

L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO

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Friday, 22 April 2016

Pope Francis returns from Lesbos with 12 Syrian refugees to be hosted by the Vatican

A safe home

On the Greek island he visits with migrants and prays with Bartholomew and Ieronymos

Pope Francis returned from Lesbos – which he visited on Saturday, 16 April, together with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and Archbishop of Athens and All Greece Ieronymos – bringing back with him a group of refugees: three families who had fled Syria and taken refuge in the field of Kara Tepe. The group of 12 includes two teenagers and four children, who came to the Greek island before the recent agreement between Turkey and the European Union. The Pope's brief but intense visit captures the spirit of this pontificate. "I have come here", the Pope told hundreds of men, women and children in the Moria Refugee Camp, "simply to be with you and to hear your stories". "We have come to call the attention of the world to this grave humanitarian crisis and to plead for its resolution", he added, underlining what he had called that morning "the greatest humanitarian crisis since the Second World War". On board the flight with journalists, Francis also remembered Benedict XVI's 89th birthday, which was being celebrated that day.

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A call to Europe

GIOVANNI MARIA VIAN

Like his visit to Lampedusa, the Pope's journey to Lesbos also spoke volumes. It was a heartfelt appeal to Europe and to the world, not to avert our eyes from the faces of the men, women and children compelled by war and poverty to leave their countries, their homes and their families. They are mostly Syrians, but also Iraqis: Yazidi, Kurds, and Christians of various confessions. Often desperate, many of them have drowned in the sea, as has happened in other parts of the world, because migration is a global phenomenon.

The papal visit to the Greek island that has welcomed innumerable refugees is thus both a simple and powerful sign. As is the unequivocal welcome of the 12 Syrian refugees whom Francis brought back to Rome, returning from a journey quite different from his others. Different because it was marked by sorrow over the worst human catastrophe since the Second World War. These few hours have become symbolic: the Pontiff, who desires to contribute wherever possible to building bridges and knocking down walls, came to spend time with men, women and children who seek only peace and freedom.

Perhaps no papal journey has ever come to fruition in so short a time. The visit – which arose at the invitation of the Patriarch of Constantinople who came to Lesbos with the Archbishop of Athens and other bishops, both Orthodox and Catholics – was announced less than a month ago. A new step on the path toward unity, marked by the 'ecumenism of blood' in the words of Pope Bergoglio, the visit now advances with another testimony of charity, as underscored by the words of Ieronymos, Bartholomew and their brother Francis in the Moria camp, where they stopped at length to greet

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On the return flight

Even the sun is weeping

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At the General Audience an appeal for Ukraine

The forgotten conflict

The armed conflict in Ukraine "forgotten by many" inspired the Pope's appeal at the General Audience on Wednesday, 20 April. He thanked everyone in advance for their contributions to the collection, which will be held this coming Sunday, 24 April, the 30th anniversary of the nuclear disaster in Chernobyl.

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Looking back at the trip
I saw so much
pain and sadness



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To the Centro Astalli

Don't give in to indifference

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With the Pontifical Scots College

Time of martyrdom

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VATICAN BULLETIN

AUDIENCES

Thursday, 14 April

H.E. Mrs Maria Alessandra Albertini, Ambassador of the Republic of San Marino, for the presentation of her Letters of Credence

Cardinal Stanislaw Rylko, President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity

Cardinal Sean Patrick O'Malley, OFM Cap., Archbishop of Boston, USA

Archbishop Ivan Jurković, titular Archbishop of Corbavia, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other Specialized Agencies in Geneva and to the World Trade Organization; representative to the International Organization for Migration

Fr Julián Carrón, Superior General of the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation

Friday, 15 April

H.E. Mr Juan Evo Morales Ayma, President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, with his entourage

Cardinal Gerhard Ludwig Müller, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith

Cardinal Beniamino Stella, Prefect of the Congregation for the Clergy

Cardinal Alberto Suárez Inda, Archbishop of Morelia, Mexico, with Bishop Javier Navarro Rodríguez of Zamora

Monday, 18 April

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

H.E. Mr Faustin-Archange Touadéra, President of the Central African Republic, with his entourage

CHANGES IN EPISCOPATE

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Jesús Moraza Ruiz de Azúa, OAR, of the Territorial Prelature of Lábrea, Brazil. It was presented in accord with can. 401 § 2 of the Code of Canon Law (13 Apr.).

The Holy Father appointed Fr Santiago Sánchez Sebastián, OAR, as Bishop-Prelate of Lábrea. Until now he has been Delegate of the Province of São Nicolau of the Augustinian Recollects and parish priest of Santa Rita de Cássia in Manaus, Brazil (13 Apr.).

Bishop-elect Sánchez Sebastián, 58, was born in Cortes, Spain. He made his religious profession for the Order of Augustinian Recollects on 22 August 1976 and was ordained a priest on 26 July 1980. He has served in parish ministry and as formator at the Colegio San Agustín of Valladolid, Spain; pro-



motor of vocations; formator at the minor seminaries of Valladolid and of Ladosa; master of novices; superior, formator in Fortaleza, Brazil.

The Holy Father appointed Fr Bertrand Lacombe as Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Bordeaux, France, and titular Bishop of Saint-Papoul. Until now he has been vicar general of Montpellier (14 Apr.).

Bishop-elect Lacombe, 49, was born in Montpellier, France. He holds licences in economic sciences and in theology. He was ordained a priest on 24 June 2001. He has served in parish ministry and as: assistant to the chaplaincies of public schools in Béziers; formator at the seminary of Tolosa and assistant in the public schools of Libron; national chaplain for the scouts of France.

The Holy Father appointed Fr Luis Javier Argüello García as Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Valladolid, Spain, and titular Bishop of Ipagro. Until now he has been vicar general of the said Archdiocese (14 Apr.).

Bishop-elect Argüello García, 62, was born in Meneses de Campos, Spain. He holds a degree in civil law. He was ordained a priest on 27 August 1986. He has served in parish ministry and as: formator and

then rector of the diocesan seminary; delegate for the vocational apostolate; administrator of the Archdiocese of Valladolid; moderator of the Curia; member of various diocesan Councils and of the Commission for the permanent diaconate.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Woldetensaë Ghebregiorghis, OFM Cap., titular Bishop of Asuoremixta, from his office as Vicar Apostolic of Harar, Ethiopia. It was presented in accord with can. 401 § 1 of the Code of Canon Law (16 Apr.).

The Holy Father appointed Fr Angelo Pagano, OFM Cap., as Vicar Apostolic of Harar, Ethiopia, assigning him the titular episcopal See of Fico. Until now he has been parish priest and project manager of the Capuchin Custody in Cameroon (16 Apr.).

Bishop-elect Pagano, 62, was born in Asmara, Eritrea. He made his solemn vows on 14 April 1981 and was ordained a priest on 25 June 1988. He was sent as a missionary to Cameroon. He has served in parish ministry and as: president of the Capuchin Conference of West Africa; member of the presbyteral council of the Diocese of Kumbo, Cameroon; vice-provincial of the

Capuchin vice-province of Ethiopia; first superior of the Capuchin Custody in Yaoundé, Cameroon.

The Holy Father appointed Fr Jaime Cristóbal Abril González from the clergy of the Archdiocese of Tunja, Colombia, as Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Nueva Pamplona, assigning his the titular episcopal See of Putia in Byzacena. Until now he has been parish priest of the Cathedral (16 Apr.).

Bishop-elect Abril González, 43, was born in El Espino, Colombia. He holds a licence in liturgy. He was ordained a priest on 10 February 1996. He has served in parish ministry and as: chaplain and professor at the Armando Solano College, Tunja, formator at the major seminary; vocational promoter of the Archdiocese, and director of the department of liturgy of the Episcopal Conference of Colombia.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Eulises González Sánchez, titular Bishop of Tatilti, from his office as Vicar Apostolic of San Andrés y Providencia, Colombia. It was presented in accord with can. 401 § 1 of the Code of Canon Law (16 Apr.).

The Holy Father appointed Fr Jaime Uriel Sanabria Arias from the clergy of Tunja, Colombia, as Vicar Apostolic of San Andrés y Providencia, assigning him the titular episcopal See of Burca. Until now he has been parish priest of Señor de los Milagros de San Pedro (16 Apr.).

Bishop-elect Sanabria Arias, 46, was born in Ciénaga-Boyacá, Colombia. He was ordained a priest on 19 November 1994. He has served in parish ministry and as: director of the Department for Youth of the Episcopal Conference of Colombia; episcopal vicar for the pastoral apostolate of the Archdiocese of Tunja.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Francis Xavier Ahn Myong-ok of Masan, Korea. It was presented in accord with can. 401 § 2 of the Code of Canon Law (19 Apr.).

The Holy Father appointed Fr Constantine Bae Ki-Hyen as Bishop of Masan, Korea. Until now he has been vicar general and chancellor of the said Diocese (19 Apr.).

Bishop-elect Bae Ki-Hyen, 63, was born in Masan, Korea. He holds a degree in theology and a master's in philosophy. He was ordained a priest on 28 January 1985. He has served in parish ministry and as: professor at the Major Seminary of Pusan; chaplain to the Korean community in Denver, USA.

Ambassador of San Marino presents her credentials


H.E. Ms Maria Alessandra Albertini, 55, is married with two children. She holds a law degree and passed the first postgraduate course in preparation for a diplomatic career. She has served as an official at the Department of the Foreign Affairs (1989-1993); embassy counsellor at the Directorate for Political Affairs (1993); president of the National Commission of San Marino to UNICEF (1997-2014); vice president of Pan-Europe San Marino (1998-2005); non-resident ambassador to the Republic of Malta and the Republic of Cyprus (since 2000); assistant to international adoption practices (until 2006); official at the Direction for Cultural Affairs (2006-2012); representative for relations with the European Council (2012-2014); director for legal affairs with the rank of plenipotentiary minister at the Department for Foreign Affairs (since 2014).



On Thursday morning, 14 April, Pope Francis received H.E. Ms Maria Alessandra Albertini, Ambassador of the Republic of San Marino, for the presentation of letters by which she is accredited to the Holy See

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cd.english@ossrom.va
www.osservatoreromano.va

GIOVANNI MARIA VIAN

Editor-in-Chief
Giuseppe Fiorentino
Assistant Editor
Mary M. Nolan
Editor
Editorial office
via del Pellegrino, 00120 Vatican City
telephone +390669899300, fax +390669883675

TIPOGRAFIA VATICANA EDITRICE

L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO
don Sergio Pellini s.n.b.
Director General
Photo Service
photo@ossrom.va www.photo.va
Advertising Agency
Il Sole 24 Ore S.p.A.
System Comunicazione Pubblicitaria
Via Monte Rosa 91, 20149 Milano
segreteria@dirizionesystem@itsole24ore.com

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At the General Audience Francis speaks about the tears of the crying woman who is forgiven

On the side of the sinner

And he thanks those who will contribute to the collection for Ukraine

The Pope's appeal at the General Audience on Wednesday, 20 April, was inspired by the often "forgotten" conflict in Ukraine, for which he previously called for a collection to be taken up on Sunday, 24 April, coinciding with the 30th anniversary of the nuclear disaster in Chernobyl. He offered his gratitude in anticipation of the generosity of all those who will contribute. Prior to the appeal, the Holy Father devoted his catechesis to the aspect of mercy in the Gospel passage of Luke (7:36-50). The following is a translation of the catechesis which was delivered in Italian.



Giovanni Andrea Sirani, "Supper in the house of the Pharisee" (1652, detail)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Good morning!

Today we would like to stop and wonder at an aspect of mercy which is well presented in the passage we heard from the Gospel of Luke. It deals with something that happened to Jesus while he was the guest of a Pharisee called Simon. He wanted to invite Jesus to his home because he had heard others speak well of him as a great prophet. And while they were seated at a meal, there entered a woman, known throughout the city to be a sinner. This woman, without saying a word, threw herself at Jesus' feet and burst into tears; her tears bathed the feet of Jesus and she dried them with her

hair, then kissed them and anointed them with the perfumed oil she had brought with her.

Two figures stand out: Simon, the zealous servant of the law, and the anonymous sinful woman. While the former judges others based on appearances, the latter, through her actions, expresses the sincerity of her heart. Simon, though having invited Jesus, does not want to compromise himself or entangle his life with the Master; the woman, on the contrary, entrusts herself completely to him with love and veneration.

The Pharisee cannot fathom why Jesus would let himself be "contam-

inated" by sinners. He thinks that were Jesus a real prophet he would recognize them and keep his distance in order to keep from being sullied, as if they were lepers. This attitude is typical of a certain way of understanding religion, and it is based on the fact that God and sin are radically opposed. The Word of God, however, teaches us to distinguish sin from the sinner: one should not have to compromise with sin, but sinners – that is, all of us! – are like the sick, who need to be treated. And in order to heal them the doctor needs to get close, examine them, touch them. Naturally, the sick person, in order to be healed, must recognize that he needs the doctor!

Between the Pharisee and the sinful woman, Jesus sides with the latter. Jesus, free of the prejudices that hinder the expression of mercy, lets her do it. He, the Holy One of God, lets her touch him without fear of contamination. Jesus is free, because he is close to God who is the merciful Father. And this closeness to God, the merciful Father, gives Jesus freedom. Furthermore, by entering into a relationship with the sinner, Jesus puts an end to that state of isolation to which the ruthless judgment of the Pharisee and of her fellow citizens – the same who exploited her – had condemned her: "Your sins are forgiven" (Lk 7:48). The Lord sees the sincerity of her faith and conversion; thus before everyone he proclaims: "Your faith has saved you" (v. 50). On one side there is the lawyer's hypocrisy, on the other, the sincerity, humility and faith of the woman. We are all sinners, but too often we fall into the temptation of hypocrisy, of believing ourselves to be better than others and we say: "Just look at your sin...". We all need, however, to look to our own sins, our own shortcomings, our own

mistakes, and to look to the Lord. This is the lifeline of salvation: the relation between the "I" of the sinner and the Lord. If I feel I am righteous, there is no saving relationship.

At this point, an even greater wonder assails all those at the table: "Who is this, who even forgives sins?" (v. 49). Jesus does not answer explicitly, but the conversion of the sinner is before the eyes of all and it shows that from him there emanates the power of the mercy of God, which is able to transform hearts.

The sinful woman teaches us the connection between faith, love, and recognition. "Many sins" have been forgiven her and therefore she has loved much; "but he who is forgiven little, loves little" (v. 47). Even Simon himself has to admit that the one who is guiltiest loves more. God has wrapped each and every one of us in the same mystery of mercy;



With Fr Ernest Simoni, the Albanian priest who was imprisoned for 28 years. The Pope had first met him in Albania on 21 September 2014, after listening to his testimony

and from his love, which always comes to us first, we learn how to love. As St Paul recalls: "in him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to his grace which he lavished on us" (Eph 1:7-8). In this passage, "grace" is virtually synonymous with mercy, and we are told that God has "lavished" it upon us, meaning that it far exceeds our expectations, since it brings to fulfillment God's saving plan for each one of us.

Dear brothers and sisters, let us recognize the gift of faith, let us give thanks to the Lord for his love which is so great and unmerited! Let us allow the love of Christ be poured into us: the disciple draws from this love and finds himself on it; from this love each one of us can be nourished and fed. Thus, in the grateful love that we in turn pour out upon our brothers and sisters, in our homes, in our families and in our societies, the mercy of

With the Austrian Ski Team

Integration and welcome

On Wednesday morning, 20 April, before beginning the General Audience, the Holy Father met with 100 members of the Austrian Ski Federation in the Paul VI Hall. Present were Peter Schröcksnadel, the Federation's president; Hans Pum, the sports director, Archbishop Franz Lackner of Salzburg; and Fr Johannes Paul Chavanne, who is responsible for the pastoral care for Olympic sports. At the start of the meeting, the group offered a collection for needy children in Africa. The following is a translation of the Pope's greeting, which was given in Italian.

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to welcome you to the Vatican today.

When I think of Austria and the Alps, winter sports also come to mind. Skiing has great importance and tradition in your country, and

the entire population participates in the excitement when you host challenging competitions. You are models, above all, for many young people. But you are also models of integration, not just in athletic performance but also for the virtues and values represented by sports: commitment, perseverance, determination, fair play, solidarity and team spirit. Through your example, you contribute to the formation of society. May you ever be messengers of the uniting power of sports and of welcome! And, returning to the natural wealth of your Country, may you be messengers of safeguarding the environment and the beauty of God's creation. Thank you for your visit! May the Lord bless you all!



VATICAN BULLETIN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

The Holy Father appointed Fr Alain Faubert as Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Montreal, Canada, assigning him the titular episcopal See of Vicus Pacati. Until now he has been parish priest of Saint-Germain Parish (19 Apr.).

Bishop-elect Faubert, 51, was born in Montreal, Canada. He holds a doctorate in theology. He was ordained a priest on 9 June 1955. He has served in parish ministry and as: assistant secretary at the diocesan office for education; episcopal vicar for the East Region of the Archdiocese of Montreal; professor of ecclesiology at the Major Seminary of Montreal; vice moderator of the Archdiocesan Curia.

The President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia in audience

On Friday morning, 15 April, the Holy Father received in audience the President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, H.E. Mr Juan Evo Morales Ayma, who subsequently met with Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher, Secretary for Relations with States.

During the discussions, which took place in a cordial atmosphere, various themes were considered regarding the current socio-economic situation of the Country, with special attention to social policy. The parties focused on the relations between Church and State, evoking Bolivia's long Christian tradition and the decisive contribution of the Church to the life of the Nation. Reference was also made to issues of common interest, such as education, healthcare and assistance to the poor. Attention then turned to various international situations.



The President of the Central African Republic in audience

On Monday, 18 April, the Holy Father received in audience, the President of the Central African Republic, H.E. Professor Faustin-Archange Touadéra, who subsequently met with Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Parolin, accompanied by Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher, Secretary for Relations with States.

During the cordial discussions, the warm welcome offered to the Holy Father during his visit to Bangui last November was evoked. It was shown that the recent electoral process and the renovation of the country's institutions are taking place in a constructive climate, with the contribution of dialogue between religious confessions, and the hope was expressed that this may mark the beginning of a time of peace and prosperity for the entire nation. At the same time, it emerged that the consequences of the conflicts of recent years continue to weigh upon the population, and the important role of the international community in supporting the development of the country was emphasized.

Attention then turned to the good bilateral relations between the Holy See and the Central African Republic, and the parties expressed their mutual understanding that these may be further consolidated in the framework of international law. Appreciation was expressed for the contribution that the work of the Church and her Pastors brings to society, especially in the fields of education and healthcare, and also with a view to reconciliation and national reconstruction.



EASTERN CHURCHES

The Holy Father gave his assent to the canonical election by the Synod of Bishops of the Patriarchal Church of Antioch for Syrians of Chorbishop Philippe Barakat as Archbishop of the Archeparchy of Homs, Syria. Until now he has been patriarchal administrator of the said Archeparchy (15 Apr.).

Archbishop-elect Barakat, 63, was born in Zeidal-Homs, Syria. He holds a licence in theology. He was ordained a priest on 15 August 1976. He has served in a parish ministry and as: treasurer and protosyncellus. In 2006 he was appointed chorbishop.

The Holy Father gave his assent to the canonical election by the Synod

of Bishops of the Patriarchal Church of Alexandria for Copts of Fr Khaled Ayad Bishay as Bishop of the Eparchy of Luqor, taking the name of Emmanuel. Until now he has been an Official of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches (16 Apr.).

Bishop-elect Bishay, 44, was born in Kom Gharg, Egypt. He was ordained a priest on 25 September 1995. He holds degrees in moral theology and in Oriental Canon Law. He has served in parish ministry and as: professor of moral theology; professor at the major seminary of Maadi.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Louis Pelâtre, AA, titular Bishop of Sasima, from his office as Vicar Apostolic of Istanbul, Turkey. It was presented in accord with can. 401 § 1 of the Code of Canon Law (16 Apr.).

The Holy Father appointed Fr Rubén Tierrablanca González, OFM, as Vicar Apostolic of Istanbul, Turkey, and apostolic administrator of the Exarchate for the Byzantine rite faithful, assigning him the titular episcopal See of Tubernuca. Until now he has been Vicar Delegate of the Apostolic Vicariate of Istanbul (16 Apr.).

Bishop-elect Tierrablanca González, 63, was born in Cortázar, Mexico. He holds a degree in Sacred Scripture. He made his religious vows for the Order of Friars Minor on 2 August 1977 and was ordained a priest on 29 June 1978. He has served in parish ministry and as: formator at the Franciscan seminary; professor of Sacred Scripture and prefect of theology students; rector of the Pontifical University Antonianum, and then Custodian of the Mother House in Rome; in 2003 he went to Istanbul where he served in parish ministry and as Custodian of the Friars Minor in Istanbul, of the International Fraternity for Ecumenical and Interreligious Dialogue in Turkey.

CHRISTIAN UNITY

The Holy Father appointed as member of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, H.B. Cardinal George Alencherry, Major Archbishop of Ernakulam-Angamaly for Syro-Malabars, India (15 Apr.).

APSA

The Holy Father appointed as Office Head of the Administration of the Patrimony of the Apostolic See (APSA), Mr Stefano Picchiotti, *Aiutante di Studio* of the said Administration (15 Apr.).

SPECIAL ENVOY

The Holy Father appointed Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, Prefect emeritus of the Congregation for Bishops and President emeritus of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America, as his Special Envoy to the Eleventh National Eucharistic Congress in Argentina, and to the bicentenary celebrations of independence, to be held in the city of San Miguel de Tucumán, Argentina, from 16 to 19 June 2016 (16 Apr.).

NECROLOGY

Bishop Alphonse Liguori Chaupa, Bishops emeritus of Kimbe, Papua New Guinea, at age 56 (21 Mar.).

Archbishop Thomas Kwaku Mensah, Archbishop emeritus of Kumasi, Ghana, at age 81 (10 Apr.).

Bishop André Mayamba Kathongo, Bishop emeritus of Popokabaka, Democratic Republic of the Congo, at age 85 (12 Apr.).

Bishop Matthias Joseph Isuja, Bishop emeritus of Dodoma, Tanzania, at age 86 (13 Apr.).

Bishop Luis Horacio Gómez González, titular bishop of Liberalia, Vicar Apostolic emeritus of Puerto Gaitán, Colombia, at age 57 (17 Apr.).

On the side of the sinner

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the Lord may be communicated to everyone.

SPECIAL GREETINGS

The people of Ukraine have long been suffering the consequences of armed conflict, which many have forgotten. As you know, I invited the Church in Europe to support the initiative which I began to confront this humanitarian emergency. In anticipation of their generosity, I thank all those who will contribute to the collection, which will take place this Sunday, 24 April.

I greet the English-speaking visitors taking part in today's Audience, particularly the pilgrims from Croatia, Norway, Sweden, Australia, Singapore, Taiwan, the Philippines

and the United States of America. In the joy of the Risen Lord, I invoke upon you and your families the loving mercy of God our Father. May the Lord bless you all!

I extend a special greeting to *young people, the sick and newlyweds*. Tomorrow we remember St Anselm of Aosta, Bishop and Doctor of the Church. May his life's example inspire you, dear *young people*, especially you boys and girls of Aversa and Ascoli Piceno, to see in the merciful Jesus the true teacher of life; may his intercession obtain for you, dear *sick people*, the serenity and peace found in the mystery of the cross; and may his teaching be an encouragement for you, dear *newlyweds*, to become educators of your children with the wisdom of the heart.

The Pope once again calls to abolish the death penalty, to forgive debt in poor countries and to remove walls of indifference

Nonviolence is a weapon for peace

Pope Francis called for "the active witness of nonviolence" to work "as a 'weapon' to achieve peace" in his message to a conference organized by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace in conjunction with Pax Christi International on Monday afternoon, 11 April. The message was read aloud by Cardinal Peter Kodwo Appiah Turkson, President of the Dicastery, at the opening session of the conference, which concluded on 13 April. The following is the English text of the Holy Father's message.



Your Eminence,

I am delighted to convey my most cordial greetings to you and to all the participants in the Conference on *Nonviolence and Just Peace: Contributing to the Catholic Understanding of and Commitment to Nonviolence*, which will take place in Rome from the 11th to 13th of April 2016.

This encounter, jointly organized by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and Pax Christi International, takes on a very special character and value during the Jubilee Year of Mercy. In effect, mercy is "a source of joy, serenity and peace";¹ a peace which is essentially interior and flows from reconciliation with the Lord.² Nevertheless, the participants' reflections must also take into account the current circumstances in the world at large and the historical moment in which the Conference is taking place, and of course these factors also heighten expectations for the Conference.

In order to seek solutions to the unique and terrible "world war in instalments" which, directly or indirectly, a large part of humankind is presently undergoing, it helps us to think back in time. Let us rediscover the reasons that led the sons and daughters of a still largely Christian

civilization in the last century to create the Pax Christi Movement and the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. From their example we learn that to bring about true peace, it is necessary to bring people together concretely so as to reconcile peoples and groups with opposing ideological positions. It is also necessary to work together for what persons, families, peoples and nations feel is their right, namely, to participate on a social, political and economic level in the goods of the modern world.³ Further, the "unceasing effort on the part of that higher creative imagination which we call diplomacy"⁴ must be continuously nourished; and justice in a globalized world, which is "order in freedom and conscious duty",⁵ must constantly be promoted. In a word, humanity needs to refurbish all the best available tools to help the men and women of today to fulfil their aspirations for justice and peace.

Accordingly, your thoughts on revitalising the tools of non-violence, and of active non-violence in particular, will be a needed and positive contribution. This is what as participants in the Rome Conference you

propose to do. In this message I would like to remind you of some further points which are especially of concern to me.

The basic premise is that the ultimate and most deeply worthy goal of human beings and of the human community is the abolition of war.⁶ In this vein, we recall that the only explicit condemnation issued by the Second Vatican Council was against war;⁷ although the Council recognized that, since war has not been eradicated from the human condition, "governments cannot be denied the right to legitimate defence once every means of peaceful settlement has been exhausted".⁸

Another cornerstone is to recognize that "conflict cannot be ignored or concealed. It has to be faced".⁹ Of course, the purpose is not to remain trapped within a framework of conflict, thus losing our overall perspective and our sense of the profound unity of reality.¹⁰ Rather, we must accept and tackle conflict so as to resolve it and transform it into a link in that new process which "peacemakers" initiate.¹¹

As Christians, we also know that it is only by considering our peers as brothers and sisters that we will overcome wars and conflicts. The Church tirelessly repeats that this is true not merely at an individual level but also at the level of peoples and nations, for it truly regards the International Community as the "Family of Nations". That is why, in this year's Message for the World Day of Peace, I made an appeal to States' leaders to renew "their relations with other peoples and to enable their real participation and inclusion in the life of the international community, in order to ensure fraternity within the family of nations as well".¹²

Furthermore, we know as Christians that, in order to make this happen, the greatest obstacle to be removed is the wall of indifference. Recent history justifies using the word "wall" not in a figurative sense alone, for unhappily it is an all too tangible reality. This phenomenon of indifference touches not only our fellow human beings but also the natural environment, with often disastrous consequences in terms of security and social peace.¹³

Nevertheless, we can succeed in overcoming indifference – but only if, in imitation of the Father, we are able to show mercy. Such mercy is

so to speak "political" because it is expressed in solidarity, which is the moral and social attitude that responds best to the awareness of the scourges of our time and of the inter-dependence of life at its different levels – the connections between an individual life, the family, and the local and global community.¹⁴

In our complex and violent world, it is truly a formidable undertaking to work for peace by living the practice of nonviolence! Equally daunting is the aim of achieving full disarmament "by reaching people's very souls",¹⁵ building bridges, fighting fear and pursuing open and sincere dialogue. The practice of dialogue is in fact difficult. We must be prepared for give and take. We must not assume that the others are wrong. Instead, accepting our differences and remaining true to our positions, we must seek the good of all; and, after having finally found agreement, we must firmly maintain it.¹⁶

We can joyfully anticipate an abundance of cultural differences and varied life experiences among the participants in the Rome Conference, and these will only enhance the exchanges and contribute to the renewal of the active witness of nonviolence as a "weapon" to achieve peace.

Finally, I would like to invite all those present to support two requests I addressed to governmental authorities in this Jubilee Year: to abolish the death penalty where it is still in force, and to consider the possibility of an amnesty; and to forgive or manage in a sustainable way the international debt of the poorer nations.¹⁷

I warmly wish Your Eminence and all the participants fruitful and successful labours, and I extend to you all my Apostolic Blessing.

FRANCIS

¹ *Misericordiae Vultus*, n. 2.

² *Ibid.*, n. 17.

³ *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 9.

⁴ Pope Paul VI, Message for the celebration of the Day of Peace 1976, *The Real Weapons of Peace*.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Address to the Fourth Course for the Formation of Military Chaplains on International Humanitarian Law, 26 October 2015.

⁷ Cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, nn. 77-82.

⁸ *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 79.

⁹ *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 226.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*, n. 227.

¹² Message for the World Day of Peace 2016, *Overcome Indifference and Win Peace*, n. 8.

¹³ Cf. *ibid.*, n. 4.

¹⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, n. 5.

¹⁵ John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris*, n. 113 (English), n. 61 (Italian).

¹⁶ Address to Representatives of Civil Society, Asunción, 11 July 2015.

¹⁷ Message for the World Day of Peace 2016, n. 8.

Hostages of Boko Haram freed in Nigeria

ABUJA, 19. Nigerian security forces freed approximately 500 people held hostage by the fundamentalist Islamic group Boko Haram. Government sources in Abuja indicated that more than 40 militants were killed in the same vast military operation. Those killed were members of the jihadist group who for years have been responsible for a long trail of blood not only in Nigeria but also in bordering countries.

The liberation was confirmed by an army spokesperson, according to whom soldiers destroyed 12 terrorist camps near the villages of Wulge and Walamari in the northeastern part of the African country. The army also thwarted an attack by fundamentalist militants in the village of Pulka, also in the northeast.

Meanwhile, the local daily newspaper 'This Day' reported that some of the girls abducted by extremists from their school in Chibok two years ago had been split into small groups and "offered" for ransom by local cells of the terrorist group.



A young woman from Chibok who managed to escape Boko Haram militants (Reuters)



During the Pope's visit to the Centro Astalli (10 September 2013)

In a video message to the Centro Astalli the Pope asks society to hear the voice of refugees

Don't give in to indifference

"Too many times have we failed to welcome you! Forgive the closedness and indifference of our societies". The Pope spoke directly to refugees in a video message sent to the Centro Astalli, run by the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), on the occasion of the 35th anniversary of their foundation. The text was made public on Tuesday, 19 April, during the presentation of their annual report in Rome. The following is a translation of the message which was sent in Italian.

Beloved Refugees,
Dear Volunteers, Workers
and Friends of Centro Astalli,

In this Year of Mercy, we are celebrating 35 years of the Jesuit Refugee Service in Italy, an activity that has been first and foremost a journey together, as one people. This is beautiful and just!

We must continue with courage: *"I was a stranger and you welcomed me"* (cf. Mt 25:35).

I was a stranger... Each one of you, the refugees who knock at our doors, bears the face of God, is the flesh of Christ. Your experience of sorrow and hope reminds us that we are all strangers and pilgrims on this Earth, generously welcomed by someone and by no merit of our

own. Whoever, like you, has fled his homeland for reasons of oppression, war, nature disfigured by pollution and desertification, or the unjust distribution of natural resources: this is the brother with whom to share bread, home and life. Too many times have we failed to welcome you! Forgive the closedness and indifference of our societies who fear the change in life and mentality that your presence requires. Though treated as a burden, a problem, a cost, you are really a gift. You are witnesses to how *our kind and merciful God* can transform the evil and injustice which you suffer into a good for all. For every one of you can be a bridge that unites distant peoples, that makes possible the encounter between di-

verse cultures and religions, a way to rediscover our common humanity.

... and you welcomed me. I was a stranger and you welcomed me. Yes, the Centro Astalli is a concrete and daily example of this welcome born from the prophetic vision of Fr Pedro Arrupe, the refugee centre in Asia, which was his "swan song". Thank you all, women and men, lay people and religious, workers and volunteers, because you show by your deeds that if we journey together the road is less intimidating.

I encourage you to continue. Thirty-five years is only the beginning of a journey that is becoming ever more necessary, the only way for a reconciled coexistence. May you always be witnesses to the beauty of encounter. May you help our society to hear the voice of refugees.

Continue to walk bravely at their side, accompany them and let yourselves be guided by them as well: refugees know the ways that lead to peace because they know the acrid odour of war.

Objective to integrate

In 2015, 49 workers and 554 volunteers of the Jesuit Refugee Service – in eight Italian cities: Rome, Palermo, Catania, Trento, Vicenza, Naples, Milan and Padua – cared for 36,000 refugees and asylum seekers, providing meals, social welfare and healthcare assistance. They also housed about 668 people. This, in brief, is the information in the 2016 annual report which the Centro Astalli presented on Tuesday, 19 April, in Rome.

The report describes how in Italy – where last year some 154,000 refugees landed – there have been growing "difficulties in access to protection" and laments "the lack of a comprehensive plan for integration". The biggest obstacles are bureaucratic. The "response of civil society is often generous", and the hospitality of religious communities is growing as well, month by month. For example, in 2015 there were 14 congregations in Rome involved in outreach as well as nine other institutes beginning to do so as well. In the city of Rome this past year, 68 people from 19 countries have been taken in.

There has been a slowdown, however, in the welcome of refugees by local entities, who "fear a drop in their approval rating and therefore prefer not to get involved". It is becoming urgent, the report states, "to do away with emergency measures and develop a plan for integration".

The Secretary of State in Poland

Close to families

Cardinal Pietro Parolin invited the Polish episcopate – who were gathered for a plenary session in Poznań on Friday morning, 15 April – to "study" and "deeply analyze" the recent Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*. The meeting took place on the second day of Parolin's visit, and was an opportunity to reaffirm the value and central importance of the family as a "fundamental unit of society". Cardinal Parolin was appointed the papal legate for the occasion of the 1,050th anniversary of Prince Mieszko's baptism.



"I am aware", the Cardinal said, "of the many families in Poland who are trying to establish their lives on constructive values inspired by the word of God." However, he added, "there are also other families in which life is not carried out properly or lived with peace and joy." The Exhortation is specifically addressed to both, and the Polish bishops are called to draw inspiration and strength from it so as "to support each of them in maintaining and fostering a strong love that is full of values such as generosity, commitment, fidelity and patience", and to "be signs of mercy and closeness to others."

A call to Europe

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

hundreds upon hundreds of refugees.

Archbishop Ieronymos expressed hope that from Lesvos there would emerge a "worldwide movement of awareness" in support of refugees, while Patriarch Bartholomew issued a severe admonition: "the world will be judged by the way it has treated you"; he then immediately recalled the victims entombed in a Mediterranean which must rediscover its vocation as a place of encounter. Pope Francis, addressing the refugees, affirmed that the three leaders had come "simply to be with you", to call attention to this crisis and plead for its resolution. As "people of faith", he continued, we wish "to speak out on your behalf".

In gratitude and admiration of the people of Greece, who despite their difficulties have been able to open their arms to the many refugees without distinction between ethnicity or religion, the visit of the three Christian bishops included a joint declaration express-

ing concern for this "colossal humanitarian crisis", which it denounces as a "crisis of humanity". The declaration also calls for "diplomatic, political and charitable initiatives" so as to enable individuals and communities to "remain in their homelands". Moreover, it expresses the urgent need to end wars in the Middle East, which have given rise to millions of refugees, amounting to nearly a third of the entire Syrian population.

In facing this tragedy Europe has a duty to respond with humanity. The concerns of institutions and of people are understandable and legitimate, the Pope acknowledged at the Port of Lesvos, before paying homage to the countless people who have drowned. But we must not forget, especially in Europe, "the homeland of human rights", that migrants are people, not numbers, and that this crisis can truly become an opportunity for the growth of what Paul VI defined as "the civilization of love".

G.M.V.



On the flight to Lesbos

Best wishes to Benedict XVI on his 89th birthday

"We are going to experience the greatest humanitarian crisis since the Second World War." Pope Francis spoke to journalists on his flight to Lesbos. "This trip", he explained, "is somewhat different than others. During Apostolic Journeys, we do many things: we visit the people, speak with them... and there is the joy of meeting them. This voyage is marked by sadness, and this is important. It is a sorrowful journey."

"We are going to – and we will see – so many people who are suffering, who do not know where to go, who had to flee. We will also go to a cemetery: the sea, where many people have drowned."

"I say this", Pope Francis said, "not to upset you, nor due to bitterness, but so that

through your work today you may make known in the media the spiritual reason why I am making this trip".

Before concluding, the Pope took the microphone again to mention "today is His Holiness Benedict XVI's 89th birthday", and he said, "Let us pray for him!" A congratulatory message sent during the flight reads: "The Holy Father Pope Francis, along with all those who accompany him on his visit to Lesbos – his retinue and journalists –, sends affectionate and cordial greetings to Pope emeritus Benedict XVI on the occasion of his 89th birthday, asking the Lord to continue to bless his precious service of closeness and prayer for the entire Church."

Real signs of hope for the future

GIANLUCA BICCINI
on assignment in Lesbos

At the foot of the stairs, it seemed that little Riad, Kudus, Omar and Masa couldn't believe they had big brown eyes before they too climbed aboard the airplane that would return Francis to Rome after his visit to Lesbos. In an unprecedented move, the Pope – known for historic gestures – concluded his 13th international journey by bringing back with him three families who have fled the horrors of the Syrian war. The 12 refugees, 6 of them minors, landed on the Greek island before the agreement between Turkey and the European Union took effect last month. They had been sheltered in the Kara Tepe transit camp.

These families, all Muslim, will initially be hosted by volunteers of the Sant'Egidio community. The Vatican will take responsibility for supporting them. The Pope's initiative became a reality through negotiations of the Secretariat of State with the competent authorities of Italy and Greece. The first family, comprised of a two-year-old boy and his parents, both engineers from Damascus, had lived in the outskirts of Al Zapatani, under heavy bombardment. The second family, the mother and father – a seamstress and teacher, respectively – and their three children – two adolescents and a seven-year-old boy – came from the Deir Azzor territory, which is occupied by the so-called Islamic State. Their house, they said, had been bombed, as had that of the third family, consisting of two young parents and their 8- and 6-year-old children. "In our former life we lived in Zamalka, a suburb of the Syrian capital". Since that time, the mother confided, "little Omar has been scared to death. He wakes up every night and for a little while he even stopped talking".

At less than three years since his historic first journey to Lampedusa, the Pontiff again chose a symbolic destination for a visit that lasted less than five hours, but which is destined to go down in history. Indeed, his decision to travel to Lesbos, the last stretch of European soil

before the Turkish coast, was followed by that of giving shelter to those who had left everything behind in search of a better future. Thus, the journey that in Francis' own words was "marked by sadness", concluded with tangible hope, with an example of welcoming that must not remain isolated. From the shores of the Mediterranean to those of the Aegean, Pope Francis continues to steer the barque of the Church through the rough sea waters that have become tombless cemeteries, sadly infamous for relentlessly swallowing up the lives of thousands of migrants.

At the invitation of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and of the President of the Greek Republic, the Pope came to this beautiful island warm in the April sun, just five nautical miles off the Turkish coast, to reaffirm the right of refugees to a reception on the part of Europe which is struggling to take on her proper responsibilities. With a tenacious will, he came to bring his fatherly care to hundreds of youth left alone in the world, like the many whom he met in the Moria camp: according to UNICEF, almost 22 thousand displaced minors are

blocked in Greece. But he also came to encourage the many residents of Lesbos and its neighbouring islands who have rolled up their sleeves and responded with solidarity to what the Synod of the Greek Orthodox Church has denounced in no uncertain terms as a slaughter.

For this reason the Pope wanted the Patriarch of Constantinople and the Archbishop of Athens and All Greece at his side. Together they went from the airport, on a shuttle bus, to the Moria Refugee Camp, surrounded by barbed wire and patrolled by Frontex agents. Burdened with sorrow but also charged with confidence, the three Christian leaders saw people who had left their homes or who had lost a child or sibling along the way, crammed like animals on makeshift boats and pushed out into the open sea with no guarantees. Francis, Bartholomew and Ieronymos were welcomed by 150 minors, most of them Muslim, crowded behind the barricades, their faces incredulous and full of questions. Others applauded or sang choruses; some wept, surrendering to emotion.

The entrance of the former military base, surrounded by olive trees,

is dominated by a 'Welcome to Moria' sign, written in English. Once inside, among the shipping containers, tents and huts, placards and bulletin boards offer helpful information, but also represent an opportunity for the refugees to communicate with the outside world: some write phrases of philosophy or faith, others simply search for news of loved ones lost while crossing the sea. Today you don't see the rubbish or the laundry hung to dry in the sun; the sanitation facilities have been painted over and the daily chaos seems to have given way to peaceful order, so that all the guests can experience a day of celebration, interrupting a far more painful routine.

The first to be greeted by the Pope were the youngsters, between eight and 16 years, who had lost their parents during the war, particularly in Syria. Next were widowed women, some of whom had even braved the voyage to Europe with four or five children. Francis then met with family groups. He crossed the courtyard where refugees are registered, where essentially their fates are decided. He then arrived at the great tent where, still accompanied by Bartholomew and Ieronymos, he greeted one by one over 250 asylum seekers, among them numerous infants.

One boy gave Francis a drawing of a boat on the sea. "You made it for me? Good boy! This is for me? Thank you. We need to keep it" – he said to his collaborators – "so it doesn't get lost, I want to put it on my desk". Then more people, more children, more handshakes, more drawings. "We will show these", he said to the camp's director, "during the in-flight press conference". Another little boy gave him a drawing, and the Pope asked him to explain who he had drawn: "Is this you and me?". The boy nodded happily.

There were highly emotional moments during the visit in the large tent of the refugee camp. When the Pope laid his hands on the head of an Asian refugee, the young man burst into tears: "Thanks God, thanks!", he cried in English, ex-



At the Moria camp the Pontiff meets thousands of refugees and invites them not to lose hope

You are not alone

We came to draw the world's attention to this grave situation

The Pope's meeting with the refugees at the Moria camp was the central moment of his visit to Lesbos. On Saturday morning, 16 April, the Holy Father – together with Patriarch Bartholomew and Archbishop Ieronymos – visited at length with the refugees. After addresses given by the Ecumenical Patriarch and the Greek Primate, the Holy Father gave an address with which he concluded his visit to the camp. The following is the English text.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I have wanted to be with you today. I want to tell you that you are not alone. In these weeks and months, you have endured much suffering in your search for a better life. Many of you felt forced to flee situations of conflict and persecution for the sake, above all, of your children, your little ones. You

have made great sacrifices for your families. You know the pain of having left behind everything that is dear to you and – what is perhaps most difficult – not knowing what the future will bring. Many others like you are also in camps or towns, waiting, hoping to build a new life on this continent.

I have come here with my brothers, Patriarch Bartholomew and Archbishop Ieronymos, simply to be with you and to hear your stories. We have come to call the attention of the world to this grave humanitarian crisis and to plead for its resolution. As people of faith, we wish to join our voices to speak out on your behalf. We hope that the world will heed these scenes of tragic and indeed desperate need, and respond in a way worthy of our common humanity.

God created mankind to be one family; when any of our brothers and sisters suffer, we are all affected. We all know from experience how easy it is for some to ignore other people's suffering and even to exploit their vulnerability. But we also know that these crises can bring out the very best in us. You have seen this among yourselves

and among the Greek people, who have generously responded to your needs amid their own difficulties. You have also seen it in the many people, especially the young from throughout Europe and the world, who have come to help you. Yes, so much more needs to be done! But let us thank God that in our suffering he never leaves us alone. There is always someone who can reach out and help us.

This is the message I want to leave with you today: do not lose hope! The greatest gift we can offer one another is love: a merciful look, a readiness to listen and understand, a word of encouragement, a prayer. May you share this gift with one another. We Christians love to tell the story of the Good Samaritan, a foreigner who saw a man in need and immediately stopped to help. For us, it is a story about God's mercy which is meant for everyone, for God is the All-Merciful. It is also a summons to show that same mercy to those in need. May all our brothers and sisters on this continent, like the Good Samaritan, come to your aid in the spirit of fraternity, solidarity and respect for human dignity that has distinguished its long history.

Dear brothers and sisters, may God bless all of you and, in a special way, your children, the elderly and all those who suffer in body and spirit! I embrace all of you with affection. Upon you, and those who accompany you, I invoke his gifts of strength and peace.

Archbishop Ieronymos' address

Solidarity gone bankrupt

The following is the English text of the address delivered by the Archbishop of Athens and All Greece.

It is with unique joy that we welcome today to Lesbos the Head of the Roman-Catholic Church, Pope Francis.

We consider his presence in the territory of the Church of Greece to be pivotal. Pivotal because together we bring forward before the whole world, Christian and beyond, the current tragedy of the refugee crisis.

I warmly thank His All-Holiness, and my beloved brother in Christ, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew; who blesses us with his presence as the First of Orthodoxy, uniting through his prayer, so that the voice of the Churches can be more vocal and heard at all the ends of the civilized world.

Today we unite our voices in condemning their uprooting, to decry any form of depreciation of the human person.

From this island, Lesbos, I hope to begin a worldwide movement of awareness in order for this current course to be changed by those who hold the fate of nations in their hands and bring back the peace and safety to every home, to every family, to every citizen.

Unfortunately it is not the

first time we denounce the politics that have brought these people to this impasse. We will act however, until the aberration and depreciation of the human person has stopped.

We do not need to say many words. Only those who see the eyes of those small children that we met at the refugee camps will be able to immediately recognize, in its entirety, the "bankruptcy" of humanity and solidarity that Europe has shown these last few years to these, and not only these, people.

I take pride in the Greeks, who even though going through their own struggles, are helping the refugees make their own Calvary (Golgotha) a little less ponderous, their uphill road a little less rough.

The Church of Greece and myself, personally, mourn the so many souls lost in the Aegean. We have already done a great deal, and we will continue to do so, as much as our abilities allow for us to undertake in handling this refugee crisis. I would like to close this declaration by making one request, a single call, a single provocation: for the agencies of the United Nations to finally, using the great experience that they offer, address this tragic situation that we are living. I hope that we never see children washing up on the shores of the Aegean. I hope to soon see them there, untroubled, enjoying life.



Ecumenical Patriarch's greeting

Weep for those who have died at sea

The following is the English text of the address given by Patriarch Bartholomew.

Dearest brothers and sisters, precious youth and children, we have traveled here to look into your eyes, to hear your voices, and to hold your hands. We have traveled here to tell you that we care. We have traveled here because the world has not forgotten you.

With our brothers, Pope Francis and Archbishop Ieronymos, we are here today to express our solidarity and support for the Greek people, who have welcomed and cared for you. And we are here to remind you that – even when people turn away from us – nevertheless "God is our refuge and strength; God is our help in hardship. Therefore, we shall not be afraid" (Ps 45:2-3).

We know that you have come from areas of war, hunger and suffering. We know that your hearts are full of anxiety about your families. We know that you are looking for a safer and brighter future.

We have wept as we watched the Mediterranean Sea becoming a burial ground for your loved ones. We have wept as we witnessed the sympathy and sensitivity of the people of Lesbos and other islands. But we also wept as we saw the hard-heartedness of our fellow brothers and sisters – your fellow brothers and sisters – close borders and turn away.

Those who are afraid of you have not looked at you in the eyes. Those who are afraid of you do not see your faces. Those who are afraid of you do not see your children.

They forget that dignity and freedom transcend fear and division. They forget that migration is not an issue for the Middle East and Northern Africa, for Europe and Greece. It is an issue for the world.

The world will be judged by the way it has treated you. And we will all be accountable for the way we respond to the crisis and conflict in the regions that you come from.

The Mediterranean Sea should not be a tomb. It is a place of life, a

crossroad of cultures and civilizations, a place of exchange and dialogue. In order to rediscover its original vocation, the *Mare Nostrum*, and more specifically the Aegean Sea, where we gather today, must become a sea of peace. We pray that the conflicts in the Middle East, which lie at the root of the migrant crisis, will quickly cease and that peace will be restored. We pray for all the people of this region. We would particularly like to highlight the dramatic situation of Christians in the Middle East, as well as the other ethnic and religious minorities in the region, who need urgent action if we do not want to see them disappear.

We promise that we shall never forget you. We shall never stop speaking for you. And we assure you that we will do everything to open the eyes and hearts of the world.

Peace is not the end of History. Peace is the beginning of a History tied to the future. Europe should know that better than any other continent. This beautiful island where we stand right now is just a dot on the map.

To dominate the wind and the rough sea Jesus, according to Luke, called a halt to the blow outright when the ship on which He and His disciples embarked was in danger. Eventually calm succeeded the storm.

God bless you. God keep you. And God strengthen you.



Joint Declaration denounces the tragedy of migration and pleads for refugees to be welcomed

The crisis of humanity

States are called to extend temporary asylum and to offer refugee status

The following is the English text of the Joint Declaration signed by Pope Francis, Patriarch Bartholomew and Archbishop Ieronymos during their visit to the Moria Refugee Camp.

We, Pope Francis, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and Archbishop Ieronymos of Athens and All Greece, have met on the Greek island of Lesbos to demonstrate our profound concern for the tragic situation of the numerous refugees, migrants and asylum seekers who have come to Europe fleeing from situations of conflict and, in many cases, daily threats to their survival. World opinion cannot ignore the colossal humanitarian crisis created by the spread of violence and armed conflict,

the persecution and displacement of religious and ethnic minorities, and the uprooting of families from their homes, in violation of their human dignity and their fundamental human rights and freedoms.

The tragedy of forced migration and displacement affects millions, and is fundamentally a crisis of humanity, calling for a response of solidarity, compassion, generosity and an immediate practical commitment of resources. From Lesbos, we appeal to the international community to respond with courage in facing this massive humanitarian crisis and its underlying causes, through diplomatic, political and charitable initiatives, and through coopera-

tive efforts, both in the Middle East and in Europe.

As leaders of our respective Churches, we are one in our desire for peace and in our readiness to promote the resolution of conflicts through dialogue and reconciliation. While acknowledging the efforts already being made to provide help and care to refugees, migrants and asylum seekers, we call upon all political leaders to employ every means to ensure that individuals and communities, including Christians, remain in their homelands and enjoy the fundamental right to live in peace and security. A broader international consensus and an assistance programme are urgently needed to uphold the rule of law, to defend fundamental human rights in this unsustainable situation, to protect minorities, to combat human trafficking and smuggling, to eliminate unsafe routes, such as those through the Aegean and the entire Mediterranean, and to develop safe resettlement procedures. In this way we will be able to assist those countries directly engaged in meeting the needs of so many of our suffering brothers and sisters. In particular, we express our solidarity with the people of Greece, who despite their own economic difficulties, have responded with generosity to this crisis.

Together we solemnly plead for an end to war and violence in the Middle East, a just and lasting peace and the honourable return of those forced to abandon their homes. We ask religious communities to increase their efforts to receive, assist and protect refugees of all faiths, and that religious and civil relief services work to coordinate their initiatives. For as long as the need exists, we urge all countries to extend temporary asylum, to offer refugee status to those who are eligible, to expand their relief efforts and to work with all men and women of good will for a prompt end to the conflicts in course.

Europe today faces one of its most serious humanitarian crises since the end of the Second World War. To meet this grave challenge, we appeal to all followers of Christ to be mindful of the Lord's words, on which we will one day be judged: "For I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you took me in; I was naked and you clothed me; I was sick and you visited me; I was in prison and you came to me... Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me" (Mt 25:35-36, 40).

For our part, in obedience to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, we firmly and wholeheartedly resolve to intensify our efforts to promote the full unity of all Christians. We reaffirm our conviction that "reconciliation [among Christians] involves promoting social justice within and among all peoples... Together we will do our part towards giving migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers a humane reception in Europe" (*Charta Oecumenica*, 2001). By defending the fundamental human rights of refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants, and the many marginalized people in our societies, we aim to fulfill the Churches' mission of service to the world.

Our meeting today is meant to help bring courage and hope to those seeking refuge and to all those who welcome and assist them. We urge the international community to make the protection of human lives a priority and, at every level, to support inclusive policies which extend to all religious communities. The terrible situation of all those affected by the present humanitarian crisis, including so many of our Christian brothers and sisters, calls for our constant prayer.

Lesbos, 16 April 2016

IERONYMOS II FRANCIS BARTHOLOMEW I



In his address at the port of Mytilene the Holy Father highlights that barriers only create division

Solutions worthy of humanity

Europe is the homeland of human rights, and whoever sets foot on European soil ought to sense this

The day in Lesvos concluded on early Saturday afternoon, 16 April, with a visit to the island's port for a meeting with the civil authorities, the people of the island and the Catholic community. The following is the English text of the Holy Father's address.

Mr Prime Minister,
Distinguished Authorities,
Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I have wanted to visit Lesvos ever since migrants arrived here seeking peace and dignity. Today I give thanks to God who has granted me this wish. I express my appreciation to President Pavlopoulos for inviting me, together with Patriarch Bartholomew and Archbishop Ieronymos.

I wish to express my admiration for the Greek people who, despite their own great difficulties, have kept open their hearts and their doors. Many ordinary men and wo-

men have made available the little they have and shared it with those who have lost everything. God will repay this generosity, and that of other surrounding nations who from the beginning have welcomed with great openness the large numbers of people forced to migrate.

Your island is blessed by the generous presence of many volunteers and various associations that, together with public institutions, have offered and continue to offer their assistance, visibly expressing their fraternal concern.

Today, I renew my heartfelt plea for responsibility and solidarity in the face of this tragic situation. Many migrants who have come to this island and other places in Greece are living in trying conditions, in an atmosphere of anxiety and fear, at times even of despair, due to material hardship and uncertainty for the future.

The worries expressed by institutions and people, both in Greece and in other European countries, are understandable and legitimate. We must never forget, however, that migrants, rather than simply being a statistic, are first of all persons who have faces, names and individual stories. Europe is the homeland of human rights, and whoever sets foot on European soil ought to sense this, and thus become more aware of the duty to respect and defend those rights. Unfortunately, some, including many infants, could not even make it to these



shores: they died at sea, victims of unsafe and inhumane means of transport, prey to unscrupulous thugs.

You, the residents of Lesvos, show that in these lands, the cradle of civilization, the heart of humanity continues to beat; a humanity that before all else recognizes others as brothers and sisters, a humanity that wants to build bridges and recoils from the idea of putting up walls to make us feel safer. In reality, barriers create divisions instead of promoting the true progress of peoples, and divisions sooner or later lead to confrontations.

To be truly united with those forced to flee their homelands, we need to eliminate the causes of this dramatic situation: it is not enough to limit ourselves to responding to emergencies as they arise. Instead, we need to encourage political efforts that are broader in scope and multilateral. It is necessary, above all, to build peace where war has brought destruction and death, and

to stop this scourge from spreading. To do this, resolute efforts must be made to counter the arms trade and arms trafficking, and the often hidden machinations associated with them; those who carry out acts of hatred and violence must be denied all means of support. Cooperation among nations, international organizations and humanitarian agencies must be tirelessly promoted, and those on the front lines must be assisted, not kept at a distance. In this regard, I reiterate my hope that the First World Humanitarian Summit being held in Istanbul next month will prove productive.

All of this can be achieved only if we work together: solutions to the complex issue of refugees which are worthy of humanity can and must be sought. In this regard, the contribution of Churches and religious communities is indispensable. My presence here, along with that of Patriarch Bartholomew and Archbishop Ieronymos, is a sign of our willingness to continue to cooperate so that the challenges we face today will not lead to conflict, but rather to the growth of the civilization of love.

Dear brothers and sisters, God is neither indifferent to, nor distant from the tragedies that wound humanity. He is our Father, who helps us to work for good and to reject evil. Not only does he come to our aid, but in Jesus he has shown us the way of peace. Before the evil of this world, he made himself our servant, and by his service of love he saved the world. This is the true power that brings about peace. Only those who serve with love build peace. Service makes us go beyond ourselves and care for others. It does not stand by while people and things are destroyed, but rather it protects them; service overcomes that dense pall of indifference that clouds hearts and minds.

Thank you, for you are guardians of humanity, for you care with tenderness for the body of Christ, who suffers in the least of his brothers and sisters, the hungry and the stranger, whom you have welcomed (cf. Mt 25:35).

Evharistó!



Real signs of hope for the future

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pressing all his pain. "Father, bless me, bless me!", he repeated earnestly to the Pope. There were countless refugees who, as the Pontiff passed, knelt and wept as they told him the stories of their suffering. Another refugee asked Francis for a sign of his visit, something to testify to his blessing. The Pontiff gave him a Rosary.

Some told of their journey: "We are from Syria" – "my family was kidnapped by ISIS" – "I am from Iraq, I hurt my leg, I need a doctor" – "they want to reject us, do something" – were among the expressions heard as the Pope passed among them. The first part of the event concluded with the children's singing. Afterward, the occasion took on a more formal tone with public speeches and the signing of the Joint Declaration, before returning to a more private moment at mealtime. The quick and frugal lunch – also because it is Lent for

the Orthodox – took place in a shipping container with eight guests of various ethnicities and religions. They were able to briefly share their stories of sorrow and separation, and to receive in exchange words of comfort and encouragement.

In the early afternoon the three leaders prayed together at the port of Mytilene, instilling a deep, ecumenical imprint on the truly humanitarian mission. In the port area of the capital city, the Pope first met the small local Catholic community which is very active on the reception front, as is the majority of the population of this island. Lesvos is the third largest of the Greek islands, and one of the most popular tourist destinations. Despite the economic crisis, the people have opened their arms to welcome – according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) – the more than half a million people who have landed

here between January 2015 and January 2016.

After the second public speech given by the Pontiff, an emotional ceremony was held in remembrance of the victims of migration. At the end of the pier, after Francis, Bartholomew and Ieronymos each recited a prayer, children handed each of them a wreath of flowers and laurel which they tossed into the sea, in silent remembrance of those who had set out from Asia or from the Near East: not only from Syria but also from Iraq and Afghanistan. Memory then returned to the Africans who died at Lampedusa, the first historic step on the journey of mercy, of this itinerant magisterium that the Pope has continued in many other parts of the world – for example in America, on the border between Mexico and the United States – continuing to call mankind to responsibility and to solidarity in regard to less fortunate brothers and sisters.

Prayers for the victims

We are all migrants

Before departing from Lesvos, Archbishop Ieronymos, Patriarch Bartholomew and Pope Francis memorialized the victims of migration. Each recited a prayer and threw a laurel wreath into the sea. The following is the English text of the Pontiff's prayer which he recited in Italian.

Merciful God, we pray to you for all the men, women and children who have died after leaving their homelands in search of a better life. Though many of their graves bear no name, to you each one is known, loved and cherished. May we never forget them, but honour their sacrifice with deeds more than words. We entrust to you all those who have made this journey, enduring fear, uncertainty and humiliation, in order to reach a place of safety and hope.

Just as you never abandoned your Son as he was brought to a safe place by Mary and Joseph, so now be close to these, your sons and daughters, through our tenderness and protection.

In caring for them may we seek a world where none are forced to leave their home and where all can live in freedom, dignity and peace.

Merciful God and Father of all, wake us from the slumber of indifference, open our eyes to their suffering, and free us from the insensitivity born of worldly comfort and self-centredness.

Inspire us, as nations, communities and individuals, to see that those who come to our shores are our brothers and sisters. May we share with them the blessings we have received from your hand, and recognize that together, as one human family, we are all migrants, journeying in hope to you, our true home, where every tear will be wiped away, where we will be at peace and safe in your embrace.

The following is Archbishop Ieronymos' prayer which he delivered in English.

O God of all spirits and flesh, Who has trodden down death, destroying the power of the devil, bestowing life on Your world to the soul of Your servants who departed this life, do You Yourself, O Lord, give rest in a place of light, in a place of green pasture, in a place of refreshment, from where pain and sorrow and mourning are fled away. Every sin by them committed in thought, word, or deed, do You as our good and loving God forgive, seeing that there is no man that shall live and sin not, for You alone are without sin: Your righteousness, and Your law is truth.

For You are the Resurrection, the Life, and the Repose of Your servants, O Christ our God; and to You do we send up Glory, as to

Your Eternal Father and Your All-Holy, Good, and Life-creating Spirit, both now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

The following is Patriarch Bartholomew's prayer of supplication, which he delivered in English.

Lord of mercy, compassion and all comfort, we pray to You for our brothers in difficult circumstances and we offer to Your Goodness: Nurture the infants; instruct the youth; strengthen the aged; give courage to the faint hearted; reunite those separated; sail with those who sail; travel with those who travel; defend the widows; protect the orphans; liberate the captives; heal the sick. Remember, O God, those who are in mines, in exile, in harsh labour, and those in every kind of affliction, necessity, or distress; and

all those who entreat Your loving kindness; those who love us and those who hate us; and pour out upon all Your rich mercy, granting them their petitions for salvation. Again we pray, Lord of life and of death, grant eternal repose to the souls of Your departed servants, those who lost their lives during their exodus from war-torn regions and during their journeys to places of safety, peace and prosperity. For You, Lord, are the helper of the helpless, the hope of the hopeless, the saviour of the afflicted, the haven of the voyager, and the physician of the sick. Be all things to all, You who know each person, his requests, his household, and his need. Deliver this island, O Lord, and every city and country, from famine, plague, earthquake, flood, fire, sword, invasion of foreign enemies, and civil war. Amen.



On the return flight from Lesvos the Pope shows the gifts he received from young refugees

Even the sun is weeping



During the return flight after his visit to the island of Lesvos, the Pope's traditional in-flight press conference, early Saturday afternoon, 16 April, was introduced by Fr Federico Lombardi, Director of the Holy See Press Office. Fr Lombardi first read a statement regarding the Pontiff's gesture of welcoming three families of Syrian refugees, all of whom are Muslim, and then the conversation between Pope Francis and the journalists began. The following is a translation of the Pope's answers, who opened the dialogue with the following words: "First of all, I would like to thank you for this day of work, which was very intense for me, all too intense... and for you too, certainly. Please, Ms...."

Inés San Martín, from 'Crux', asked in Spanish whether the agreement between the European Union and Turkey on the question of refugees in Greece was merely a political gesture. She then requested a comment on the morning's brief encounter at Santa Marta with U.S. presidential candidate Bernie Sanders.

No, first there is no political speculation because I was not very familiar with these agreements between Turkey and Greece. I read the newspapers..., but this is

something simply humane [referring to the initiative of welcoming the three refugee families]. It is a humanitarian matter. It was an inspiration that actually came to one of my collaborators a week ago, and I immediately accepted because I saw that the Spirit was speaking. Everything was done properly: they are coming with the proper documents; the three governments – Vatican City State, the Italian government and the Greek government – have investigated everything, they looked at everything and they granted the visas. They are being hosted by the Vatican: the Vatican, with the cooperation of the Sant'Egidio Community, will find them jobs, if there are any, or support them.... They are guests of the Vatican, and they are joining two Syrian families who have already been welcomed in the two Vatican parishes.

Second, this morning, when I was leaving, Senator Sanders, who had come to the conference of the *Centesimus Annus* Foundation, was there. He knew that I was going out at that time and he was kind enough to greet me. I greeted him and I shook hands with him, his wife, and another couple with him who were staying at Santa Marta, because all the members were stay-

ing at Santa Marta, except for the two president participants who, I believe, stayed at their embassies. When I went down, he introduced himself and greeted me, a handshake and nothing more. This is good manners; it is good manners and not getting involved in politics. If anyone thinks that saying hello to someone is getting involved in politics, I would suggest they find a psychiatrist! (with a laugh)

Franca Giansoldati, from 'Il Messaggero', pointed out that the Pope often speaks of "welcoming" and less of "integration". She then referred to the ghetto neighbourhoods of European cities, where Muslim immigrants most struggle to integrate. She asked why Francis gave preference to three entirely Muslim families.

I did not choose between Christians and Muslims. These three families had their papers in order, the necessary documents, and so it was possible. There were, for example, two Christian families on the first list who did not have their papers in order. It is not a privilege. All 12 of them are children of God. The "privilege" is being children of God: this is true. Regarding integration: what you are saying is very intelligent. Thank you for saying it. You said a word that in our current culture seems to be forgotten, after the war.... Today there are ghettos. Some of the terrorists who have committed acts of terrorism – some – are children and grandchildren of people born in these countries, in Europe. What happened? There was no policy of integration and to me this is fundamental; indeed so much that you see that in the Post-Synodal Exhortation on the Family – this is another issue – one of the three

Even the sun is weeping

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

pastoral dimensions for families experiencing difficulties is integration in the life of the Church. Today, Europe must resume this capacity that it has always had, of integrating. Because the nomads, the Normans and many peoples came to Europe and Europe has integrated them and enriched its culture. I think that we need to learn about, and to educate in, integration. Thank you.

Elena Pinardi, from the 'European Broadcasting Union' (EBU), asked whether with the reinforcements at the borders of European countries, the checks and the actual deployment of troops could mean the end of the Schengen Agreement and of the European dream.

I don't know. I understand the governments, and the peoples, who have a certain fear. I understand this and we must be very responsible in our welcome. One aspect of that responsibility is this: how we can integrate these people and ourselves. I have always said that building walls is not a solution. We saw one fall in the last century. It resolves nothing. We must build bridges. But bridges are built intelligently, with dialogue, with integration. That is why I can understand a certain apprehension. But for a country to close its borders resolves nothing, because in the long run it harms its own people. Europe urgently needs to create policies of welcoming and integration, of growth, of employment, of economic reform.... All these things are bridges that will lead us not to build walls. I completely understand this fear; but after what I have seen – I am changing the subject, but I want to say it today – and what you too have seen, in that refugee camp... brought tears to our eyes! The children.... I brought with me to show you: the children gave me many drawings. Here is one. What do the children want? Peace, because they are suffering. There are educational courses there, in the camp.... What those children have seen! Look at this other one: They also saw a little boy drown. The children have this in their heart! Truly, today it made

us weep. This boy from Afghanistan drew the same thing: here the boat that came from Afghanistan is turning toward Greece. These children have this in their memory! It will take time to process this. Look at this one: the sun is watching and weeping. But if the sun is able to weep, so can we: a tear would do us good.

Fanny Carrier, from 'France Presse', asked why the Pope does not differentiate between migrants fleeing from war and those fleeing from hunger, and whether Europe can accept all of the poverty of the world.

It's true. I said today in my speech: "some flee from war, others flee from hunger". Both of these are the effects of exploitation, also of the earth itself.... A government leader from Africa told me, a month ago, more or less, that the first decision of his government was to reforest, because the land had become barren after the exploitation of deforestation. Good things need to be done on both fronts. But some people flee hunger and others war. I would invite arms traffickers – because weapons are being produced, up to a certain point there are agreements... but the dealers, those who traffic in order to carry on wars in various places, for example in Syria: those who give weapons to the various groups – I would invite these traffickers to spend a day in that camp. I think this would be healthy for them!

Néstor Pongutá, from 'W Radio Colombia', asked whether the Pope's feelings had changed between the time of his departure for Lesbos, when he had spoken of the sad journey, and the time of his return, marked by the reception of 12 refugees.

I am going to plagiarize! I'll answer with a phrase that is not mine. The same question was asked of Mother Teresa: "All this effort, all this work, only to help people to die.... What you are doing is useless! The sea is so great!". Mother Teresa answered: "It is a drop of water in the sea! But after this drop of water the sea will not be the same!". That is how I would respond. It is a



small gesture. But one of those small gestures that we must make, everyone, men and women, to reach out to those in need.

Joshua McElwee, from the 'National Catholic Reporter', questioned the Pope on the economic policy of austerity.

The word austerity has a different meaning depending on which point of view you take: in economic terms it means a component of a plan; in political terms it means something else; in spiritual and Christian terms yet another. When I speak of austerity, I am speaking of austerity in comparison with waste. I heard it said at the FAO – I think it was in a meeting of the FAO – that with what we throw away from our tables all the hunger in the world could be sated. And we, in our homes, how much we waste, how much we waste without wanting to! This is the throw-away culture, the culture of waste. I speak of austerity in that sense, in the Christian sense. Let us stop for a moment and live a little more austere.

Francisco Romero, from 'Rome Reports', shifted focus to the crisis of immigrants arriving in the United States, from Mexico and throughout Latin America.

It's the same thing. It is the same, because they arrive there fleeing from hunger instead. It is the same problem. In Ciudad Juárez I celebrated Mass 100 metres, perhaps less, from the fence. On the other side there were about 50 bishops from the United States and a stadium with 50 thousand people following the Mass on the jumbo screen; on our side, in Mexico, there was a camp full of people.... It is the same. They come to Mexico from Central America. You remember that two months ago, there was a conflict with Nicaragua because Nicaragua did not want refugees to pass through: it was resolved. They took them by airplane to the other country without passing through Nicaragua. It is a worldwide problem. I spoke about it there, to Mexican Bishops; I asked them to take care of the refugees.

Francis Rocca, from 'The Wall Street Journal', mentioned the recent Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation and

asked whether or not there has been any change in the discipline concerning reception of the sacraments by the divorced and remarried.

I could say "yes" and leave it at that. But that would be too brief a response. I recommend that all of you read the presentation made by Cardinal Schönborn, a great theologian. He is a member of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and he knows the Church's teaching very well. Your question will find its answer in that presentation. Thank you. [*For the Cardinal's presentation, see last week's edition.]

Jean-Marie Guénois, from the French daily 'Le Figaro', continued on the same subject, noting that it was addressed only in one footnote, n. 351, of 'Amoris Laetitia'.

Look, one of the recent Popes, speaking about the Council, said that there were two Councils: Vatican II, which took place in St Peter's Basilica, and another Council which took place in the media. When I called the first Synod, most of the media were concerned with one question: Will the divorced and remarried be able to receive communion? Since I am not a saint, this was somewhat annoying to me, and even made me a bit sad. Because I think: those media that say all these things, don't they realize that this is not the important issue? Don't they realize that the family, all over the world, is in crisis? And the family is the basis of society! Don't they realize that young people don't want to get married? Don't they realize that the declining birth rate in Europe is enough to make us weep? Don't they realize that the shortage of jobs and employment opportunities is forcing fathers and mothers to take two jobs and children to grow up by themselves and not learn how to talk with their mothers and fathers? These are the big issues! I do not remember that footnote, but surely if something of that sort is in a footnote it is because it was said in the *Evangelii Gaudium*. I don't recall the number, but surely that is the case.

Thank you for being with me. Truly I feel at ease with you. Thank you very much. Thank you for your company.



During the return flight the Pope greeted the Syrian refugees he escorted back to Italy.

Morning Mass at the Domus Sanctae Marthae

Tuesday, 12 April

Two kinds of persecution

There are two types of Christian persecution, the Pope said on Tuesday morning, during Mass at Santa Marta. There is the explicit kind – to which he related to the martyrs killed at Easter in Pakistan – and the sort of persecution that is polite, disguised as culture, modernity and progress, and which ends up taking away man's freedom and even the right to conscientious objection. But in the very suffering of persecution, Francis recalled, Christians know that the Lord is always at their side.

For his meditation the Pontiff drew inspiration from the first reading, taken from the Acts of the Apostles (7:51-8:1). We heard about “the martyrdom of Stephen”, he explained. “The tradition of the Church calls him the Protomartyr, the first martyr of the Christian community”. However, even “before him there had been child martyrs” who had suffered persecution under Herod. “From that time until today there have been martyrs in the Church, there have been and there are”. There are “men and women persecuted simply for confessing and for saying that Jesus Christ is Lord: this is prohibited!”. Indeed, this confession “at certain times, in certain places, provokes persecution”.

This is clearly manifest, the Pope stated, “in the passage of the Acts of the Apostles that we will read tomorrow: after the martyrdom of Stephen, a great persecution broke out in Jerusalem”. Then, “all the Christians fled, only the Apostles remained”. Thus, persecution, Francis said, “is the daily bread of the Church: after all, Jesus said so”.

When we are tourists in Rome, the Pope continued, “we go to the Colosseum and think of the martyrs killed there by lions”. However, martyrs are not limited to those in the Colosseum. In reality, martyrs “are men and women of every day: present day, with Easter Sunday just three weeks ago”. Francis' thought went to “those Christians who were celebrating Easter in Pakistan”. They were “martyred just for celebrating the Risen Christ”. And “thus the history of the Church continues with her martyrs”. Because “the Church is the community of believers, the community of confessors, of those who profess that Jesus is Christ. Indeed, the Church is the community of martyrs”.

Persecution, the Pope noted, “is one of the characteristics, one of the traits of Church, pervading her entire history”. And “persecution is cruel, like that of Stephen, like that of our Pakistani brothers and sisters three weeks ago”. It is cruel “the way Saul was cruel at the death of Stephen”. Saul “went into houses, seized Christians and took them away to be judged”.

There is, however, also “another kind of persecution that is not often spoken about”, Francis noted. The first form of persecution “is due to confessing the name of Christ” and it is thus “a clear, explicit type of persecution”. The other kind of persecution is “disguised as culture, disguised as modernity, disguised as

progress: it is a kind of – I would say somewhat ironically – polite persecution”. You can recognize “when someone is persecuted not for confessing Christ's name, but for wanting to demonstrate the values of the Son of God”. Thus, it is a kind of “persecution against God the Creator in the person of his children”.

In this way “we see every day that the powerful make laws that force people to take this path, and a nation that does not follow this modern collection of laws, or at least that does not want to have them in its legislation, is accused, is politely persecuted”. This is a form of “persecution that takes away man's freedom”, and even the right to “conscientious objection! God made us free, but this kind of persecution takes away freedom!”. Thus, “if you don't do this, you will be punished: you'll lose your job and many other things, or you'll be set aside”.

“This is the persecution of the world”, the Pontiff continued. And “this persecution even has a leader”. In the persecution of Stephen, “the leaders were the scribes, the doctors of the law, the high priests”. On the other hand, “Jesus named the leader of polite persecution: the prince of this world”. We see him “when the powerful want to impose attitudes, laws against the dignity of the children of God, persecute them and oppose God the Creator: it is the great apostasy”. Thus, “Christian life continues with these two kinds of persecution”, but also with the certainty that “the Lord promised not to distance himself from us: ‘Be careful, be careful! Don't fall into the worldly spirit. Be careful! But go forward, I will be with you’”.

In his concluding prayer, Francis asked the Lord for “the grace to understand that a Christian's path must always persevere amid both kinds of persecution: a Christian is a martyr, that is, a witness, one who

must bear witness to Christ who has saved us”. This means “on the journey of life, bearing witness to God the Father, who created us”. On this path a Christian “must suffer many times: this brings so much suffering”. But “such is our life: Jesus is always beside us, with the consolation of the Holy Spirit”. And “this is our strength”.

Thursday, 14 April

Docile and joyful

“Speak Lord, I am listening”. The Pope suggested we address God with these simple words of Samuel “when we have doubt, when we don't know or when we simply want to pray”. The words are also an antidote to surrendering to the temptation to resist the Holy Spirit. During Mass at Santa Marta on Thursday, Francis recommended that we be not afraid when the Holy Spirit is at work and upsets our plans. Because it is joy, certainly not adhering to the letter of the law, that characterizes the life of a Christian who is docile to the work of the Spirit.

Francis began his homily by referring to the day's passage from the Acts of the Apostles (8:26-40), in which “the Holy Spirit” is “the main character”. It isn't Philip or the Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the queen. After all, the Pope added, “in the readings the Church has offered us in these days, it is clearly seen that it is the Spirit, the One who does things. It is the Spirit who creates the Church and makes her grow; this is the work of the Spirit”.

“In recent times”, the Pope said, “the Church has shown how capable it is of resisting the Spirit: closed, hardened, foolish hearts that resist the Spirit”. There were people who, even on seeing things – such as “the healing of the lame man by Peter

and John at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple; the words and the great things done by Stephen – they were closed to these signs of the Spirit, and they resisted the Spirit”. Moreover, they even “tried to justify this resistance with a so-called faithfulness to the letter of the law”.

Francis continued, “today, and tomorrow too, the Church proposes the opposite: it is not resistance to the Spirit but docility to the Spirit that is the proper attitude of a Christian”. It is a matter of “being docile to the Spirit, and this docility enables the Spirit to operate and go forth to build the Church”.

Returning to the day's passage from the Acts of the Apostles, Francis highlighted that we are dealing with “a bishop, Philip, one of the Apostles, busy as all bishops are, and certainly he had plans to work that day”. But “the Spirit said: ‘Rise and do this instead, leave the episcopate and go there’”. Philip “obeyed: he was docile to the voice of the Spirit” and so, “left all that he had to do that day and went” where he was told”. So it was that the Spirit called him to go “to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza”, giving him no explanation: “Go!”.

Along the road, Philip met “a gentleman, an Ethiopian proselyte: he was the minister of the economy, a great man of the queen of Ethiopia”. That man, the Pope explained, “had come to worship God: he was worshipping God and reading Scripture”. It was once again the Spirit who told Philip to go up to that chariot. And again, “he obeyed, docile to the word of the Lord”.

The Acts of the Apostles tell us that “Philip heard him reading from Isaiah, and asked, ‘Do you understand what you are reading?’. But his interlocutor answered him: ‘No, how can I, unless someone guides me?’”. And thus, “he invited Philip to climb aboard the chariot and Philip explained what the prophet Isaiah had prophesied: namely, Jesus Christ”. In a word, Philip “explained the salvation of the Gospel”.

“Perhaps this explanation was a bit long”, the Pope stated, “but they were on a journey, surely talking. The Ethiopian asked questions, Philip answered, and the Spirit also worked in the heart of the Ethiopian man”. Indeed, the Spirit “offered the gift of faith: this man felt something new in his heart”. Again, the Pope said, “continuing along the road, in that discussion, they came to some water and, being a practical man, he had a very practical, concrete profession, he said: ‘See, here is water! What is to prevent my being baptized?’”. Thus, “he accepted the faith and requested Baptism: he was docile! Docility to the Spirit!”.

This is the story of “two men: one preached the Gospel and the other knew nothing of Jesus”, but in whom “the Spirit had sown the seed of healthy curiosity, not the curiosity of gossip”. And “the Spirit gave him the gift of faith”. Francis then explained that “after the ceremony of this Baptism, we might think that they both continued to talk, to



José Clemente Orozco, “The Martyrdom of St Stephen” (1944)

Morning Mass at the Domus Sanctae Marthae

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speak. No, when they came up out of the water", Scripture says, "the Spirit of the Lord caught up Philip: right away! And the Eunuch saw him no more". The Acts tell us that "Philip, docile, was found at Azotus, preaching the Gospel". Of course, this "had not been in his plans, but he was docile to the Spirit". So, "whatever happened to the Eunuch? He saw him no more! Did he weep? No!". In fact, Scripture tells us that he "went on his way rejoicing". This is "the joy of the Spirit, of docility to the Spirit".

In recent days, Francis recalled, "we heard what resistance to the Spirit does". Today, instead, "we have an example of two men who were docile to the voice of the Spirit". The distinguishing sign "is joy", because "docility to the Spirit is a source of joy". This is why it is important to tell ourselves, "I would like to do something, this thing, but I feel that the Lord is asking something else of me: I will find joy there, where there is the call of the Spirit!".

The Pope also proposed "a beautiful prayer to ask for this docility". We find it, he explained, "in the First Book of Samuel: young Samuel was asleep and he heard the call and thought it was the priest, Eli". So, Samuel "arose right away and went to him: 'Here I am!'. But Eli told him that he hadn't called. Samuel, Francis recalled, then "returned to bed" but he heard the call again for a second and then a third time. Eli, said the Pope, "was not a good priest, but he understood the things of God: he perceived that it was the Lord who called!". Therefore he said to Samuel: "Go lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, Lord, for thy servant hears'". This, the Pope said, "is a beautiful prayer to repeat: 'Speak Lord, I am listening'".

Friday, 15 April

When a man is down

"Rise and go", the Lord said to Saul, who had fallen to the ground on the road to Damascus. He likewise sent Ananias to baptize the converted persecutor. "Rise and go", the Pope said, is also a call to each of us, because a Christian "must be on his feet with his head held high", while "a man with a closed heart is a man who is down". For Mass at Santa Marta on Friday, with a meditation on the biblical account of the conversion of Saul, taken from the Acts of the Apostles (9:1-20), Pope Francis continued to discuss the importance of docility to the action of the Holy Spirit, and to reflect "on the attitude of those people who have a closed heart, a hard heart, an arrogant heart".

The previous day's liturgy had highlighted how both the Apostle Philip and the queen's minister opened their hearts to the voice of the Spirit". This Friday of the Third Week of Easter, then brings us the story of Saul, "the story of a man who lets God change his heart: the transformation from a closed, hard,

misguided heart to a man with a heart docile to the Holy Spirit".

Saul, the Pontiff explained, "was present at the martyrdom of Stephen", and he "agreed". He was "a strong, brave young man, zealous in his faith, but with a closed heart". In fact not only "did he not want to hear about Jesus Christ" but he went even further and began "to persecute Christians". Thus, confident, he asked permission to "do the same" in Damascus.

While he was travelling, the Pope continued, "suddenly a light from heaven flashed about him". Then "he fell to the ground and heard a voice". This man, "the strong, confident Saul, was on the ground", in other words, he was "down". And as he was down, Francis continued, he "understood his truth; he understood that he was not a man as God wanted, because God created us, all of us, to be on our feet, heads held high".

At this point the Lord said "a key phrase, the same one he had said to Philip in giving him the mission to go and find the Ethiopian proselyte: 'You, rise and go!'. Moreover, the Lord said to Saul, a confident man who knew it all: "enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do". It was as if to say: "you still have to learn". It was humiliation, and that's not all.

Rising from the ground Saul "realized he was blind" and thus "let himself be guided". Here, the Pope remarked, "his heart began to open", as he was compelled to be led by the hand to Damascus. "This man was down", and he "understood immediately that he had to accept this humiliation". In this regard the Pontiff explained that "humiliation" is "precisely the way to open the heart". Indeed, "when the Lord sends us humiliation or allows humiliation to come to us, it is precisely for this reason: so the heart may be opened, may be docile" and "be converted to the Lord Jesus".

The narrative then moves on to Ananias. To him too, the Lord said: "Go. Rise and go". So the disciple "departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord has sent me that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit'. This key phrase embraces a fundamental detail: "the main character in these stories", Francis pointed out, "is not the doctors of the law, nor Stephen, nor Philip, nor the eunuch, nor Saul... it is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a protagonist of the Church who leads the People of God".

At this point in the Acts we read that "something like scales fell" from Saul's eyes "and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized". His "hardness of heart", with the experience of humiliation, became "docility to the Holy Spirit". Saul, "who believed that he was the one with the truth, and who had persecuted Christians, received the Lord's grace to see and understand his truth: 'You are a down and you must rise!'".

It is a lesson for everyone: "it is beautiful", the Pope said, "to see that the Lord is able to change

hearts and make a hard, stubborn heart become a heart docile to the Spirit". However, Francis added, it is important that "we not forget those key words". First and foremost: "Rise", because "a Christian must be on his feet with his head held high". Then: "Go", because "a Christian must go, must not be closed in on himself". Finally, "let yourself be led", as did Paul who "let himself be led like a child; entrusted himself to the hands of another, whom he did not know". There is, in all of this, the Pontiff explained, "the work of the Holy Spirit".

Monday, 18 April

The only way

The instructions for Christian life are quite simple. There is no need to go searching for advice: suffice it follow a voice, as sheep do with their shepherd. The image of Jesus the Good Shepherd was the focus of Pope Francis' homily during Mass at Santa Marta on Monday morning.

The liturgy of the day offered a sort of "echo of the readings" of the Fourth Sunday of Easter, which is called "Good Shepherd Sunday, in which Jesus presents himself as the 'Good Shepherd'". Commenting on this theme in the Gospel of John (10:1-10), the Pontiff highlighted "three realities" on which he chose "to reflect a bit: the door, the way, and the voice".

First the "door". The Gospel passage presents Jesus' words: "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber". This is the first image, Francis emphasized: "He is the door: the door by which to enter the sheepfold is Jesus. There is no other". It is worth noting, the Pope said, that Jesus always spoke to the people using "simple images". Indeed, "those people all knew what a shepherd's life was, because they saw it every day". Therefore those who heard him understood very well: "the sheepfold is entered only through the door". Those who would rather enter the fold "through the window or by some other means are criminals". The Gospel defines them as thieves or robbers.

Thus it is all very clear: "One cannot enter into eternal life through another way that is not the door, that is, which is not Jesus". And, the Pontiff added, the Lord "is the door of our life - and not only of eternal life but also of our daily life". Thus, for example, any decision can be taken "in the name of Jesus, through the door of Jesus". Or, to use "simple language", one can take it by "smuggling". But the Lord "speaks clearly". The sheepfold is entered "only through the door, which is Jesus".

The Gospel of John continues, and the words of the Lord offer another important element: that of the "way". Indeed, we read that the gatekeeper opens the door to the shepherd, that "the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he

has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him".

Here, Francis offered a second key word: "way: following Jesus". This too involves everyday life: indeed, we speak of the "way of life, of everyday life", which "is following Jesus". Here too the instruction is clear: "Do not go astray!", the Pope advised. It is Jesus "who is the door through which we enter and through which we exit with him to follow the way of life". It is Jesus who "shows us the way". Thus, "those who follow Jesus do not go astray".

The direction is clear, but there are many occasions to go astray, so the Pontiff hypothesized a situation that might present itself: "Yes, Father, but things are difficult.... Many times I do not clearly see what to do.... They told me that there was a fortune teller and I went there; I went to a fortune teller and he read my cards...". The Pope's advice was immediate: "If you do this, you aren't following Jesus! You are following someone else, who gives you another, different way", because "there is no one else who can point the way".

This describes a problem that Jesus warned us about: "There will be others who will say: the way of the Messiah is this, this.... Do not listen! Do not listen to them. I am the way!". This, the Pope said, is certain: "If we follow him we are not mistaken".

Finally, the third word: "voice". The sheep follow Jesus "because they know his voice". The Pontiff expanded on the concept to prevent any misunderstanding: "Know the voice of Jesus! Do not imagine that I am speaking about an apparition, that Jesus will come and say to you: 'Do this'. No, no!". Someone might ask: "Father, how can I recognize Jesus' voice? And also protect myself from the voice of those who are not Jesus, who come in through the window, who are robbers, who destroy, who deceive?". Once again the recipe is simple, with three instructions. First of all, Francis suggested, "you will find Jesus' voice in the Beatitudes". Therefore, those who teach "a way contrary to the Beatitudes are those who have entered through the window: they are not Jesus!". Then, Jesus' voice can be recognized in those who "speak to us about the works of mercy. For example, in Chapter 25 of St Matthew". Thus, the Pope clarified, "if someone tells you what Jesus says there, it is the voice of Jesus". Last, the third indication: "you can recognize the voice of Jesus when they teach you to say 'Father', that is, when they teach you to pray the Our Father".

The Pontiff's conclusion: "Christian life is so simple! Jesus is the door. He leads us along the way and we recognize his voice in the Beatitudes, in the works of mercy and when he teaches us to say 'Father'". The Pope added a prayer: "that the Lord help us to understand this image of Jesus, this icon: the shepherd, who is the door, points the way and teaches us to hear his voice".



The Pope ordains eleven men to the priesthood

By word and example

On the Fourth Sunday of Easter, 17 April, the World Day of Prayer for Vocations, Pope Francis ordained 11 men to the priesthood in St Peter's Basilica. The Pope delivered the homily prescribed by the Roman Rite, adding a few of his own thoughts. The following is the English text from the Roman Rite, which has been edited to conform to the Holy Father's words.

Beloved brothers, these men, our brothers and sons, are now to be raised to the order of priests. It is true that God has made his entire people a royal priesthood in Christ. But our High Priest, Jesus Christ, also chose some of his followers to carry out publicly in the Church a priestly ministry in his name on behalf of mankind. He was sent by the Father, and he in turn sent the apostles into the world; through them and their successors, the bishops, he continues his work as Teacher, Priest, and Shepherd.

Our brothers have seriously considered this step and are now to be ordained to the priesthood in the presbyteral order. They are to serve Christ the Teacher, Priest, and



Shepherd in their ministry which is to make his own body, the Church, grow into the people of God, a holy temple of the Holy Spirit.

They are called to share in the priesthood of the bishops and to be molded into the likeness of Christ, the supreme and eternal Priest. By consecration they will be made true priests of the New Testament, to preach the Gospel, sustain God's people, and celebrate the liturgy, above all, the Lord's sacrifice.

You, beloved sons and brothers, are now to be advanced to the order of the presbyterate. You must apply your energies to the duty of teaching in the name of Christ, the

chief Teacher. Share with all mankind the word of God, the word of God that you have received with joy. Remember your history, the gift of the word that the Lord has given you through your mother, grandmother – as St Paul said – the catechists and the entire Church. Meditate on the law of God, believe what you read, teach what you believe, and put into practice what you teach.

Let the doctrine you teach be true nourishment for the people of God. Let the example of your life attract the followers of Christ, so that by word and action – word and actions go together – you may build up the house which is God's Church. In the same way you must carry out your mission of sanctifying in the power of Christ. Your ministry will perfect the spiritual sacrifice of the faithful by uniting it to Christ's sacrifice, the sacrifice which is offered sacramentally through your hands.

Know what you are doing and imitate the mystery you celebrate. In the memorial of the Lord's death and resurrection, make every effort to die in sin and to walk in the new life of Christ. Bring the death of Christ within yourselves and walk with Christ in new life. Without the cross you will never find the true Christ; a cross without Christ makes no sense.

When you baptize, you will bring men and women into the people of God. In the sacrament of penance, you will forgive sins in the name of Christ and the Church. Please, in the name of the same Jesus Christ, the Lord, and in the name of the Church, I ask you to be merciful, very merciful. With holy oil you will relieve and console the sick. You will celebrate the liturgy and offer thanks and praise to God throughout the day, praying not only for the people of God but for the whole world.

Remember that you are chosen from among God's people. Chosen, do not forget that you are chosen! The Lord called you one by one. You are chosen and appointed to act for them in relation to God. Do your part in the work of Christ the Priest with genuine joy and love, and attend to the concerns of Christ before your own.

United with the bishop and subject to him, seek to bring the faithful together into a unified family and to lead them effectively, through Christ and in the Holy Spirit, to God the Father. Always remember the example of the Good Shepherd who came not to be served but to serve, and to seek out and rescue those who were lost.

Audience with the Pontifical Scots College

Time of martyrdom

Recalling the sacrifice of Jesuit saint John Ogilvie four centuries ago, Pope Francis underlined that "we too are living in a time of martyrdom, and in the midst of a culture so often hostile to the Gospel". The Holy Father received the Pontifical Scots College on Thursday, 14 April. After the Archbishop of Glasgow's greeting, the Pontiff urged the seminarians to have "the same selfless spirit" as their predecessors in Scotland. The following is the English text of the Pope's address.



Dear Archbishop Tartaglia,
Archbishop Cushley,
Dear Members of Staff
and Seminarians of the Pontifical Scots College,

I am pleased to welcome you today, as together we commemorate the 400th anniversary of the transformation of the Pontifical Scots College into a seminary for priestly formation. This anniversary is significant not only for the many years it marks, but even more so because we recall the fidelity of the 16 men who, on 10 March 1616, were resolute in their determination to return to Scotland as priests to preach the Gospel. That decision was born of a martyr's blood.

"Love Jesus above all things! Let your 'yes' be marked by a firm resolve to give yourselves generously to your priestly formation"

The martyrdom of St John Ogilvie, which was meant to silence the Catholic faith, instead was an impetus for its promotion and for defending the Church's freedom to remain in communion with the See of Peter. The "yes" proclaimed by the 16 men 400 years ago was eloquent not simply for their good intentions, but rather because they persevered, and prepared themselves in every way, returning to Scotland to face the hardships that awaited them, even if it meant becoming martyrs themselves. Theirs was a life which sought the joys and peace that Christ alone could offer. Looking out at you today, I can see that, through the grace of God, the martyrdom of St John

and the courage of those 16 men has borne fruit in your beloved homeland.

We too are living in a time of martyrdom, and in the midst of a culture so often hostile to the Gospel. I urge you to have that same selfless spirit as your predecessors did. Love Jesus above all things! Let your "yes" be marked by a firm resolve to give yourselves generously to your priestly formation, so that your years in Rome may prepare you to return to Scotland and to offer your lives completely. If you have this same passion as your

brothers from 400 years ago, that same love for the Church and Scotland, you will honour the history and sacrifices we recall today. You will also become in this moment a sign to the Scottish people, especially the youth, if you encounter them in their everyday lives, if you reach out to those who are furthest from Christ. Show them, each and every one, that God is always with us and that his mercy endures forever.

In this Jubilee of Mercy, I pray that the Lord may grant you the courage and grace to be faithful to his will, by being dedicated to prayer, by loving Jesus, especially in the Holy Eucharist, and by entrusting yourselves to the care of Mary our Mother. Upon you and all the faithful in Scotland, I willingly impart my Apostolic Blessing as a pledge of strength and peace in the Lord. And I ask you please not to forget to pray for me. Thank you! God bless you all!



"I saw so much sadness". These few words tell of the suffering Pope Francis saw at the refugee camp on Lesbos. On Sunday, 17 April, the day after his visit to the Greek island, the Holy Father dedicated his reflection at the Regina Caeli in St Peter's Square to the Gospel image of the Good Shepherd. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's words which were delivered in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Good morning!

Today's Gospel (Jn 10:27-30) offers us some of Jesus' expressions during the feast of the dedication of the Temple of Jerusalem, which is celebrated at the end of December. He is found on the Temple grounds, and perhaps that enclosed sacred space suggested to Him the image of the sheepfold and the shepherd. Jesus is presented as "the Good Shepherd", and says, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand" (vv. 27-28). These words help us to understand that no one can call himself a follower of Jesus, if he does not listen to His voice. And this "listening" should not be understood in a superficial way, but in an engaging way, to the point of making possible a true mutual understanding, from which one can come to a generous following, expressed in the words, "and they follow me" (v. 27). It is a matter of listening not only with ears, but listening with the heart!

And so, the image of the shepherd and the sheep indicates the close relationship that Jesus wants to



The Holy Father tells of the martyrdom of victims and the tears of survivors

I saw so much pain

establish with each one of us. He is our guide, our teacher, our friend, our model, but above all he is our Saviour. In fact, the following expressions from the Gospel passage affirm, "I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand" (v. 28). Who can say that? Only Jesus, because the "hand" of Jesus is one thing with the "hand" of the Father, and the Father is "greater than all" (cf. v. 29).

These words communicate to us a sense of absolute security and immense tenderness. Our life is fully secure in the hands of Jesus and the Father, which are a single thing: a unique love, a unique mercy, revealed once and for all in the sacrifice of the Cross. To save the lost sheep which we all are, the Shepherd became lamb, and let himself be immolated so as to take upon himself and to take away the sin of the world. In this way he has given us life, life in abundance (cf. Jn 10:10)! This mystery is renewed, in an always surprising humility, on the Eucharistic table. It is there that the sheep gather to nourish themselves; it is there that they become one, among themselves and with the Good Shepherd.

Because of this we are no longer afraid: our life is now saved from perdition. Nothing and no one can take us from the hands of Jesus, because nothing and no one can over-

Many of them were children, some of them – these children – witnessed the death of their parents, companions, some of whom had drowned in the sea

come his love. Jesus' love is invincible. The evil one, the great enemy of God and of his creatures, attempts in many ways to take eternal life from us. But the evil one can do nothing if we ourselves do not open the doors of our hearts to him, by following his deceitful enticements.

The Virgin Mary heard and obediently followed the voice of the Good Shepherd. May she help us to welcome with joy Jesus' invitation to become his disciples, and to always live in the certainty of being in the paternal hands of the Father.

After praying the Regina Caeli with the faithful, the Holy Father said:

Dear brothers and sisters, I thank those who accompanied in prayer the visit that I made yesterday to the island of Lesbos, Greece. I brought the Church's solidarity to the refugees and to the people of Greece. With me were Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and Archbishop Ieronymos of Athens and All Greece, signifying unity in the charity of all the Lord's disciples. We visited the camps of refugees who have come from Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Africa, from many countries... We greeted approximately 300 of these refugees, one by one, all three of us: Patriarch Bartholomew, Archbishop Ieronymos and myself. Many of them were children, some of them – these children – witnessed the death of their parents, companions, some of whom had drowned in the sea. They have seen so much pain! And I want to speak of a special individual: a man, not 40 years of age. I met him yesterday with his two children. He is

Muslim and was married to a young Christian woman. They loved and respected each other. However unfortunately the young woman was beheaded by terrorists because she did not want to renounce Christ and abandon her faith. She is a martyr! And this man wept so much....

Last night a violent earthquake struck Ecuador, causing many deaths and extensive damage. Let us pray for these people and also for Japan where there have been several



earthquakes in recent days. May the aid of God and of brothers give them strength and support.

Today is the World Day of Prayer for Vocations. We are invited to pray for vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life. This morning I ordained 11 new priests. I renew my greeting to the newly ordained priests, to their families and friends; and I invite all priests and seminarians to participate in their Jubilee, in the first three days of June. Think, dear young people, boys and girls, in the Square, about whether the Lord is calling you to consecrate your life to his service through the priesthood or consecrated life.

I wish everyone a happy Sunday. Please do not forget to pray for me. Have a good lunch. *Arrivederci!*