



“THE EVANGELICAL POPE: preaching & living an incarnated faith”

by Robert Mickens, in *La Croix International*, March 26, 2023
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Mickens wrote this article for March 25th, and he begins with a reference to a prominent Roman liturgy professor, regarding the Feast of the Annunciation:

“Danilo Sartor, a priest ... who taught liturgy for many years in Rome, says it would be better to change [the name] to the ‘Feast of the Incarnation.’ ... This would best ‘get to the heart of the mystery that is being celebrated.’” Mickens then reflects on the many ways Pope Francis incarnates his faith in the “messy reality of our lives and our world.” Here are some excerpts from the article, and the complete article is available at: <https://international.la-croix.com/news/letter-from-rome/the-evangelical-pope-preaching-and-living-an-incarnated-faith/17512>

“... The incarnation is at the very core of what we believe as followers of Jesus the Christ. Believing in a God who becomes part of God’s own creation — and, even more, the implications of that — can seem not to be other-worldly and “sacral” enough for us. We prefer to skip over the entire earthly (fleshly) life of Christ in our credal statements.”

“... As Richard Rohr likes to point out,

‘Have you ever noticed the huge leap the creed makes between born of the Virgin Mary and suffered under Pontius Pilate? This leap is marked by the great comma, which he says should lead us to ask some serious questions: Did all the things Jesus said and did in those years not count for much? Were they nothing to believe in? Was it only his birth and death that mattered? Does the gap in some way explain Christianity’s often dismal record of imitating Jesus’ actual life and teaching?’”

“... This is one of the reasons the 86-year-old pope continues to upset those Catholics who see their religion more as a form of private piety and devotion ... than a **living, incarnate faith that poses communal, societal and ethical demands and obligations**. Francis would say it is a **faith that has to do with finding God and responding to God within the messy realities of our lives and our world**, not in some lofty and idealized realm that is outside of such realities.

“**‘Realities are greater than ideas,’** he says in *Evangelii gaudium*. *This principle has to do with incarnation of the word and its being put into practice... The principle of reality, of a word already made flesh and constantly striving to take flesh anew, is essential to evangelization,*’ he continues **‘At the same time, this principle impels us to put the word into practice, to perform works of justice and charity which make that word fruitful...’**”

“... Pope Francis believes it is a Church that incarnates the Word — **the person and message of Jesus Christ — in today’s realities**, not in *‘the realm of pure ideas’* of how we’d like things to be. Evidently, that unsettles some folks.”

God has chosen to need men & women in every age to reveal divine love, to make known the reality of the Incarnation.