the father whose sons are much more cunning than the sons of light (Lk 16:8). This spirit of the world turns our lustful heart after the flesh, and our eyes toward prideful confidence in the things of the world. The spirit of the world is the father of incredulity and all impiety. It is precisely the god of this world that has blinded its heart (2 Cor 4:4). This is why St. Paul urges us not to conform ourselves to this age (Rom 12:2).
 - The spirit of the world shows seeks to make us vain. A vain heart is a "safe haven for 'ecclesiastical' forms of indiscipline and disobedience that disfigure the face of our holy Mother the Church. Look behind any episcopal posture of moralism, naïve optimism or irenicism and you're sure to find a vain heart, which deep down attempts to minimize the leadership responsibilities that have been entrusted to him by God. These attitudes lead to the all too familiar fragmentation of the Church, resulting in a Gospel witness that is "rent by doctrinal disputes, ideological polarizations or mutual condemnation." ... And it is in these same postures, daughters of vanity, that uselessly give scandal to others, above all those who are weak in the faith. ... At the very heart of the Church, ... we witness disrespect and criticism, division among Christians, the risk of secularism, the politicization of the Gospel, rampant disorientation, the loss of the very identity of the consecrated life, the danger of breaking the unity in doctrine and discipline. And all this is [supposedly] done in the name of Jesus Christ and out of fidelity to his Gospel.
 - He describes how sometimes this disunity is preached from the pulpits when the Church herself is criticized, when the Church's outward manifestations, her hierarchy, her signs are rejected, leading people to question their own membership in the Church, convinced that their own project takes precedence over that of our Mother the Church. They decide to implant their own idea of the Church, not the Church itself.
 - He says we need to be aware of the lure toward spiritual worldliness and that many times we have succumbed, encouraging us to "ask pardon for the many times in our task as pastors we have sinned in this area."
 - He concluded by saying, "My attitude toward the world [toward spiritual worldliness] should be fundamentally the same as toward my own sins, toward the disordered and sinful roots in myself: keen awareness and aversion! From this attitude alone springs the desire for conversion. Which, in turn, over time, forges in us the faculty that is so solidly Christian: the capacity to judge. The 'yes, yes... no, no' that Jesus teaches us implies a spiritual maturity

that rescues us from the superficiality of the foolish heart. A Christian needs to know what can be accepted and what must be condemned. We cannot sit down and ‘dialogue’ with the enemy of our salvation: we need to meet him head on, ready to combat his every intention.”

- There are two outgrowths of spiritual worldliness
 - The first is to turn the Church’s work into an NGO
 - During his first homily as Pope, at the Mass with the Cardinals who elected him on March 14 in the Sistine Chapel, he declared, “We can walk as much as we want, we can build many things, but if we do not profess Jesus Christ, things go wrong. We may become a charitable NGO, but not the Church, the Bride of the Lord.”
 - The process of going from bride to business occurs when the Church focuses too much on herself rather than on God and others. He told the Bishops of CELAM on July 28 in Rio: “The Church is an institution, but when she makes herself a “center”, she becomes merely functional, and slowly but surely turns into a kind of NGO. The Church then claims to have a light of her own, and she stops being that *mysterium lunae* [mystery of the moon reflecting the light of the sun, representing Christ] of which the Church Fathers spoke. She becomes increasingly self-referential and loses her need to be missionary. From an “institution” she becomes a “enterprise”. She stops being a bride and ends up being an administrator; from being a servant, she becomes an “inspector”. Aparecida wanted a Church which is bride, mother and servant, more a facilitator of faith than an inspector of faith””
 - A Church that has become an NGO is worthless, like salt that has lost its flavor, he told new movements on May 18: “The Church is neither a political movement nor a well-organized structure. That is not what she is. We are not an NGO, and when the Church becomes an NGO she loses her salt, she has no savor, she is only an empty organization.”
 - The Church has to avoid this loss of a supernatural sense by focusing mainly on efficiency. He told the bishops of CELAM on July 28 in Rio: “Functionalism. Its effect on the Church is paralyzing. More than being interested in the road itself, it is concerned with fixing holes in the road. A functionalist approach has no room for mystery; it aims at efficiency. It reduces the reality of the Church to the structure of an NGO. What counts are quantifiable results and statistics. The Church ends up being run like any other business organization. It applies a sort of “theology of prosperity” to the organization of pastoral work.”
 - All Church institutions, he said, need to make sure they do not succumb to this hyper-institutionalization of the Church. He told young Argentines in Rome on July 25: “Parishes, schools, and institutions are made for going out ... if they don’t, they become an NGO, and the Church cannot be an NGO.”
 - Hence, when people think about the reform Pope Francis was elected to bring about, it’s never going to be merely one of flow-charts and efficiencies, but one to overcome this spiritual worldliness and the temptation toward functionalism. True reforms is going to help the Church become an ever more faithful, loving, fruitful bride.
 - The second is to reduce the message of the Gospel to an ideology
 - On October 17, at his daily Mass homily at the Domus Sanctae Marthae, he described how many of the Scribes and the Pharisees basically made the Mosaic Law an ideology by focusing on the law itself as a rigid set of principles to be imposed on others rather than on the Legislator and how the law is meant to bring us and others into a life changing relationship with him. Ideological religion becomes an obstacle to true faith. He said, “The faith passes, so to speak, through a distiller and becomes ideology. And ideology does not bring people together. In ideologies Jesus isn’t present, in his tenderness, his love, his meekness. And ideologies are rigid, always, in every way. And when a Christian becomes a disciple of the ideology, he has lost the”

faith: he is no longer a disciple of Jesus, he is a disciple of this attitude of thought... For this reason Jesus said to [the Pharisees]: 'You have taken away the key of knowledge.' The knowledge of Jesus is transformed into an ideological and also moralistic knowledge, because these close the door with many requirements. ... The faith becomes ideology and ideology frightens, ideology chases away the people, distances the people and distances of the Church of the people. But this is a serious illness, ideological Christians. It is an illness, but it is not new. Already the Apostle John, in his first Letter, spoke of this [with the gnostics]. Christians who lose the faith and prefer ideologies. They become rigid, moralistic, ethical, and without kindness. But how is it that a Christian can become like this? Just one thing: this Christian does not pray,” who doesn't have a living relationship with God that changes him to become sensitive to what wills, which is something that can happen even when someone is “saying prayers” but not truly praying them.

- When he met with the bishops of CELAM assembled in Rio on July 28, he said that ideologized Christianity is a real danger: “Making the Gospel message an ideology. This is a temptation that has been present in the Church from the beginning: the attempt to interpret the Gospel apart from the Gospel itself and apart from the Church. An example: Aparecida, at one particular moment, felt this temptation. It employed, and rightly so, the method of “see, judge and act” (cf. No. 19). The temptation, though, was to opt for a way of “seeing” which was completely “antiseptic”, detached and unengaged, which is impossible [prescinding from faith] The way we “see” is always affected by the way we direct our gaze. There is no such thing as an “antiseptic” hermeneutics. The question was, rather: How are we going to look at reality in order to see it? Aparecida replied: With the eyes of discipleship.” He described different forms of Christian ideologies: sociological reductionism (just studying the phenomenon of religion or comparative religions), psychologizing [reducing spirituality to psychology], gnostic solution [making Christianity too much a thing of the head and knowledge rather than a way of life], and the pelagian solution [focusing too much on ourselves and our work and not on God.]
- This is one of the reasons why Pope Francis says that the Church's proclamation must always begin with Christ, with the kerygma, because sometimes there is a “degrading reductionism” of the faith to an ideology advancing some type of cause, even a good cause, as the end of the Christian faith rather than as a part.

- Conclusion

- The Times of London at the beginning of the 20th century sent out an inquiry to famous authors, asking “What's wrong with the world today?” GK Chesterton wrote back, “Dear Sir, I am. Yours, GK Chesterton.”
- As we continue with our retreat, led in a sense by Pope Francis through his thoughts, let us ask the Lord for the grace to recognize that the reform of the Church begins with the reform of the priesthood, and the reform of the priesthood begins with our own spiritual reform.
- That's the work Christ wants to do in us during these days, to refresh us, heal us, and send us out yoked to him to help him anew save and redeem the world.