

ONLINE RESOURCES

A free copy of Evangelii Gaudium can be downloaded from http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html. Save it in your tablet or laptop. People can either read all chapters independently or organise a “book club”, where everyone can read a chapter together, or someone or a group is assigned to read a chapter and shares it with the rest. See what works for you.

Bishop Robert Barron gives a brief and compelling reason behind Evangelii Gaudium
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1v8ZqVLY9V8>

If you are interested to understand the different types of papal documents, to see what makes an **Apostolic Exhortation** different, from say, an **Encyclical**, click on this link: <https://library.athenaeum.edu/c.php?g=30820&p=193150>

Published and developed by the Archdiocese of Wellington, New Zealand. For questions on the use of this prayer resource, you may email any of the developers:

Maya Bernardo – m.bernardo@wn.catholic.org.nz;
Sharon Penny – sharon_penny@xtra.co.nz;
Barbara Rowley – browley@xtra.co.nz

Photographs by Mary-Ann Greaney

Acknowledgements:

Bridget Taumoepeau – Reviewer
Ann Williams - Layout and Design

Evangelii Gaudium

Prayer Module 1

‘The Joy of the Gospel’



The Joy of the Gospel

Introduction and Overview
Chapter 1

Opening Prayer

We encourage you to start this prayer with a song. Suggested song is Fr. James Lyons' "Joy of the Gospel" to the tune of Ode Of Joy by Beethoven.

Other suggested songs are:

- 1) *'Hearts on Fire' by Michael Mangan. You could do this with action;*
- 2) *'Give me joy in my heart' by Richard Irwin;*
- 3) *'My soul is joyful' by Frank Anderson M.S.C.*



RESOURCE:

The Joy of the Gospel
Lyrics by : Fr. James Lyons



Joyful, joyful, is the Gospel,
Bringing news of happiness.
God in time is born among us,
Jesus Christ the Word made flesh.
Son of God he gifts the Spirit,
Freeing hearts held down with fear
Opening doors to new horizons,
Speaking love for all to hear.

See the love of God around us
In the beauty of each day.
Let our hearts be filled with gladness,
Giving thanks along the way.
Winter times of pain and sorrow
Melt in the flow of love's clear light.
Celebrate our gratefulness
With caring hands and faces bright.

Every life is rich with blessings,
Everyone has gifts to share.
Peace and justice are the fruits
Of giving self in generous care.
Goodness always tends to grow
Reaching across each boundary.
Mercy gives the strongest witness
Crowning our humanity.

Joyful, joyful, is the Gospel
Gifting us with life anew.
Offering all a new beginning,
Young and old and strangers too.
Live this message, bring it to others,
Smile the joy our faith proclaims.
Hand in hand walk on together,
Christian both in deed and name.

Tune Beethoven Ode to Joy. Words Rev Fr James Lyons, gifted to the Catholic Church of Aotearoa New Zealand. Public domain.

Final Blessing

Let us proclaim with Francis the following exultation:

Time and time again, Jesus bears us on his shoulders

No one can strip us of the dignity bestowed upon us by this boundless and unending love.

With a tenderness which never disappoints, but is always capable of restoring our joy, he makes it possible to lift up our heads and start anew.

Let us not flee from the resurrection of Jesus, let us never give up, come what will.

May nothing inspire more than the life of Jesus His life that impels us forward! (#3). Amen

(You can close the prayer with the Opening Song)



¹Some texts were redacted to suit as intercessory prayers

Scripture Readings

In this Exhortation I (Francis) wish to encourage the Christian faithful to embark upon a new chapter of evangelization marked by this (Gospel) joy, while pointing out new paths of the Church's journey in years to come (#1).

In the introduction of *Evangelii Gaudium* (#5) there are many quotes from the New Testament where joy and being joyful are mentioned. Some of these you may know by heart. You might want to turn to the Bible and read the entire text pertaining to one of these joyful verses. (some of them belong to one text). *Each participant can take a turn in reading a verse:*

- Rejoice! Is the Angel's greeting Mary (Luke 1:28)
- Mary's visit to Elizabeth makes John leap for joy in his mother's womb (Luke 1:41)
- In her song of praise, Mary proclaims: "My spirit rejoices in God my Saviour (Luke 1:47)
- For this reason, my joy has been fulfilled (John 3:29)
- Jesus himself rejoiced in the Holy Spirit (Luke 10:21)
- His message brings us joy: "I have said these to you, so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete (John 15:11)
- Our Christian joy drinks of the wellspring of his brimming heart. He promises his disciples: "You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy" (John 16:20)
- He then goes on to say: "But I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you (John 16:22)
- The disciples "rejoiced at the sight of the risen Christ (John 20:20)
- In the Acts of the Apostles we read that the first Christians "ate their food with glad and generous hearts (Acts 2:46)
- Wherever the disciples went, "there was great joy" (Acts 8:8)

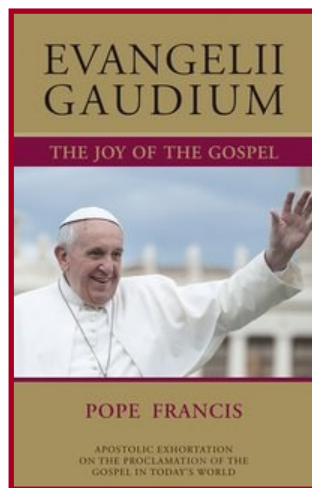
Reflection

- Choose a verse that reminds you of a joyful moment of your life.
- How do you connect the importance of joy with spreading the Gospel?

About Evangelii Gaudium

Evangelii Gaudium is an Apostolic Exhortation, which is a papal reflection on a topic, often related to a Synod of Bishops. The form was first used by Pope Pius XII in 1939. Exhortations generally encourage a virtue or mission. Evangelii Gaudium is one such document and is addressed to the bishops, clergy, consecrated persons and the lay faithful. It is written in easily understood and captivating, rather than academic, language. Pope Francis invites us to reflect with him *on* what it means to be a church in these times.

He sees all of us as missionary disciples, who usher in the “new evangelization” where the good news is spread in a spirit of joy.



Intercessory Prayersⁱ

(Assign a person to read each prayer.)

Grant us the courage to accept Your invitation to enter into a renewed personal encounter with you, believing that when we do so, you are already there waiting for us with open arms (#3). E te Ariki...

Response: Whakarongo mai ra kia matou

Being a Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but an encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction. May we be your living encounter to the world (#7). E te Ariki...

Response: Whakarongo mai ra kia matou

Goodness always tends to spread. Every authentic experience of truth and goodness seeks by its very nature to grow within us, and any person who has experienced a profound liberation becomes more sensitive to the needs of others. May we choose to live a dignified and fulfilling life, by reaching out to others to seek their good (#9). E te Ariki...

Response: Whakarongo mai ra kia matou

May we be a Church that goes forth from our comfort zone, in order to reach all the peripheries in need of the light of the Gospel (#20) Continue to form us as a community of missionary disciples who take the first step, who are involved and supportive, who bear fruit and rejoice (#24)

Response: Whakarongo mai ra kia matou

Let us share our personal intentions. E te Ariki...

Response: Whakarongo mai ra kia matou