

L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO

WEEKLY EDITION  IN ENGLISH

Unicuique suum Non praevalerunt

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Friday, 12 December 2014

Pope Francis for the upcoming World Day of Peace

No longer slaves, but brothers and sisters



On Wednesday, 10 December, the Holy Father's annual message for the World Day of Peace was released. This Day, which is celebrated annually on 1 January, has as its theme this year, "No longer slaves, but brothers and sisters".

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An abominable phenomenon

GIOVANNI MARIA VIAN

The message for the World Day of Peace has a dramatic tone which at the same time is open to trust. Pope Francis wished to address it to every woman and man, without distinction of faith or ideology. Dramatic indeed is the "abominable phenomenon" which the Pontiff chose to call to international attention. It is the scourge of human exploitation by man, even to the point of slavery. The word has been nominally silenced; in fact, however, slavery still exists in many societies, often hidden or ignored.

The Pope's gaze is rooted in the biblical vision but his words are addressed to everyone, basing themselves on the expression used by the Apostle Paul in his shortest and most moving text: in a note addressed to Philemon asking him to take back a runaway slave Onesimus, to welcome him no longer as a slave but as "a beloved brother". And this is the root of

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On Wednesday, 10 December, during his catechesis at the General Audience, Pope Francis chose to explain a few things about the recent extraordinary synod. "No intervention called into question the fundamental truths of the Sacrament of Marriage, namely: indissolubility, unity, fidelity and openness to life."



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On the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception

A Marian pilgrimage

On Monday, 8 December, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, the Holy Father began his day by reciting the Angelus with the faithful in St Peter's Square. Later in the day he travelled across Rome to the Basilica of St Mary Major to revere *Salus Populi Romani* and then went to Piazza di Spagna to venerate the statue of Mary, as is traditional. Pope Francis also took some time to greet the sick, who had come to take part in the veneration.



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To Pontifical Academies

Never tire of learning from Mary

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VATICAN BULLETIN

AUDIENCES

Thursday, 4 December

Cardinal Severino Poletto, Archbishop emeritus of Turin, Italy

Archbishop Michael Wallace Banach, titular Archbishop of Memfi, Apostolic Nuncio in Papua New Guinea and in the Solomon Islands

Archbishop Giovanni d'Aniello, titular Archbishop of Paestum, Apostolic Nuncio in Brazil

H.E. Mr Armando Emilio Guebuza, President of the Republic of Mozambique, and his entourage

H.E. Mr Juan Pablo Cafiero, Ambassador of Argentina, on a farewell visit

Friday, 5 December

Cardinal Fernando Filoni, Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples

Archbishop Silvano Maria Tomasi, cs, titular Archbishop of Asolo, Permanent Representative of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other Specialized Institutions in Geneva, Representative of the Holy See to the International Organization for Migration

Mr Salvatore Martinez, National President of the Renewal in the Holy Spirit

Mr Kiko Argüello, Founder of the Neocatechumenal Way

Saturday, 6 December

Cardinal Marc Ouellet, PSS, Prefect of the Congregation for Bishops

Cardinal George Pell, Prefect of the Secretariat for the Economy

Cardinal Angelo Amato, SDB, Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints

Cardinal Beniamino Stella, Prefect of the Congregation for the Clergy

Archbishop Osvaldo Padilla, titular Archbishop of Pia, Apostolic Nuncio in Korea and in Mongolia

Bishop Piergiorgio Debernardi of Pinerolo, Italy

CHANGES IN EPISCOPATE

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Odelir José Magri, MCCJ, as Bishop of the Diocese of Chapecó, Brazil. Until now he has been Bishop of Sobral (3 Dec.).

Bishop Magri, 51, was born in Campo Erê, Santa Catarina, Brazil. He was ordained a priest on 18 October 1992. He was ordained a bishop on 12 December 2010, subsequent to his appointment as Bishop of Sobral.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Peter Celestine Elampassery, OFM Cap., of Jammu-Srinagar, India. It was presented in accord with can. 401 § 1 of the Code of Canon Law (3 Dec.).

The Holy Father appointed Fr Ivan Pereira as Bishop of Jammu-Srinagar, India. Until now he has been Director of the Diocesan Education Board (3 Dec.).

Bishop-elect Pereira, 50, was born in Vasai, India. He holds a BA in education and a Masters in English.

He was ordained a priest on 15 May 1993. He has served in parish ministry and as: rector of the St Paul's Minor Seminary; secretary of the Regional Catholic Council; vicar general and secretary to the Bishop of Jammu-Srinagar; diocesan director of the Holy Childhood Association and of the Indian Christian Youth Association; secretary and president of the Regional Conference of Diocesan Priests of North India; and principal of the Burn Hall Higher Secondary School.

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Zanoni Demettino Castro as Coadjutor Archbishop of Feira de Santana, Brazil. Until now he has

been Bishop of São Mateus (3 Dec.).

Bishop Demettino Castro, 52, was born in Vitória da Conquista, Brazil. He was ordained a priest on 28 December 1986. He was ordained a bishop on 24 November 2007, subsequent to his appointment as Bishop of São Mateus.

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Waldemar Passini Dalbello as Coadjutor Bishop of Luziânia, Brazil. Until now he has been titular Bishop of Membressa and Auxiliary of Goiânia, He has also served as Apostolic Administrator of Brasília

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Congregation for the Causes of Saints

Promulgation of Decrees

On Saturday, 6 December, the Holy Father received Cardinal Angelo Amato, SDB, Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, in a private audience and authorized the Congregation to promulgate the following Decrees:

– the miracle attributed to the intercession of Bl. Jeanne Emilie de Villeneuve, Foundress of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of Castres; born in Toulouse, France on 9 March 1811 and died in Castres on 2 October 1854;

– the miracle attributed to the intercession of Bl. Marie-Alphonse Danil Ghattas, Foundress of the Congregation of the Sisters

of the Holy Rosary of Jerusalem; born in Jerusalem on 4 October 1843 and died in Ein Karem on 25 March 1927;

– the miracle attributed to the intercession of Bl. Mary of Jesus Crucified (in the world: Mariam Baourdy), Discalced Carmelite nun; born in Ibellin, Galilee on 5 January 1846 and died in Bethlehem on 26 August 1878;

– the heroic virtues attributed to the Servant of God Carmela of Jesus (in the world: Francesca Prestigiacomo), Foundress of the Institute of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of the Incarnate Word; born in Palermo, Italy on 15 October 1858 and died in Rome on 14 December 1948;

– the heroic virtues attributed to the Servant of God María Séiquer Gayá, Foundress of the Apostolic Sisters of Christ Crucified; born in Murcia, Spain on 12 April 1891 and died there on 17 July 1975;

– the heroic virtues attributed to the Servant of God Adalberta (in the world: Vojtěcha) Hasmandová, Superior General of the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of St Charles Borromeo; born in Huštěnovice, Czech Republic, on 25 March 1914 and died in Znojmo-Hradiště on 21 January 1988;

– the heroic virtues of the Servant of God Práxedes Fernández García, lay woman and mother, member of the Third Order of St Dominic; born in Puente de la Luisa, Spain on 21 July 1886 and died in Oviedo on 6 October 1936;

– the heroic virtues of the Servant of God Elisabetta Tasca, lay woman and mother; born in San Zenone degli Ezzelini, Italy on 24 April 1899 and died in Vo' di Brendola, Italy on 3 November 1978.

The Lineamenta of the 14th General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops

As was previously announced, the 14th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops will be held on 4-25 October 2015 on the theme: "The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and in the Contemporary World".

As Pope Francis pointed out in his concluding address at the Third Extraordinary Assembly (18 October), the *Lineamenta*, which is the first of the Assembly's documents, is essentially the edited version of the *Relatio synodi*. However, in order to facilitate the reception of the Synod document and in order to enhance the themes addressed in it, the *Relatio* is accompanied by a series of questions which will aid in continuing on the path which the Synod began and in preparing for the *In-*

strumentum laboris of the upcoming Ordinary Assembly.

The document – which was published in the original Italian on 9 December – is being sent to the Episcopal Conferences, to the Synods of the Eastern Churches *sui iuris*, to the Union of Religious Superiors and to the Dicasteries of the Roman Curia.

In the upcoming days, these ecclesial bodies will receive the document in their respective languages and will be able to choose the appropriate way in which to ensure its reception and to enhance the *Relatio Synodi*, involving the various components of the particular Churches and academic institutions, lay associations and other ecclesial organizations, in order to promote a widespread consultation of the family ac-

ording to the orientation and spirit of the methods of the Synod.

The results of this consultation must be sent to the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops by 15 April 2015, so that they may be studied for the preparation of the *Instrumentum laboris* which will be published before the summer.

The Episcopal Conferences and the various ecclesial bodies are invited to accompany the path of the Synod with opportune moments of prayer and celebration for the family and for the upcoming Assembly. They are especially asked to celebrate on the occasion of the Liturgical Feast of the Holy Family, 28 December. Furthermore everyone is invited to pray often the Holy Father's prayer for the Synod on the Family.

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Pope Francis on the family at the General Audience

The truth about the Synod

Pope Francis explained a few things about the recent synod to the faithful during the General Audience in St Peter's Square on Wednesday, 10 December. This was in the context of a new series of reflections on the theme of family. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's catechesis which was given in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Good morning,

We have concluded a cycle of catecheses on the Church. Let us thank the Lord who had us take this journey, rediscovering the beauty and responsibility of belonging to the Church, of being Church, all of us.

We now begin a new stage, a new cycle, and the theme will be the family; a theme which fits into this intermediate period between two Assemblies of the Synod dedicated to this very important reality. Therefore, before entering into the different aspects of family life, I would like to return today to begin precisely from the Synod Assembly of the past month of October, which had this theme: "The pastoral challenges of the family in the context of [the new] evangelization". It is important to remember how it took place and what it produced, how it unfolded and what it produced.

During the Synod the media did their work – there was much expectation, much attention – and we thank them because their coverage was complete. So much news, so much! This was possible thanks to the Press Office, which held a briefing every day. But often the vision of the media was somewhat in the style of sports events, or political coverage: often two teams were spoken of, for and against, conservatives and progressives, and so on. Today I would like to recount what the Synod was.

First of all, I asked the Synod Fathers to speak frankly and courage and to listen with humility, to say with courage all that they had in their heart. In the Synod there was no prior censorship, but each one could – even more, was supposed to – say what he had on his heart, what he honestly thought. "But, this one will argue". It is true, we heard how the Apostles debated. The text says: "there had been much debate. The Apostles argued among themselves, because they were seeking God's will about whether or not pagans could enter the Church. It was something new. Always, when God's will is sought, in a Synod Assembly, there are different points of view and there is debate and this is not a bad thing! Providing it be done with humility and with the spirit of service to the assembly of brothers. Prior censorship would have been a bad thing. No, no each one had to say what he was thinking. After Cardinal Erdő's *Relatio ante disceptationem*, there was a first basic phase in which all the Fathers were able to speak and all listened. And that attitude of listening that the Fathers had was edifying. It was a moment

of great freedom, in which each one expounded his thoughts with *parrhesia* and with trust. At the basis of the interventions was the *Instrumentum Laboris*, which resulted from the previous consultation of the entire Church. And here we must thank the Secretariat of the Synod for the great work done both before and during the Assembly. Truly excellent.

No intervention called into question the fundamental truths of the Sacrament of Marriage, namely: indissolubility, unity, fidelity and openness to life (cf. Second Ecumenical Vatican Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 48; *Code of Canon Law*, 1055-1056). This was not touched.

All the interventions were gathered and this is what led to the second phase, that is a draft called *Relatio post disceptationem*. This *Relatio* was also given by Cardinal Erdő, and is organized in three sections: listening – the context and challenges to the family; the gaze on Christ – the Gospel of the Family; discussion of pastoral perspectives.

Group discussions, which took place at the third phase, were held on this initial summary proposal. The groups, as always, were divided by language, because it is better this way, communication is easier: Italian, English, Spanish and French. Each group, after finishing its work, presented a report, and all the group reports were published immediately. Everything was given, for transparency, in order to make known what had occurred.

At that point – the fourth phase – a commission examined all the recommendations made by the language groups and the *Relatio sinodi* was drawn up, maintaining the previous format – listening to the current situation; in keeping with the Gospel and pastoral responsibility – but it sought to reflect the developments from the group discussions. As always, a *Final Message* of the Synod was also approved, being

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For the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia 2015

The Gospel of marriage

The Pope sent a message to all those participating in the preparations for the eighth World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia 2015. The following is a translation of the message addressed to Archbishop Paglia and written in Italian.

We recently celebrated the Extraordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on: "Pastoral Challenges to the Family in the Context of Evangelization". In the sign of synodality we identified the most urgent themes confronting the family in our pluralistic society. In reality, "we cannot qualify the family with ideological concepts, we cannot speak of a conservative family or a progressive family: family is family!" (*Address to participants in the International Colloquium on the complementarity of man and woman*, 17 November 2014). The values and virtues of the family, its essential truths, are the strengths on which the family nucleus rests and cannot be called into question. We are called, rather, to review our own lifestyle which is always exposed to the risk of being "contaminated" by a worldly mentality – individualist, consumerist, hedonist – and to rediscover ever again the royal road, in order to live and proclaim the grandeur and beauty of marriage and the joy of being and making a family.

To my Venerable Brother
Archbishop VINCENZO PAGLIA
President of the Pontifical Council
for the Family

At the end of the Seventh World Meeting of Families, Pope Benedict XVI announced that the city of Philadelphia, in the United States of America, would host the following gathering. On many occasions I have confirmed this decision, looking with trust and hope to this event of grace at which, please God, I will take part. It will take place from the 22 to 27 September 2015 and will have as its theme "Love is our mission. The family fully alive".

The mission of the Christian family, today as yesterday, is that of proclaiming to the world, by the power of the Sacrament of Marriage, the love of God. From this very proclamation a living family is born and built, one which sets the hearth of love at the centre of its human and spiritual dynamism. If, as St Irenaeus said "*Gloria Dei vivens homo*" (*Adv. Haer.*, IV, 20, 7), then so a family, which, by the grace of the Lord, lives to the full its vocation and mission glorifies Him.

The indications of the Final Report of the recent Synod, and the guidelines of the upcoming Ordinary Assembly of October 2015, invite people to fulfil in their commitment to proclaim the Gospel of marriage and of the family and to experience the pastoral proposals in the social and cultural context in which we live. The challenges of this context should stimulate us to enlarge the space afforded to faithful love open to life, to communion, to mercy, to sharing and to solidarity. I urge all married couples, therefore, priests and parish communities, as well as movements and associations to let themselves be led by the Word of God, on which rests the foundation of the holy edifice of the family, the domestic Church and the family of God (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, nn. 6 and 11).

I express my appreciation to the Archdiocese of Philadelphia for its generous availability and organizational commitment put at the service of the universal Church and of families across the different continents. I ask the Lord to reward even now this beloved particular Church with abundant heavenly graces.

Meanwhile I invoke the intercession of the Virgin of Guadalupe and of Aparecida. From my heart I impart to you, dear Brother, and to the collaborators of your Dicastery the Apostolic Blessing, which I willingly extend to all those who are cooperating in the preparations for the Meeting, and I ask you please to pray for me.

Fraternally,

From the Vatican, 9 December
2014

Franciscus

Jorge María Mejía was born on 31 January 1923 to a well-known family in Buenos Aires. He entered the metropolitan seminary there in 1939 and then, at the age of 22, he was ordained a priest on 22 September 1945. Following his ordination he began serving in parish ministry, however a year later he was sent to Rome to complete his ecclesiastical formation. There he earned two degrees in theology and one in Biblical studies. He eventually continued his study of the Bible in Jerusalem.

In 1951, he became an ordinary professor of the Old Testament at the Pontifical Catholic University of Argentina, where he also taught introduction to Sacred Scripture, Hebrew, Biblical Greek and Biblical Archeology. He also served contemporaneously in parish ministry in Buenos Aires, as well as in other dioceses around the country. In 1955, he became the head of the Catholic journal *Criterio*, where he remained until 1977.

Beginning in November 1963, he participated in the Second Vatican Council. In 1967, Mejía began serving as Secretary of the Department for Ecumenism at CELAM and was involved in Latin America with promoting relations among the Churches and Christian communities, as well as other religions, especially Judaism.

In March 1977 he was called to Rome to serve as Secretary of the Commission of the Holy See for Religious Relations with the Jews, a

The Argentine prelate was 91 years old

Cardinal Jorge María Mejía dies

Argentine Cardinal Jorge María Mejía, Archivist and Librarian emeritus of Holy Roman Church, died in Rome on Tuesday, 9 December, at the age of 91. Having learned of his death, Pope Francis sent his condolences to the Cardinal's brother, Alejandro Jaime Mejía, in a telegram in Spanish the following day. When the Holy Father learned that the Cardinal's condition was deteriorating, he went to visit his friend in the hospital on Sunday, 17 November. And this was not his first visit, Francis went to visit him just 48 hours after he was elected Pope. The following is a translation of the Pope's condolences.

Grieving at the death of your brother, the dear Cardinal Jorge María, Archivist and Librarian emeritus of Holy Roman Church, who for many years served with faithfulness and professional expertise in various offices of the Holy See, I wish to convey to you my most heartfelt condolences. I assure you of my prayers of suffrage for him, to whom I was bound by a long-standing friendship, that the Lord may grant peace to him who gave of himself in such a deeply generous way to the Church. With faith in the Paschal mystery of Christ, who illuminates and fills Christian life with hope, and in memory of a faithful Shepherd dedicated to the mission of evangelization, I ask for divine comfort in these moments of sorrow, for you and for your dear ones – who are praying for the loss so greatly felt – to whom I impart my Apostolic Blessing.

FRANCIS PP.

Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State, also sent a telegram of condolences.

commission linked to the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. In this position he published a document in 1985 on the correct

presentation of Jews and Judaism in preaching and in catechesis. He also organized John Paul II's visit to the Synagogue of Rome on 13 April 1986.

A few weeks before, on 8 March 1986, the Holy Father appointed him Vice-President of the Pontifical Commission *Iustitia et Pax* (today the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace) and raised him to the dignity of bishop and assigned him the titular see of Apollonia. Cardinal Roger Etchegaray ordained him in the Church of San Luigi dei Francesi in Rome.



In his new post together with Cardinal Etchegaray, he prepared for the World Day of Prayer for Peace in Assisi, which was held on 27 October 1986. He also drafted various documents on international debt, the homeless and racism. Pope Wojtyła appointed him to organize two conferences with renowned economists from differing backgrounds in view of the publication of the Encyclical *Centesimus Annus* (1991).

In March 1994 John Paul II appointed him Secretary of the Congregation for Bishops, and raised him to the dignity of archbishop. At the same time he became Secretary of the College of Cardinals. Then on 7 March 1998, at the age of 75, he was appointed Archivist and Librarian of Holy Roman Church. John Paul II created him a cardinal at the Consistory on 21 February 2001, assigning him the Deaconry of San Girolamo della Carità. The Holy Father celebrated the Cardinal's funeral on Thursday, 11 December, in the Vatican Basilica.



Cardinal Mejía's funeral celebrated by His Holiness Pope Francis in the Vatican Basilica on 11 December

The truth about the Synod

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shorter and more informative with respect to the *Relatio*.

This was how the Synod unfolded. Some of you may ask me: "Did the Fathers argue?" But, I do not know if they argued, but they spoke firmly, yes, really. And this is freedom, it is actually the freedom that is found in the Church. Everything happened "*cum Petro* and *sub Petro*", that is to say, in the presence of the Pope, who is the guarantor for everyone of freedom and trust, and who guarantees orthodoxy. And at the end, through my intervention, I gave a concise summary of the Synod experience. Thus, the three official documents that came out of the Synod are: the *Final Message*, the *Final Report*, and the *Final Address of the Holy Father*. There are no others.

The *Final Report*, which was the result of all the reflections of the Dioceses up to that moment, was published yesterday and is to be sent to all Episcopal Conferences, which will discuss it in view of the upcoming Ordinary Assembly in October 2015. I say it was published

yesterday – it had already been published –, but yesterday it was published with the questions addressed to the Episcopal Conferences and it thus becomes the actual *Lineamenta* of the next Synod.

We must understand that the Synod is not a parliament, a representative comes from this Church, this Church, this Church... No, it is not this. Representatives come, yes, but the structure is not parliamentary, it is completely different. The Synod is a protected space in order that the

Holy Spirit can work; there were no clashes between factions, like in parliament where this is permissible, but a comparison among Bishops, which has come after lengthy preparations and which now will work further for the good of families, of the Church, and of society. It is a process, it is the normal Synodal path. Now this *Relatio* is sent to the particular Churches and there the work of prayer, reflection and fraternal discussion will be done in preparation for the next Assembly.

This is the Synod of Bishops. Let us entrust it to the protection of the Virgin, our Mother: that she may help us to follow the will of God, taking pastoral decisions which may help the family more and better. I ask you to accompany this synodal path with prayer until the next Synod. May the Lord illuminate us, enable us to move toward the maturity of what we, as a Synod, must say to all the Churches. Your prayer is very important for this.

SPECIAL GREETINGS

I greet the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today's Audience, including the groups from Denmark, Nigeria, Australia and the United States of America. Upon all of you, and your families, I invoke joy and peace in the Lord Jesus. God bless you all!

May the liturgical Season of Advent foster in everyone renewed adherence to the Gospel, sincere solidarity toward brothers and sisters, and the rediscovery of Christian hope.



Pope Francis' message to the Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons

Deterrence cannot be the basis for peaceful coexistence



"Nuclear deterrence and the threat of mutually assured destruction cannot be the basis for an ethics of fraternity and peaceful coexistence among peoples and states". The Pope wrote this in a message to Sebastian Kurz, Federal Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Austria, the country hosting the third Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons (8-9 December). Participating in the Vienna meeting were 157 countries and, for the first time, nuclear powers such as the US and Great Britain. The following is the English text of the Holy Father's message.



To His Excellency
Mr SEBASTIAN KURZ,
Federal Minister for Europe,
Integration and Foreign Affairs of
the Republic of Austria,
President of the Conference on the
Humanitarian Impact of
Nuclear Weapons

I am pleased to greet you, Mr President, and all the representatives from various Nations and International Organizations, as well as civil society, who are participating in the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons.

Nuclear weapons are a global problem, affecting all nations, and impacting future generations and the planet that is our home. A global ethic is needed if we are to reduce the nuclear threat and work towards nuclear disarmament. Now, more than ever, technological, social and political interdependence urgently calls for an ethic of solidarity (cf. John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 38), which encourages peoples to work together for a more secure world, and a future that is increasingly rooted in moral values and responsibility on a global scale.

The humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons are predictable and planetary. While the focus is often placed on nuclear weapons' potential for mass-killing, more attention must be given to the "unnecessary suffering" brought on by their use. Military codes and international law, among others, have long banned peoples from inflicting unnecessary suffering. If such suffering is banned in the waging of conventional war, then it should all the more be banned in nuclear conflict. There are those among us who are victims of these weapons; they warn us not to commit the same irreparable mistakes which have devastated

populations and creation. I extend warm greetings to the *Hibakusha*, as well as other victims of nuclear weapons testing who are present at this meeting. I encourage them all to be prophetic voices, calling the human family to a deeper appreciation of beauty, love, cooperation and fraternity, while reminding the world of the risks of nuclear weapons which have the potential to destroy us and civilization.

Nuclear deterrence and the threat of mutually assured destruction cannot be the basis for an ethics of fraternity and peaceful coexistence among peoples and states. The youth of today and tomorrow deserve far more. They deserve a peaceful world order based on the unity of the human family, grounded on respect, cooperation, solidarity and compassion. Now is the time to counter the logic of fear with the ethic of responsibility, and so foster a climate of trust and sincere dialogue.

Spending on nuclear weapons squanders the wealth of nations. To prioritize such spending is a mistake and a misallocation of resources which would be far better invested in the areas of integral human development, education, health and the fight against extreme poverty. When these resources are squandered, the poor and the weak living on the margins of society pay the price.

The desire for peace, security and stability is one of the deepest long-

ings of the human heart. It is rooted in the Creator who makes all people members of the one human family. This desire can never be satisfied by military means alone, much less the possession of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Peace cannot "be reduced solely to maintaining a balance of power between enemies; nor is it brought about by dictatorship" (*Gaudium et Spes*, 78). Peace must be built on justice, socio-economic development, freedom, respect for fundamental human rights, the participation of all in public affairs and the building of trust between peoples. Pope Paul VI stated this succinctly in his Encyclical *Populorum Progressio*: "Development is the new name for peace" (76). It is incumbent on us to adopt concrete actions which promote peace and security, while remaining always aware of the limitation of short-sighted approaches to problems of national and international security. We must be profoundly committed to strengthening mutual trust, for only through such trust can true and lasting peace among nations be established (cf. John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris*, 113).

In the context of this Conference, I wish to encourage sincere and open dialogue between parties internal to each nuclear state, between various nuclear states, and between nuclear states and non-nuclear states. This dialogue must be inclusive, involving international organizations, religious communities and

civil society, and oriented towards the common good and not the protection of vested interests. "A world without nuclear weapons" is a goal shared by all nations and echoed by world leaders, as well as the aspiration of millions of men and women. The future and the survival of the human family hinges on moving beyond this ideal and ensuring that it becomes a reality.

I am convinced that the desire for peace and fraternity planted deep in the human heart will bear fruit in concrete ways to ensure that nuclear weapons are banned once and for all, to the benefit of our common home. The security of our own future depends on guaranteeing the peaceful security of others, for if peace, security and stability are not established globally, they will not be enjoyed at all. Individually and collectively, we are responsible for the present and future well-being of our brothers and sisters. It is my great hope that this responsibility will inform our efforts in favour of nuclear disarmament, for a world without nuclear weapons is truly possible.

From the Vatican, 7 December 2014

Franciscus

The Pope's video message to Christians in Iraq

Reeds in the wind

The Holy Father has again declared his solidarity with Christians and Yazidis suffering persecution in the Middle East. The Holy Father did so in a video message sent with Cardinal Philippe Barbarin, Archbishop of Lyon, who began his second visit to Iraq on 5 December. The following is a translation of the video message which was recorded in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I would like to greet each and every one of you, together with Cardinal Philippe Barbarin, who once again brings you the concern and love of the whole Church. I too would like to be there but, since I can't travel, I'll do it like this... but I am very close to you in these moments of trial. On the return from my journey in Turkey, I said that Christians are being driven out of the Middle East with suffering. I thank you for the witness that you give; there is so much suffering in your witness. Thank you! Thank you so much!

It seems that they don't want Christians to be there, but you bear witness of Christ. I think of the wounds, the pain of mothers with



their children, of elderly people and of displaced people, of the injuries of victims of every kind of violence.

As I recalled in Ankara, of particular concern is the fact that, due mostly to a group of extremists and fundamentalists, entire communities, especially – but not only – Christians and Yazidis have suffered and are still suffering inhuman violence because of their eth-

nic and religious identity. Christians and Yazidis have been driven by force from their homes, have had to abandon everything they have to save their own lives and not reject their faith. The violence has struck holy places, monuments, religious symbols and the cultural patrimony, as though the intention were to erase every trace, every memory of the other.

Angelus on the Second Sunday of Advent

Let yourselves be comforted

"We cannot be messengers of God's comfort if we do not first feel the joy of being comforted and loved by Him". These were among the Pope's words to the faithful gathered for the Angelus in St Peter's Square on Sunday, 7 December, the Second Sunday of Advent. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's words which were given in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Good morning!

This Sunday marks the second stage of the Season of Advent, a marvelous time which reawakens in us the expectation of Christ's return and the memory of his historical coming. Today's Liturgy presents us with a message full of hope. It is the Lord's express invitation from the lips of the Isaiah: "Comfort, comfort

my people, says your God" (40:1). These words open the *Book of Comfort*, in which the Prophet addresses the joyous proclamation of liberation to the people in exile. The time of tribulation has ended; the people of Israel can look trustingly toward the future: at last they can return to their homeland. This is the reason for the invitation to let themselves be comforted by the Lord.

Isaiah addresses people who have passed through a dark period, who have been subjected to a very difficult trial; but now the time of comfort has come. Sorrow and fear can be replaced with joy, for the Lord himself will guide his people on the way to liberation and salvation. How will He do all this? With the solicitude and tenderness of a shepherd who takes care of his flock. He will in fact provide unity and security and feed his flock, gather the lost sheep into his sure fold, reserve special attention to the most fragile and weak (v. 11). This is God's attitude toward us, his creatures. For this reason, the Prophet invites those who hear him – including us, today – to spread this message of hope: that the Lord consoles us. And to make room for the comfort which comes from the Lord.



We cannot be messengers of God's comfort if we do not first feel the joy of being comforted and loved by Him. This happens especially when we hear his Word, the Gospel, which we should carry in our pocket: do not forget this! The Gospel in your pocket or purse, to read regularly. And this gives us

comfort: when we abide in silent prayer in his presence, when we encounter Him in the Eucharist or in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. All this comforts us.

Let us therefore allow Isaiah's call – "Comfort, comfort my people" – resound in our heart in this Season of Advent. Today there is need for people to be witnesses to the mercy and tenderness of God, who spurs the resigned, enlivens the disheartened, ignites the fire of hope. He ignites the fire of hope! We don't. So many situations require our comforting witness. To be joyful, comforting people. I am thinking of those who are burdened by suffering, injustice and tyranny; of those who are slaves to money, to power, to success, to worldliness. Poor dears! They have fabricated consolation, not the true comfort of the Lord! We are all called to comfort our brothers and sisters, to testify that God alone can eliminate the causes of existential and spiritual tragedies. He can do it! He is powerful!

Isaiah's message, which resounds in this second Sunday of Advent, is a salve on our wounds and an impetus to prepare with commitment the way of the Lord. Indeed, today the Prophet speaks to heart to tell us that God condones our sins and comforts us. If we entrust ourselves to Him with a humble and penitent heart, He will tear down the walls of evil, He will fill in the holes of our omissions, He will smooth over the bumps of arrogance and vanity, and will open the way of encounter with Him. It is curious, but many times we are afraid of consolation, of being comforted. Or rather, we feel more secure in sorrow and desolation. Do you know why? Because in sorrow we feel almost as protagonists. However, in consolation the Holy Spirit is the protagonist! It is He who consoles us, it is He who gives us the courage to go out of ourselves. It is He who opens the door to the source of every true comfort, that is, the Father. And this is conversion. Please, let yourselves be comforted by the Lord! Let yourselves be comforted by the Lord!

The Virgin Mary is the "Way" that God Himself prepared in order to come into the world. Let us entrust to Her the salvation and peace awaited by all men and women of our time.

After the Marian prayer, the Holy Father greeted the faithful present.

Dear brothers and sisters, I greet all of you, faithful from Rome and pilgrims from Italy and from other countries: families, parish groups, associations.

I wish a happy Sunday to all of you. Please, let yourselves be comforted by the Lord, understood? Let yourselves be comforted by the Lord! And do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch. *Arrivederci!* And tomorrow, happy Feast Day of the Immaculate Conception. May the Lord bless you.

Reeds in the wind

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

As religious leaders, we have an obligation to denounce all violations of dignity and of human rights!

Today I would like to draw near to you who are enduring this suffering, to be close to you... And I think of St Thérèse of the Child Jesus, who said that she and the Church felt like a reed: when the wind, the storm comes, the reed bends but it does not break! At this moment you are the reed, you bend in pain, but you have the strength to carry forward your faith, which is a testimony for us. Today you are the reeds of God! The reeds that are laid low by this fierce wind, but will rise again!

I would like to give thanks once again. I pray the Spirit that makes all things new, that he give each one of you strength and endurance. It's a gift of the Holy Spirit. And, as I did in Turkey, I strongly ask for a greater convergence of international effort to resolve these conflicts which are soaking your homelands in blood, to counteract the other causes that drive people to leave the lands of their birth and to foster conditions so that they may remain or return. I wish that you all return, that you are able to return.

Dear brothers and sisters, you are in my heart and in my prayers and in the hearts and prayers of all Christian communities whom I will ask to pray in a special way for you on 8 December, to pray to Our Lady that she watch over you: She is mother, may she watch over you.

Brothers and sisters, your endurance is martyrdom, a fruitful dew. Please, I ask you to pray for me. May the Lord bless you, may Our Lady watch over you.

May Almighty God bless you, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Pope Francis lights the Gubbio Christmas tree

A forgiving light

With the touch of a button, Pope Francis lit the Mount Ingino Christmas tree in Gubbio, Italy, from a tablet in his home at Santa Marta. The ceremony was held on Sunday evening, 7 December. The tree's structure is made up of approximately 1,000 lights and is 750 metres tall and it's base is 450 metres wide. The shooting star at the top is 1,000 square metres. Before lighting the tree, the Holy Father gave the following address in Italian.

Good evening, I wish you a holy and happy Christmas!

In turning on the light of the Christmas tree, we wish for the light of Christ to be in us. A Christmas without light is not Christmas. Let there be light in the

soul, in the heart; let there be forgiveness to others; let there be no hostilities or darkness... Let there be the beautiful light of Jesus. This is my wish for all of you, when you turn on the light of the Christmas tree.

Many thanks for your gift, it is beautiful. Also I give to you my warmest wishes, peace and happiness.

If you have something dark in your soul, ask the Lord for forgiveness. Christmas is a great opportunity to cleanse the soul! Do not fear, the priest is merciful, forgiving all in the name of God, because God forgives everything.

May there be light be in your hearts, in your families, in your cities. And now, with this wish, let us turn on the light.

Blessed be God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Happy Christmas and pray for me!



To the International Theological Commission

With open eyes and ears

"Together with the Christian people as a whole, the theologian opens his eyes and ears to the 'signs of the times' so that 'revealed truth can be ever more deeply understood'. The Holy Father reflected on this to members of the International Theological Commission on Friday, 5 December, in the Consistory Hall. The following is a translation of the Pope's address which was delivered in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am pleased to meet with you at the start of the new quinquennium – the ninth – of the International Theological Commission. I thank the President, Cardinal Müller, for the words he addressed to me on behalf of all of you. Your Commission began shortly after the Second Vatican Council, following a proposal of the Synod of Bishops, in order that the Holy See might more directly avail itself of the reflection of theologians from various parts of the world. The mission of the Commission is therefore "to study doctrinal problems of great importance, especially those which present new points of view, and in this way to offer its help to the Magisterium of the Church" (*Statutes*, art. 1). The 27 documents published thus far are evidence of this commitment and a reference point for theological debate.

Your mission is to serve the Church, which requires not only intellectual skills, but also spiritual dispositions. Among the latter, I would like to draw your attention to the importance of listening. The Prophet Ezekiel said: "Son of man, all my words that I shall speak to you receive in your heart, and hear with your ears" (Ez 3:10). The theologian is first and foremost a believer who listens to the Word of the living God and receives it in his/her heart and mind. But the theologian must also humbly listen to "what the Spirit says to the churches" (Rev 2:7), through the various manifestations of the faith lived by the People of God. The Commission's recent document on the "*Sensus fidei* in the life of the Church" recalled this. It is beautiful; I liked the document very much, my compliments! Indeed, together with the Christian people as a whole, the theologian opens his/her eyes and ears to the "signs of the times". He/she is called to "to hear, distinguish and interpret the many voices of our age, and to judge them in the light of the divine word" – it is the Word of God that judges – "so that revealed truth can always be more deeply penetrated, better understood and set forth to greater advantage" (Second Vatican Council Apostolic Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 44).

In this light, within the increasingly diversified composition of the Commission, I would like to note the increased presence of women – still not too many... They are the icing on the cake, but we need more – a presence that becomes an invitation to reflect on the role that women can and should play in the

field of theology. Indeed, "the Church acknowledges the indispensable contribution which women make to society through the sensitivity, intuition and other distinctive skill sets which they, more than men, tend to possess... I readily acknowledge that many women ... [offer] new contributions to theological reflection" (Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 103). Thus, by virtue of their feminine genius, women theologians can detect, to the benefit of all, certain unexplored aspects of the unfathomable mystery of Christ, "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col 2:3). I invite you to derive the greatest benefit of this specific contribution of women to the understanding of the faith.

Another feature of your Commission is its international character, which reflects the catholicity of the Church. The diversity of viewpoints should enrich catholicity without harming unity. The unity of Catholic theologians stems from their common reference to one faith in Christ and is nourished by the diversity of the Holy Spirit's gifts. Starting from this foundation, and in a healthy pluralism, various theological approaches, developed in different cultural contexts and using diverse methods, cannot ignore one another, but in theological dialogue should reciprocally enrich and correct one another. The work of your Commission can be a witness to this growth, and also a testimony to the Holy Spirit, since it is He who sows this charismatic variety in the Church, the diverse viewpoints, and it is He

who will establish unity. He is the main actor, always.

The Immaculate Virgin, as a privileged witness of the great events of salvation history, "kept all these things, pondering them in her heart" (Lk 2:19): A woman of listening, a woman of contemplation, a woman of closeness to the problems of the Church and of the people. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and with all the resources of her feminine genius, she unceasingly entered ever more deeply into "all the truth" (cf. Jn 16:13). Mary is thus the icon of the Church who,



Michelangelo, "The prophet Ezekiel" (Sistine Chapel)

eagerly awaiting her Lord, progresses day after day in her understanding of the faith, thanks also to the patient work of men and women theologians. May Our Lady, the teacher of true theology, obtain for us, through her maternal prayer, that our charity "may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment" (Phil 1:9). I accompany you on this journey with my Blessing, and I ask you please to pray for me. Pray theologically. Thank you.

Audience with the President of Mozambique

On Thursday 4 December, in the Vatican Apostolic Palace, the Holy Father received in audience the President of the Republic of Mozambique, H.E. Mr Armando Emilio Guebuza, who subsequently met with Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State, accompanied by Msgr Antoine Camilleri, Undersecretary for Relations with States.



During the cordial discussions the good relations between the Holy See and the Republic of Mozambique were highlighted. In this context, reference was made to the fundamental contribution of the Catholic Church to the development of the country through her educational and healthcare institutions, and her important role in the promotion of peace and national reconciliation.

Finally, attention turned to various regional challenges, such as disarmament and the struggle against poverty and social inequality.

To the Santa Marta Group

Partners to combat human trafficking



A conference entitled "Police and Church Partners to Combat Human Trafficking" was held in London on 5-6 December. It was the second international meeting of the Santa Marta Group. For the occasion the Holy Father sent a message to Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster and President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. The following is the Pope's English text.

I extend greetings to you and all the delegates gathered for the conference to discuss continued efforts in the fight against human trafficking. I am deeply grateful to all present for your resolve in combating this evil and for your commitment to carry on the work begun at the conference held in the Vatican in April of this year. Your labours to promote ongoing dialogue on the legal remedies to human trafficking and on the essential care of those who suffer this enslavement are especially important because of the hidden nature of this crime. We must never forget, nor may we ignore, the suffering of so many men, women and children whose human dignity is violated through this exploitation. I thank the Home Secretary of the British Government, the Metropolitan Commissioner of Police, and the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales for organizing this event and the delegates who demonstrate anew their commitment by their participation in this initiative. In assuring you that the Church remains steadfast in her pledge to combat human trafficking and to care for the victims of this scourge, I offer the promise of my prayers that Almighty God may bless and guide your efforts.

FRANCISCUS P.P.

The Santa Marta Group takes its name from Pope Francis' residence, where members of the group met last April. On that occasion the Holy Father called human trafficking an open wound in modern society and a crime against humanity. Led by Cardinal Nichols and Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe, the group is a coalition of police chiefs, government officials and bishops from around the world who are working together with civil society to eradicate human trafficking and to guarantee pastoral care to victims. They aim to develop strategies of prevention and reintegration. The conference, also organized by the Home Office, was held in the Lancaster House, London.

Archbishop Mamberti gives an address at the 21st Ministerial Council of OSCE

Protection of rights in order to restore trust

The following is the English text of the address given by Archbishop Dominique Mamberti, Secretary for the Holy See's Relations with States, on 4 December at the Ministerial Council of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), held in Basel, Switzerland.

The Delegation of the Holy See wishes to thank His Excellency Mr Didier Burkhalter, President of the Swiss Confederation and Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, as well as the 2014 Swiss Chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) for their generous hospitality here in the historical city of Basel.

The Ministerial Council meets this year in the context of the disturbing events that undermine security in the OSCE area. The politico-military tools of the Organization designed to defuse conflicts and restore a climate of trust and confidence between the participating States have been tested in an unparalleled manner. Unfortunately, the evidence has shown that even the best tools are ineffective if there is insufficient political will to implement them in good faith.

The Holy See has been following very closely and with deep concern the worrying developments in Ukraine. The Catholic Church and the Holy Father Francis are close to those who suffer and are exposed to violations of their fundamental human rights and freedoms, in particular the right to life in dignity and without fear.

In this context, we welcome a swift reaction to the outbreak of violence, in particular, by deploying the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission. On the other hand, we regret that, in spite of the valuable efforts of the Forum for Security and Cooperation, the non-implementation of other valuable tools that our Organization possesses, such as the Vienna Document or the Code of Conduct, has prevented the emergence of the conditions necessary for the settlement of the ongoing crisis.

Even more regretful is the loss of life, physical suffering, violations of people's fundamental rights, and enormous material damage that has already affected too many Ukrainian citizens. Our prayers and thoughts of solidarity go to all the victims and to all those who are subject to grave violations of their right to live in peace.

Attempting to resolve disputes with the use of arms rather than by a sincere effort to find negotiated solutions is a sad development, as has frequently been noted by successive Popes. Pope Francis himself exclaimed in his first Message for the World Day of Peace: "I appeal forcefully to all those who sow violence and death by force of arms: in the person you today see simply as an enemy to be beaten, discover rather your brother or sister, and hold back your hand! Give up the way of arms and go out to meet the other in dialogue, pardon and reconciliation, in order to rebuild justice,

trust, and hope around you!" (*Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace*, 7).

Therefore, it is our strong conviction that the best way of resolving the current situation is through dialogue and negotiation for the benefit not only of those directly involved but also for the benefit of the larger international community. There should be no hesitancy and lack of good will to use all possible means to reach a peaceful solution.

This year marks some important anniversaries. It has been 100 years since the beginning of the First World War and 75 years since the beginning of the Second World War. These anniversaries bring back memories of unprecedented suffering raging for a total of 10 years through the world and in particular across the OSCE region. The years of war were followed by decades of recovery but also by post-war divisions, prolonging uncertainty and postponing the desires of peoples and nations to live in freedom and prosperity without fear of new tragedies.

It should be seen as our moral imperative to avoid, by all possible means, the horrors and divisions of the past too often stirred up by senseless and interest-driven propaganda. Instead, no effort must be spared in building and reinforcing peace, which we all have pledged to pursue, where no one will feel threatened and where no one's freedom will be compromised.

In order to lay the foundations of common security for all, the forefathers of this Organization, gathered in Helsinki in 1975, were able to overcome seemingly irreconcilable differences for the sake of the common good. We should, therefore, seriously reflect upon that fact and rise once again above what separates us and look for what unites us. The common good of all citizens of the OSCE region, in particular those whose lives are under threat or whose rights and freedom risk being gravely compromised must become our main goal. Peace is an indivisible good. Either it is the good of all or it is the good of none. Therefore, we should work towards it with determination.

Less than a month ago, the 25th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall was also celebrated. It is not just a reminder of the end of an era of profound division; it is a symbol of hope, showing that it is possible to overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles for the benefit of what is deeply rooted in our human nature, namely life in dignity and freedom. And the fact that it was achieved in a marvelously peaceful manner makes us hopeful that it can be done again. We need bridges and not walls that will connect peoples from Vancouver to Vladivostok, spreading peace throughout the world.

The OSCE participating States have recognized and repeatedly reaffirmed that security goes beyond politico-military issues. It includes, as integral parts, issues related to the

economic and environmental sphere, as well as to human rights. In fact, the OSCE has placed respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law at the very core of any effective response to security threats. It goes without saying that security cannot be achieved without the protection of human rights and, on the other hand, that full respect of human rights can be ensured only in a secure environment, allowing individuals to enjoy the inalienable rights and freedoms to which they are all entitled as human beings. We should also keep in



mind that the universality, indivisibility and interdependence of human rights all serve as guarantees safeguarding inherent human dignity. (cf. *Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI, Meeting with the members of the General Assembly of the United Nations Organization*, New York, 18 April 2008).

There is no doubt that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and are united in one human family. Therefore the Holy See welcomes with gratitude the ongoing attention the OSCE is paying to the problem of trafficking of human persons. Indeed, "human trafficking is a crime against humanity. We must unite our efforts to free the victims and stop this increasingly aggressive crime which threatens not only individuals but the basic values of society and of international security and justice, to say nothing of the economy, and the fabric of the family and our coexistence. What is called for, then, is a shared sense of responsibility and firmer political will to gain victory on this front. Responsibility is required towards those who have fallen victim to trafficking in order to protect their rights, to guarantee their safety and that of their families, and to prevent the corrupt and criminals from escaping justice and having the last word over the lives of others" (*Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to the new Ambassadors accredited to the Holy See on the occasion of the presentation of the letters of credence*, 12 December 2013).

We wish to draw particular attention to freedom of religion or belief, which lies at the heart of basic human rights. Numerous international

documents recognize that the spiritual dimension of life is a vital part of human existence. Freedom of religion or belief is also a well-established constant in the OSCE documents, stretching from the Helsinki Final Act to include the Astana Summit Commemorative Declaration and the Kiev Ministerial Decision adopted at our gathering last year. The adoption of last year's decision shows that the rights associated with religion need particular protection. Let us not forget its unifying power as well, since this is where we have found a common ground after some years without reaching decisions in the human dimension. However, despite the commitments undertaken by the participating States of the OSCE in the area of religious freedom, which actually includes many other rights and freedoms, such as freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, in some countries, including countries of the OSCE region and its neighboring areas, this right is still gravely violated.

We cannot be silent in the face of tens of thousands of Christians who are persecuted and killed worldwide every year, including in areas bordering on the OSCE region. There is no doubt that these profoundly deplorable crimes, which also place the security of participating States at risk, must be strongly condemned and opposed.

In this regard, I would like to recall the words of Pope Francis who insists on the responsibility of the international community to help those who suffer persecution in the Middle East: "As I have had the occasion to reiterate several times, we cannot resign ourselves to thinking of the Middle East without Christians, who have professed the name of Jesus for 2,000 years. Recent events, mostly in Iraq and Syria, are dire. We are witnessing a phenomenon of terrorism of previously unimaginable dimensions. So many of our brothers and sisters are being persecuted and have had to leave their homes, even in a brutal manner. It seems that awareness of the value of human life has been lost. It seems that the person does not count and can be sacrificed for other interests. And all this, unfortunately, with the indifference of so many" (*Address of His Holiness Pope Francis in occasion of the Ordinary Public Consistory*, 20 October 2014).

The OSCE, its participating States and their "partners for cooperation" must raise their voice against this injustice and against the brutal violation of the rights of persons simply because of their faith. What is needed, as the Holy Father stated during his recent visit in Turkey, is a new solidarity between Muslims and Christians in the fight against terrorism and "a concerted commitment on the part of all, based on mutual trust, which can pave the way to lasting peace" (*Address of His Holiness Pope Francis during the meeting with the President of Turkey, Prime Minister and civil authorities, Ankara*,

PIETRO PAROLIN

In this spirit of Advent, a time of longing and joy, the Holy See and Great Britain recall with deep gratitude the fruits of a relationship that has matured with quiet patience. We have grown towards full formal relations, which matured just three decades ago, and now look forward to a shared future, seeking together the common good. We offer today thanksgiving for the renewed relationship of trust and respect between the Holy See and the British Crown, fostered across the length of a century.

In today's Gospel, St Matthew presents us the image of Jesus taking the meagre offering of seven loaves and a few fish, to bless and multiply them and feed the crowd hungry for food, but hungry also for life, truth, beauty and goodness. Anticipating the Eucharist, the Lord gives the multitude a foretaste of Heaven, healing those people – his people – from their infirmities, from their sins and waywardness, calling them to a new life in his Kingdom.

“Christ continues to send his disciples into the world in order to proclaim the coming of his Kingdom and to bring his peace into the world”: with these words Pope Benedict XVI reminded the faithful gathered in Glasgow, that the Lord's power is still at work amongst us, made tangible through the actions of his disciples. We can identify those actions in the works of justice, peace and reconciliation – including corporal works of mercy – in which the Catholic Church, the Anglican Communion and other Christian communities have worked together with the British Authorities.

These works might include protecting the innocent and the weak in two World Wars and in more recent conflicts throughout the world; seeking to promote dialogue and reconciliation in order to bring about lasting peace among peoples. The British Government and the Holy See have cooperated in these efforts for



James William Edmund Doyle, “St Augustine of Canterbury preaching before King Ethelbert” (1864)

Secretary of State on the centenary of diplomatic relations

The Holy See and the UK together for justice

justice and peace, and we naturally wish to strengthen and extend this cooperation for the good of all, be it in situations of disaster, from famine in Africa to tidal waves in Asia, or for the poor in our home communities and for those on the periphery of society – the unborn in the womb, the sick and the elderly, the abused and victims of human trafficking – those who cannot fend for themselves. In all these endeavours, our resolve to work for justice and peace is rooted always in the inalienable dignity of the human person.

In everything, we are sustained and nourished by the Lord our Shepherd, by God who made us, whose flock we are. As the Psalmist reminds us, God gives us everything: fresh and green pastures, restful waters, a banquet of rich food even as our foes look on from without, uncomprehending. He comforts us, heals us, anoints our wounds, prepares a home for us, a kingdom, a land far beyond what we

can imagine. He never, ever abandons his people. Even in the horror of the wars, which the world experienced in the 20th century, in the destruction of churches and the persecution inflicted by heartless regimes that tried to hide from God. Not in life, nor in death, shall we be abandoned by God, if we listen, believe, trust and love.

The Lord binds us up, healing our ills and forgiving past misunderstandings; by his grace relationships are restored. It is in this context of grace and God's power to restore relationships that we celebrate the centenary of the renewal of relations between the Holy See and the United Kingdom, and give thanks for our journey together over these past hundred years. I am therefore pleased to salute Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Holy See, Mr Nigel Baker, for bringing us together this evening. At the same time, I welcome the presence of the Apostolic Nuncio to Great Britain, Archbishop Antonio Mennini. In their persons, I also acknowledge, with deep gratitude, their predecessors and their efforts to build and maintain the relations that we enjoy today.

We give thanks for this restored trust, as we strive to share a life anchored in Christian values of moral goodness. We give thanks for the distance we have walked together in seeking to re-establish unity of faith and praxis that was our shared treasure for nearly a thousand years. We must acknowledge here the very significant work of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity, for the Holy See, and the Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission, as well as dialogues sustained between the Apostolic See and numerous other Christian communities. Notwithstanding this valuable work, some of the consequences of our centuries-old wounds are still with us. As Pope St John Paul II said, on the first Papal visit to Great Britain in

1982: “the sin of disunity among Christians, which has been with us for centuries, weighs heavily upon the Church”. Keen to ease that burden, and to grow together in love, we remain firmly resolved to continue on the path to Christian unity.

As we celebrate this centenary, we also recognise, that we have been sustained by the faith and perseverance of so many before us. When St Augustine of Canterbury arrived from Rome over fourteen centuries ago, he found the Gospel of Christ had already taken root in Britain. From that time on, the Christian message has prospered in every age, even to our own, thanks to the zeal and courage of missionaries and ministers of the Gospel. The need to hear and proclaim that message never diminishes, indeed our own age hungers for the consolation of God's love, and thirsts for his truth.

As Pope Benedict XVI affirmed in his homily in Westminster Cathedral in 2010: “How much we need, in the Church and in society, witnesses of the beauty of holiness, witnesses of the splendour of truth, witnesses of the joy and freedom born of a living relationship with Christ!”. When Pope Benedict beatified Cardinal Newman, later in his visit to Britain, he reminded us how Bl. John Henry, after his conversion, contin-

At St Paul's

Published here are passages from the Cardinal-Secretary of State's homily during Mass at the Basilica of St Paul Outside-the-Walls on the occasion of the centenary of diplomatic relations between the Holy See and the United Kingdom, on 3 December.

ued to explore, together with his former colleagues, questions on which they differed, always “driven by a deep longing for unity in faith”. Surely this is what characterizes our relationship over these one hundred years!

Freshest in our minds is the personal visit paid by Her Majesty the Queen, just this year, to Pope Francis in the Vatican. It was for all a sign of sincere friendship, and a firm indication of the permanent desire to foster, in a time of great turmoil around us, a path of unity and peace. May God bless His Holiness Pope Francis; may he bless Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, and may the divine assistance guide us together in mutual support and cooperation on the journey to God's Kingdom.

As Pope Francis stated in *Evangelii Gaudium*: “true Christian hope, which seeks the eschatological kingdom, always generates history”. We are here to celebrate that history, and confirm our Christian hope as we look to the future. Amen.

Protection of rights

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28 November 2014). There must be a new partnership of believers and non-believers to fight anti-semitism, intolerance against Muslims and the ever growing discrimination against Christians also in Europe, where, although there is no organized persecution, there are many forms of intolerance which manifest themselves in a variety of ways, even in hate motivated crimes against persons and sacred places.

Bearing all of this in mind, we continue to insist that the full guarantee of religious freedom cannot be limited to the free exercise of worship; it must also give due

consideration to the public dimension of religion and, hence, to the possibility of believers exercising their responsibility in building the social order. Every violation of religious freedom, whether explicit or subtle, does fundamental damage to the cause of peace and security.

In conclusion, I wish to renew my gratitude to the 2014 Swiss Chairmanship of the OSCE for its leadership and service, as well as to express my best wishes to the incoming Serbian Chairmanship as we work together to attain the goals, implement the common vision and work according to common values agreed upon and shared by all the participating States of the OSCE.

Pope Francis' Message for the upcoming World Day of Peace, 1 January 2015

No longer slaves, but brothers and sisters

"Man's exploitation by man" is a "scourge" and an "abominable phenomenon", which leads to contempt for the fundamental rights of others and to the suppression of their freedom and dignity". The Holy Father wrote this in his Message for the 48th Celebration of the World Day of Peace 2015, with the theme: "No longer slaves, but brothers and sisters", inviting everyone, "to practice acts of fraternity towards those kept in a state of enslavement". The Pope urgently appealed "to all men and women of good will, and all those near or far, including the highest levels of civil institutions, who witness the scourge of contemporary slavery", not to become "accomplices to this evil, not to turn away from the sufferings of our brothers and sisters, our fellow human beings, who are deprived of their freedom and dignity". The following is the English text of the Pope's Message.



No longer slaves, but brothers and sisters

1. At the beginning of this New Year, which we welcome as God's gracious gift to all humanity, I offer heartfelt wishes of peace to every man and woman, to all the world's peoples and nations, to heads of state and government, and to religious leaders. In doing so, I pray for an end to wars, conflicts and the great suffering caused by human agency, by epidemics past and present, and by the devastation wrought by natural disasters. I pray especially that, on the basis of our common calling to cooperate with God and all people of good will for the advancement of harmony and peace in the world, we may resist the temptation to act in a manner unworthy of our humanity.

In my Message for Peace last year, I spoke of "the desire for a full life... which includes a longing for fraternity which draws us to fellowship with others and enables us to see them not as enemies or rivals, but as brothers and sisters to be accepted and embraced".¹ Since we are by nature relational beings, meant to find fulfillment through interpersonal relationships inspired by justice and love, it is fundamental for our human development that our dignity, freedom and autonomy be acknowledged and respected. Tragically, the growing scourge of man's exploitation by man gravely damages the life of communion and our calling to forge interpersonal relations marked by respect, justice and love. This abominable phenomenon, which leads to contempt for the fundamental rights of others and to the suppression of their freedom and dignity, takes many forms. I would like briefly to consider these, so that, in the light of God's word, we can consider all men and women "no longer slaves, but brothers and sisters".

Listening to God's plan for humanity

2. The theme I have chosen for this year's message is drawn from St Paul's letter to Philemon, in which the

oured him. This created an inequality between brothers born of the same womb.

In the account of the origins of the human family, the sin of estrangement from God, from the father figure and from the brother, becomes an expression of the refusal of communion. It gives rise to a culture of enslavement (cf. Gen 9:25-27), with all its consequences extending from generation to generation: rejection of others, their mistreatment, violations of their dignity and fundamental rights, and institutionalized inequality. Hence, the need for constant conversion to the Covenant, fulfilled by Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, in the confidence that "where sin



Fragment of Paul's letter to Philemon

increased, grace abounded all the more... through Jesus Christ" (Rom 5:20-21). Christ, the beloved Son (cf. Mt 3:17), came to reveal the Father's love for humanity. Whoever hears the Gospel and responds to the call to conversion becomes Jesus' "brother, sister and mother" (Mt 12:50), and thus an adopted son of his Father (cf. Eph 1:5).

One does not become a Christian, a child of the Father and a brother or sister in Christ, as the result of an authoritative divine decree, without the exercise of personal freedom: in a word, without being freely converted to Christ. Becoming a child of God is necessarily linked to conversion: "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). All those who responded in faith and with their lives to Peter's preaching entered into the *fraternity* of the first Christian community (cf. 1 Pet 2:17; Acts 1:15-16, 6:3, 12:29); Jews and Greeks, slaves and free (cf. 1 Cor 12:13; Gal 3:28). Differing origins and social status did not diminish anyone's dignity or exclude anyone from belonging to the People of God. The Christian community is thus a place of communion lived in the love shared among brothers and sisters (cf. Rom 12:10; 1 Thess 4:9; Heb 13:1; 1 Pet 1:22; 2 Pet 1:7).

All of this shows how the Good News of Jesus Christ, in whom God makes "all things new" (Rev 21:5),³ is also capable of redeeming human rela-

tionships, including those between slaves and masters, by shedding light on what both have in common: adoptive sonship and the bond of brotherhood in Christ. Jesus himself said to his disciples: "No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you" (Jn 15:15).

The many faces of slavery yesterday and today

3. From time immemorial, different societies have known the phenomenon of man's subjugation by man. There have been periods of human history in which the institution of slavery was generally accepted and regulated by law. This legislation dictated who was born free and who was born into slavery, as well as the conditions whereby a freeborn person could lose his or her freedom or regain it. In other words, the law itself admitted that some people were able or required to be considered the property of other people, at their free disposition. A slave could be bought and sold, given away or acquired, as if he or she were a commercial product.

Today, as the result of a growth in our awareness, slavery, seen as a crime against humanity,⁴ has been formally abolished throughout the world. The right of each person not to be kept in a state of slavery or servitude has been recognized in international law as inviolable.

Yet, even though the international community has adopted numerous agreements aimed at ending slavery in all its forms, and has launched various strategies to combat this phenomenon, millions of people today – children, women and men of all ages – are deprived of freedom and are forced to live in conditions akin to slavery.

I think of the many men and women labourers, including minors, subjugated in different sectors, whether formally or informally, in domestic or agricultural workplaces, or in the manufacturing or

mining industry; whether in countries where labour regulations fail to comply with international norms and minimum standards, or, equally illegally, in countries which lack legal protection for workers' rights.

I think also of the living conditions of many migrants who, in their dramatic odyssey, experience hunger, are deprived of freedom, robbed of their possessions, or undergo physical and sexual abuse. In a particular way, I think of those among them who, upon arriving at their destination after a gruelling journey marked by fear and insecurity, are detained in at times inhumane conditions. I think of those among them, who for different social, political and economic reasons, are forced to live clandestinely. My thoughts also turn to those who, in order to remain within the law, agree to disgraceful living and working conditions, especially in those cases where the laws of a nation create or permit a structural dependency of migrant workers on their employers, as, for example, when the legality of their residency is made dependent on their labour contract. Yes, I am thinking of "slave labour".

I think also of persons forced into prostitution, many of whom are minors, as well as male and female sex slaves. I think of women forced into marriage, those sold for arranged marriages and those bequeathed to relatives of their deceased husbands, without any right to give or withhold their consent.

Nor can I fail to think of all those persons, minors and adults alike, who are made objects of trafficking for the sale of organs, for recruitment as soldiers, for begging, for illegal activities such as the production and sale of narcotics, or for disguised forms of cross-border adoption.

Finally, I think of all those kidnapped and held captive by terrorist groups, subjected to their purposes as combatants, or, above all in the case of young girls and women, to be used as sex slaves. Many of these disappear, while others are sold several times over, tortured, mutilated or killed.



"Cain and Abel" (c1084, ivory panel from the Cathedral of Salerno, Italy)



Some deeper causes of slavery

4. Today, as in the past, slavery is rooted in a notion of the human person which allows him or her to be treated as an object. Whenever sin corrupts the human heart and distances us from our Creator and our neighbours, the latter are no longer regarded as beings of equal dignity, as brothers or sisters sharing a common humanity, but rather as objects. Whether by coercion or deception, or by physical or psychological duress, human persons created in the image and likeness of God are deprived of their freedom, sold and reduced to being the property of others. They are treated as means to an end.

Alongside this deeper cause – the rejection of another person's humanity – there are other causes which help to explain contemporary forms of slavery. Among these, I think in the first place of poverty, underdevelopment and exclusion, especially when combined with a lack of access to education or scarce, even non-existent, employment opportunities. Not infrequently, the victims of human trafficking and slavery are people who look for a way out of a situation

of extreme poverty; taken in by false promises of employment, they often end up in the hands of criminal networks which organize human trafficking. These networks are skilled in using modern means of communication as a way of luring young men and women in various parts of the world.

Another cause of slavery is corruption on the part of people willing to do anything for financial gain. Slave labour and human trafficking often require the complicity of intermediaries, be they law enforcement personnel, state officials, or civil and military institutions. "This occurs when money, and not the human person, is at the centre of an economic system. Yes, the person, made in the image of God and charged with dominion over all creation, must be at the centre of every social or economic system. When the person is replaced by mammon, a subversion of values occurs".⁵

Further causes of slavery include armed conflicts, violence, criminal activity and terrorism. Many people are kidnapped in order to be sold, enlisted as combatants, or sexually exploited, while others are forced to emigrate, leaving everything behind: their country, home, property, and even members of their family. They are driven to seek an alternative to these terrible conditions even at the risk of their personal dignity and their very lives; they risk being drawn into that vicious circle which makes them prey to misery, corruption and their baneful consequences.

A shared commitment to ending slavery

5. Often, when considering the reality of human trafficking, illegal trafficking of migrants and other acknowledged or unacknowledged forms of slavery, one has the impression that they occur within a context of general indifference.

Sadly, this is largely true. Yet I would like to mention the enormous and often silent efforts which have been made for many years by religious congregations, especially women's con-

gregations, to provide support to victims. These institutes work in very difficult situations, dominated at times by violence, as they work to break the invisible chains binding victims to traffickers and exploiters. Those chains are made up of a series of links, each composed of clever psychological ploys which make the victims dependent on their exploiters. This is accomplished by blackmail and threats made against them and their loved ones, but also by concrete acts such as the confiscation of their identity documents and physical violence. The activity of religious congregations is carried out in three main areas: in offering assistance to victims, in working for their psychological and educational rehabilitation, and in efforts to reintegrate them into the society where they live or from which they have come.

This immense task, which calls for courage, patience and perseverance, deserves the appreciation of the whole Church and society. Yet, of itself, it is not sufficient to end the scourge of the exploitation of human persons. There is also need for a threefold commitment on the institutional level: to prevention, to victim protection and to the legal prosecution of perpetrators. Moreover, since criminal organizations employ global networks to achieve their goals, efforts to eliminate this phenomenon also demand a common and, indeed, a global effort on the part of various sectors of society.

States must ensure that their own legislation truly respects the dignity of the human person in the areas of migration, employment, adoption, the movement of businesses offshore and the sale of items produced by slave labour. There is a need for just laws which are centred on the human person, uphold fundamental rights and restore those rights when they have been violated. Such laws should also provide for the rehabilitation of victims, ensure their personal safety, and include effective means of enforcement which leave no room for corruption or impunity. The role of women in society must also be recognized, not least through initi-

No longer slaves, but brothers

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ives in the sectors of culture and social communications.

Intergovernmental organizations, in keeping with the principle of subsidiarity, are called to coordinate initiatives for combating the transnational networks of organized crime which oversee the trafficking of persons and the illegal trafficking of migrants. Cooperation is clearly needed at a number of levels, involving national and international institutions, agencies of civil society and the world of finance.

*Businesses*⁶ have a duty to ensure dignified working conditions and adequate salaries for their employees, but they must also be vigilant that forms of subjugation or human trafficking do not find their way into the distribution chain. Together with the social responsibility of businesses, there is also the *social responsibility of consumers*. Every person ought to have the awareness that "purchasing is always a moral – and not simply an economic – act".⁷

Organizations in civil society, for their part, have the task of awakening consciences and promoting whatever steps are necessary for combating and uprooting the culture of enslavement.

In recent years, the Holy See, attentive to the pain of the victims of trafficking and the voice of the religious congregations which assist them on their path to freedom, has increased its appeals to the international community for cooperation and collaboration between different agencies in putting an end to this scourge.⁸ Meetings have also been organized to draw attention to the phenomenon of human trafficking and to facilitate cooperation between various agencies, including experts from the universities and international organizations, police forces from migrants' countries of origin, transit, or destination, and representatives of ecclesial groups which work with victims. It is my hope that these efforts will continue to expand in years to come.

Globalizing fraternity, not slavery or indifference

6. In her "proclamation of the truth of Christ's love in society",⁹ the Church constantly engages in charitable activities inspired by the truth of the human person. She is charged with showing to all the path to conversion, which enables us to change the way we see our neighbours, to recognize in every other person a brother or sister in our human family, and to acknowledge his or her intrinsic dignity in truth and freedom. This can be clearly seen from the story of Josephine Bakhita, the saint originally from the Darfur region in Sudan who was kidnapped by slave-traffickers and sold to brutal masters when she was nine years old. Subsequently – as a result of painful experiences – she became a "free daughter of God" thanks to her faith, lived in religious consecration and in service to others, especially the most lowly and helpless.

This saint, who lived at the turn of the 20th century, is even today an exemplary witness of hope¹⁰ for the many victims of slavery; she can support the efforts of all those committed to fighting against this "open wound on the body of contemporary society, a scourge upon the body of Christ".¹¹

In the light of all this, I invite everyone, in accordance with his or her specific role and responsibilities, to practice acts of fraternity towards those kept in a state of enslavement. Let us ask ourselves, as individuals and as communities, whether we feel challenged when, in our daily lives, we meet or deal with persons who could be victims of human trafficking, or when we are tempted to select items which may well have been produced by exploiting others. Some of us, out of indifference, or financial reasons, or because we are caught up in our daily concerns, close our eyes to this. Others, however, decide to do something about it, to join civic associations or to practice small, everyday gestures – which have so much merit! – such as offering a kind word, a greeting or a smile. These cost us nothing but they can offer hope, open doors, and change the life of another person who lives clandestinely; they can also change our own lives with respect to this reality.

We ought to recognize that we are facing a global phenomenon which exceeds the competence of any one community or country. In order to eliminate it, we need a mobilization

comparable in size to that of the phenomenon itself. For this reason I urgently appeal to all men and women of good will, and all those near or far, including the highest levels of civil institutions, who witness the scourge of contemporary slavery, not to become accomplices to this evil, not to turn away from the sufferings of our brothers and sisters, our fellow human beings, who are deprived of their freedom and dignity. Instead, may we have the courage to touch the suffering flesh of Christ,¹² revealed in the faces of those countless persons whom he calls "the least of these my brethren" (Mt 25:40, 45).

We know that God will ask each of us: What did you do for your brother? (cf. Gen 4:9-10). The globalization of indifference, which today burdens the lives of so many of our brothers and sisters, requires all of us to forge a new worldwide solidarity and fraternity capable of giving them new hope and helping them to advance with courage amid the problems of our time and the new horizons which they disclose and which God places in our hands.

From the Vatican, 8 December 2014

Franciscus

An abominable phenomenon

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the brotherhood desired from the beginning by the Creator, but also from the beginning is overshadowed by sin. However, "where sin increased, grace abounded all the more" the papal message responds, in keeping with St Paul.

So such relations, worthy of man, are not impossible even if slavery is not only an historical phenomenon but a tragic and shameful reality today, with which Bergoglio has always been concerned and again emphatically denounces as a "crime against humanity", detrimental to millions of human beings: women and men, even children, people forced into prostitution, sold for the removal and trafficking of organs, held in slavery by terrorist groups, for example in regions of Africa and of the Near and Middle East.

It is indeed an abominable and worldwide phenomenon, but one which rarely manages to receive attention in the international media. The image traced by the Pontiff is stark in its horrifying contours and is completed in the message which refers to its causes, from poverty to corruption. These are increasingly oppressive dimensions that can lead to perverse en-

tanglements in public life, as demonstrated in Italy by the ongoing investigation in Rome.

Adding to this disheartening panorama is the impression – denounces Pope Francis, who has promoted, even in the Vatican, various meetings to combat trafficking – that this phenomenon of slavery occurs "within a context of general indifference". Yet signs of hope are multiplying, confirming St Paul's conviction that where sin increases, grace abounds all the more. In fact, the Pontiff emphasizes the enormous, yet "silent efforts which have been made for many years by religious congregations, especially women's congregations, to provide support to victims".

It is thus women above all who help the victims, predominantly women and girls, with care, rehabilitation and aid in the often difficult social reintegration. Therefore, Pope Francis repeats, it is necessary that the "role of women in society must also be recognized". It is no coincidence that the message for the World Day of Peace today holds up the example of Josephine Bakhita, an African Saint and slave-turned-free "daughter of God", for the attention of women and men of good will for a future of hope.



NOTES

¹ N. 1.

² Message for the 2014 World Day of Peace, 2.

³ Cf. Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 11.

⁴ Cf. Address to Delegates of the International Association of Penal Law, 23 October 2014: *L'Osservatore Romano*, 24 October 2014, p. 4 [*OR English*, 31 October, p. 8].

⁵ Address to Participants in the World Meeting of Popular Movements, 28 October 2014: *L'Osservatore Romano*, 29 October 2014, p. 7 [cf. *OR English*, 7 November, p. 4].

⁶ Cf. PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE, *Vocation of the Business Leader: A Reflection*, 2013.

⁷ BENEDICT XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate*, 66.

⁸ Cf. Message to Mr Guy Ryder, Director General of the International Labour Organization, on the occasion of the 103rd Session of the ILO, 22 May 2014: *L'Osservatore Romano*, 29 May 2014, p. 7 [*OR English*, 6 June p. 10].

⁹ BENEDICT XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate*, 5.

¹⁰ "Through the knowledge of this hope she was 'redeemed', no longer a slave, but a free child of God. She understood what Paul meant when he reminded the Ephesians that previously they were without hope and without God in the world – without hope because without God" (Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Spe Salvi*, 3).

¹¹ Address to Participants in the Second International Conference on Combating Human Trafficking: Church and Law Enforcement in Partnership, 10 April 2014: *L'Osservatore Romano*, 11 April 2014, p. 7 [*OR English*, 11 April, p. 1]; cf. Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 270.

¹² Cf. Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 24 and 270.

Address to the Federation of Christian Organizations for International Volunteer Service

True friends of the poor

"The image of a Church that rolls up her sleeves in the service of her brothers and sisters in difficulty", with these words the Holy Father addressed the members of the Federation of Christian Organizations for International Volunteer Service (FOCSIV), whom he received on Thursday, 4 December, in the Paul VI Hall. Emphasizing their characteristics the Pope reminded the members that a true "disciple of Christ does not draw back, he does not turn his face away", but seeks to help. The following is a translation of his address, which was given in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Good Morning!

I am pleased to meet with you on the occasion of International Volunteer Day. I address my cordial greeting and I thank the President, who presented your mission in the current situation. Your Federation, which gathers Christian-based Volunteer Organizations, performs precious action in the world. It is the image of a Church that rolls up her sleeves and serves brothers and sisters in difficulty. Indeed, the various organizations that compose the FOCSIV seek to combine the experiential wisdom of their members with the aspect of volunteer service to the poor in the manner of the Good Samaritan and in line with Gospel values. Starting with your Christian identity, you present yourselves as "volunteers in the world" with numerous development initiatives, in order to give a practical response to the aspersions of hunger and war.

I thank you for what you do and how you do it! Your interventions alongside men and women in difficulty are a vivid proclamation of the tenderness of Christ, who walks with the humanity of all times. Follow this path of voluntary and unselfish commitment. There is so much need of the value of gratuitousness: the poor can never become an opportunity for profit! Poverty today has had a makeover – there are new kinds of poverty! – and among the poor different expectations are growing: they aspire to be leaders, they organize themselves, and most of all they practice the solidarity that exists among the suffering, among the least. You have been called to read these signs of the times and to become an instrument which serves to draw attention to the poor. Solidarity with the poor is thinking and acting in terms of community, of the priority of the life of all over the appropriation of goods by the few. It is also fighting the structural causes of poverty: inequality, unemployment and homelessness, the denial of social and labour rights. Solidarity is a way of making history with the poor, avoiding the allegedly altruistic works that reduce the other to indifference.

Among the principal causes of poverty is an economic system which plunders nature – I am thinking of deforestation in particular, but also of environmental disasters and the loss of biodiversity. It bears repeating that Creation is not a possession that we can dispose of as we please, much less a possession of only a few. Creation is a magnificent gift that God has given us to care for and use to the benefit of all, with re-

spect. I encourage you, therefore, to carry on in your commitment in order so that Creation may continue to be the patrimony of everyone, to hand down in all its beauty to future generations.

Many of the countries where you work know the scandal of war. Working for the development of peoples, you are also cooperating to build peace, seeking with tenacious determination to disarm minds, to draw people near, to build bridges between cultures and religions. Faith will help you to do so even in the most difficult countries, where the spiral of violence seems to leave no room for reason. Your activity in refugee camps is a sign of peace and hope. There you encounter desperate people, faces marked by oppression, children who hunger for food, for liberty and for a future. How many people in the world flee from the horrors of war! How many people are being persecuted because



of their faith, forced to abandon their homes, their places of worship, their lands, their loved ones! How many lives are torn apart! How much suffering and how much destruction! In light of all this, a disciple of Christ does not draw back, does not turn his face away, but seeks to take on this painful humanity with closeness and evangelical welcome.

I am thinking of migrants and refugees, who seek to leave behind harsh living conditions and every type of danger. Cooperation is needed from everyone, institutions, NGOs and ecclesial communities, to promote paths of harmonious coexistence among various people and cultures. Migratory movements call for appropriate reception procedures that do not leave migrants adrift at sea or in the hands of unscrupulous traffickers. At the same time, effective

collaboration is necessary among states, in order to efficiently regulate and manage such phenomena.

Dear brothers and sisters, working in your Federation, in existence for over 40 years, volunteers have been true witnesses of charity, peace makers, architects of justice and solidarity. I encourage you to persevere with joy on this path of faithfulness to mankind and to God, placing the person of Jesus every more at the centre. He will really help you find the time every day for personal encounter with God in prayer: this will be your strength in the most difficult times of disillusion, loneliness and misunderstanding. I entrust each of you and the organizations of your Federation to the protection of Most Holy Mary. May my blessing also accompany you. And remember to pray for me! Thank you.

VATICAN BULLETIN

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sede vacante (3 Dec.).

Bishop Passini Dalbello, 48, was born in Anápolis, Brazil. He was ordained a priest on 3 December 1994. He was ordained a bishop on 19 March 2010, subsequent to his appointment as titular Bishop of Membressa and Auxiliary of Goiânia.

The Holy Father appointed Fr Patrick Michael O'Regan from the clergy of Bathurst, New South Wales, as Bishop of Sale, Australia. Until now he has been Dean and Vicar General of Bathurst Cathedral (4 Dec.).

Bishop-elect O'Regan, 56, was born in Bathurst, New South Wales. He was ordained a priest on 2 September 1983. He holds a licence in Liturgy and Sacramental theology. He has served in parish ministry and as: diocesan administrator for the diocese of Bathurst; member of the National Liturgical Council and diocesan co-ordinator for the ongoing formation of priests and permanent deacons; teacher at the Catholic Institute, Sydney.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Philip Sulmeti of Kakamega, Kenya. It was presented in accord with can. 401 § 1 of the Code of Canon Law (5 Dec.).

The Holy Father appointed Fr Joseph Obanyi Sagwe as Bishop of Kakamega, Kenya. Until now he has been parish and Vicar General of the Diocese of Kisii (5 Dec.).

Bishop-elect Sagwe, 47, was born in Kebiro, Kenya. He studied philosophy and theology. He was ordained a priest on 25 October 1996, and has served in parish ministry.

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Filomeno do Nascimento Vieira Dias as Archbishop of Luanda, Angola. Until now he has been Bishop of Cabinda (8 Dec.).

Archbishop do Nascimento Vieira Dias, 56, was born in Luanda, Angola. He was ordained a priest on 30 October 1983. He was ordained a Bishop on 11 February 2005, subsequent to his appointment as titular Bishop of Flumenpiscense and Auxiliary of Luanda, Angola.

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Martin Musonde Kivuva as Archbishop of Mombasa, Kenya. Until now he has been Bishop of Machakos (9 Dec.).

Archbishop Musonde Kivuva, 62, was born Muthetheni, Kenya. He was ordained a priest on 9 December 1978. He was ordained a bishop on 3 June 2003, subsequent to his appointment as Bishop of Machakos, Kenya.

The Holy Father appointed Fr Adolfo Ramón Canecín as Coadjutor Bishop of Goya, Argentina. Until now he has been Episcopal Vicar of the Diocese of Formosa (9 Dec.).

Bishop-elect Canecín, 56, was born in Formosa, Argentina. He graduated in philosophy and theology. He was ordained a priest on 25 March 1988. He has served in parish ministry and as: rector of Formosa Cathedral; vicar general and then rector of the interdiocesan seminary of *La Encarnación*; co-ordinator of the *Liga de Madres de Familia*, and assessor of *Renovación Carismática Católica*.

PONTIFICAL SWISS GUARD

On Tuesday, 2 December, the Holy Father has decided that Colonel Daniel Rudolf Anrig will step down from his position as Commander of the Pontifical Swiss Guard Corps on 31 January 2015, at the conclusion of the extension accorded him following his five-year term.

ADVENT SERMON

On Friday morning, 5 December, in the presence of the Holy Father, Fr Raniero Cantalamessa, OFM Cap., Preacher of the Papal Household, gave the first Advent sermon in the Vatican's Redemptoris Mater Chapel.

Reflection for the opening of the Year of Consecrated Life

The grace of the call

MICHAEL GILMARY, MMA*

Religious life is a particular form of consecrated life, and, as the Year of Consecrated Life opens, it would be helpful to begin in the beginning, that is to say, to begin with a consideration of the call or vocation to religious life. By understanding better this grace, we will also learn what prepares the seedbed of vocations, what helps them grow and be fruitful, and what will sustain them to the end.

The call to religious life is a grace from God, given to some but not to all. "Somewhere near the heart of the religious life. [It is] ... a distinctive call from God, choosing certain individuals for this way of life. ("Religious Vocation – of Divine Origin", an address by Servant of God Fr John Hardon, at the meeting of *Consortium Perfectae Caritatis*, 29 February 1972).

The discernment of the call to religious life and the response to it requires three things: faith, prayer and sacrifice. Without faith, no one could recognize Christ and his life as the model for all Christians and especially for religious. Without prayer, no one could hear the call or desire to respond by imitation of Christ. Without sacrifice, no one could persevere in responding to the call to leave all things for love of Christ. These three conditions best prepare the soil of the heart to receive the seed – in this case, the seed of a call to religious life. The lack of these dispositions renders the seed fruitless.

To appreciate the importance of these necessary conditions for hearing and responding to a vocation, I will attempt to draw a parallel between the three types of fruitless soil in the parable of the seed (Matthew 13:1-23) with the three conditions of the "good soil" that enable the seed to take root, thrive and be fruitful. In the Gospel, our Lord speaks of these conditions as neces-

sary for Christian discipleship. All the more, then, are they necessary for religious life.

"Where sound religious education is neglected it is either tempting Providence or asking for a miracle to expect vocations to flourish" (Conference of Fr Hardon: "Religious Education and Vocations"). To be realistic, of course, those who believe and come to discern a vocation might not possess a fully developed faith. Yet, even so, their faith must be cultivated not neglected. That is to say, they must not be like the foot path, which is uncultivated soil. No seed can penetrate trampled earth. Likewise, those who have no interest and make no effort to cultivate and understand what they believe prevent the seed from being received. Instead, candidates must have a desire to understand what they believe. They must also be willing to subject themselves, as faith requires, in mind and heart to Christ and his Vicar on earth who teaches us with Christ's own authority. There are too many sad examples in the history of the Church that show us the devastation of the demons stealing away the seeds of faith from the minds and hearts of those who only call themselves Catholic – even some vowed religious – but who, in practice, deny the authority of Christ and the Church.

By means of prayer, the soul is listening with heart and mind elevated to God, trying to learn how to think like God and to love and desire the things God loves and desires to give us. This is why desire for religious life is always a sign of a vocation. It isn't the only or definitive sign, of course. It may even be a call simply to deepen one's commitment to Christ apart from religious consecration. Yet it remains a sign that a call has been heard. Without devotion to prayer, however, no call can be heard. A feeble life of prayer might enable us to hear the call, but if there is no depth of soil, even the first trial that comes along could be sufficient to wither the plant altogether. "Since religious vocations are

of divine origin, it is only through divine means that they can be sustained, and only by divine means can the young religious be formed to face the terrifying challenges of the ... the twenty-first century." (From his conference: "Religious Vocation – of Divine Origin")

Hearing the call to religious life enlightens the mind and enkindles the heart to follow Christ more closely, as the Church's law says: religious life is "a stable form of living by which the faithful, following Christ more closely under the action of the Holy Spirit, are totally dedicated to God, who is supremely loved" (*CIC*, can. 573 § 1; cf. also *CCEO*, c. 410; cf. *Lumen Gentium*, n. 44). For those who love, sacrifice is the way to express it – and supreme love sacrifices supremely. Precisely this sacrificial love gives joy to the hearts of religious which they radiate to the world, for by means of their loving sacrifices, they already possess in some way the happy state of the blessed: "the fruit of the Spirit is: love, joy ..." (Gal. 5:22).

The lovers of Christ know that the vows provide the very food of love. Here we should note that since Christianity as such is a call to love and to sacrifice, religious have no monopoly on either one. Many laity, not in the "state of perfection" nevertheless might strive for and attain the perfection of the counsels. Why? Because they love Christ and desire to please him. That is why true believers and lovers of Christ abound in admiration for the evangelical counsels and show gratitude to Christ for giving them. They rejoice at the encounter with those who have been called to religious life and encourage vocations. (cf. St Francis de Sales, *Treatise on the Love of God*, Book VIII, cc. 6-9.)

But for those religious or candidates unwilling to sacrifice totally for love of Christ, eventually the weeds of desires for the world creep up, choke the vocation and prevent any fruitfulness. They end up sad, like the rich young man, since they know they have refused a greater love.

St Thomas writes: "When the mind is affected vehemently with intense love and desire for something, the result is that it sets aside other things. Therefore, when a man's mind is fervently carried by love and desire to divine matters, in which perfection manifestly consists, it follows that he casts aside everything that might hold him back from being borne to God: not only the care of things or affection of wife and children but even of himself" (*Summa Contra Gentiles*, III, c. 130).

These three conditions provide the best soil for a closer imitation of Christ who, "having joy set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame" (Heb 12:2). The joy set before him was our redemption. He preferred to suffer the separation of body and soul in death than to be separated from us for eternity. The



Vigil for the opening of the Year of Consecrated Life in the Basilica of St Mary Major in Rome, 29 November

Canticle describes Christ in these terms: "if a man should give all the substance of his house for love, he shall despise it as nothing" (8:7).

So now, with all consecrated religious, we enter the Year of Consecrated Life together, our hearts grateful to God for such supernatural gifts, imploring a fruitful and abundant harvest.

"Let each of the faithful called to the profession of the evangelical counsels, therefore, carefully see to it that he persevere and ever grow in that vocation God has given him. Let him do this for the increased holiness of the Church, for the greater glory of the one and undivided Trinity, which in and through Christ is the fount and the source of all holiness" (*Lumen Gentium*, n. 47).

*Vocations Director and Novice Master at Most Holy Trinity Monastery

Radio in Pakistan announcing the Word of God

Spreading the Gospel proclamation on the air is the goal of Good News Radio, the first Catholic radio station in Pakistan. The project was launched by the Archdiocese of Karachi on 22 November. Priests, men and women religious and lay people will collaborate in the production of the transmissions, said Fr Arthur Charles, Secretary of the Commission for Social Communications of the Pakistani Bishops, to Fides News Agency. A group of seven volunteers provides six hours of original live content every day.

According to Fr Charles, who conceived of the project, "one can use the mass media to evangelize. The Radio will be a tool to enrich the lives of the listeners in our country". He continued: "We thought that, with the advent of broadband internet, radio would be one of the useful online media. It provides opportunities that are not found elsewhere". "In this way the Lord uses us for His Kingdom. If we cannot go to difficult or remote areas to preach the message of Jesus, we bring the Gospel everywhere through radio and other mass media. It is just like planting a seed", he said.

Statement from the Director of the Holy See Press Office

On Tuesday morning, 2 December, the Promoter of Justice of the Tribunal of the Vatican City State, Gian Piero Milano, met with the Attorney General of the Dominican Republic, Francisco Domínguez Brito, at the request of the latter, during his visit to Europe for meetings in Poland and in the Vatican. The Director of the Holy See Press Office, Fr Federico Lombardi, announced this, furthering explaining that the meeting is "part of international cooperation at the level of investigative organs for the proceedings against Archbishop Józef Wesolowski and regards the investigations in course". "The time was useful for both parties given the complexity of the inquest and the possibility of international letters rogatory by the Vatican to acquire further information", he explained. "Meanwhile, as regards the situation of Archbishop Wesolowski," he added, "the Judiciary of the Vatican City State, continuing the investigations, has conducted an initial interrogation of the accused, which will be followed by others. As the deadline for his remand into custody has expired, and in view of his health, Archbishop Wesolowski was given authorization for some freedom of movement, albeit with the obligation of remaining within the confines of the State and subject to appropriate restrictions on his communications with the outside".

The Pope recalls in a video message that the crisis must not be an alibi for ignoring the cry of the poor

The trap of Narcissus

Money for war but not for investing in labour and development

In the current "situation of the social and economic crisis" the "great temptation is to stop to tend our own wounds and in so doing to find an excuse for not hearing the cry of the poor". Pope Francis stated this in a video message broadcast on 20 November at the opening of the Festival of the Social Doctrine, which took place in Verona from 20-23 November. The following is a translation of the transcript of the video message, which was broadcast in Italian.

Beloved,

A cordial greeting to all of you who are attending the fourth Festival of the Social Doctrine of the Church, which has as its theme this year: "Beyond Places in Time". This title brings several thoughts to mind.

The first is about going further on. The situation of the social and economic crisis we are in can frighten and confuse us or lead us to think that the situation is so burdensome that we conclude we cannot do anything about it. The great temptation is to stop to tend our own wounds and, in so doing, to find an excuse for not hearing the cry of the poor and the suffering of those who have lost the dignity of bringing bread home because they have lost their job. And those who seek only to heal their own wounds end up only concealing them. This is the trap. The risk is the indifference that renders us blind, deaf and dumb, present only to ourselves, with a mirror in front of us, such that all that happens is irrelevant. Men and women closed within themselves. There was someone like this who was called Narcissus.... Do not take that path.

We are called to go further on and to respond to real needs. It is crucial to abandon platitudes, which are held to be safe and secure, in or-

der to free the many hidden or unknown energies that are present and that work very concretely. The Christian ethic is not an impediment to the plurality of expressions with which people manifest concern and care of one's neighbour. To go beyond means to expand and not to restrict, to create spaces and not limit oneself to controlling them. It would be so beautiful if the many streams of goodness would merge to create a great river whose water would overcome the dryness and bring new fruitfulness, making this life and time shine with beauty and friendship. To cross over means to free goodness and enjoy its fruit.

To go beyond it is necessary to take the initiative. I know that the Festival has dedicated ample space to the economy, to entrepreneurs, to businesses and to cooperation. Today in the economic sphere too, it is crucial to take the initiative, because the system tends to homogenize everything and money dominates everything because it leads you to this globalization which is not good and homogenizes everything. What is the dominant factor of this homogenization? It is money. Taking the initiative in these areas means having the courage not to let oneself be imprisoned by money or to become slaves to short-term results. It is necessary to adopt a new outlook! I'll give you an example. Today it is said that many things cannot be done because there is not enough money. Yet there is always money to do some things and not enough to do others. For example, money is found to buy arms, to wage war, for unscrupulous financial transactions. This is usually kept quiet, what is frequently highlighted is that there is not enough money to create jobs, to invest in

awareness, in talents, to plan new welfare, to safeguard the environment. The real problem is not money but people: we cannot ask of money what only people can do or create. Money alone does not create development, creating development takes people who have the courage to take the initiative.

Taking the initiative means developing a business capable not only of technical innovation; it is also necessary to renew labour relations, experimenting with new forms of participation and of workers' responsibility, inventing new formulas for entering the world of labour, creating a solid relationship between the business and the territory. Taking the initiative means overcoming excessive aid. To live intensely in this period leads to betting on a different future and on a different way of solving problems. Here too I would like to give you an example. They told me about a father who had a son with Down's Syndrome. The

"The Christian ethic is not an impediment to the plurality of expressions... to go beyond means to expand and not to restrict, to create spaces and not limit oneself to controlling them"

father did everything for this son and had availed himself of all the services that were offered by the public entities for education, treatment, social life. But he was not satisfied. He wanted to think of something that would give his son more dignity and more autonomy. He created a cooperative of kids with Down's: he studied work suitable to them, he made a contract with a retail business to sell their work.... In other words, he created the working conditions on which his son could build his future and his healthy autonomy. This is an example of going beyond. Stopping means ever and again requesting the State or some entity for assistance; acting means creating new procedures. And this is the secret: to create new procedures without asking that they give us new spaces. These new procedures are not the result of technical interventions, they are the result of a love which, enlisted by the circumstances, is not satisfied until it has created something and has become the response.

Taking the initiative also means to consider love as the true force of change. To love one's work, to be present in difficulties, to feel involved and to respond responsibly and to arouse that love that each one of us has in our heart, because



David Revoy, "Narcissus" (2006)

the Spirit has given it to us. Taking the initiative is the reaction to this summons which is typical of love. If we exist in time with this effluence, this extra love, something new will surely happen to foster the growth of goodness. With this vision of reality it becomes almost natural to foster and develop talents. To facilitate the expression and growth of talents is what we are called to do, and to do so it is necessary to open spaces. Not to control spaces, to open them. It is about letting the capacities, the intelligence, the abilities that people are endowed with to circulate. Freeing talents is the beginning of the change; this action will enable one to overcome envy, jealousy, rivalry, conflict, closure, that preconceived closure will be overcome, and to open to joy, the joy of the new. Clearly, speaking about talents implies that the discourse is about young people in particular. If we want to go beyond we must decisively invest in them and give them much trust. But I wonder: what is the percentage of young people, today, who are unemployed and without work? Does this mean going beyond, or going backward?

To change it is necessary to go forward together and in the same direction. One might ask oneself: "To go beyond, take the initiative, free spaces, take the initiative, might this not result in confusion?". We find the answer in the idea of time which the Bible passes on to us. Time is grace and fullness. To go beyond places is not haphazard but the result of a common goal: history is a journey toward fulfillment. If we move as a people, if we go forward together, our existence will show this meaning and this fulfillment.

In conclusion I address a heartfelt greeting to each one. I would like to take the opportunity to thank the Bishop of Verona who is hosting this fine initiative, and I express my sincere thanks to Fr Vincenzi for having organized the Festival of the Social Doctrine this year too, and I hope this commitment to form a new social consciousness will continue. I ask you to please pray for me. I bless you from my heart.

The uniform of the Swiss Guard celebrates 100 years

One hundred years ago, on 22 November 1914, the Commandant of the Pontifical Swiss Guard, Jules Repond, announced to his men that Benedict XV had approved the proposal to return their uniforms to the 16th century model. The uniform dates back to 1506, however, over time various changes have been made to the original model. So it was in 1914 that Commandant Repond, after an in-depth study, proposed that their uniforms return to the Renaissance style. It took several months to prepare the new uniforms, which were worn for the first time on 6 May 1915.



At the International Pastoral Congress on the World's Big Cities Francis speaks of his experience in the episcopate of Buenos Aires

Go out and encounter God

And he refers to the city mission of Montini while Archbishop of Milan

A change in mentality in order to enter into multicultural dialogue, with the religiosity of the people and above all, with the urban poor. These were the principal challenges that Pope Francis presented to the participants in the International Pastoral Congress on the World's Big Cities, whom he received in the Vatican on Thursday, 27 November, at the close of the work they had carried out on 25-26 November in Barcelona. There were approximately 30 city pastors from four continents, whom the Pontiff called to look to the experience of the city mission celebrated by Montini during his episcopate in Milan. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's address which was given in Italian.

Dear Brothers,

I thank you for your participation in this meeting, which reconnects to the preparations made last May in Barcelona. I thank Cardinal Sistach for his words of introduction.

Rather than delivering a formal address – partly because I would like to be a little spontaneous and partly because I did not have time to prepare a formal address: between those for Turkey and those for Europe, my plate was full – I will speak to you from the standpoint of my personal experience, as one who has been a pastor in a heavily populated and multicultural city like Buenos Aires. And also about the experience that we had together as bishops of the 11 dioceses comprising that ecclesiastical region; with

them, starting from diverse fields and proposals, we sought in ecclesial communion to address several pastoral aspects for the evangelization of that conurbation with a population of 13 million people among all 11 dioceses: Buenos Aires has 3 million at night and almost 8 [million] who come to the city during the day. But there are 13 million all together. It ranks 13th among the world's most densely populated cities. In reflecting with you, I would like to enter into this "flow" in order to open new roads, I would also like to help sift through possible fears, which many times, in one way or another, we all experience and which confuse us and paralyze us.

In *Evangelii Gaudium*, I wanted to draw attention to urban pastoral

care, but without opposing rural pastoral care. This is an excellent opportunity to delve into the challenges and possible horizons of urban pastoral care. Challenges, meaning the places where God is calling us; horizons, meaning the aspects to which I think we need to pay special attention. I will recount only four of them, but you will certainly discover others!

1. First, perhaps the most difficult: implementing change in our pastoral mentality. It has to change!

In the cities we need other "maps", other paradigms, which can help us to rearrange our thoughts and our attitudes. We cannot remain confused, because this uneasiness leads us to take the wrong path, primarily us, but it then confuses the People of God and those who, with a sincere heart, seek Life, Truth and Meaning.

We come from a centuries-old pastoral practice, in which the Church has been the single point of reference for culture. It's true, it is our legacy. As the authentic Teacher, she felt the responsibility to outline and impose, not only the cultural forms, but also values, and to more

profoundly trace the personal and collective imagination, in other words the histories, the cornerstones that people lean on to find the ultimate meanings and answers to their essential questions.

We are no longer in that time. It has past. We are no longer in Christianity, no more. Today we are no longer the only ones who produce culture, nor the first, nor the most listened to. We therefore need a change in pastoral mentality, but not to "relativistic pastoral care" – no, not this – which, for wanting to be present in the "cultural laboratory", loses the evangelical horizon, leaving man in his own hands and emancipated from the hand of God. No, not this. This is the relativistic path, the most convenient. This cannot be called pastoral care! Those who do this have no genuine concern for man, but leave him at the mercy of two equally grave dangers: they hide Jesus from him and the truth about man himself. Hiding Jesus and the truth about man are grave dangers! This path leads man to the solitude of death (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, 93-97).

It is necessary to have the courage to be a bold and fearless pastoral evangelizer, because men, women, families and the different groups living in the cities expect from us and need the Good News which is Jesus and his Gospel. I have so often heard it said that one is ashamed to expose oneself. We must work in order not to be ashamed or reluctant in proclaiming Jesus Christ; to seek the how... This is key for the task.

2. Dialogue with multiculturalism. In Strasbourg I spoke about a multipolar Europe. But big cities are also multipolar and multicultural. And we have to dialogue with this reality, without fear. It means developing a pastoral dialogue without relativism, which does not negotiate one's Christian identity, but which seeks to reach the heart of the other, of others different from us, and there to sow the Gospel.

We need a contemplative approach that, without rejecting the contribution of the various sciences in order to understand the urban phenomenon – these are important contributions – seeks to uncover the foundation of cultures, which at their deepest core are always open and thirsting for God. It will really help us to get acquainted with the imaginary and the invisible cities, that is, the groups or the human territories which are identified in their symbols, languages, rites and forms in order to narrate life. I think so often about the creativity and the courage that Paul had in his discourse in Athens. The poor man, it didn't go so well.... But he was creative, because he stopped at the idols.... Let us place ourselves in the Judeo-Christian mentality. He entered their culture.... It was unsuccessful, of course, but the creativity! He tried to understand that multi-

Papal message for the International Congress

Creative evangelization

The Holy Father sent a message to Cardinal Lluís Martínez Sistach, Archbishop of Barcelona, Spain, on the occasion of the International Pastoral Congress on the World's Big Cities, held in the capital of Catalonia on 25-26 November. The following text is a translation of the original message, which was composed in Spanish.

Dear Brother,

I greet you with affection as the final events of the International Pastoral Congress on the World's Big Cities are underway in Barcelona. I also greet the organizers and participants in the various stages of the Congress.

I am pleased to learn of the efforts that have been made, and I encourage all to continue to reflect creatively on the way to contend with the task of evangelizing in the great urban centres, which are ever expanding and in which everyone needs to feel the closeness and mercy of God, who does not abandon them. God always allows himself to be found, taking the initiative to offer a sense of true life to those who are alone, confused or pained due to the wounds often inflicted by a chaotic and unsupportive society.

The Church has the mission of ensuring that the Good News of Jesus Christ and His saving love reaches different environments,

without fear of pluralism, and without any form of discrimination. She does not consider it a loss to go out to the peripheries or to change the usual preconceptions when necessary. Like a mother, whose primary concern is the wellbeing of her children, sparing no effort or sacrifice: may she ensure they never lack the light of the Gospel in order to lead a life of abundant hope, joy and peace; that they never lack acceptance to feel integrated within a community, whether in circumstances of disintegration or cold anonymity; that there may grow within them the spirit of authentic solidarity with all, especially with those most in need.

I ask the Lord that the work of this Congress may enlighten the pastoral activity at the current pastoral activity, and from my heart, I bless the Congress participants and those taking part in the solemn ceremony which is, on this occasion, taking place in the emblematic temple of the Sagrada Família in Barcelona.



The ceremony in the Basilica of Sagrada Família (Guillermo Simón Castelló)

I ask you to pray and I seek prayers for me and for the fruits of my service to the Church. May Jesus bless you and may the Holy Virgin protect you.

Fraternally,

FRANCIS



culturality, which was far from the Judeo-Christian mentality.

3. The third aspect is the religiosity of the people. God lives in the cities. It is necessary to go and look for Him, and to stop there, where He is at work. I know it is not the same thing on the various continents, but we have to uncover, in the religiosity of our peoples, the authentic religious substratum, which in many cases is Christian and Catholic. Not in all: there are non-Christian religiosities. But it is necessary to go there, to the core. We must neither fail to appreciate nor disregard this experience of God which, while sometimes being dispersed or blended, calls to be discovered and not built. It is there that the *semina Verbi* are sown by the Spirit of the Lord. It is not good to make hasty and general assessments such as: "This is only an expression of natural religiosity". No, this cannot be said! That is where we can begin the dialogue of evangelization, as Jesus did with the Samaritan woman and surely with many others beyond Galilee. A consciousness of one's own Christian identity and also empathy for the other person are necessary for the dialogue of evangelization. I think I have said this to you, to the Bishops of Asia, have I not? That empathy in order to find this underlayer in religiosity.

The Church in Latin America and in the Caribbean, for several decades, has realized this religious power, which comes above all from the poor majority.

God continues to speak to us today, as He has always done, through the poor, through those "leftovers". In general today, big cities are inhabited by numerous migrants, who come from rural areas or from other continents, with other cultures. Even Rome.... The Vicar of Rome could perhaps confirm? So many homeless people everywhere.... They are pilgrims of life, in search of "salvation", who often have the strength to go forward and fight thanks to the ultimate sense they receive from a simple and profound experience of faith in God. The challenge is twofold: to be hospitable toward the poor and the migrants – in general, cities aren't, they reject! – and to value their faith. It is quite probable that this faith may be mixed with elements of immanentist and magical thinking, but we must look for it, recognize it, interpret it and certainly also evangelize to it. I have no doubt that in the faith of these men and women there is an enormous potential for evangelization of the urban areas.

4. Fourth – continuing on –: the urban poor. Cities, along with the multiplicity of precious offers for life, have consequences that cannot be hidden and that in many cities are increasingly evident: the poor, the outcast, the thrown away. Today we can talk about the thrown away. The Church cannot ignore their cry, nor get involved with unjust, narrow-minded and interested systems who try to make them invisible.

So many poor people, victims of old and new forms of poverty. There are new forms of poverty! Structural and endemic poverty are excluding generations of families. Economic, social, moral and spiritual poverty. Poverty that emarginates and throws away people, children of God. In the cities, the future of poor people is more poverty. Go there!

A few proposals

I propose two pastoral cores to you; they are actions but not only that. I think pastoral care is more than action, it is also presence, contents, attitudes, gestures.

The first thing: *Go out and facilitate*

This is a genuine ecclesial transformation with a missionary focus. A change in mentality: from receiving to going out, from waiting for them to come to going out to find them. To me, this is key!

Go out to encounter God who lives in the city and in the poor. Go out to meet, to listen, to bless, to walk with the people. And facilitate the encounter with the Lord. Make the Sacrament of Baptism accessible.

With the President of the Republic of Austria

On Thursday, 13 November, the Holy Father received in audience, in the Vatican Apostolic Palace, the President of the Republic of Austria, H.E. Mr Heinz Fischer, who subsequently met with Secretary of State, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, accompanied by Archbishop Dominique Mamberti, Secretary for Relations with States.

During the cordial discussions, mention was made of the good relations between Austria and the Holy See, with particular emphasis on the importance on religious freedom and human rights, and the commitment made for interreligious and intercultural dialogue.

Finally, a number of issues at the international level, in particular the situation in the Middle East, were examined.



Open Churches. Offices open for working people. Catecheses with suitable contents and schedules for the city.

It is easier for us to help faith grow than to help it be born. I think we have to continue to deepen those necessary changes in our various catecheses, essentially in our teaching forms, so that the contents may be better understood, but at the same time it is necessary to learn to reawaken in our interlocutors curiosity and interest in Jesus Christ. This curiosity has a patron saint: it's Zacchaeus. Let us ask him to help us reawaken it. And then then to invite to conform to Him and follow Him. We must learn to evoke faith! Evoke the faith! Then, not to wander here and there.... No! Sow! If faith begins the Spirit must then ensure that this person turns to me or turns to another to ask for a step further, a step further.... Evoke faith. Second proposal: *Be the Samaritan Church*.

This means a change in the significance of testimony. In urban pastoral care, quality will come from the capacity of the Church and of every Christian to bear witness. When Pope Benedict said that the Church does not grow through proselytism but through attraction, he was speaking about this. Witness which attracts, which arouses people's curiosity.

Here is the key. Through testimony we can affect the deepest core, where culture is born. Through testimony the Church sows the mustard seed, but she does so in the very heart of the cultures being generated in the cities. Concrete testimony of mercy and kindness that seeks to be present in the existential and poor peripheries, acts directly on the imagination of society, creating direction and meaning for life and for the city. Thus, as Christians we contribute to building a city in justice, in solidarity and in peace.

With social pastoral care, with *Caritas*, with different organizations, as the Church has always done throughout the centuries, we can take on the burden of the poorest people through meaningful actions, actions that render present the Kingdom of God, manifesting and expanding it. Also by learning and working together with those who are

doing very effective things to benefit the poorest people. It is such a productive area of charitable ecumenical pastoral care, in which we make commitments to serve the poorest along with brothers and sisters of other Churches and ecclesial communities. The leading role of lay people and of the poor themselves is very important in all of this. As well as the freedom of lay people, for what imprisons us, what does not allow the doors to open, is the sickness of clericalism. It is one of the most serious problems.

Dear brothers and sisters, this is what my reflection on pastoral experience suggested to me. It gives me joy to think that we are following a path together, and that we do so in the footsteps of so many holy pastors who came before us; I am referring only to the example of Blessed Giovanni Battista Montini, who during his episcopate in Milan, managed the great city mission with passionate zeal. In the writings of Blessed Paul VI, when he was Archbishop of Milan, there was a boatload, a boatload of things that could help with this. May their example and their intercession, with that of our Heavenly Mother, help us to bring about a fruitful change in mentality, to enhance our capacity to dialogue with different cultures, to value the religiosity of our peoples, and to share the Gospel and bread with the poorest of our cities. Thank you.

With the President of Peru



On Friday, 14 November, the Holy Father received in audience, in the Vatican Apostolic Palace, the President of the Republic of Peru, H.E. Mr Ollanta Moises Humala Tasso, who subsequently met with Archbishop Dominique Mamberti, Secretary for Relations with States, in the absence of Secretary of State, Cardinal Pietro Parolin.

During the cordial discussions, mention was made of the good relations between the Holy See and the Republic of Peru, with particular emphasis on the special role of Christianity in the formation of the identity of the country, as well as the contribution the Catholic Church has given and continues to guarantee in favour of the human, social and cultural progress of the population.

Finally, there was an exchange of views on the political and social situation in the Region, with attention to the efforts made to promote full development and the protection of the environment.

Morning Mass at the Domus Sanctae Marthae

Thursday, 4 December

Founded on rock

Francis warned in his homily on Thursday that “so many good people” give in to the temptation to be Christians “only in appearance”, wearing “makeup” that washes away with the rain. He also spoke again of the witness of so many “Christians of substance”, who build their life on the “rock of Jesus” and live every day with “hidden holiness”.

In the day’s Readings, one a passage from the book of Isaiah (26:1-6) and another from the Gospel of Matthew (7:21, 24-27), the Church “speaks of Christian strength and weakness; of rock and sand”, Pope Francis began. Indeed, “a Christian is strong when he not only declares himself Christian, but when he lives his life as a Christian, when he puts the Christian doctrine, the Word of God, the Commandments, the Beatitudes, into practice”. The key point is “putting into practice”.

However, the Pope remarked, there are those who are “Christians only in appearance: people who make themselves up as Christians, but in the moment of truth they have only makeup”. And we all know what happens when a woman, all made up, gets caught in the rain without an umbrella: “it all comes off, appearances wind up on the ground”. That makeup, Francis acknowledged, “is a temptation”. Thus, it isn’t enough to say, “I’m a Christian, Lord”, in order to truly be one. Jesus himself says that it doesn’t suffice to simply repeat, “Lord! Lord!”, in order to enter his kingdom. We must do the Father’s will and put his “Word into practice”. This is the difference between “a Christian in life” and a Christian “in appearance” only.

After all, the Pontiff explained, it’s clear that “the Lord is needed”. First of all, “a Christian in life is founded on rock”. In fact, Paul clearly says so when “he speaks about the water from the rock in the desert: the rock was Christ, the rock is Christ”. Therefore, the only thing that counts is “being founded on the person of Jesus, following Jesus, on the path of Jesus”. Francis shared that he has so often met “not bad people” but people who are “good, but who are victims of this ‘Christianity of appearances’”. They are people who say, “I’m from a very Catholic family” or “I’m a member of that association and also a benefactor of that other one”. However, according to the Pope, the real question to ask these people is: “is your life founded on Jesus? Where is your hope? In this rock or in these appearances?”

This is the importance of “being founded on rock”. After all, “we have seen so many Christians of appearances that wash away with the first temptation, that is, with the rain”. Indeed, “when the rivers overflow, when the winds blow – life’s temptations and trials – a Christian of appearances falls, because there is no substance there, there is no rock, there is no Christ”. On the other hand, however, “we have so many

saints” among the People of God, Pope Francis stated, who are “not necessarily canonized, but saints! So many men and women who lead their life in Christ, who put the Commandments into practice, who put Jesus’ love into practice. So many!”.

The Pope recalled their testimony. “Let’s consider the smallest: the sick who offer their suffering for the Church, for others”. And then, “let’s consider the many lonely elderly people who pray and offer. Let’s consider the many mothers and fathers” who work so hard for “their family, their children’s education, daily work, problems, always with hope in Jesus” and “they don’t strut about, but rather they do what they can”.

Truly, Francis repeated, “there are saints in everyday life”. He then spoke of “the many priests” who stay behind the scenes “but who work with such love in their parishes: catechesis for the children, care for the elderly and the sick, preparation for newlyweds. And every day it’s the same, the same, the same. They don’t tire because the rock is their foundation”. Only those who live in “Jesus: this is what gives holiness to the Church; this is what gives hope”. This is why, the Pope continued, “we have to take great care of the hidden holiness that there is in the Church, that of Christians not of appearances but



Joy Russell, “The House on Rock”

founded on rock, on Jesus”. Look to those “Christians who follow Jesus’ advice at the Last Supper: ‘Abide in me’”. Yes, to the “Christians who abide in Christ”, because, certainly, we are all sinners”, but when “any of these Christians commit a grave sin” they repent, they ask forgiveness: this is great”. It means having “the capacity to ask for forgiveness; not confusing sin with virtue; knowing well where virtue is and where sin is”. We also understand from this that these Christians are “founded on rock, and the rock is Christ: they follow the path of Jesus, they follow Him”.

In the First Reading, the Pontiff explained, Isaiah “speaks of a strong city that has salvation, that follows God, that is righteous: a strong people. The city is a people. A

strong people. Their will is steadfast and God assures them of peace: peace for those who trust in Him”. Then he then added: “Trust in the Lord for ever, for the Lord God is an everlasting rock. For he has brought low the inhabitants of the height”. In other words, Francis said, “the proud, the vain, the Christians of appearances will be brought down, humiliated”. Isaiah has more to say about the “lofty city”: that God “lays it low, lays it low to the ground, casts it to the dust”. And this is precisely the way “the Christians of appearances end up”, Pope Francis said, conjuring up the image from Isaiah: on one hand “the ruins of a city” and then “the other city, the other house, solid, robust because it’s founded on stone”.

The passage from Isaiah led Francis to another reflection. “It made me think of the last two verses of the First Reading”, referring to “this city that has fallen, this vain city, this city that wasn’t founded on the rock of Christ”. In fact, we read that “The foot tramples it, the feet of the poor, the steps of the needy”. This expression, he said, “smells of punishment”. Yes, “it seems like punishment”, but “it isn’t punishment”.

Something similar is also said “in the song of Our Lady: he has put down the mighty from their thrones, he has humiliated the proud”. Moreover, Pope Francis said, “the poor will be those who triumph, the poor in spirit, those who feel themselves nothing before God, the humble” who “bring forth salvation, but putting the Word of the Lord into practice”. However, Francis repeated, “all the rest is appearance: today we are, tomorrow we won’t be”. The Pope then made reference to St Bernard: “Consider, man, that you will be the food of worms”. Because one day “we will all be eaten by worms” unless “we have this rock, we will end up trampled”.

Precisely in this season of Advent, “let us ask the Lord that we may be firmly founded on the rock that is Him: He is our hope”, the Pope concluded. It’s true, “we are all sinners, we are all weak, but if we place our hope in Him we can all carry on”. And this “is Christian joy: to know that in Him there is hope, there is forgiveness, there is peace, there is joy”. This is why it makes no sense to “put our hope in things” that are here today but gone tomorrow.

Tuesday, 9 December

Going out to give life

The Pontiff began his homily Tuesday morning with the day’s First Reading from the Book of Isaiah (40:1-11), in which the Prophet proclaims God’s comfort to Israel. This prophetic promise passes through all history to reach us today. But when is it fulfilled in the Church?

Pope Francis recalled that, as “a person is comforted when he feels the Lord’s mercy and forgiveness, the Church celebrates; she is happy to go out of herself”. The joy of the Church is to “give birth”, and to “come out of herself in order to give

life”. In other words, the joy of the Church is to “go out in search of those sheep who are lost”, and to witness to “that very tenderness of the shepherd, the tenderness of the mother”.

In recalling the words from the Gospel of Matthew (18:12-14), the Pope highlighted the impetus that drives the shepherd “who goes out”, who “goes to look for” the lost and missing sheep. Yet, this zealous shepherd “can keep count like a prudent businessman”. He loses one of 99, but his balance sheet still shows plenty of assets. However, Francis indicated, he “has the heart of a shepherd, he goes out to search” and, when he finds that one, “he celebrates, he is joyful”.

“The joy of going out in search of faraway brothers and sisters” is born in the same manner. “This is the joy of the Church”. It is precisely in this way that the Church “becomes mother, becomes fruitful”. On the contrary, the Pontiff admonished, when the Church doesn’t do this, “she stands still inside, she is closed within herself”, even though “she might be well organized”. And in this manner she becomes “a discouraged, anxious, sad Church; a Church who is more spinster than mother; and this Church isn’t useful”, such a Church is no more than a museum.

The end of the passage from Isaiah returns to the image of a shepherd who “will gather the lambs in his arms, he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young”. This is “the joy of the Church: going out of herself and becoming fruitful”, as in the time of Israel, when Isaiah proclaimed to the people those words of comfort offered by the Lord. Thus, in rereading this passage the Church opens herself to joy. She receives strength. Because the people are in “need of comfort”. The same presence of the Lord “comforts, always comforts, either firmly or mildly, but it always comforts”. Indeed, the Pope stated, wherever the Lord is, “there is comfort and peace”. Even in tribulations, he added, “peace is there”, the peace “that is the presence of the Lord who comforts”.

Unfortunately, men tend to run away from consolation. “We have mistrust, we are more comfortable in our things, and also more comfortable in our shortcomings, in our sins”. It is here that man feels more at ease rather than “when the Spirit comes and comfort comes”. This leads us to a condition beyond our control: the state of “abandonment in the Lord’s comfort”. It is in this situation that peace and joy arrive, as recalled in this beautiful expression of Hezekiah: “unto peace he hath changed my bitterness”, for the Lord went there in order to comfort”. It is also recited in the “Psalm of the prisoners in Jerusalem, in Babylon: ‘When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream’ – they didn’t believe it! – ‘our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy’”.

Indeed, when “the comfort of the

In crucial and difficult moments for the Church and for humanity, Montini always turned to Our Lady to ask for her intercession and protection

Pope Francis' message for the 19th Public Session of Pontifical Academies

Let us never tire of learning from Mary

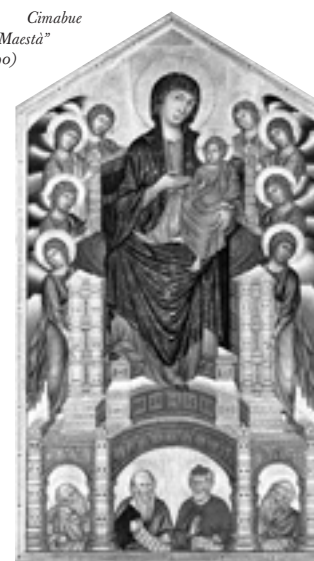
"Let us never tire of learning from Mary, of admiring and contemplating her beauty, of allowing ourselves to be guided by Her". Pope Francis wrote this in the message sent to Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi on the occasion of the 19th Public Session of the Pontifical Academies, held on Thursday afternoon, 20 November, in the St Pius X Hall on Via della Conciliazione. The following is a translation of the message read in Italian by Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State.

of Mary (8 December 1965), you wish to make her voice resound by offering footage of the homily in which he entrusted to Mary the fate of the Church, profoundly renewing herself in the Council. On that solemn and historical occasion, Blessed Paul VI wished to declare, to the Church as a whole, Mary as "the Mother of God and as our spiritual Mother". And he added: "Is it not perhaps by fixing our gaze on this humble Woman, our Sister and at the same time our heavenly Mother and Queen, the flawless and sacred mirror of infinite Beauty, that our conciliar spiritual ascension and this final farewell may be complete and that our post-Conciliar work could begin? Does this beauty of Immaculate Mary not become for us an inspirational model? A comforting hope?". The same Pontiff, 10 years later, on 16 May 1975, intervening at the Mariological and Marian Congresses announced in Rome by the Pontifical International Marian Academy on the occasion of the Jubilee Year, wishing to be a promoter, both in the area of Mariological research and in popular piety, of the *via pulchritudinis*, the research trajectory which begins by the discovery and admiration of Mary's

beauty, grasped as the reflection of the infinite beauty of God Himself.

In crucial and difficult moments for the Church and for humanity, Paul VI always turned to Mary, exhorting the People of God to ask for her intercession and protection. He invoked from her above all the gift of peace. The heartfelt words of the Encyclical Letter *Mense Maio* are more timely than ever: "Let us offer our pleas to the Mother of God with greater devotion and confidence, so that we may obtain her favor and her blessings.... May she who experienced the cares and hardships of earthly life, the weariness of daily toil, the hardships and trials of poverty, and the sorrows of Calvary, come to aid the needs of the Church and the human race. May she graciously lend an ear to the devout pleas of those all over the world who beg her for peace. May she enlighten the minds of those who rule nations. And finally, may she prevail on God, who rules the winds and storms, to calm the tempests in men's warring hearts and *grant us peace in our day*. What we seek is true peace grounded on the sturdy foundations of justice and love" (nn. 11, 12).

Following the Synod of Bishops on the New Evangelization, in the



Cimabue
"Santa Trinita Maestà"
(1280-1290)

Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, I too entrusted the journey of the Church to the maternal and attentive intercession of Mary, recalling to all believers that "there is a Marian 'style' to the Church's work of evangelization. Whenever we look to Mary, we come to believe once again in the revolutionary nature of love and tenderness. In her we see that humility and tenderness are not virtues of the weak but of the strong who need not treat others poorly in order to feel important themselves.... This interplay of justice and tenderness, of contemplation and concern for others, is what makes the ecclesial community look to Mary as a model of evangelization" (n. 288).

Thus, let us not tire of learning from Mary, of admiring and contemplating her beauty, of allowing ourselves to be guided by Her, who always leads us to the original source and to the fullness of genuine, infinite beauty, that of God, revealed to us in Christ, Son of the Father and Son of Mary.

Wishing to encourage and support those who are committed to offering a serious and valid contribution to Mariological research, and especially to that which travels and examines the *via pulchritudinis*, I am pleased to award the Prize of the Pontifical Academies to the *Italian Interdisciplinary Mariological Association*, above all for the now 20-year publication of the journal *Theotokos*. As a sign of encouragement for the precious work performed with passion on a pastoral level, I then present the Pontifical Medal to the *Marian Centre for Cultural Diffusion* of the Servants of Mary operating in Mexico.

Lastly, I wish for the Academies and all those present a productive commitment in your respective fields of research, and I entrust each one to the maternal protection of Mary, the *Tota Pulchra*, while I impart a heartfelt and special Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, 20 November 2014

Franciscus

To Venerable Brother
Cardinal GIANFRANCO RAVASI
President of the Pontifical Council for Culture and of the Coordinating Council of the Pontifical Academies

I address my cordial greeting to those participating in the 19th Public Session of the Pontifical Academies, dedicated to the theme "Mary, icon of the infinite beauty of *Dios Marialis Cultus* and the Mariological and Marian Magisterium of Blessed Paul VI". Your meeting, organized by the Pontifical International Marian Academy, recalls the unforgettable figure of my venerable Predecessor, Blessed Paul VI, and his great love for the Virgin Mary, expressed in so many moments of his Pontificate as well as in numerous Documents.

Indeed, after carefully proceeding with the formulation of Chapter VIII of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, in which he focused conciliar reflections on Our Lady, contemplated "in *mysterio Christi et Ecclesiae*", he wished to dedicate to the Mother of God, and also to the worship addressed to her as *Mater Ecclesiae*, two Encyclical Letters, *Mense Maio* and *Christi Matri*. Likewise, three of his Apostolic Exhortations are dedicated to Mary as well: *Signum Magnum*, *Recurrens Mensis October* and lastly, *Marialis Cultus*, a document which you aptly commemorated 40 years after its publication.

It is truly beautiful that, on the eve of the 50th anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, established by Paul VI, by no coincidence on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception

Domus Sanctae Marthae

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

Lord" arrives, "it disturbs us. It's He, not we, who commands. And the strongest comfort is that of mercy and of forgiveness", as Isaiah proclaims: "cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins". From this point came the Pope's call for reflection on how God's generosity cannot be transcended. "You have sinned 100 times, partake 200 times of joy: this is how God's mercy is when He comes to comfort", Francis explained.

Nevertheless, man tries to back away, because "this gives us some fear, a bit of mistrust: 'It's too much, Lord!'" In order to render understandable the infinite quality of God's mercy, the Pontiff returned to the words of the Prophet Ezekiel, in Chapter 16, following "the list of so many sins of the people, so very many, he says at the end: 'But I will not abandon you; I will give you more, this will be my punishment: consolation and forgiveness'". He is truly like this, "our God, the God

who comforts in mercy and in forgiveness". This is why it's good to repeat: "Let yourselves be comforted by the Lord, He alone can comfort us".

Francis added that we so often "hire out" small consolations, but these consolations "are useless, they may help but they aren't useful". In fact, what's useful to us is only what "comes from the Lord, with his forgiveness and our humility. When the heart humbles itself, that comfort comes" and we can be carried forth "by this joy, this peace".

The Pontiff concluded with an invocation to the Lord, that "He grant us the grace to work, to be Christians" who are "joyful in the fruitfulness of Mother Church", and that He save us from the danger of "falling into the attitude of these sad, impatient, mistrustful, anxious Christians" who, in the Church, have all that is perfect, yet bear no fruit. The Pope asked God to console us with "the comfort of a Mother Church who goes out of herself" and with "the comfort of Jesus' tenderness his mercy in the forgiveness of our sins".



After celebrating the Angelus on Monday morning, 8 December, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, Pope Francis first went to "revere *Salus Populi Romani*" in the Basilica of St Mary Major, where he was greeted by Cardinal Abril y Castelló. The Holy Father then went to Piazza di Spagna to venerate the *Immacolata*. On arriving, he was greeted by Cardinal Vicar Vallini, by the Parish Priest of Sant'Andrea delle Fratte,

Fr Trebisonda of the Minims, and by Mayor Marino. Francis then walked to the foot of the statue of Mary in front of the Palazzo di Propaganda Fide, where he paused in prayer. During his private prayer the Pontifical Gestatorial Chair Bearers brought a wreath of white roses to the statue of the Virgin, while the Sistene Chapel Choir, led by Maestro Palombella, intoned the Litany. The Pope spent some time

greeting those who had come to take part in the veneration, including the sick, who in return gave him a scarf, a bag of chestnuts and a child's drawing. Afterwards, the Pope returned to the Vatican by car.



At the Angelus

Salvation is not bought

At the Angelus on Monday, Pope Francis explained that "salvation is a free gift of the Lord", recalling that the "the attitude of Mary of Nazareth" shows that "being comes before doing". The following is a translation of the Holy Father's words.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Good morning! Happy Feast Day!

The message of today's Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary can be summed up in these words: everything is a free gift from God, everything is grace, everything is a gift out of his love for us. The Angel Gabriel calls Mary "full of grace" (Lk 1:28): in her there is no room for sin, because God chose her from eternity to be the mother of Jesus and preserved her from original sin. And Mary corresponds to the grace and abandons herself, saying to the Angel: "Let it be done to me according to your word" (v. 38). She does not say: "I shall do it according to your word": no! But: "Let it be done to me...". And the Word was made flesh in her womb. We too are asked to listen to God who speaks to us, and to accept his will; according to the logic of the Gospel nothing is more productive and fruitful than listening to and accepting the Word of the Lord, which comes from the Gospel, from the Bible. The Lord is always speaking to us!

The attitude of Mary of Nazareth shows us that *being* comes before *doing*, and to *leave the doing* to God in order to *be* truly as he wants us. It is He who works so many marvels in us. Mary is receptive, but not passive. Because, on the physical level, she receives the power of the Holy Spirit and then gives flesh and blood to the Son of God who forms

within her. Thus, on the spiritual level, she accepts the grace and corresponds to it with faith. That is why St Augustine affirms that the Virgin "conceived in her heart before her womb" (*Discourses*, 215, 4). She conceived first faith and then the Lord. This mystery of the acceptance of grace, which in Mary, as a unique privilege, was without the obstacle of sin, is a possibility for all. St Paul, indeed, opens his Letter to the Ephesians with these words of praise: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places" (1:3). As Mary was greeted by St Elizabeth as "blessed among women" (cf. Lk 1:42), so too we have always been "blessed", that is, loved, and thus "he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless" (Eph 1:4). Mary was *preserved*, while we have been *saved* thanks to Baptism and to the faith. However, all people, she and we together, through Christ, "to the praise of his glorious grace" (v. 6), with which grace the *Immacolata* was endowed to the fullest.

Regarding this love, regarding this mercy, the divine grace poured into our hearts, one single thing is asked in return: unreserved giving. Not one of us can buy salvation! Salvation is a free gift of the Lord, a free gift of God that comes within us and dwells in us. As we have received freely, so are we called to give freely (cf. Mt 10:8); imitating Mary, who, immediately upon receiving the Angel's announcement, went to share the gift of her fruitfulness with her relative Elizabeth. Because if everything has been given to us, then everything must be passed on. How? By allowing that

the Holy Spirit make of us a gift for others. The Spirit is a gift for us and we, by the power of the Spirit, must be a gift for others and allow the Holy Spirit to turn us into instruments of acceptance, instruments of reconciliation, instruments of forgiveness. If our life is allowed to be transformed by the grace of the Lord, for the grace of the Lord does transform us, we will not be able to keep to ourselves the light that comes from his face, but we will let it pass on to enlighten others. Let us learn from Mary, who kept her gaze, constantly fixed on the Son and her face became "the face that looked most like Christ's" (Dante, *Paradiso*, xxxii, 87). And to her let us now turn with the prayer that recalls the annunciation of the Angel.

After the Angelus, the Pope said:

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This afternoon I will go to St Mary Major to revere the *Salus Populi Romani* and then to Piazza di Spagna to renew the traditional act of homage and prayer at the foot of the monument to the *Immacolata*. It will be an afternoon entirely dedicated to Our Lady. I ask you to join me spiritually on this pilgrimage, which expresses our filial devotion to our heavenly Mother. And do not forget: salvation is free. We have received this free gift, this grace of God and we must pass it on; we have received the gift and we must pass it on to others. Do not forget this!

To everyone I wish a happy feast day and a happy pilgrimage of Advent under the guidance of the Virgin Mary. Please, do not forget to pray for me. Have a good lunch and we will meet again!

On the Feast of the Immaculate Conception

A Marian afternoon

In prayer before the Virgin
**Teach us to make
room for God**

During the veneration of the Immaculate near the Spanish Steps on Monday, 8 December, Pope Francis recited the following prayer to the Virgin in Italian.

Mary our Mother,

Today the People of God
celebrate,
they venerate you, the

Immaculate,
ever preserved from the stain of sin.

Accept the homage I offer you in the name of the Church in Rome and throughout the world.

Knowing that you, our Mother, are totally free from sin is a consolation to us.

Knowing that evil has no power over you fills us with hope and strength in our daily struggle against the threat of the evil one.

But in this struggle we are not alone, we are not orphans, for Jesus, before dying on the Cross, gave you to us as our Mother.

Though we are sinners, we are still your children, the children of the Immaculate, called to that holiness that has shown

resplendent in you by the grace of God from the beginning.

Inspired by this hope, today we invoke your motherly protection for us, our families, this city and the world.

Through your intercession, may the power of God's love that preserved you from original sin, free humanity from every form of spiritual and material slavery and make God's plan of salvation victorious in hearts and in history.

May grace prevail over pride in us, too, your children.

May we become merciful as our heavenly Father is merciful.

In this time leading up to the celebration of Jesus' birth, teach us to go against the current: to strip ourselves, to be humble, and giving, to listen and be silent, to go out of ourselves, granting space to the beauty of God, the source of true joy.

Pray for us, our Immaculate Mother!