

The Inspirational Phrases and Images of Pope Francis as Prophetic Catalysts of
Dramatic Missionary Growth in the Church of Rockville Centre

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So many phrases and images of Pope Francis have inspired and captured the imagination of the Church and the World and reawakened in us in the Catholic Church on Long Island a conviction that *dramatic missionary growth* is not only a possibility but an expression of the very nature and daily reality of the Universal Sacrament of Salvation.

Think of Pope Francis' short phrases and images which reflect his daily prayer and preaching, and his global missionary spirit. These phrases and images have so often broken through our defenses and opened us up to conversion and solidarity with the poor and the suffering.

They are so powerful and provocative in their brevity. They get to the heart of the matter. They are ideal for twitter and for use in every platform of social media.

These phrases and images have helped move so many of us from an anesthetized, bored, flat or disengaged Catholicism to the spirit of paragraph 14 in *The Joy of the Gospel*: "Jesus can break through the dull categories with which we would enclose him and he constantly amazes us by his divine creativity. Whenever we make the effort to return to the source and to recover the original freshness of the Gospel, new avenues arise, new paths of creativity open up, with different forms of expression, more eloquent signs and words with new meaning for today's world. Every form of authentic evangelization is always 'new'."

Consider again a brief selection of Pope Francis' phrases and images which help lead us to the original freshness of the Gospel and new paths of New Evangelization creativity:

"The smell of the sheep"

"A community of missionary disciples"

"The Church as Christ's Combat Field Hospital"

"Break through global indifference"

"God's word is unpredictable in its power"

"The Church urgently needs the deep breath of prayer"

"St. Francis shows us just how inseparable the bond is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior peace."

"Families transform the world and history"

“The Joy of Love experienced by families is also the joy of the Church”

“Jesus knows the anxieties and tensions experienced by families and he weaves them into his parables”

“Mercy is the beating heart of the Gospel”

“Mercy is the very foundation of the Church’s life”

“What would happen if we were to treat our Bible as we treat our mobile phone?”

From *Aparecida* (the 2007 document issued by the Bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean where so many of Pope Francis’ phrases and images can be found), to *The Light of Faith* (2013), to *The Joy of the Gospel* (2013), to his encyclical letter on the environment *On Care for our Common Home* (2015), to his homilies and addresses at the *World Meeting of Families* in Philadelphia and his visits to Washington DC and New York City (2015), to *The Year of Mercy Documents* (2015-2016), to *The Joy of Love* (2016), to his provocative daily homilies, Pope Francis is challenging you and I to be the missionary Church we are called to be.

Whether it is the Catholic Church on Long Island being a combat field hospital of mercy in regard to gang violence, the Opioid epidemic or anxieties, uncertainties and crosses carried by our immigrant and refugee families, Pope Francis wants us to be holy.

He wants us to be intrepidly bold and missionary. He wants us to serve the poor and all those in crisis. He wants us to be Good Samaritans of mercy and forgiveness.

He wants us to be instruments of *dramatic missionary growth*.