

Pastor's Column

Preach Always—Use Words Only When Necessary

“Preach always and use words only when necessary.” These are the words of St. Francis of Assisi, and they have come to life in a real way in recent weeks.

In just two weeks, Pope Francis has revitalized and re-energized the Universal Church. And he has done so, not in what he has said, but in what he has done.

In many instances, his gestures and his actions may seem fairly insignificant and small, but again, they speak loudly. It is a reminder that the things we say and do, even the “little things,” make a difference!

How has Pope Francis given new life to the Universal Church in such a short time? Look at his actions and gestures:

1. He enters the Vatican balcony after his election, and before giving his blessing, he asks the people in the square to give him a blessing...
2. He immediately simplified his papal wardrobe wearing just the white cassock...
3. He rejected the use of the red Prada shoes and wore the black shoes he wore when he arrived in Rome for the conclave...
4. He chose to continue to wear his Bishop's Pectoral Cross and chose not to wear a solid gold ring, but rather a gold-plated ring...
5. He rode the bus with the other Cardinals and returned to his hotel room after his election, and he chose to pay his own hotel bill...
6. He preaches from the ambo rather than seated on the Papal Chair, and chooses not to wear his Miter while preaching. All of this displays a desire to be one with his fellow Bishops rather than being “above” them...

7. He is making his own phone calls—“Hello, this is Pope Francis. May I speak to ‘So and so’”...
8. He called the man who operates the newsstand on a corner in Buenos Aires where he purchased his daily newspaper. Pope Francis asks “How are you? And how is your family?”
9. He tells the people of Argentina, “Don't come for the Inauguration Mass. Instead give the money that you would have spent on the trip to the poor!”...

Pope Francis is preaching, and using words only when necessary! We need to enjoy this new spirit in the Church and to enjoy the “honeymoon” while it still exists.

He has many challenges ahead of him, and there is much that needs to be done. What lies before him in the days ahead?

I would encourage you to take time to read an article, “The Pope's Four Biggest Challenges,” written by John L. Allen. He is CNN's senior Vatican analyst and senior correspondent for the National Catholic Reporter, and is recognized as a very objective observer of the Catholic Church. His most recent book was “The Future Church: How Ten Trends Are Revolutionizing The Catholic Church.”

You can find his article here: <http://religionblogs.cnn.com/2013/03/16/the-popes-four-biggest-challenges/>

May we enjoy the new spirit Pope Francis brings into the Church and may we sustain him with our prayer and support as he faces the many challenges ahead of him!

The Feast of the Resurrection—new life, new hope, and new beginnings!

F. Mike



YEAR OF FAITH 2012
2013