

L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO

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Friday, 4 September 2015

The Pope's appeal at the General Audience dedicated to the family

Stop the horrors of war

Calling for an end to the persecution of Christians



"No more war!", Pope Francis repeated, recalling the anniversary of World War II. He also expressed his wish that "the world today no longer experience the horrors and frightful sufferings of similar tragedies".

At the General Audience on Wednesday, 2 September, in St Peter's Square, the Holy Father once again appealed for peace. In condemning "the madness of destruction", he also addressed his particular concern for Christians and minorities who are victims of persecution around the world. Francis also warned of those "who manufacture and trade weapons, bloodstained weapons,

weapons bathed in the blood of so many innocents".

In his catechesis, the Pope spoke of the responsibility of the family in the evangelization and communication of the faith, underlining that "a familial style that flows through human relationships is a blessing for

the peoples: it brings hope back to the land". When "familial affections are allowed to convert to the Gospel witness, they become capable of inconceivable things, which make tangible the works of God", he said.

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Letter for the Extraordinary Jubilee

An encounter with mercy

In this Year of Mercy, which starts on 8 December and ends on 20 November 2016, Pope Francis has chosen to extend to all Catholic priests the authority to "absolve the sin of abortion those who have procured it and who, with contrite heart, seek forgiveness for it." He has also decided that those penitents who approach priests of the Fraternity of St Pius X in the Sacrament of Reconciliation "shall validly and licitly receive the absolution of their sins".



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For the Holy Year

Truth and forgiveness

LUCETTA SCARAFFIA

With the Jubilee centred on a "genuine experience of the mercy of God" the Pope wishes to open the door especially to the excluded. Among them prison inmates, who can't come to Rome or even to their own diocesan churches: moreover, "directing their thought and prayer to the Father each time they cross the threshold of their cell" will be for them like entering the Holy Door, Francis writes. And the mercy of this Holy Year will also be available to the faithful who attend churches officiated by the Society of St Pius X, in the hope of achieving full communion with their priests and superiors.

But it is especially to women who have terminated their pregnancies that the Pope addresses the substance of his words of love. These women had contradicted Church teaching by considering abortion – a "most grave evil" – as a right upon which their freedom depends, but have since realized through the hardship of their personal experience that abortion is no path to freedom. They have realized how hard it is, after having made decisions for the most part influenced by current ideologies, to erase within their hearts the guilt of having prevented a child from being born.

It is to these women, whose hearts are weighed down by this seemingly incurable wound, that Francis turns and offers what only the love of God can give: forgiveness. There is such mercy in the Pope's words. "I know", he writes in his letter, "that it is an existential and moral ordeal. I have met so many women who bear in their heart the scar of this agonizing and painful decision. What has happened is profoundly unjust; yet only understanding the truth of it can enable one not to lose hope".

The greatness of the Christian tradition is contained here: to forgive without diminishing the moral gravity of the sin, without erasing the reality of the sin. In the face of a world that would like to consider abortion a right like others, in the face of ideological movements that paved the way for

For the Care of Creation

In the words of St Francis

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VATICAN BULLETIN

AUDIENCES

Saturday, 29 August

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

Monday, 31 August

Cardinal Gualtiero Bassetti, Archbishop of Perugia - Città della Pieve, Italy

Cardinal Giuseppe Betori, Archbishop of Florence, Italy

Archbishop Piero Pioppo, titular Archbishop of Torcello, Apostolic Nuncio in Cameroon and in Equatorial Guinea

Archbishop Rino Passigato, titular Archbishop of Nova Caesaris, Apostolic Nuncio in Portugal

Archbishop Ettore Balestrero, titular Archbishop of Victoriana, Apostolic Nuncio in Colombia

Archbishop Giacinto Berloco, titular Archbishop of Fidene, Apostolic Nuncio in Belgium and in Luxembourg

Fr Pascal Burri, Chaplain of the Pontifical Swiss Guard, on a farewell visit

CHANGES IN EPISCOPATE

The Holy Father appointed Fr Jean-Pierre Cottanceau, SS.CC. as Apostolic Administrator of the Archdiocese of Papeete, French Polynesia (28 Aug.).

EASTERN CHURCHES

The Holy Father has extended the circumscription of the Eparchy of Mandya for Syro-Malabars, India, to include six civil districts near Bangalore in which the Syro-Malabar faithful are located: Urban Bengaluru, Rural Bengaluru, Chickballapur, Kolar, Ramnagara and Tumkur (26 Aug.).

The Synod of Bishops of the Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Church, meeting at Mount St Thomas, Kerala, with Pontifical assent, has canonically elected Fr Antony Kariyil, CMI, as Bishop of the Eparchy of Mandya for Syro-Malabars, India. Until now he has been

Director of the Rajagiri School of Engineering and Technology in Cochin, Kerala, India (26 Aug.).

Bishop-elect Kariyil, 65, was born in Cherthala, India. He was ordained a priest on 27 December 1977. He holds a Master's in Theology and a Doctorate in Social Sciences. Until now he has served as: headmaster of Christ College in Bangalore; chaplain of the Syro-Malabar community at Resurrection Church in Bangalore; headmaster of the College of Social Sciences in Rajagiri, Kalamassery; member of the provincial council of the Rajagiri Sacred Heart Province; Prior General of the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate; and national president of

the section for priests of the Conference of Religions of India.

CONGREGATION FOR THE EASTERN CHURCHES

On 1 September the Holy Father reconfirmed as members of the Special Commission for the Liturgy of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches: Archbishop Piero Marini, titular Archbishop of Martirano, President; Fr McLean Cummings, Secretary; Fr Tedros Abraha, OFM, Cap.; Fr Cesare Giraudo, SJ; Fr Thomas D. Pott, OSB; Archimandrite Fr Manuel Nin, OSB; Fr Rinaldo Iacopino, SM; Msgr Paul Pallath.

VATICAN PRINTING PRESS

Fr Abraham Kavalakatt, SDB, has succeeded his confrère, Fr Marek Kaczmarczyk, SDB, as Sales Manager of the Vatican Printing Press - *L'Osservatore Romano* (1 Sept.).

NECROLOGY

Archbishop Maroun Khoury Sader, Archbishop emeritus of Tyr for Maronites, at age 89 (26 Aug.).

Bishop Francisco San Diego, Bishop emeritus of Pasig, the Philippines, at age 79 (26 Aug.).

Józef Wesolowski dies

In the early morning of Friday, 28 August, former Apostolic Nuncio Józef Wesolowski was found dead in his room at the Vatican. The Holy See's Promoter of Justice ordered an autopsy and The Holy Father was duly notified. The following day an autopsy was performed, confirming that Wesolowski had died of natural causes.

"The Office of the Promoter of Justice, as part of the obligations of its authority, ordered an autopsy, appointing a commission of three experts", led by Giovanni Arcudi, a professor of forensic pathology at the University of

Rome Tor Vergata. According to the Holy See Press Office statement, the autopsy confirmed that Wesolowski died due to natural causes, attributed to a cardiac event. "In the coming days the Office of the Promoter of Justice will acquire the subsequent findings from the ordinary laboratory examination" carried out by the same committee.

The Pope's audience with the President of the State of Israel

On Thursday, 3 September, in the Vatican Apostolic Palace, the Holy Father received in audience H.E. Mr Reuven Rivlin, President of the State of Israel, who subsequently met with Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Parolin, accompanied by the Secretary for Relations with States, Archbishop Paul Gallagher.

During the cordial discussions the Parties focused on the political and social situation in the Middle East, affected by several conflicts, with special attention to the conditions of Christians and other minority groups. In this respect the importance of interreligious dialogue was recognised, along with the responsibility of religious leaders in promoting reconciliation and peace.

The urgent need to promote a climate of trust between Israelis and Palestinians was highlighted, alongside the resumption of direct negotiations with the aim of reaching an agreement respecting the legitimate aspirations of the two populations, as a fundamental contribution to peace and stability in the Region.

Various issues were considered regarding the relations between the



State of Israel and the Holy See, and between the state authorities and local Catholic communities. The Parties expressed their hope that the bilateral Agreement currently being drafted be concluded promptly, and that an adequate solution be found for various matters of common interest, including the situation of Christian schools in the country.



The Pope's sorrow for the victims in Dominica

Tropical storm Erika strikes

Pope Francis sent the families of the victims in Dominica his condolences in a telegram on Friday, 31 August, following the damage of tropical storm Erika. Signed by Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State, the telegram was sent to Bishop Gabriel Malzaire of Roseau through the Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Nicola Girasoli.

The Holy Father also "prays for all those providing rescue and relief service". "In commending the dead to the loving mercy of God, the Holy Father invokes upon their grieving families and all those affected by this disaster the blessings of perseverance, hope and peace". Twenty people died on the island of Dominica. A state of emergency was declared in Florida. Originally Erika was considered a hurricane but has since been downgraded to a tropical storm.

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At the General Audience the Pope calls for the family to be leaders in society

A smile in the desert

"The smile of a family can overcome this desertification of our cities". Pope Francis shared this thought at the General Audience on Wednesday, 2 September, in St Peter's Square, addressing the faithful in Italian. The following is a translation of his catechesis.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Good morning!

In this last stage on our journey of catecheses on the family, let us broaden our gaze to the way in which it lives out its responsibility to *communicate the faith*, to transmit the faith, both inside and out.

At first, what may come to mind are several Gospel expressions that seem to oppose the bonds of family and the following of Christ. For example, the strong words that we all know and we all have heard: "He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (Mt 10:37-38).

Naturally, by this Jesus doesn't intend to cancel out the fourth commandment, which importantly is the first commandment directed at others. The first three are in relation to God, this one is directed at people. Nor can we think that, after performing his miracle for the newlyweds in Cana, after consecrating the marriage bond between man and woman, after restoring sons and daughters to the life of the family, would the Lord ask us to be insensitive to these bonds! This is not the explanation. On the contrary, when Jesus affirms the primacy of faith in God, he finds no paragon more fitting than that of familial love. Moreover, these same familial bonds, within the experience of the faith and love of God, are transformed, they become "filled" with greater meaning and become capable of *going beyond themselves*, to create a fatherhood and motherhood, and to welcome as brothers and sisters also those who are in the margins of every bond. One day, to those who told him that his mother and brothers were outside looking for him, Jesus responds, pointing to his disciples: "Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the



will of God is my brother, and sister, and mother" (Mk 3:34-35).

Emotional maturity can't be bought or sold and it is the greatest endowment of the familial genius. It is precisely in the family where we learn to grow in the atmosphere of emotional maturity. Its "grammar" is learned there, otherwise it is very difficult to learn it. And it is through this language that God makes us all understand.

The invitation to place family ties within the context of obedience to the faith and to the covenant with the Lord does not demean them; on the contrary it protects them, frees them from selfishness, protects them from degradation, rescues them for life which knows no death. A familial style that flows through human relationships *is a blessing for the peoples*: it brings hope back to the land. When familial affections are allowed to convert to the Gospel witness, they become capable of inconceivable things, which make tangible the works of God, those works which God performs in history, such as those which Jesus did for the men, women and children he encountered. Just one smile miraculously rising out of the desperation of an abandoned child, who is beginning to live again, explains God's action in the world better than a thousand theological treatises. One man and one woman, capable of risking and sacrificing themselves for another's child and not just for their

own, explains the matters of love better than any scientist. And wherever there are such familial affections, there too arise these heartfelt gestures that are more eloquent than words. The gesture of love.... This makes us think.

The family that responds to the call of Jesus *consigns the stewardship of the world back to the covenant of man and woman with God*. Imagine developing this testimony today. Let us imagine that the headline of the story (of society, of the economy, of politics) is relegated – finally! – to the covenant of man and woman, in order that they tend to it with their gaze directed at the generations to come. The themes of earth and home, of the economy and of work, would sing a very different tune!

If we were – beginning with the Church – to centre our attention on the family that listens and practices the Word of God, we would become like the good wine of the wedding feast of Cana, we would ferment like the leaven of God!

Indeed, the family's covenant with God is called today to counteract the community desertification of the modern city. But the lack of love and smiling has turned our cities into deserts. So much entertainment, so many things for wasting time, for making laughter, but love is lacking. The smile of a family can overcome this desertification of our cities. This is the victory of family love. No economic and political engineering can substitute this contribution of families. The Babel project builds lifeless skyscrapers. The Spirit of God instead makes the desert fruitful (cf. Is 32:15). We must come out of the towers and from the armoured vaults of the elite, to again spend time in the homes and open spaces of the multitudes, open to the love of families.

The communion of charisms – those bestowed in the Sacrament of Marriage and those granted at consecration through the Kingdom of God – is intended to transform the Church into a fully familial place

through the encounter with God. Let us go forth on this path, let us not lose hope. Wherever there is a loving family, that family with its witness of love is capable of warming the heart of an entire city.

Pray for me, let us pray for one another, that we become capable of recognizing and supporting the visits of God. The Spirit will bring happy disarray to Christian families, and the city of man will rise from its depression.

SPECIAL GREETINGS

These days even in the Far East, the end of the Second World War is remembered. I renew my fervent prayer to the Lord of all, that through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, the world today no longer experience the horrors and frightful sufferings of similar tragedies – for it does experience them! This is also the persistent yearning of the peoples, especially of those who are victims of various ongoing sanguineous conflicts. Persecuted minorities, persecuted Christians, the madness of destruction, and then those who



manufacture and trade weapons, bloodstained weapons, weapons bathed in the blood of so many innocents. No more war! It is the fervent cry which from our hearts and from the hearts of all men and women of good will raises up to the Prince of Peace.

I greet the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today's Audience, including those from Sweden, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Japan, Malaysia and the United States of America. My particular greeting goes to the Board of the Catholic Extension Society of the United States. Upon all of you, and your families, I invoke an abundance of joy and peace in the Lord Jesus. God bless you all!

Last I greet *young people*, the *sick* and *newlyweds*. Tomorrow we will celebrate the liturgical memorial of St Gregory the Great. Dear *young people*, may the moral greatness of this Pope inspire you to make courageous choices for the good; may his strength in illness sustain you, dear *sick people*, in carrying the cross in spiritual union with the heart of Christ; may his bond with the Church help you, dear *newlyweds*, to unite your family in love.

Truth and forgiveness

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

women's liberation, Francis repeats his condemnation of this injustice in the precise moment he offers this gift.

Every woman knows that abortion marks one's life indelibly, a weight that will be carried within forever. Only forgiveness can free one from this burden, not the pride of having made a choice that the prevailing culture would call unavoidable.

With a few fatherly words, granting every priest the faculty during this Jubilee to lift the censure of a sin that is so widespread

it deserves a larger door to forgiveness, Pope Francis bears his heart to the women of our time. He asks nothing except that they recognize what their bodies and hearts have already recognized, beyond their volition. And in exchange he offers the only possible solution, the only liberation: forgiveness.

This is an act of courageous love towards women, a recognition of their true nature, beyond the reach of ideologies and political correctness. An act that would echo even louder if, both within the Church and without, women were granted their rightful place.

Benedict XVI celebrates Mass for participants in the annual meeting of his former students

The forgetfulness of the world

"Truth, love and goodness come from God, render man pure and are met in the word which frees us from the 'forgetfulness' of a world which no longer thinks of God". This was the central message of the homily of Benedict XVI in a Mass celebrated on Sunday, 30 August, in the Church of the Teutonic Cemetery in the Vatican, for the occasion of the annual summer seminar of his former students, known as the *Ratzinger Schülerkreis*. The meeting, which was held recently in Castel Gandolfo, considered the theme "How to speak of God today".

Delivering the homily in German, the Pope emeritus drew inspiration from a passage of the Gospel according to Mark (7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23), recalling that exactly three years ago, on the same occasion, Cardinal Schönborn, Archbishop of Vienna, asked whether one must not perhaps be purified exteriorly and not only interiorly; and whether evil comes only from within, or if it is also external? Benedict XVI returned to this interesting question to introduce his meditation. "For an appropriate response", he observed, "it is necessary to broaden the question and consider not only this passage of the Gospel, but the Gospel in its entirety". Does the evil which assails us not come perhaps from the outside? This was the sense of the question which the Pope emeritus posed.

Of course, we could say that in order to be purified of all exterior impurity, Benedict XVI again affirmed, "it is necessary to respond with with external hygiene to the many diseases and sometimes epidemics that threaten us". It is good to have this kind of responsibility for the exterior so that death does not prevail, noted the Pope emeritus. However, he continued, this is not enough because there is also "the epidemic of the heart", that of the interior, which "leads to corruption and even to other impurities, those which lead man to think only of himself and not of the good".

Thus the *ethos*, in other words, "interior hygiene", assumes a decisive importance, next to worship. Hence, "what does a pure man do? What is the authentic power of purification?", Benedict XVI asked.

In another passage of the Gospel, he pointed out, the Lord says to his own: "You are already made clean by the word which I have spoken to you". Thus, "one becomes pure by way of the Word". And "the Word is much more than words, because it is through words that we encounter the Word, himself. The Word is Jesus Christ himself and we also encounter the Word in those who re-

flect him, who show us the face of God and who reflect his meekness, his humility of heart, his simplicity, his kindness, his sincerity". In conclusion the Pope emeritus expressed his hope "that the Lord grant us this 'hygiene of the heart', by way of the truth which comes from God: this is the power of purification".

During the celebration, the universal intentions of the faithful included prayer for Pope Francis, that the Lord assist him in his work, especially for the Holy Year of Mercy. At the conclusion of Mass, a ceremony was held in the rooms adjacent to the Teutonic Cemetery to inaugurate and bless the Pope Benedict-Joseph Ratzinger Hall. Msgr Hans Peter Fischer, Rector of the Teutonic College, also announced that on 18 November there will be a ceremony for the opening of the Joseph Ratzinger-Benedict XVI Library of Rome, located in the library of the of the Teutonic College and the Roman Institute of the Society of Görres in the Vatican. The new library will be entirely dedicated to his life and his thought as a scholar and as Pontiff. The event will include a speech by Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi, President of the Pontifical Council of Culture, on the theme: "From the Bible to the library. Benedict XVI and the culture of the word".

Sponsored by the Joseph Ratzinger-Benedict XVI Vatican Foundation, the library named after the Pope emeritus contains about 1,000 volumes in various languages "and is characterized as an area open to those who are interested in Joseph Ratzinger and his publications, to learn about his life and deepen his theology". Many volumes were donated by Benedict XVI himself, and others by the Vatican Foundation.



The Ratzinger Schülerkreis meeting in Castel Gandolfo on Sunday, 28 August 2011

Dean of the College of Cardinals at Castel Gandolfo for the Feast of Our Lady of the Lake

Instruments of mercy

Like Mary, witnesses and instruments of mercy. At Castel Gandolfo on Saturday, 29 August, for the annual Feast in honour of Our Lady of the Lake, Cardinal Angelo Sodano, Dean of the College of Cardinals, and titular Archbishop of Albano, invited all faithful to look to the Mother of the Lord and, following her example, to make the proper journey of the Holy Year. "Praying to Mary", he

said in his homily, "leads us to have a lifestyle inspired by mercy which is truly essential for every Christian and, therefore, for the Church as a whole".

The Cardinal celebrated Mass in the small church dedicated to Our Lady of the Lake by Pope Paul VI on 15 August 1977, and donated to the Pontifical Parish of San Tommaso da Villanova. Recalling that solemn celebration, the Dean of the

College of Cardinals referred to the homily of Bl. Pope Montini: "All is a hymn to the mystery of Mary's presence in the life of the Church. It is a beautiful commentary to the Magnificat he defined as 'the most beautiful canticle there is in Sacred Scripture'. And reflecting on the Cantic of Mary, Cardinal Sodano highlighted the passage "from the acclaim of God's omnipotence to that of his mercy". Then came the Cardinal's reflection and hope: "May this Feast lead us all to renew ourselves spiritually, trusting always in God's mercy and also committing ourselves to be instruments of the merciful love of Christ in the world today".

The Feast, greatly appreciated by the people of Castel Gandolfo, dates back to the 1950s. This year it took on an even greater importance as it coincided with the bicentenary of the birth of Don Bosco, founder of the Salesian Family to whose care the parish of San Tommaso da Villanova is entrusted.

As customary, at the end of the Mass the statue of the Virgin was carried in procession to the small city port where it was then placed on a small boat. On its return to the pier, the procession concluded with a solemn blessing.

Tribute to a Catholic priest's commitment to ecumenism

The funeral of Fr Brian O'Sullivan, a Catholic priest who dedicated his life to promoting Christian unity, will be celebrated at noon on Tuesday, 8 September in the Anglican Church of St Andrew and St Cuthman, in Steyning, West Sussex, England. The evening before a vigil Mass will be held in the local Catholic Church of Christ the King. The decision to celebrate the funeral Mass in an Anglican church – according to the Catholic Herald's website – was approved by the Anglican bishop of Chichester, Dr Martin Warner, who underlined Fr O'Sullivan's "commitment to life in Christian unity". O'Sullivan was a priest in the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton.



At the Angelus the Pope recalls that outward observance of the law is not enough

Hearts free of hypocrisy

“Outward observance of the law is not enough to make us good Christians”, said Pope Francis. This was his reminder at the Angelus on Sunday, 30 August, in St Peter’s Square. He emphasized that “external things do not make us holy or unholy”, but it is the heart that “expresses our intentions, our choices and the will to do all for the love of God.” The following is a translation of the address he gave in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Good morning!

The Gospel for this Sunday concerns a dispute between Jesus and several Pharisees and scribes. The discussion is about the value of the “tradition of the elders” (Mk 7:3) which Jesus, quoting the Prophet Isaiah, defines as the “precepts of men” (v. 7) which must never take precedence over the “commandment of God” (v. 8). The ancient rules in question consisted not only in the precepts God revealed to Moses, but in a series of norms that the Mosaic Law indicated. The interlocutors observed these norms in an extremely scrupulous manner and presented them as the expression of authentic religiosity. Therefore, they rebuked Jesus and his disciples for transgressing them, specifically the norms regarding the external purification of the body (cf. v. 5). Jesus’ response has the force of a prophetic pronouncement: “You leave the commandment of God”, he says, “and hold fast the tradition of men” (v. 8). These are words which fill us with admiration for our Teacher: we sense that in him there is truth and that his wisdom frees us from prejudice.

Pay heed! With these words, Jesus wants to caution us too, today, against the belief that outward observance of the law is enough to make us good Christians. Dangerous as it was then for the Pharisees, so too is it for us to consider ourselves acceptable or, even worse, better than others simply for observing the rules, customs, even though we do not love our neighbour, we are hard of heart, we are arrogant and proud. Literal observance of the precepts is a fruitless exercise which does not change the heart and turn into practical behaviour: opening oneself to meet God and his Word in prayer, seeking justice and peace, taking care of the poor, the weak, the downtrodden. We all know, in our communities, in our parishes, in our neighbourhoods, how much harm and scandal is done to the Church by those people who say they are deeply Catholic and often go to Church, but who then neglect their family in daily life, speak badly of others and so on. This is what Jesus condemns because this is a counter-witness to Christianity.

After his exhortation, Jesus focuses attention on a deeper aspect and states: “there is nothing outside a man which by going into him can defile him; but the things which come out of a man are what defile

him” (v. 15). In this way he emphasizes the primacy of interiority, that is, the primacy of the “heart”: it is not the external things that make us holy or unholy, but the heart which expresses our intentions, our choices and the will to do all for the love of God. External behaviour is the result of what we decide in the heart, and not the contrary: with a change in external behaviour, but not a change of heart, we are not true Christians. The boundary between good and evil does not pass outside of us, but rather within us. We could ask ourselves: where is my heart? Jesus said: “Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also”. What is my treasure? Is it Jesus, is it his teaching? If so, then the heart is good. Or is my treasure something else? Thus it is a heart which needs purification and conversion. Without a purified heart, one cannot have truly clean hands and lips which speak sincere words of love – it is all duplicitous, a double life – lips which speak words of mercy, of forgiveness: only a sincere and purified heart can do this

Let us ask the Lord, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, to give us a pure heart, free of all hypocrisy. This is the word that Jesus uses for the Pharisees: “hypocrites”, because they say one thing and do another. A heart free from all hypocrisy, thus we will be able to live according to the spirit of the law and accomplish its aim, which is love.

After the Angelus, the Pope said:

Dear brothers and sisters, yesterday, in Harissa, Lebanon, the Syro-Catholic Bishop Flavien Mikhael Melki, a martyr, was proclaimed



Blessed. In the context of the terrible persecution of Christians he was a tireless defender of the rights of his people, exhorting all to remain steadfast in faith. Today too, dear brothers and sisters, in the Middle East and in other parts of the world, Christians are being persecuted. There are more martyrs today than in the first centuries. May the beatification of this Martyr Bishop instil in them comfort, courage and hope, but may it also be an incentive to legislators and governments that religious freedom be assured everywhere. I ask the international community to do something so as to put an end to the acts of violence and oppression.

Sadly, also in recent days many migrants have lost their lives in their dreadful voyages. For all of these brothers and sisters, I pray and invite prayer. In particular, I join Cardinal Schönborn – who is present here today – and the entire Church

of Austria in prayer for the 71 victims, including four children, found in a lorry on the motorway between Budapest and Vienna. Let us entrust each one of them to the mercy of God; and let us ask him to help us to cooperate effectively to prevent these crimes, which offend the entire human family. Let us pray in silence for all migrants who are suffering and for those who have lost their lives.

I greet the pilgrims from Italy and from so many parts of the world, especially the Scouts from Lisbon and the faithful from Zara, Croatia. I greet the faithful from Verona and Bagnolo di Nogarole; the youth from the Diocese of Vicenza, those from Rovato and those from San Galdino Parish in Milan; the children from Salzano and from Arconate.

I wish everyone a happy Sunday. Please, do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch! *Arrivederci!*

Seven years since the massacre of Christians in Odisha

From horror to hope

With prayer and anti-violence events, the Christian community in India observed the seventh anniversary of the massacres that occurred in Kandhamal District, Odisha (formerly Orissa), in August 2008. These events took place not only in this martyred land, where the main commemorative event was held on 31 August, but also in other Indian states. “I am always moved by my people’s joy,” said Archbishop John Barwa of Cuttack-Bhubaneswar. “They suffered horrific anti-Christi-



an violence. Yet, their faith did not waver; on the contrary, they strengthened their faith and love for Christ.”

On 23 August 2008, a Maoist group killed the Hindu leader Laxamananda Saraswati in his ashram in Kandhamal District. Although guerillas had immediately admitted responsibility, Hindu radicals instead blamed Christians whom the guru had long criticized for their social commitment, especially to Dalits (“untouchables”, according to the caste system), and whom he had accused of proselytizing. Among those accused by the Hindu leader were bishops, priests and women religious. Hindu extremists in Kandhamal unleashed the most violent persecution against the Christian minority ever seen in India. The massacres caused 55,000 faithful to flee, and led to the looting and burning of 5,600 houses in 415 villages. According to the Catholic Church and social activists, nearly 300 churches were destroyed, in addition to convents, schools, hostels and care institutions. At least 91 people perished: 38 were killed outright, 41 died due to injuries incurred in the attacks and 12 by police action. The district government recently decided to award 15,000 rupees to 12 of the victims injured in the 2008 attacks. Among them were several women religious who had peacefully protested against the brutality of the Hindu radicals.

The Pope's letter in view of the extraordinary jubilee

An encounter with mercy

The Extraordinary Jubilee opening on 8 December will be "a true moment of encounter with the mercy of God". Pope Francis stated this in a letter sent to Archbishop Salvatore [Rino] Fisichella, President of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization, in which he indicated several key points for experiencing the Holy Year as an occasion to feel the tenderness of the Father. The following is the English text of the Pope's letter to Archbishop Fisichella, which was written in Italian.



To My Venerable Brother
Archbishop RINO FISICHELLA
President of the Pontifical Council
for the Promotion
of the New Evangelization

With the approach of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy I would like to focus on several points which I believe require attention to enable the celebration of the Holy Year to be for all be-

lievers a true moment of encounter with the mercy of God. It is indeed my wish that the Jubilee be a living experience of the closeness of the Father, whose tenderness is almost tangible, so that the faith of every believer may be strengthened and thus testimony to it be ever more effective.

My thought first of all goes to all the faithful who, whether in individual Dioceses or as pilgrims to Rome, will experience the grace of the Jubilee. I wish that the Jubilee Indulgence may reach each one as a genuine experience of God's mercy, which comes to meet each person in the Face of the Father who welcomes and forgives, forgetting completely the sin committed. To experience and obtain the Indulgence, the faithful are called to make a brief pilgrimage to the Holy Door, open in every Cathedral or in the churches designated by the Diocesan Bishop, and in the four Papal Basilicas in Rome, as a sign of the deep desire for true conver-

sion. Likewise, I dispose that the Indulgence may be obtained in the Shrines in which the Door of Mercy is open and in the churches which traditionally are identified as Jubilee Churches. It is important that this moment be linked, first and foremost, to the Sacrament of Reconciliation and to the celebration of the Holy Eucharist with a reflection on mercy. It will be necessary to accompany these celebrations with the profession of faith and with prayer for me and for the intentions that I bear in my heart for the good of the Church and of the entire world.

Additionally, I am thinking of those for whom, for various reasons, it will be impossible to enter the Holy Door, particularly the sick and people who are elderly and alone, often confined to the home. For them it will be of great help to live their sickness and suffering as an experience of closeness to the Lord who in the mystery of his Passion, death and Resurrection indicates the royal road which gives meaning to pain and loneliness. Living with faith and joyful hope this moment of trial, receiving communion or attending Holy Mass and community prayer, even through the various means of communication, will be for them the means of obtaining the Jubilee Indulgence. My thoughts also turn to those incarcerated, whose freedom is limited. The Jubilee Year has always constituted an opportunity for great amnesty, which is intended to include the many people who, despite deserving punishment, have become conscious of the injustice they worked and sincerely wish to re-enter society and make their honest contribution to it. May they all be touched in a tangible way by the mercy of the Father who wants to be close to those who have the greatest need of his forgiveness. They may obtain the Indulgence in the chapels of the prisons. May the gesture of directing their thought and prayer to the Father each time they cross the threshold of their cell signify for them their passage through the Holy Door, because the mercy of God is able to transform hearts and is also able to transform bars into an experience of freedom.

I have asked the Church in this Jubilee Year to rediscover the richness encompassed by the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. The experience of mercy, indeed, becomes visible in the witness of concrete signs as Jesus himself taught us. Each time that one of the faithful personally performs one or more of these actions, he or she shall surely obtain the Jubilee Indulgence. Hence the commitment to live by mercy so as to obtain the grace of complete and exhaustive forgiveness by the power of the love of the Father who excludes no one. The Jubilee Indulgence is thus full, the fruit of the very event which is to be celebrated and experienced with faith, hope and charity.

Furthermore, the Jubilee Indulgence can also be obtained for the deceased. We are bound to them by the witness of faith and charity that they have left us. Thus, as we remember them in the

Eucharistic celebration, thus we can, in the great mystery of the Communion of Saints, pray for them, that the merciful Face of the Father free them of every remnant of fault and strongly embrace them in the unending beatitude.

One of the serious problems of our time is clearly the changed relationship with respect to life. A widespread and insensitive mentality has led to the loss of the proper personal and social sensitivity to welcome new life. The tragedy of abortion is experienced by some with a superficial awareness, as if not realizing the extreme harm that such an act entails. Many others, on the other hand, although experiencing this moment as a defeat, believe they have no other option. I think in particular of all the women who have resorted to abortion. I am well aware of the pressure that has led them to this decision. I know that it is an existential and moral ordeal. I have met so many women who bear in their heart the scar of this agonizing and painful decision. What has happened is profoundly unjust; yet only understanding the truth of it can enable one not to lose hope. The forgiveness of God cannot be denied to one who has repented, especially when that person approaches the Sacrament of Confession with a sincere heart in order to obtain reconciliation with the Father. For this reason too, I have decided, notwithstanding anything to the contrary, to concede to all priests for the Jubilee Year the discretion to absolve of the sin of abortion those who have procured it and who, with contrite heart, seek forgiveness for it. May priests fulfill this great task by expressing words of genuine welcome combined with a reflection that ex-

Authority extended to all priests

Under church law, excommunication *latae sententiae* is incurred by committing one of a set of especially grave sins, which include heresy, desecration of the Eucharist and a physical attack on the pope. This set includes willful killing of the unborn, thus anyone who willingly participates in an abortion – including the pregnant woman, the abortion provider and any assistants – incurs excommunication *latae sententiae*, which normally can be lifted only by the local bishop.

In some countries, for instance the United States, most if not all bishops have for years granted their priests the faculty to remove the penalty of excommunication if it was incurred. However, in this Year of Mercy, which starts 8 December and ends 20 November 2016, Pope Francis has chosen to extend to all Catholic priests the authority to "absolve of the sin of abortion those who have procured it and who, with contrite heart, seek forgiveness for it."

plains the gravity of the sin committed, besides indicating a path of authentic conversion by which to obtain the true and generous forgiveness of the Father who renews all with his presence.

A final consideration concerns those faithful who for various reasons choose to attend churches officiated by priests of the Fraternity of St Pius X. This Jubilee Year of Mercy excludes no one. From various quarters, several Brother Bishops have told me of their good faith and sacramental practice, combined however with an uneasy situation from the pastoral standpoint. I trust that in the near future solutions may be found to recover full communion with the priests and superiors of the Frater-

ty. In the meantime, motivated by the need to respond to the good of these faithful, through my own disposition, I establish that those who during the Holy Year of Mercy approach these priests of the Fraternity of St Pius X to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation shall validly and licitly receive the absolution of their sins.

Trusting in the intercession of the Mother of Mercy, I entrust the preparations for this Extraordinary Jubilee Year to her protection.

From the Vatican, 1 September 2015



The tenderness of the Father

An interview with the President of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization

MARIZIO FONTANA

For the Year of Mercy, Pope Francis intends to reach out especially to those who have contributed to or experienced the tragedy of abortion, or who have been incarcerated for their crimes: "The Pope's wish that the Jubilee be a way to feel the tenderness and the closeness of God is the key to the entire letter of Pope Francis". Archbishop Rino Fisichella, President of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization, was holding the text he had just received from the Pontiff, and explained its contents in an interview with *L'Osservatore Romano*.

First off, he tells us, "we come to the theme of the Indulgence. The Pope goes straight to it, explaining the conditions necessary to obtain and celebrate it: the celebration of the Euchar-

ist, that of reconciliation, pilgrimage and prayer for the Pope's intentions, in addition to professing the faith. In my opinion they are all expressions that refer to the great dimension of the Tradition of the Church through which forgiveness is fulfilled. Thus, one feels more tangibly how God's mercy is really able to reach the farthest limits and the issues that we do not usually think about but which are, however, those which we experience daily, namely the consequences of sin which we carry within us". The Indulgence reassures us that God's closeness and forgiveness is truly total and truly absolute.

Will there be, in addition to this, other documents regarding the Indulgence?

I do not think so. The Pope wanted to address in the letter not only the theme of the Indulgence, but also that of the absolution of the sin of abortion and that of the faithful who associate with the Fraternity of St Pius X, within a single text, which is to be read precisely in the light of mercy. Thus, the letter, in fact, expresses the Pope's desire that his closeness and his concern reach everyone so that the Jubilee of Mercy may truly be a concrete sign of love and tenderness with which God meets everyone and excludes no one.

You mentioned absolution of the sin of abortion. What difference does it make, in the context of the Holy Year, with regard to the customary practice of the Church?

In most dioceses in the world, absolution of the sin of abortion is restricted to only a few priests. Each bishop, in fact, in his own diocese, names the priests who are authorized to do this. At certain times, for example, during Lent, the bishops will extend this faculty to more priests. The Pope has shown that he wishes to involve all priests, also pointing out the royal road to them: he says explicitly that priests should express "words of genuine welcome combined with a reflection that explains the gravity of the sin commit-



ted", and then to indicate "a path of authentic conversion". A way is suggested which seeks to support priests in the service they are called to render, especially with regard to such an exceptional theme.

The Pope often returns to the theme of life.

Francis emphasizes that in our time there is a mentality that seems somehow to have modified the very concept of life, a mindset that is no longer capable of welcoming the beauty of a nascent life. Along with this, in the letter, we find profound understanding for all women who, due to abortion, personally live out a profound tragedy. The Pope meets everyone, especially in those situations of profound unease marked by the consequences of that anthropological mutation being experienced today in the West especially, that is insensitive to the point of falling into forms of superficiality far removed from the actual tragedy lived and from respect for nascent life.

Might people misunderstand this emphasis on listening and forgiveness as a kind of justification?

The problem of abortion cannot be experienced in a superficial way: it is unthinkable that in the face of such a dramatic situation there is no awareness of the true implication of what is about to take place. The fact that the action continues to be viewed in an objective way is serious. However, this does not prevent the people involved in abortion – and let us not forget that abortion, as a sin, involves not only the woman but also all those who contribute in some way to procuring the abortion itself – if they are truly contrite, from having the opportunity to start anew, and once they realize the evil done to begin a new life.

In this merciful embrace, in this attempt to maintain an open dialogue, there is also mention of the Fraternity of St Pius X.

I think the theme of mercy spurred the Pope to also take into considera-

tion the uncomfortable situation that some faithful express because they are not sure of having received forgiveness. In this situation it seems to me that, once again, before looking at the juridical aspects and at the expressions that touch upon doctrinal questions, the Pope wants instead to give his fatherly attention to the faithful. He wishes to give them the certainty that the Sacrament of Reconciliation – which obviously expresses the broadest, most visible dimension of mercy – may also work in them the profound of grace which acts and therefore, once again, goes to meet everyone, overcoming the obstacles that have been created over time.

The letter contains the striking image of detainees who upon crossing the threshold of their cells pass through the Holy Door in spirit.

It is a really beautiful image. I would be surprised, given the many contacts the Pope has with detainees, if the image were not actually inspired by this experience. I must say that it is very suggestive, and in his suggestion, one also understands the sensitivity of the Pontiff and the wish to reach everyone, even those farthest away, with his closeness, and thus the tenderness of God who excludes no one. The Pope writes explicitly: each time they cross the threshold of their cell, if their thought and prayer be directed toward changing their life, showing that there is the desire to start anew, then that threshold will effectively represent, to all intents and purposes, the "Holy Door". One could add to this the wish expressed by the Pope that some detainees might celebrate the Holy Year together with him and even physically to pass through the Holy Door. We hope that this wish for closeness, for freedom and for the possibility to begin a new journey, despite mistakes made and injustices done, may truly be among the fruits of the Jubilee of Mercy.



Marc Chagall, "The Prodigal Son" (1975-76)

Looking forward to the Pope's visit in the United States

The mission of Junípero Serra

CRISTIAN MARTINI GRIMALDI

"The Gospel is not proclaimed with a face of mourning", Pope Francis said two years ago during a Mass at Santa Marta. Junípero Serra, who will be canonized by the Pontiff in September, disclosed the same outlook in a letter to his superiors in Mexico City when he wrote asking them not to send "men who tire quickly or who put on a sad face because there is so much work to do".

The apostle of California arrived in Veracruz, Mexico, in December 1749, after 98 days aboard a ship. Despite the availability of horses and mules, Serra chose to walk to Mexico City. His arrival in the capital was not a happy one. Along the way he was stung by an insect; scratching it led to an open wound which never healed and caused him serious pain for the rest of his life.

The Mexican capital at that time had a population of 100,000, half of which was Spanish, and the rest a mix of African and indigenous peoples. In the former Aztec capital

the original structures that had been admired by General Cortés two centuries before, were still standing in the 18th century. In the middle was a large lake which the inhabitants crossed in canoes. It bore no resemblance to the concrete jungle that is the Mexican capital today, yet in some way it mirrored the present-day megalopolis. Mexico City was already showing symptoms of what would become its chronic illness: many of the buildings constructed by the Spanish were beginning to collapse. After all, the city had been built on a lake bed. Today one need only look out of a top story window in Mexico City to notice that the foundation of buildings are never quite flat but rather undulating, like a poorly stretched rug.

Serra stayed in the convent of San Fernando in Mexico City for five months, which he spent in prayer and study.

The year 1750 flew by. It was the year in which he and a group of volunteers set out for the Sierra Gorda. It is here that his brilliant mission-

ary career began. He spent eight years travelling inhospitable lands where so many others had failed. He learned the native tongue, following the definitive manual of that time on administering the sacraments to the South American natives, which advised that, in order to win the hearts of the indigenous people, it was first necessary to win over their ears. Thus, learning the local language was essential. He built farms and workshops, propelled the native people toward the sciences and arts, and most importantly, taught them the principle teachings of the Catholic faith.

It was a given among the missionaries of that time that the native people would better assimilate doctrinal principles if their lives were also ordered: remodeling the external world for the sake of building a new interior world – that was the challenge. The many activities within the missions were meant to give a rhythm to the life of a people who up until that moment had been seminomadic. That was no simple task. One of the persistent challenges in Alta California was convincing the indigenous people to stay in the missions.

With King Charles III and the new organizational policies of New Spain, Serra was finally able to found the missions that made him famous. Jesuit missionaries were then expelled from the Americas – at that time approximately 2,000 Jesuits ran 220 missions and there were 17 Jesuit missions in Baja California. The government of the viceroyalty appointed the Franciscans to fill the void, and Serra, as the president, set out with 16 others. Baja California was an arid and harsh territory, natives lived for the most part in small communities of 70-250 individuals. There was no uniform language. They did not build large structures, they did not have ceramic pottery and, more importantly, they did not engage in agriculture. Serra wrote again to his superiors in Mexico City: this time to ask for clothing and coverings "for in the world there are no people more bare than these!".

News that the Russians intended to settle the western coast of North

America was a serious cause for alarm among the authorities in New Spain. The Viceroy Marquis de Croix immediately ordered the inspector general José de Gálvez to organize an expedition to occupy those lands.

Gálvez understood that for a firm and lasting victory it would be essential to capture more than just territory, but to win the hearts of the natives. That task was to be entrusted to Fr Junípero Serra, who in 1769 finally arrived in Alta California, in the port of San Diego. It is here that he would found the first of his nine missions in California.

Serra's challenge to evangelize Alta California was far from simple, but the greatest obstacle wasn't so much the natural misunderstandings

that would arise with the hunter-gatherers as the continuous problems that came with the Spanish soldiers. While on one hand they were needed to protect the missions from attacks by hostile tribes, on the other they often hindered the conversion of those peoples: it was not uncommon for the soldiers to accost native women, and the diseases they spread – syphilis, smallpox, measles and influenza – permanently undermined the demographic vitality of the missions in North America.

On 28 August 1784, exactly 35 years after his arrival in Veracruz, a 70-year-old Serra died in the St Charles Borromeo Mission, the second of the missions he helped found in California.



Biblical treasures on display in Philadelphia

Fragments of immeasurable value are part of an exhibition at the Penn Museum from 15 August to 7 November. The exhibit, entitled "Sacred Writings. Extraordinary Texts of the Biblical World", is being offered in honour of the Pope's visit to the United States from 22 to 27 September. The objective is to highlight the different ways in which various translations of the Bible have been represented throughout the centuries and across the continents. Figuring



Clay tablet documenting the great flood in Mesopotamia (1650 BC)

among the prized pieces is one of the oldest papyrus fragments of the Gospel of Matthew, written in Ancient Greek and dating back to the third century. This fragment contains the beginning of the Apostle's Gospel, which illustrates the lineage of Jesus. There is also the first English translation of the New Testament authorized by the Church of Rome, printed in Reims, France in 1582. Also on display is the first complete Bible printed in the New World; it was translated into the Native American Massachusetts language by Puritan missionary John Eliot in 1663. It is also possible to admire an antique clay tablet in Sumerian cuneiform, dating to approximately 1650 BC, which contains the earliest known version of the great flood in Mesopotamia. This version was later incorporated in the Epic of Gilgamesh.

The treasured collection also contains a polyglot New Testament Bible compiled by German scholar

Elias Hutter and printed in Nuremberg in 1599. The text includes 12 languages: Syriac, Hebrew, Greek, Latin, German, Czech, Italian, Spanish, French, English, Danish, and Polish. Then there is a manuscript in Italian, dating to the late 15th century, which illustrates the main historical events from the time of Creation to the election of Pope Sixtus IV in 1471.

Also in Philadelphia, from 21 August to 3 January at the National Constitution Center, is an exhibit entitled "Religious Liberty and the Founding of America". The exhibit features key documents from early American history that illuminate the role religion played in public life in the Founding era and shows how freedom of religion became a right guaranteed by the first amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Among the documents, visitors can view a copy of George Washington's Letter to Roman Catholics in America.



Morning Mass at the Domus Sanctae Marthae

Paul's advice

Two icons, the testimony of Job and Michelangelo's fresco of the *Last Judgement*, can restore our certainty in the personal encounter with the Lord. To each of us, the Pope offered the advice that Paul gives to the Christians of Thessalonica, to "comfort one another" and "to speak about the coming of the Lord", which is all that counts. In addition, don't waste time chatting in the sacristy. During morning Mass at Santa Marta on Tuesday, 1 September, Francis also suggested a series of questions for an examination of conscience on how we are living our lives as we await the Lord.

The Holy Father began his meditation by examining a passage from the First Letter which "the Apostle Paul writes to the community of Thessalonica" (5:1-6, 9-11), taken from the liturgy of the day. The Pope noted that perhaps "this letter is the first that he writes". He addresses it to "a somewhat troubled community", one that is preoccupied about the "how and when" of the Lord's return. Thus, in the passage offered the previous day, Francis said, St Paul is compelled to tell them not to "grieve as others do who have no hope". Indeed, the community is asking: "What happens to the dead, where do the dead go?". And even: "When will the Lord come?". And some answer: "He is coming now! And since he is coming now, let us not work!".

Thus Paul, a "practical" man, addresses the Thessalonian Christians with strong words: "one who does not work does not eat". Thus, the Pope stated, the Apostle, "has to teach the path of peace" to this community. In the previous day's Reading too, Paul admonishes them not to "grieve because the Lord will come and your dead are with him". But he then says something more: "and so we shall always be with the Lord". This affirmation, said Francis, "is a great comfort". Indeed, it "is what awaits us, all of us". What's more, he added, "yesterday's passage ended with advice: 'Therefore comfort one another with these words'".

But "today too", the Pope said, "the passage we read ends with the same teaching: comfort one another". It is indeed "comfort that gives hope: the Lord will come, and he will come when he wants to come, when he sees that the time has come". No one can say when it will be: Paul even writes that the Lord "will come like a thief in the night, as travail comes upon a woman with child: he comes!". From this perspective "what must we do?". Paul offers this advice: "Comfort one another, encourage one another". In other words, he tells them to talk about it together. "But I ask you", Francis continued, "do we talk about the fact that the Lord will come, that we will meet him?". Or "do we talk about many things, even theology, matters of the Church, of priests, nuns, Monsignors, all this?". And he added, "is this hope our comfort?".

Paul's advice is to comfort one another, encourage one another in community. On this question Fran-

cis proposed an examination of conscience: "in our communities, in our parishes, do we talk about the fact that we are awaiting the Lord who is coming, or do we chat about this, that or the other, to pass a bit of time and not become too bored? What is my comfort? Is it this hope? Am I certain that the Lord will come to find me and take me with him? Am I certain of this?".

Pope Francis then repeated the words of the Responsorial Psalm 27[26]: "I believe that I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living". And right away he asked another question: "Do you believe that you will see the Lord?". To consider this Francis referred to the "beautiful ending of Chapter 19 of the Book of Job", and explained that "Job suffers greatly", yet "amid his pain, his wounds, his misunderstandings, the suffering of not understanding why this has happened to him, he says: I am certain, I know that my Redeemer lives; I know that God lives and I shall see him, that with my eyes I shall behold him".

This witness challenges each one of us. Thus the Pope proposed a direct reflection: "Do I believe this? Or is it better not to think? Do we think about something else, because this certainty that the Lord will



Michelangelo Buonarroti, "The Last Judgement" (1536-1541)

come to find me, to take me with him... This is our peace, this is our comfort, this is our hope".

"It's true, he will come to judge", Francis added. "And when we go to the Sistine Chapel, we see that beautiful scene of the *Last Judgement*: it's true!". But "let us also think that he will come to find me so that I may see him with my own eyes, embrace him and always be with him. This is the hope that the Apostle Peter tells us to explain to others to bear witness to hope by our life". Thus, this is the true comfort: "I believe – this is true certainty – that I shall see the goodness of the Lord. This is why, the Pope continued, returning to Paul's counsel, "encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are

doing. And this is how we go forward". After all, precisely "in the opening prayer of the Mass", he recalled, "we asked the Lord to nurture the seedling that he planted in us, that seed of goodness, that seed of grace".

Francis followed the homily by asking "the Lord for the grace that the seed of hope which he planted in our heart may continue to grow until the final meeting with him", that we may say: "I believe that I shall see the Lord"; "I know that the Lord lives"; "I know that the Lord shall come to find me". This is "the horizon of our life". Therefore, the Pontiff concluded, "let us ask the Lord for this grace and comfort one another with good works and good words, on this path".

Vatican Pharmacy sends aid to immigrants

Charity in the lab

The adhesive label of the red-topped white jar reads: Benzyl benzoate 20%. Healthcare professionals say it is one of the most effective treatments for scabies. And it is also has become a new way in the Vatican to practice charity and serve people in need, without distinction of race, language, age or religion. The ointment is prepared in the pharmacy's own laboratory and is being handed out to thousands of immigrants arriving in Italy every day.

This initiative was requested by the Office of Papal Charities, which is also handling distribution at reception centres around Rome. Recently in one of the city's most crowded centres, volunteers from the Almoner's Office delivered 50 kg of the scabies ointment, along with 100 packs of antibiotics and antihistamines and 50 antifungal salves.



The ointment is one of the galenic preparations that are made every day in the Vatican Pharmacy's laboratory. Copper stills and hand scales have been set aside and modern technology has taken over. Indeed, the laboratory was recently renovated, while remaining faithful to the time-honoured pharmacological tradition of the Fatebenefratelli, who gave this institution its start in the Vatican in 1874.

In addition to the scabies mite, the Vatican Pharmacy is also on the front line in the fight against the less harmful but no less bothersome mosquito. The Pharmacy has created a "two-in-one" spray lotion: it serves both to repel insects and soothe their bites. It contains natural essential oils, such as citronella, geranium, clove and lavender.

Along the lines of rediscovering the pharmaceutical lab's potential comes a new series of products, with colourful labels bearing the pharmacy's name and a photo of St Peter's Basilica. Incorporating plant-based compounds, these products span from hand cream and aftershave lotion to body creams and powders for pressure wounds, just to name a few. These are only the first that Br Rafael



Cenizo Ramírez, Director of the Vatican Pharmacy, has decided to make available to the public, providing high quality products of proven therapeutic effectiveness.

The new phytotherapeutic line augments the series of products already produced by the Vatican Pharmacy. These include liquid preparations, known as "mother tinctures" extracted from fresh medicinal plants, to which modern phytotherapy attributes great importance in the treatment of various diseases. At the moment there are ten tinctures available, seven of which are single-extract products. Meticulous attention is paid to both the quality of the tinctures used and the product information supplied, especially with regard to instructions for use.

Thus the laboratory produces not only physician-prescribed galenic preparations, but also stock preparations. And since overall wellness is also a concern, there are of course several cosmetic items: the products most recently introduced include hand cream with Hyaluronic acid and a moisturizing aftershave cream. (Nicola Gori)

The Italian-American missionary who helped both the good guys and bad

Sr Blandina The nun of the West

SILVIA GUIDI

"His eyes were blue-gray", Sr Blandina Segale wrote in her diary, and he had, "the air of a little boy" who could not have been more than 17 years old. "He was an innocent, if not for the iron firmness of purpose, good or bad ... [he] could choose the right path and instead chose the wrong". On learning of his death,



The only known photo of Billy the Kid

she wrote: "Poor Billy the Kid, thus ending the career of a young man who started down the slope at the age of twelve to avenge an insult that had been done to his mother".

The legendary outlaw crossed paths various times with Rosa Maria Segale, an Italian-American nun, who entered the convent of the Sisters of Charity in Cincinnati on 8 December 1868, taking the name Blandina.

Rosa Maria was a schoolteacher in Steubenville and Dayton, Ohio, when at the age of 22, she was sent as a missionary to Trinidad, Colorado. She travelled to the frontier and after facing many surprises and adventures along the way, she reached the mining town on 9 December in 1872.

Her obedience as a missionary of Charity brought her east of the Rio Grande and south of Sangre de Cristo Mountains. She often lived in close contact with bandits and outlaws, fighting against the then-frequent practice of summary justice and lynchings. Many such incidents were recounted in her diary, *At the End of the Santa Fe Trail*, published in 1932 by Bruce Publishers, Milwaukee.

On Wednesday, 26 August 2015, the Archdiocese of Santa Fe announced that they had taken the first step in the process for the beatification of "the fastest nun in the West". Sainthood may become a reality for the little nun who crossed

the Wild West helping both the good and bad guys, snatching cattle from the hands of thieves, fighting for the rights of Native Americans, which were often trampled on. "Poor wild hearts, how they feel full of anger and treated unfairly", she wrote of her friends, the Apache. Exploring distant lands, she travelled alone on horseback, by train or stagecoach to establish schools, nursery schools and hospitals.

Many of her exploits are practically legendary. Although perhaps not historically accurate, they give us an idea as to how Sr Blandina would take on anyone – even outlaws and bandits – with a mix of authority, practicality and tough love. When she heard that a member of Billy the Kid's gang had been seriously wounded and left to die, she went and said harshly to his as-



Sr Blandina Segale

sailants, "I see that with a hard head you find yourself not able to kill him with one shot to the head". Then without another word she began to bandage his wounds. According to the chronicles of the time, her actions convinced Billy the Kid to forgo his plan to kill the four doctors who had refused to help his friend.

Marcelo Figueroa recalls the dialogue with his friend

Episode 33

Friendship is the common thread that joined Protestant biblicist Marcelo Figueroa, Rabbi Abraham Skorka and Jorge Mario Bergoglio for many years. It is also a theme of the final episode of their television programme which was to air in March 2013 on a diocesan television channel in Buenos Aires. Thirty-two instalments made it to the airwaves on schedule, but the 33rd episode was left on the drawing board: "I'll do it when I get home", Bergoglio said just before he left for the Conclave.

The idea behind the programme was to address, each according to his own perspective of faith, issues which could concern everyone. The starting point was the analysis of Sacred Scripture: in fact the show was called "Bible, a dialogue today". The programme was hosted by the Cardinal from Buenos Aires, along with Skorka and Figueroa. For several years they held impassioned discussions on various topics: the meaning of life,

family, old age, dignity, fears, the reason and importance of faith in these times. "Ever since Jorge Mario Bergoglio became Pope, we have been separated by a vast geographic distance but we feel very close, because it is always wonderful to see each other again", Figueroa confided to *L'Osservatore Romano*. Now he is limited to meeting the Pontiff at Santa Marta. "I think that Francis is a spiritual and moral point of reference not just for Catholics", he added. "He has a real awareness of the problems affecting the world, a clear geopolitical viewpoint".

Figueroa continued by speaking to the issue on which their television programme was centred. "The Pope is very sensitive to the issue of religious dialogue," he said, "because he understands that others are reflected in God. It is through human relationships that we must create trust. We begin by establishing relationships, then comes the rest". (Silvina Pérez)

Msrgr Pierfranco Pastore dies

A priest among journalists

For more than 40 years he offered professional and spiritual guidance to journalists covering the Pope and the Holy See. He confided that his priesthood was greatly influenced by his relationships with journalists from around the world. And thus, when the news of the death of Bishop Pierfranco Pastore, 80, was announced on Sunday, 30 August, many remembered how even after he left his post in the Vatican in 2003, he stayed close to his old colleagues, especially in difficult times. It is for this reason that this priest remains in the hearts of many.

Pastore was born in Novara, Italy. His father was trade unionist Giulio Pastore, founder and first secretary of the Italian Confederation of Unionized Workers, and his brother Mario was a well-known news anchor at Rai, the Italian national television channel. Bishop Pastore worked on the front lines of Holy See communications as the secretary of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications. He began his service at Vatican Radio in 1974, heading "Holy Year Special", a programme which was broadcast in Italian, French, English, Spanish. The programme was introduced as a

service to pilgrims during the Jubilee of 1975. It continued after the Holy Year with a different name and began focusing on current events and news. The result "Quattrovoce" was also headed by Msrgr Pastore.

In June 1976 Paul VI called him to serve as the assistant to Msrgr Romeo Panciroli, then director of the Holy See Press Office. On 4 December 1984 he was appointed Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications, a role in which he coordinated the publishing of important pastoral documents. In 1994 John Paul II elevated him to the dignity of bishop.

Bishop Pastore played a particularly important role during the Holy Year of 2000, paying special attention to the Jubilee of Journalists and the world of entertainment. During this time, he coordinated and aided in the activities of world media in order to guarantee the most accurate coverage.

Archbishop Claudio Maria Celli, President of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications, celebrated Bishop Pastore's funeral on Tuesday, 1 September, in the chapel of the Catholic Action's welfare home, where the prelate resided.



Bergoglio in the studio during the transmission "Bible, a dialogue today"

MARC LINDEIJER*

Zhujiuhe is a small village situated in the vast gray plain at the border of the northern Chinese Provinces Zhili and Shandong. Its name translates to the "River of the Zhu Family." Several members of that family had converted to Catholicism during the 18th century, when the Jesuits from Beijing progressed deeper into Zhili Province. In the early 19th century, the Zhu family had settled near the river and given it its name. In 1900, the village had some 300 inhabitants living in low cottages built of clay, nestled among sprawling sorghum fields and was dominated by a simple church with a flat roof and high façade; its cross towered over the countryside. The French Jesuit Léon Ignace Mangin, 42 years



old and a missionary in China since 1882, was the pastor of the Catholic community of Zhujiuhe. He was helped by a middle-aged village elder, Zhu Dianxuan, an able administrator who also happened to be skilled in the art of warfare. His 50-year-old wife, Mary Zhu-Wu, was much esteemed by the villagers: a gentle woman of great faith, she gave priority to helping the poor in her service of God. Never looking for notoriety or glory, these three people would become the centre of the most violent massacre of Christians during the Boxer Rebellion.

The history of the uprising itself, the political machinations and warfare that ignited it, need not be explained here. They mattered little to the people of Zhujiuhe, when in the summer of 1900 they took in thousands of Catholic refugees from the neighbouring villages. This increased the population to 3,000, ten times its usual size, when on 17 July they were attacked by 4,500 heavily armed men, the combined forces of the Boxers and the imperial army. A few days earlier, the villagers, protected behind the ramparts that Zhu Dianxuan had constructed, had still been able to ward off the attacks and even seized a cannon from the enemy. Fr Mangin and his fellow-Jesuit, Paul Denn, who had also fled to Zhujiuhe, had offered Mass each morning and heard confessions throughout the day; during the evenings, they relieved the night watchmen on the ramparts. The next day, Zhu Dianxuan, the only experienced leader among the 1,000 odd men who were able to defend the village, climbed the ramparts to train the cannon on the enemy forces. But that same evening, when



A martyr saint of China

The courage of Mary Zhu-Wu

already more than half of his men had died in battle, the cannon back-fired onto Zhu Dianxuan's chest. Mangin, who was standing nearby, ran towards the dying man and gave him Extreme Unction. By the third day, as the situation seemed hopeless, those who could escape did so, leaving behind those who were too weak to flee, especially women and children. When on the early morning of 20 July the soldiers took the village, the first people they killed were a group of parish virgins and women catechists. Eighty-five other women and children fled in panic to the orphanage and jumped into its well, where they drowned or suffocated. Their cries and screams for help continued for two days.

Most of the villagers, around 1,000 of them, had taken refuge in the church, spiritually assisted by the two Jesuit priests. Too pressed to offer a final Mass, Mangin and Denn sat on the steps before the altar and heard confessions, while most of the people knelt in prayer

or simply waited. Mary Zhu-Wu, presumably grieving for her husband, nevertheless remained calm, exhorting everyone to trust God and to pray to our Heavenly Mother. Around nine o'clock in the morning, the attackers broke through the door and began firing at random into the church, until it was filled with smoke. Panic ensued, while people were being killed, but the priests managed to unite them in prayer, reciting together the Confiteor and the Act of Contrition, and then gave them general absolution as the guns continued to fire on the people. Here, Mary Zhu-Wu, rose to singular greatness: she stood up and positioned herself with outstretched arms in front of Fr Mangin to shield him with her body. Not long afterwards, a bullet struck her and she fell at the altar railing. Mangin, praying the rosary with one hand and grasping a crucifix in the other, soon fell victim to the gunmen, too. Then the Boxers barricaded the church and set it on fire. Most of

the refugees inside died from smoke inhalation, the last ones – with Mangin and Denn – burning to death as the church roof finally collapsed. A mere 500 Catholics managed to survive the massacre by fleeing or apostatizing; a few others, women especially, were sold as slaves or led away as captives to Beijing, where they may have ended up in a brothel. But Mary Zhu-Wu continues to live on at Zhujiuhe, the "River of the Zhu family", now turned into a river of blood. While her husband defended the village against the external enemy, she strengthened the interior faith and courage of the people, even giving up her life to save their pastor. In 1955, Pope Pius XII declared her Blessed, together with the two Jesuits and 53 other martyrs; they were all canonized by Pope John Paul II in 2000.

*Assistant of the Postulator General of the Society of Jesus

Bishop Flavien Mikhael Melki beatified in Lebanon

An ecumenism of blood

RAMI AL KABALAN*

An authentic testimony of the "ecumenism of blood" can be found in the figure of Bishop Flavien Mikhael Melki, who was born and raised in the Syriac Orthodox Church and died in communion with the Syriac Catholic Church. He was killed in hatred of the faith in 1915 during the rule of the Young Turks.

The martyr – who Cardinal Angelo Amato, Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, beatified on Saturday, 29 August, on behalf of Pope Francis in Daroun-Harissa, Lebanon – was born in 1858 in the small village of Kalaat Mara, located in Vilayet de Mardine, in north eastern Greater Syria (in what is today Turkey), to a deeply Christian family of the Syriac Orthodox Church. At the age of 20 he was ordained a deacon and became the librarian of the monastery.

It was in those years that, always seeking to broaden his knowledge, he studied the fathers of the Eastern Churches, among other things, and decided to become Catholic. He courageously left the monastery, and openly declared his faith, trav-

elling to Lebanon, to the Syriac Catholic Patriarchate of Charfé, where his beatification took place.

In the summer of 1915, as head of his community, he was arrested and taken to prison in Djezireh-ibn-Omar. Abandoning himself to the will of God, he continued his ministry as father and pastor even during his imprisonment with other Christians. He also celebrated the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Confession, also imparting a papal blessing by plenary indulgence as the Holy See authorizes three times a year.

Like most of the prisoners, he was subjected to interrogation and was told that if he did not convert he would die. At first he was silent then, demonstrating his unequivocal commitment to Christ, he clearly stated his opposition to such an idea.

On 29 August 1915, his hands and feet were tied and he was brutally and savagely beaten, then shot to death. His body was thrown into the Tigris River, along with the re-



mains of the others who were killed.

For the Syriac Church of Antioch this beatification is the first that has occurred since the solemn acknowledgement of the primacy of Peter and the reconstitution of the ecclesial communion with Rome in 1781. It is not only an important recognition of the heroic holiness of the martyred bishop, but it is also a tribute to all Christian martyrs who have given their lives for Christ, and is encouragement for those who still today suffer persecution on account of Christ, especially Christians in Iraq and Syria.

*Postulator for the Cause

The Holy Father celebrates the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation in St Peter's Basilica

In the words of St Francis

«Laudato sie, mi' Signore / cum tucte le tue creature, / spetialmente messor lo frate sole, / lo quale è iorno, et allumini noi per lui...». The sweet and powerful words of St Francis of Assisi's canticle resounded with harp accompaniment under the dome of St Peter's Basilica where on Tuesday afternoon, 1 September, Pope Francis presided at the Liturgy of the Word for the first World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation.

The spirituality of the Poverello of Assisi set the tone for the entire celebration; a perfect setting for hymns from the Old Testament – sung by the Sistine Chapel Choir, directed by Msgr Massimo Palombella – and a passage from the encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, which was read as the Second Reading.

In a Basilica packed with the faithful, 28 cardinals, including the Dean the College of Cardinals and the Secretary of State, were present. Seated beside the Pope was Archbishop Georg Gänswein, Prefect of the Papal Household. Attending along with the diplomatic corps accredited to the Holy See were Archbishop Becciu, Substitute of the Secretariat of State; Archbishop Gallagher, Secretary for Relations with States; Msgr Wells, Assessor; Msgr Camilleri, Undersecretary for Relations with States; and Msgr Bettencourt, Head of Protocol.

At 5 pm, a procession opened the ceremony which the Pontiff began with a prayer taken from the conclusion of the encyclical. Later, Fr Raniero Cantalamessa, Preacher of the Papal Household, delivered the homily, inviting the faithful present to pray aloud "O Lord our God, how great is your name on the earth".

At the end of the liturgy, the Pope's actions summarized the Day, which he established on 6 August and which will be celebrated every year on 1 September, the date chosen by the Orthodox Church in 1989. After the benediction and the *Salve Regina*, the Pontiff stopped to greet individually the ecumenical representatives who had participated in the ceremony, including representatives of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, the Romanian Orthodox Church in Italy, the Coptic Orthodox Church of Egypt, the Anglican Church, the World Methodist Council, and the Biblical Society in Italy. Together they recognized that "soil, water, mountains: everything is, as it were, a caress of God". Asking for the grace "to feel profoundly joined to everything that is", they prayed that all "may love the common good, advance the weak, and care for this world in which we live".



Pietro Perugino and his workshop, "God the Father" (1482, Sistine Chapel, detail of the "Baptism of Christ")



"Today is
the World Day
of Prayer
for the Care of
Creation.

Let us work and pray"

(@Pontifex)

John August Swanson,
"Francis and the wolf"
(2002)



Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace organizes

An hour of Eucharistic Adoration

As part of the events which were planned in local Churches for the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation on 1 September, the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace encouraged the faithful to organize an hour of Eucharistic Adoration.

Parishes around the world followed the proposed programme for the hour of Eucharistic Adoration, which included an introductory Collect from the Orthodox tradition, followed by selected passages of the Word of God. First and foremost were passages from Genesis (1:26-2:3 and 2:15), which provide the narrative of Creation and of God's will to take man "and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it". This reading was followed by Psalm 148, in which all creatures are called to give praise for the wonders created on the earth. Another reading was a passage from the Gospel

according to Matthew (6:25-33), in which Jesus says that our life is worth more than food, and our body more than clothing.

Three passages from the *Laudato Si'* then followed: in the first (nn. 8-9), the Pope recalls that Patriarch Bartholomew "has spoken in particular of the need for each of us to repent of the ways we have harmed the planet, ... 'inasmuch as we all generate small ecological damage'". In the second (n. 236), the Pontiff highlights that in the Eucharist "all that has been created finds its greatest exaltation". In the third (nn. 241-242), the Pope refers to Mary and Joseph, pointing out the Virgin in particular: "Just as her pierced heart mourned the death of Jesus, so now she grieves for the sufferings of the crucified poor and for the creatures of this world laid waste by human power".

Homily of the Preacher of the Papal Household

Faith as a guarantee

During the Liturgy of the Word in the Vatican Basilica on the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, the homily was given by Fr Raniero Cantalamessa, OFM, Cap., Preacher to the Papal Household. "Faith in a Creator God and that man is made in God's image is not a threat", Fr Cantalamessa said, "but rather a guarantee for creation, and indeed the strongest of all guarantees. It means that man is not absolute master of other creatures; he must account for what he has received. The parable of the talents has its primordial application here: the earth is the talent that we have all received and for which we are accountable".

According to the Preacher, "the idea of an idyllic relationship between man and the cosmos, outside of the Bible, is a literary invention. The prevailing opinion

among pagan philosophers of the time, in the wake of Plato, tended to make the material world the product of a secondary god (the *Deuteros Theos*, or Demiurge), or even, as Marcion would say, the work of a bad god, not the God revealed by Jesus Christ. There was a general yearning to liberate oneself from matter, not to liberate the material. This was the vision that during the time of Francis of Assisi reemerged as the Cathar heresy". St Francis, however, was "living proof of the contribution that faith in God can give to the shared effort of safeguarding Creation". Indeed, Fr Cantalamessa said, the saint's "love for creatures was a direct result of his faith in the universal paternity of God. He did not yet have the practical reasons that we have today to worry about the future of the planet: atmospheric

pollution, a shortage of clean water... His was an environmentalism free of the utilitarian, albeit legitimate, purposes that we have today. Jesus' words, 'you have but one Father, who is in heaven; you are all brethren' (cf. Mt 23:8-9), were enough for him", the Preacher continued. This was not, for St Francis, "an abstract principle" but rather "the fixed horizon within which he lived and thought. Steadfast in this certainty, he sought to place the entire world 'in a state of fraternity and in a state of praise'".



Sawai Chinnawong, "Genesis" (2004)