

L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO

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Vatican City

Friday, 29 January 2016

Pope Francis concludes the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity with Vespers on the Feast of the Conversion of Paul

Christ is the only door

And a Papal visit to Sweden is set for 31 October on the 500th anniversary of the Reformation



PAGE 8/9

Unity on the journey

GIOVANNI MARIA VIAN

Within hours of the announcement that Pope Francis would meet with Lutherans in Sweden to celebrate the beginning of the fifth centenary of the Protestant Reformation, during the Jubilee of Mercy, the Bishop of Rome crossed the threshold of the Holy Door of the Basilica of St Paul Outside-the-Walls together with representatives of the Patriarch of Constantinople and of the Anglican Primate. The simple yet meaningful gesture was followed by a homily which, on the ecumenical journey of the Church of Rome, signals further progress on a symbolic day such as the Feast of the Conversion of St Paul. The Pope drew a powerful connection between this conversion and the mission that characterizes his pontificate. "I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain". This passage from Paul's Epistle was quoted by the Pontiff, who then recalled that the First Letter of Peter addresses "members of small and fragile communities", as if to reflect the situation of many Christians who today not uncommonly experience persecution and the ecumenism of blood that Pope Bergoglio has so often recalled with emotion.

Divisions persist among Christians and within individual confessions, but – the Pontiff emphasized – "beyond the differences that still divide us, let us recognize with joy that at the origin of Christian life there is always one call whose maker is God himself. Let us advance on the path to a full and visible communion among Christians not only when we move closer to one another, but above all as we convert to the Lord, who out of grace chooses us and calls us to be his disciples". But "it is not only the call that unites us; we also share one mission". Indeed, "by walking and working together, we realize that we are already united in the name of the Lord". The Pope added, because "unity is achieved on the journey", reiterating a concept that he holds dear.

In St Paul's Basilica John XXIII

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

With the World Council of Churches

The journey continues

ANDRZEJ CHOROMANSKI ON PAGE 7

To the Roman Rota

The Church's dream

PAGE 11

At the Angelus The poor at the centre



PAGE 5

The General Audience in St Peter's Square

A reserve of gold and silver



Emanuele Luzzati (1921-2007), "The Hebrews in the desert"

PAGE 3

Rubric of the Roman Missal regarding the washing of feet

On Thursday, 21 January, it was announced that Pope Francis ordered an amendment to the rubric of the Roman Missal regarding the washing of feet, establishing that the selection of candidates in the rite no longer be limited to men. The Pontiff communicated his decision to Cardinal Robert Sarah, Prefect of the Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, by way of a letter.

PAGE 4

VATICAN BULLETIN

AUDIENCES

Tuesday, 19 January

Bishop César Daniel Fernández of Jujuy, Argentina

Thursday, 21 January

Archbishop Eliseo Antonio Ariotti, titular Archbishop of Vibiana, Apostolic Nuncio in Paraguay

H.E. Mr Robert Compaore, Ambassador of Burkina Faso, for the presentation of his Letters of Credence

Bishop Rubén Oscar Frassia of Avellaneda-Lanús, Argentina

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

Friday, 22 January

H.E. Mr Charles Angelo Savarin, President of the Commonwealth of Dominica, with his wife and entourage

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

Mr Timothy Donald Cook, Chief Executive Officer of Apple

Msr Pio Vito Pinto, Dean of the Tribunal of the Roman Rota

The College of the Prelate Auditors of the Tribunal of the Roman Rota

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

Saturday, 23 January

H.E. Matthew S.M. Lee, Ambassador of China, for the presentation of his Letters of Credence

H.B. Cardinal Béchara Boutros Raï, Patriarch of Antioch for Maronites, Lebanon

Mr Francesco Paolo Tronca, Prefect and Commissioner of the Municipality of Rome

Cardinal Rubén Salazar Gómez, Archbishop of Bogotá, Colombia, with: Archbishop Luis Augusto Castro Quiroga, IMC, of Tunja, President of the Episcopal Conference of Colombia; Archbishop Oscar Urbina Ortega of Villavicencio, Vice-President; Bishop José Daniel Falla Robles, titular Bishop of Calama, Auxiliary of Cali, Secretary General

Bishop Roberto Rodríguez, Bishop emeritus of La Rioja, Argentina

Monday, 25 January

H.E. Mr Neven Pelicarić, Ambassador of Croatia, for the presentation of his Letters of Credence

Archbishop Miguel Maury Buendía, titular Archbishop of Italia, Apostolic Nuncio in Romania

Archbishop Wojciech Zaluski, titular Archbishop of Diocletiana, Apostolic Nuncio in Burundi

Archbishop Mario Antonio Cargnello of Salta, Argentina

H.E. Mr Budiardman Bahar, Ambassador of Indonesia, on a farewell visit

Cardinal Giuseppe Betori, Archbishop of Florence, Italy

Tuesday, 26 January

H.E. Mr Hassan Rouhani, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, with his entourage

NEW DIOCESE

The Holy Father established the new Diocese of San Francisco de Asís de Jutiapa, Guatemala, with territory taken from the Diocese of Jalapa, making it a suffragan of the Archdiocese of Santiago de Guatemala. He also appointed Fr Antonio Calderón Cruz from the clergy of the Diocese of San Marcos as the first Bishop of San Francisco de Asís de Jutiapa. Until now he has been parish priest of La Blanca Parish in San Marcos (25 Jan.).

Bishop-elect Calderón Cruz, 56, was born in Guatemala City, Guatemala. He holds degrees in philosophy and theology. He was ordained a priest on 5 July 1986. He has served in parish ministry and as: head of diocesan youth pastoral care; assistant to the Bishop in the administration of three parishes; formator at the Nuestra Señora de la Asunción Major Seminary; diocesan administrator of San Marcos.

ECCLESIASTICAL CIRCUMSCRIPTIONS

The Holy Father has decided to register under common law the following six Ecclesiastical Circumscriptions in northern Canada which, until now, have been under the jurisdiction of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. They are: Keewatin-Le Pas, Churchill-Hudson Bay, Moosonee, Grouard-McLennan, MacKenzie-Fort Smith and Whitehorse.

CHANGES IN EPISCOPATE

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Gentil Delázari of Sinop, Brazil. It was presented in accord with can. 401 § 1 of the Code of Canon Law (20 Jan.).

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Canisio Klaus as Bishop of Sinop, Brazil. Until now he has been Bishop of Santa Cruz do Sul, Brazil (20 Jan.).

Bishop Klaus, 64, was born in Arroio do Meio, Brazil. He was ordained a priest on 28 December 1979. He was ordained a bishop on

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

The Pontiff receives Iranian President Rouhani

Political solutions for the Middle East

On Tuesday, 26 January, in the Vatican Apostolic Palace, the Holy Father received in audience His Excellency Hassan Rouhani, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 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, common spiritual values emerged and reference was made to the good state of relations between the Holy See and the Islamic Republic of Iran, the life of the Church in the country and the action of the Holy See to favour the promotion of the dignity of

the human person and religious freedom.

Attention then turned to the conclusion and application of the Nuclear Accord and the important role that Iran is called upon to fulfil, along with other countries in the Region, to promote suitable political solutions to the problems afflicting the Middle East, to counter the spread of terrorism and the trafficking of arms. In this respect, the Parties highlighted the importance of interreligious dialogue and the responsibility of religious communities in promoting reconciliation, tolerance and peace.



The Ambassador of the Republic of China presents his credentials


H.E. Mr Matthew S.M. Lee, 60, was born in Penghu County, Taiwan, Republic of China. He holds a bachelor of arts, a master's in international relations and international law, and an executive MBA. He has served as: translator and editor of *China Times* (1981-1982); official in the Protocol Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1982-1983); official in the Department for North American Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1983-1985); secretary to the deputy consul in Seattle, USA (1985-1991); chief of staff for Senator C.J. Chen (1991-1994); deputy director general and then deputy consul general in Los Angeles, USA (1994-1997); director general at the Government Information Office, Executive Yuan (1997-1999); counsellor at the Government Information Office, Executive Yuan (1999-2000); director general for general affairs at the



On Saturday morning, 23 January, Pope Francis received H.E. Mr Matthew S.M. Lee, the new Ambassador of the Republic of China, for the presentation of his Credentials accrediting him to the Holy See

Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2000-2002); director general and consul general in San Francisco, USA (2002-2005); ambassador to Latvia (2005-2006); ambassador to the Republic of Palau (2006-2008); head of protocol at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2008-2009); director general of East Asian Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2009-2011); ambassador to Argentina (2011-2014); ambassador to Jordan (2014-2015).

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cd.english@ossrom.va
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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 +390669898675

TIPOGRAFIA VATICANA EDITRICE
L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO
don Sergio Pellini s.n.b.
Director General

Photo Service
photo@ossrom.va www.photo.va
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System Comunicazione Pubblicitaria
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segreteria@redirezionesystem@itsole24ore.com

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At the General Audience the Pope recalls that every human being is a gem in the hands of God

A reserve of gold and silver

We are all "precious gems in the hands of the good and merciful Father". Moreover, we are "his personal 'reserve of gold and silver', such as King David stated he had given for the construction of the Temple". This evocative image was offered by Pope Francis on Wednesday, 27 January, at the General Audience dedicated to the theme of the Jubilee of Mercy, read in the light of the Bible. With the faithful who gathered in St Peter's Square, the Pontiff expanded on the passage from the Book of Exodus (2:23-25) in which the Lord hears the cry of his people and establishes a covenant with them. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's address, which he delivered in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Good morning!

In Sacred Scripture, God's mercy is present throughout the entire history of the people of Israel.

With his mercy, the Lord accompanies the journey of the Patriarchs, gives them children despite being barren, leads them on paths of grace and reconciliation, as demonstrated by the story of Joseph and his brothers (cf. Gen ch. 37-50). I think of the many brothers and sisters in a family who are distant and do not speak to each other. This Year of Mercy is a good opportunity to meet again, embrace, forgive and forget the bad things. But as we know, in Egypt, life is hard for the people. It is precisely when the Israelites are about to give in to resignation, that the Lord intervenes and works salvation.

One reads in the Book of Exodus: "In the course of those many days the King of Egypt died. And the people of Israel groaned under their bondage, and cried out for help, and their cry under bondage came up to God. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God saw the people of Israel, and God knew their condition" (2:23-25). Mercy cannot remain indifferent to the suffering of the oppressed, to the cry of those who are subjected to violence, reduced to slavery, condemned to death. It is a painful reality that afflicts every era, including ours, and which often makes us feel powerless, tempted to harden our heart and think of something else. However, God "is not indifferent" (*Message for the Celebration of the 2016 World Day of Peace*, n. 1). He does not look away from our human pain. The God of mercy responds and takes care of the poor, of those who cry out in desperation. God listens and intervenes in order to save, raising men able to hear the groan of suffering and to work in favour of the oppressed.

And so begins the story of Moses as the mediator of freedom for the people. He confronts the Pharaoh to convince him to let the Israelites depart; and he then leads the people, across the Red Sea and the desert, toward freedom. Moses – whom just after his birth, divine mercy saved from death in the waters of the Nile – becomes the mediator of that very mercy, allowing the people to be born to freedom, saved from the waters of the Red Sea. In this Year of Mercy we too can do this work of acting as mediators of mercy in order

to approach, to give relief, to create unity. So many good things can be done.

God's mercy always operates to save. It is quite the opposite of the work of those who always act to kill: for example, those who wage war. The Lord, through his servant Moses, guides Israel in the desert as if Israel were a son, educates the people to the faith and makes a covenant with Israel, creating a bond of the strongest love, like that of a father with his child and of a groom with his bride.

Divine mercy goes that far. God offers a special, exclusive, privileged relationship of love. When he gives instructions to Moses regarding the covenant, he says: "if you will obey my voice and keep my covenant,

"In this Year of Mercy we too can do this work of acting as mediators of mercy through the works of mercy in order to approach, to give relief, to create unity. So many good things can be done. God's mercy always operates to save"

you shall be my own possession among all peoples; for all the earth is mine, and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex 19:5-6).

Of course, God already possesses all the earth because he created it; but his people become for him a different, special possession: his personal "reserve of gold and silver" such as King David stated he had given for the construction of the Temple.

So we become thus for God, by accepting his covenant and letting ourselves be saved by him. The Lord's mercy renders man precious, like a personal treasure that belongs

to him, which he safeguards and with which he is well pleased.

These are the wonders of divine mercy, which reaches complete fulfillment in the Lord Jesus, in the "new and eternal covenant" consummated in his blood, which annuls our sin with forgiveness and renders us definitively Children of God (cf. 1 Jn 3:1), precious gems in the hands of the good and merciful Father. And as we are Children of God and have the opportunity to receive this legacy – that of goodness and mercy – in comparison to others, let us ask the Lord that in this Year of Mercy we too may do merciful things; let us open our heart in order to reach everyone with the works of mercy, to work the merciful legacy that God the Father showed toward us.

SPECIAL GREETINGS

I address a warm welcome to Italian-speaking pilgrims. I greet the circus artists and workers and I thank them for their fine performance; you are champions of beauty and beauty is good for the soul. Beauty brings us closer to God, but behind this spectacle of beauty there are so many hours of training!

I greet the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today's Audience, especially those from the United States of America. With prayerful good wishes that the current Jubilee of Mercy will be a moment of grace and spiritual renewal for you and your families, I invoke upon all of you joy and peace in our Lord Jesus Christ. God bless you all!



Marc Chagall, "Crossing of the Red Sea" (1955)

May the Extraordinary Jubilee, with the passage through the Holy Door, invite us to emerge from selfishness – we all have some amount of selfishness. We must emerge from this. We must emerge from selfishness and foster in each person the exercise of the works of mercy toward our brothers and sisters.

A special thought goes to *young people, the sick and to newlyweds*: Tomorrow is the liturgical memorial of St Thomas Aquinas, Patron Saint of Catholic Schools. May his example impel you, dear *young people*, to see in the merciful Jesus the one teacher of life; may his intercession obtain for you, dear *sick people*, the serenity and peace present in the mystery of the Cross; and may his doctrine be an encouragement for you, dear *newlyweds*, to entrust yourselves to the wisdom of heart in order to fulfil your mission.

A flag from inmates

As a symbol of "the goal of creating a new pastoral ministry in prisons", a flag signed by the inmates of the prisons in Venice, Turin and Pontremoli – was given

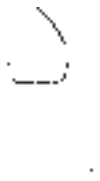
to the Pope. Also presented to the Holy Father was a CD recorded by the choir of the detainees in the prison in Venice. Presenting the flag to the Pope at the General Audience was Juri Nervo, the head of the project in Turin entitled: "Eremo del silenzio" [*Retreat of Silence*]. Nervo has transformed prison cells into cells for prayer with the help of many young people he has met in schools and parishes, and the Dominican Sisters of Bethany. Nervo gave Pope Francis the flag which had been signed by the inmates he had met with. And, in turn, the Pope signed another flag which will be brought to other Italian penitentiaries and then will be given back to the Holy Father bearing other signatures on 6 November during the Jubilee for Inmates.



A change to the rubric of the Roman Missal regarding the washing of feet

No longer only men

Pope Francis ordered the following amendment to the rubric of the Roman Missal regarding the washing of feet during Holy Thursday Mass, establishing that the selection of candidates for the rite no longer be limited to men. The Pontiff communicated his decision to the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments by letter, translated as follows from the Italian.



To my Venerable Brother Cardinal ROBERT SARAH Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments

Your Eminence,

As I had the opportunity to inform you personally, for some time I have been reflecting on the Rite of "The Washing of Feet", contained in the Liturgy of *In Missa in cena Domini*, with the aim of improving the procedure, in order to fully express the significance of the gesture Jesus performed in the Upper Room, giving of himself "to the very end" for the salvation of the world, his boundless charity.

After careful consideration, I have reached the decision to make a change in the rubric of the Roman Missal. Therefore, I order that the rubric according to which the candidates chosen to receive the washing of feet be men or boys be modified in such a way as to enable the Pastors of the Church from now on to choose the candidates for the rite from among all members of the People of God. It is further recommended that those chosen be given an appropriate explanation of the significance of the said rite.

With gratitude for the invaluable service of this Dicastery, I assure you, Your Eminence, the Secretary and the whole staff of my remembrance in prayer, and as I express my best wishes for Holy Christmas, I impart to each one the Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican,
20 December 2015

Franciscans

Variety and unity

From the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments

DECREE

The reform of Holy Week, with the Decree *Maxima Redemptionis Nostrae Mysteria* (30 November 1955), established the faculty for the washing of feet of twelve men during the Mass of the Lord's Supper after the reading of the Gospel according to John, where a pastoral reason is given, in order to show in an almost representative way the humility and charity of Christ towards his disciples.

In the Roman Liturgy this rite was handed down with the name of the *Mandatum* of the Lord concerning fraternal charity according to Jesus' words (cf. Jn 13:34), which are sung in an antiphon during the celebration.

In performing this rite bishops and priests are invited to conform themselves intimately to Christ who "came not to be served but to serve" (Mt 20:28) and, compelled by charity (Jn 13:1), to give his life "to the end" for the salvation of the whole human race.

In order to show the full meaning of this rite to those who take part in it, it seemed fitting to the Su-

preme Pontiff Francis to amend the norm which is found in the rubric of the *Missale Romanum* (p. 300, n. 11): "The men who have been chosen are led by the ministers...", which therefore must be amended as follows: "Those who are chosen from among the People of God are led by the ministers..." (and consequently in the *Caeremoniale Episcoporum* n. 301 and n. 299b: to "seats for those chosen"), so that pastors may select

a small group of the faithful to represent the variety and the unity of each part of the People of God. Such small groups can be made up of men and women, and it is appropriate that they consist of people young and old, healthy and sick, clerics, consecrated men and women and laity.

The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, in virtue of the faculties granted by the Supreme Pontiff, introduces this innovation into the liturgical books of the Roman Rite, reminding pastors of their responsibility to properly instruct both the chosen faithful as well as all others so that they may participate consciously, actively and fruitfully in the rite.

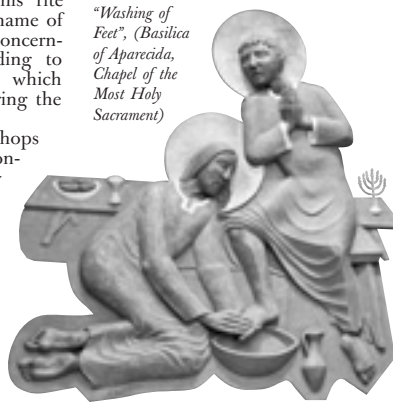
Anything to the contrary notwithstanding.

From the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, 6 January 2016, Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord.

Cardinal ROBERT SARAH
Prefect

Archbishop ARTHUR ROCHE
Secretary

"Washing of Feet", (Basilica of Aparecida, Chapel of the Most Holy Sacrament)



I have given you an example

ARTHUR ROCHE*

With the decree *In Missa in cena Domini* the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, at the request of the Holy Father, has readjusted the rubric of the *Missale Romanum* regarding the washing of feet (p. 300 n. 11), variously linked down the centuries with Holy Thursday and which, from the reform of Holy Week in 1955, could also take place during the evening Mass that begins the Paschal Triduum.

Illuminated by the Gospel of John the rite carries a double significance: an imitation of what Christ did in the Upper Room washing the feet of the Apostles and an expression of the self-gift signified by this gesture of service. It is not by accident this is called the *Mandatum* from the *incipit* of the antiphon which accompanied the action: "Mandatum novum do vobis, ut diligatis invicem, sicut dilexi vos, dicit Dominus" (Jn 13:14). In fact the commandment to fraternal love binds all the disciples of Jesus without any distinction or exception.

Already in an old *ordo* of the Seventh century we find the following: "Pontifex suis bicularibus pedes lavat et unusquisque clericorum in domo sua". Applied differently in the various dioceses and abbeys it is also found in the Roman Pontifical of the 12th century after Vespers on

Holy Thursday and in the Pontifical of the Roman Curia of the 13th century ("facit mandatum duodecim subdiaconos"). The *Mandatum* is described as follows in the *Missale Romanum* of Pope Saint Pius V (1570): "Post denudationem altarium, hora competenti, facto signo cum tabula, conveniunt clerici ad faciendum mandatum. Maior abluat pedes minoribus: tergit et osculatur". It takes place during the singing of antiphons, the last of which is *Ubi caritas* and is concluded by the *Pater*

noster and a prayer which links the commandment of service with purification from sins: "Adesto Domine, quaesumus, officio servitutis nostrae: et quia tu discipulis tuis pedes lavare dignatus es, ne despicias opera manuum tuarum, quae nobis retinenda mandasti: ut sicut hic nobis, et a nobis exteriora abluuntur inquinamenta; sic a te omnium nostrum interiora laventur peccata. Quod ipse praestare digneris, qui vivis et regnas, Deus, per omnia saecula saeculorum". Enlightened by the gospel which has been heard during the morning Mass, the carrying out of this action is reserved to the clergy ("conveniunt clerici") and the absence of an instruction to have "twelve" would seem to indicate that what counts isn't just imitating what Jesus did in the Upper Room but rather putting the exemplary value of what Jesus did into practice, which is expected of all his disciples.

The description of the "De Mandato seu lotionem pedum" in the *Caeremoniale Episcoporum* of 1600 is more detailed. It mentions the custom (after Vespers or at lunchtime, in a church, a chapter room or a suitable place) of the Bishop washing, drying and kissing the feet of "thirteen" poor people after having dressed them, fed them and given them a charitable donation. Likewise this could be done to thirteen can-



"Last Supper and the Washing of Feet" (13th c.)

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

At the Angelus the Pontiff speaks about Jesus' mission

The poor at the centre of the Gospel

The poor "are at the centre of the Gospel". Pope Francis emphasized this fact at the Angelus on Sunday, 24 January, when he recalled that the privileged recipients of evangelization are "those who are distant, suffering sick, cast out by society". The following is a translation of the Holy Father's address, which he delivered in Italian in St Peter's Square.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Good morning!

In today's Gospel, before presenting Jesus' programmatic speech in Nazareth, Luke the Evangelist briefly recounts the work of evangelization. It is an activity that Jesus carries out with the power of the Holy Spirit: his Word is original because it reveals the meaning of the Scriptures; it is an authoritative Word because he commands even impure spirits with authority, and they obey him (cf. Mk 1:27). Jesus is different from the teachers of the law, for example, he doesn't open a law school but rather goes around preaching and teaching everywhere: in the synagogues, on the streets, in houses, always moving about! Jesus is also different from John the Baptist, who proclaims God's imminent judg-



"Jesus Preaches in the Synagogue"

ment. Instead Jesus announces God's fatherly forgiveness.

Now let us imagine that we too enter the synagogue of Nazareth, the village where Jesus has grown up, until he is about 30 years old. What happens is an important event, which delineates Jesus' mission. He stands up to read the Sacred Scripture. He opens the scroll of the Prophet Isaiah and takes up the passage where it is written: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, be-

cause he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor" (Lk 4:18). Then, after a moment of silence filled with expectation on the part of everyone, he says, in the midst of their general amazement: "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (v. 21).

Evangelizing the poor: this is Jesus' mission. According to what he says, this is also the mission of the Church, and of every person baptized in the Church. Being a Christian is the same thing as being a missionary. Proclaiming the Gospel with one's word, and even before, with one's life, is the primary aim of the Christian community and of each of its members. It is noted here that Jesus addresses the Good News to all, excluding no one, indeed favouring those who are distant, suffering sick, cast out by society.

Let us ask ourselves: what does it mean to evangelize the poor? It means first of all drawing close to them, it means having the joy of serving them, of freeing them from their oppression, and all of this in the name of and with the Spirit of

Christ, because he is the Gospel of God, he is the Mercy of God, he is the liberation of God, he is the One who became poor so as to enrich us with his poverty. The text of Isaiah, reinforced with little adaptations introduced by Jesus, indicates that the messianic announcement of the Kingdom of God come among us is addressed in a preferential way to the marginalized, to captives, to the oppressed.

In Jesus' time these people probably were not at the centre of the community of faith. Let us ask ourselves: today, in our parish communities, in our associations, in our movements, are we faithful to Christ's plan? Is the priority evangelizing the poor, bringing them the joyful Good News? Pay heed: it does not only involve doing social assistance, much less political activity. It involves offering the strength of the Gospel of God, who converts hearts, heals wounds, transforms human and social relationships according to the logic of love. The poor are indeed at the centre of the Gospel.

May the Virgin Mary, Mother of evangelizers, help us to strongly perceive the hunger and thirst for the Gospel that there is in the world, especially in the hearts and the flesh of the poor. May she enable each of us and every Christian community to tangibly bear witness to the mercy, the great mercy that Christ has given us.

After the prayer, the Holy Father said:

Dear brothers and sisters, I warmly greet all of you from various parishes in Italy and other countries, as well as associations and families.

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

Celebrating the World Day of the Sick in the Holy Land

Rediscover how to draw near to others

The work of doctors and nurses is not just a profession but above all a service. Archbishop Zygmunt Zimowski, President of the Pontifical Council for Health Care Workers, explained the vocation of those in the medical profession in the Holy See Press Office on Thursday morning, 28 January, during the presentation of the 24th World Day of the Sick which will be celebrated in Nazareth from 6-13 February. Recalling the theme of Pope Francis' message (Entrusting Oneself to the Merciful Jesus like Mary: "Do whatever he tells you" (Jn 2:5), which was published in September 2015, Archbishop Zimowski noted the importance of the location of the celebrations. In his message, the Pope proposed a meditation on the Gospel passage regarding the Wedding at Cana "where Jesus performs his first miracle through the intercession of his mother".

Francis also recalled the importance of how Jesus draws near to the sick and suffering. Archbishop Zimowski pointed to the example from the Gospel of Matthew when a sick man rises from his bed at the summons of Christ. "This is one of many examples", he said. "In fact the entire Gospel is full of similar events". The words of the Evangelist Mark also recall the miracles of healing which Jesus performed. "We, too, are constantly called. In a certain sense, each one of us is called in a different way". At times, the Archbishop explained, "we are intimidated by the fact that we cannot 'heal', that

we cannot help like Jesus. Let us try to overcome this embarrassment". It is important, he said, "to be near to those who are suffering. Perhaps more than healing they need the presence of others, of the human heart which is full of mercy and of solidarity".

The 510th anniversary of the founding of the Swiss Guard was an occasion for one of the Vatican's oldest military corps to rediscover their mission and vocation. The anniversary was celebrated on Friday, 22 January, with a Mass in the Church of Santa Maria in Campo Santo Teutonico and a commemoration in the courtyard of the Guard.

The Commandant, Christoph Graf, recalling the arrival of the first Swiss Guards in Rome, explained that they were not looking "for war in Italy". They were the opposite of mercenaries, he said, they "placed themselves at the service of the Pontiff and the Apostolic Palace". This mission, he added, "is still written as the main duty in the our corps' guidelines". In fact "no one comes to serve in Rome for economic reasons", rather they come "to serve the Pope and the Church". Still today, is our "main motivation".

The anniversary of the Swiss Guard

For the sake of loyalty not money

Graf then noted that the Guards confront "challenges every day with courage and professionalism, especially in this tense social and international situation", considering loyalty as one of the highest values. For more than 500 years the Pontifical Swiss Guard "has remained faithful and loyal to the Popes and their superiors. They have per-

formed their duties described in the guidelines without ever striving to take on other functions, unless they are ordered by their superiors".

The Augustinians of the Vatican parish of Sant'Anna – led by the parish priest, Fr Bruno Silvestrini – were honoured at the celebration. Welcoming them was the Guard's chaplain, Fr Thomas Widmer.



VATICAN BULLETIN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

21 June 1998, subsequent to his appointment as Coadjutor Bishop of Diamantino. He succeeded as Bishop on 28 August 1998. On 19 May 2010 he was transferred to the Diocese of Santa Cruz do Sul.

The Holy Father appointed Canon Fr Marco Brunetti from the clergy of the Archdiocese of Turin, Italy, as Bishop of Alba, Italy. Until now he has been Director of the Office for Health Pastoral Care (21 Jan.).

Bishop-elect Brunetti, 53, was born in Turin, Italy. He holds a degree in theology and a diploma in health pastoral care. He was ordained a priest on 7 June 1987. He has served in parish ministry and as head of three diocesan houses for the clergy; canon of the Metropolitan Chapter of the Cathedral of Turin; member of the regional and diocesan Presbyteral Council; diocesan delegate for elderly priests; member of the Priestly Fraternity of St Joseph Cafasso.

EASTERN CHURCHES

The Holy Father established the Apostolic Exarchate for the Maronite faithful resident in Colombia, with its headquarters in Bogota,

Ambassador of Croatia presents credentials



On Monday, 25 January, Pope Francis received H.E. Mr Neven Pelicarić, the new Ambassador of Croatia, for the presentation of the letters accrediting him to the Holy See

H.E. Mr Neven Pelicarić was born on 17 January 1966. He holds a law degree and a master's in international law and diplomacy. He has served as: apprentice at the Ministry of International Affairs (1991-1992); second secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1992-1996); first secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1996-1998); counsellor at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1998-2000); counsellor minister at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2000-2005); ambassador at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2005-2009); ambassador to Spain (2009-2013). Since 2013 he has served as diplomatic counsellor to the Prime Minister with the rank of ambassador.

Colombia. The Holy Father also appointed Fr Fadi Abou Chebel, OMM, as its first Apostolic Exarch. Until now he has served as the chaplain in charge of the university apostolate in Lebanon (20 Jan.).

Bishop-elect Chebel, 46, was born in Deir el Kamar, Lebanon. He made his solemn profession for the Mariamite Maronite Order on 19 January 1994 and was ordained a priest on 23 December 1995. He holds a licence in pastoral theology. He has served in parish ministry and as: chaplain to the seminarians and treasurer of Saint Teresa Convent in Shayle; head and general chaplain of

Notre-Dame College in Louaize; head of the students in Rome; head of the university pastoral apostolate in Lebanon.

The Holy Father appointed Msgr Mirosław Milewski as Auxiliary of Plock, Poland, assigning him the titular episcopal See of Villa nova. Until now he has been Vicar General and Chancellor of the Diocesan Curia (23 Jan.).

Bishop-elect Milewski, 44, was born in Ciechanów, Poland. He was ordained a priest on 14 June 1997. He holds a doctorate in sociology and in the social doctrine of the

Church. He has served in parish ministry and as: prefect of discipline at the Major Seminary of Plock; adjunct professor of the social doctrine of the Church at the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University; professor of the social doctrine of the Church and of pastoral theology at the Major Seminary of Plock; member of the College of Consultors, of the presbyteral council and of the pastoral council.

APSA

The Holy Father appointed Msgr Giuseppe Russo from the clergy of the Archdiocese of Taranto, Italy, as Undersecretary of the Administration of the Patrimony of the Apostolic See (APSA) (21 Jan.).

Ambassador of Burkina Faso presents his Letters of Credence

H.E. Mr Robert Compaore, 50, was born in Manga, Zoundweogo, Burkina Faso. He holds a diploma from the *Ecole nationale d'administration et de la magistrature* (ENAM). He has served as: administrative official at the Ministry of Public Service (1988-1992); secretary for foreign affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1994-1997); third secretary at the embassy in Paris (1997-2001); foreign affairs counsellor at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2004); head of legal advice and litigation (2004-2006); human resources director for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2006-2007); second counsellor at the embassy in Brussels (2007-2012); foreign affairs counsellor at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2012); political and diplomatic counsellor to the president of the Commission of the Economic Community of West African States (CEDEAO) at



On Thursday, 21 January, Pope Francis received H.E. Mr Robert Compaore, Ambassador of Burkina Faso, for the presentation of the letters accrediting him to the Holy See

the office of special representation in Guinea Bissau (2012-2013). Since 2013 he has served as political and diplomatic counsellor at the CEDEAO mission in Guinea Bissau (ECOMIB).

RELATIONS WITH STATES

The Holy Father appointed Archbishop Miguel Maury Buendía, titular Archbishop of Midila, as Apostolic Nuncio in Moldova. Until now he has been Apostolic Nuncio in Romania (25 Jan.).

START OF MISSION

On 6 December 2015, Archbishop Alberto Ortega Martín, titular Archbishop of Midila, began his mission as Apostolic Nuncio in Jordan with the presentation of his Letters of Credence to H.H. King Abdallah II, of Jordan.

NECROLOGY

Bishop Alwin Albert Hafner, MSF, Bishop emeritus of Morombe, Madagascar, at age 85 (7 Jan.).

Bishop Ian Murray, Bishop emeritus of Argyll and The Isles, Scotland, at age 83 (22 Jan.).

Congregation for the Causes of Saints Promulgation of Decrees

On Thursday, 21 January, Pope Francis received Cardinal Angelo Amato, SDB, Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, in a private audience. During the course of the audience, the Holy Father authorized the promulgation of the following decrees:

– the miracle attributed to the intercession of Blessed Stanislaw of Jesus Mary (in the world: Jan Papczyński), founder of the Congregation of the Marian Clerics of the Immaculate Conception of Blessed Virgin Mary; born on 18 May 1631 and died on 17 September 1701;

– the miracle attributed to the intercession of Blessed José Gabriel del Rosario Brochero, diocesan priest; born on 16 March 1840 and died on 26 January 1914;

– the miracle attributed to the intercession of the Blessed José Sánchez del Río, layman and martyr; born on 28 March 1913 and killed on 10 February 1928;

– the miracle attributed to the intercession of the Venerable Servant of God Francesco Maria Greco, diocesan priest and founder of the Congregation of the Little Workers of the Sacred Hearts; born on 27 July 1857 and died on 13 January 1931;

– the miracle attributed to the intercession of the Venerable Servant of God Elisabetta Sanna of the Third Order of St Francis, laywoman and widow,

member of the Union of the Catholic Apostolate founded by St Vincent Pallotti; born on 23 April 1788 and died on 17 February 1857;

– the martyrdom of the Venerable Servant of God Engelmar Unzeitig (in the world: Hubert), priest of the Congregation of the Missionaries of Mariannahill, born on 1 March 1911 and killed in hatred of the Faith on 2 March 1945;

– the martyrdom of the Servants of God Genaro Fueyo Castañón, diocesan priest, and his three lay companions, killed in hatred of the Faith in 1936;

– the martyrdom of the Servant of God Justus Takayama Ukon, layman; born between 1552 and 1553 and killed in hatred of the Faith on 3 February 1615;

– the heroic virtues of the Servant of God Arsenio da Trigolo (in the world: Giuseppe Migliavacca), priest of the Order of Friars Minor Capuchin and founder of the Congregation of the Sisters of Mary Most Holy Consolatrix; born on 13 June 1849 and died on 10 December 1909;

– the heroic virtues of the Servant of God Maria Luisa of the Most Holy Sacrament (in the world: Maria Velotti), of the Third Order of St Francis, foundress of the Congregation of the Franciscan Sisters Adorers of the Holy Cross; born on 16 November 1826 and died on 3 September 1886.

Relations with the World Council of Churches

The journey continues

ANDRZEJ CHOROMANSKI*

On 8 December 2015, at the commencement of the extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, we also commemorated the golden anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Council, which opened the Catholic Church to the modern ecumenical movement. This anniversary created the opportunity to recall a multifaceted collaboration with the World Council of Churches (WCC), which began during the preparation of the Council. Founded in 1948, the WCC is today the broadest and most inclusive organized expression of the ecumenical movement. It brings together some 345 Christian denominations from more than 110 countries, including Orthodox, Lutherans, Reformed, Anglicans, Methodists, Baptists as well as United and Independent churches. All together they represent over 500 million people worldwide.

Although the Catholic Church is not a member of the WCC, various dicasteries of the Roman Curia collaborate with it in different programmatic areas. From the point of view of pursuing the goal of full visible unity, collaboration between the WCC and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU) is the most important thing, a collaboration which takes several concrete forms.

The most significant form of collaboration is implemented through the channel of the Joint Working Group (JWG). Founded in 1965, the JWG was one of the first ecumenical fruits of the Council. Since then it has been a catalyst of fruitful theological discussion and practical cooperation. The nine reports produced so far testify to the important achievements accomplished by the JWG in fields of doctrinal dialogue, ecumenical formation, mission and evangelism, youth, justice and peace, and new emerging questions related to the life of modern societies.

Through an agreement between the President of the PCPCU and the WCC General Secretary, the JWG has

recently been reduced in number with a view to enhancing its functionality. At present it consists of an equal number of 10 members nominated respectively by the PCPCU and the WCC. On the Catholic side there are members of different Roman dicasteries as well as representatives of local Churches throughout the world. On the other side, there are officials of the WCC from Geneva as well as representatives of different ecclesial traditions gathered in the WCC from different regions of the world. Plenary meetings are held annually and an executive group meets twice in the interim.

The first plenary of the 10th phase of the work of the JWG was held in June 2015. It was decided that during the current mandate the JWG would focus on practical cooperation rather than on systematic theological studies. Among the issues agreed upon for consideration during the first three years of the current mandate are ecumenical challenges and opportunities related to migrants and refugees, the relationship between religion and violence, as well as problems regarding the responsible care of creation, social justice and poverty.

The plenary, which was held in Rome, was linked with a commemorative event organized by the *Centro Pro Unione* to mark the golden anniversary of the establishment of the JWG in 1965. The event gathered many former and current moderators and members of the JWG, as well as the Secretary General of the WCC, Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit. In a message sent to the participants Pope Francis underlined the importance of the JWG, encouraging it to not be "an inward-looking forum" but rather to become "ever more a 'think-tank', open to all the opportunities and challenges facing

the Churches today in their mission of accompanying suffering humanity on the path to the Kingdom, by imbuing society and culture with Gospel truths and values".

Though the Catholic Church is not a member of the WCC, it is a member of some of its commissions and teams. The most important among them is the Commission on Faith and Order. The Commission addresses doctrinal questions concerning apostolic faith and the structure of the Church, as well as ethical and social issues over which Christians have become divided. Restructured after the general assembly of the WCC in 2013, the Commission now has 49 members and 4 consultants including 4 Catholic theologians appointed by the PCPCU. Representing almost all Christian traditions, it is a unique global 'think tank' of ecumenical theology. The first working session of the new mandate was held in the Orthodox Monastery of Caraiman, Romania, in June 2015. After a process of discernment, three study groups have been composed, each with the participation of Catholic theologians: on the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace, on ecclesiology and on moral discernment in the churches.

In 2013 the Commission published a remarkable document entitled 'The Church: Towards a Common Vision'. It was the result of many years of work by theologians representing almost all Christian traditions with an important contribution by the Catholic Church. This document is a 'convergence text'

bringing together a range of ecclesiological visions from Orthodox to Catholic, Evangelical and Pentecostal. At present all churches are asked to send official responses to the text by the end of 2016. The PCPCU has been involved for almost two years in the process of preparing an official Catholic response. Several theo-



logians and theological faculties from all over the world have already sent their comments that will be analysed by a special commission of experts appointed by the PCPCU. The Commission will establish a final text which, when approved by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, will be sent to Faith and Order as the official Catholic response.

Since 1968, the rich collaboration between the PCPCU and Faith and Order is exemplified in the joint preparation and publication of the annual resources for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. This year's booklet, entitled 'Called to proclaim the mighty acts of the Lord', under the patronage and supervision of the two parent bodies, was produced by an ecumenical group from Latvia.

Another WCC group which includes Catholics as full members is the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME). Established in 1961, the CWME continues the tradition of the international missionary movement, which in the first half of the 20th century made an important contribution to fostering unity among Christians. Since 1985, among the 25 members of the Commission there are three Catholics belonging to missionary orders, officially appointed by the PCPCU. Among the current study themes are the relation between mission and the unity of the Church, the theology of evangelism in a world of religious plurality, and the search for a spirituality of mission. Once in the interval between two WCC general assemblies, the CWME organized an international Conference attended by hundreds of participants; the next is planned for 2018 in Africa with the theme 'Transforming Discipleship'.

A fruitful cooperation between the PCPCU and WCC also exists in the

Joint declaration of the WCC, UNICEF, UNFPA and UNHCR

Cooperation for the sake of refugees

A conference on the emergency migrant crisis was held on 18-19 January in Geneva hosted by the World Council of Churches (WCC) co-sponsored by several UN agencies. Participants have been asked to better coordinate in order to respond effectively to the growing number of migrants coming to Europe.

"Implementing, strengthening and improving the common EU asylum system is urgently needed", reads a statement by the WCC, UNICEF, UNFPA and UNHCR. "Strengthened coordination", it continues, "in the European response is required to meet the needs of refugees and migrants, including protection against sexual and gender-based violence, education for children and adolescents, and the specific health, nutrition and protection needs of children, adolescents and women, the elderly and people with disabilities. It is essential to uphold principles of international law in the context of the crisis".



In the Lateran Basilica

Lutherans and Catholics in choir

Under the patronage of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, a concert entitled, "*Laudate Dominum omnes gentes*", was held on Sunday evening, 24 January, in the Basilica of St John Lateran. The Sistine Chapel Choir, directed by Msgr Massimo Palombella, and the Lutheran choir, Kammerchor der Frauenkirche Dresden, directed by Matthias Grüner, came together to perform pieces from both traditions. The concert, organized for the occasion of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, was held in the apse of the Basilica.

"The only door which leads us to salvation is Jesus Christ our Lord, the merciful face of the Father". Pope Francis offered this reminder during the celebration of Vespers which he presided in the Basilica of St Paul Outside-the-Walls on Monday evening, 25 January. The event concluded the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's homily, which was given in Italian.

"For I am the least of the apostles [...] because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain" (1 Cor 15:9-10). This is how the Apostle Paul sums up the significance of his conversion. What happened after that dramatic encounter with the Risen Christ on the Road from Jerusalem to Damascus is not primarily a moral change but a transforming experience by the grace of Christ and, at the same time, the call to a new mission to proclaim to all the same Jesus whom Paul used to persecute by persecuting his disciples. At this moment, in fact, Paul understands that there is a real and transcendent union between the eternally living Christ and his followers: Jesus lives and is present in them and they live in him. The vocation to be an apostle is founded not on the human merits of Paul, who considers himself "unfit" and "unworthy", but on the infinite goodness of God, who chose him and entrusted the ministry to him.

St Paul also bears witness to a similar understanding of what happened on the road to Damascus in his First Letter to Timothy: "I thank him who has given me strength for this, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful by appointing me to his service, though I formerly blasphemed and persecuted and insulted him; but I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus" (vv. 12-14). The superabundant mercy of God is the sole rationale upon which Paul's ministry is founded, and it is at the same time what the Apostle must proclaim to all people.



The Pope concludes the ecumenical octave by recalling that Jesus is the merciful face of the Father

Christ is the only door

St Paul's experience is similar to that of the communities to whom the Apostle Peter directs his First Letter. St Peter addresses members of small and fragile communities, exposed to the threat of persecution, and he applies to them the glorious titles attributed to the holy People of God: "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people" (1 Pet 2:9). For those early Christians, as today for all of us baptized, it is a cause for comfort and constant wonder to know that they are chosen to take part in God's salvific plan, fulfilled in Jesus Christ and in the Church. "Why me, Lord?"; "why us?"; Here we touch upon the mystery of God's mercy and of his choice: the Father loves everyone and desires to save everyone, and that is why he calls some, "by conquering them" with his grace, so that through them his love may reach everyone. The mission of the entire People of God is to declare the wonderful deeds of the Lord, first among them the Paschal Mystery of Christ, through which we have all moved out of the darkness of sin and death into the splendour of his life, new and eternal (cf. 1 Pet 2:10).

In the light of the Word of God which we have heard, and which has guided us during this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, we can truly say that all of us believers in Christ are "called to declare the wonderful deeds" (cf. 1 Pet 2:9). Beyond the differences that still divide us, let us recognize with joy that at the origin of Christian life there is always one call whose maker is God himself. Let us move forward on the path to a full and visible communion among Christians not only when we come closer to one another, but above all as we convert to the Lord, who out of grace chooses us and calls us to be his disciples. To convert means to allow the Lord to live and work in us. That is why, when Christians of different Churches listen together to the Word of God and seek to put it into practice, they take important steps toward unity. It is not only the call that unites us; we also share one mission: to declare to

all people the wonderful deeds of God. Like St Paul, and like the faithful to whom St Peter writes, we too cannot but proclaim the same merciful love that has conquered and transformed us. As we move towards full communion, we can already develop many forms of collaboration, to go together and collaborate in order to foster the spread of the Gospel. By walking and working together, we realize that we are already united in the name of the Lord. Unity is achieved on the journey.

In this Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy, let us always bear in mind that there cannot be an authentic search for Christian unity without trusting fully in the Father's mercy. Let us ask first of all for forgiveness for the sin of our divisions, which are an open wound in the Body of Christ. As the Bishop of Rome and the Shepherd of the Catholic Church, I want to ask forgiveness and mercy for any behaviour on the part of Catholics towards Christians of other Churches that did not reflect the values of the Gospel. At the same time, I invite all Catholic brothers and sisters to forgive if, today or in the past, they have suffered offences from other Christians. We cannot erase what is past, nor do we wish to allow the weight of past transgressions to continue to pollute our relationships. The mercy of God will renew our relationships.

In this atmosphere of intense prayer, I greet in a brotherly way: H.E. Metropolitan Gennadios, representative of the Ecumenical Patriarchate; H.G. David Moxon, Personal Representative in Rome of the Archbishop of Canterbury; and all the representatives of the different Churches and ecclesial communities of Rome who have gathered here this evening. With them we walked through the Holy Door of this Basilica, so as to remind ourselves that the only door which leads us to salvation is Jesus Christ our Lord, the merciful face of the Father. I also cordially greet the young Orthodox and Eastern Orthodox students who are here in Rome with the support of the Committee for Cultural Collaboration with the Orthodox Churches working through the Council for Promoting Christian Unity, as well as the students from the Ecumenical Institute of Bossey who are visiting Rome to deepen their knowledge of the Catholic Church.

Dear brothers and sisters, let us join together today with the prayer that Jesus Christ prayed to his Father: "that they may all be one [...] so that the

world may believe" (Jn 17:21). Unity is a gift of the mercy of God the Father. Here before the tomb of St Paul, Apostle and Martyr, sheltered in our humble request is sustained by the intercession of the multitudes of Christian martyrs, past and present. They responded generously to the call of the Lord, they bore faithful witness with their lives to the wonderful deeds that God has done for us, and they already enjoy full communion in the presence of God the Father. Sustained by their example – an example that constitutes the ecumenism of blood – and comforted by their intercession, let us raise our humble prayer to God.



Unity on the journey

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

convoked the Second Vatican Council, and shortly before its conclusion Paul VI admitted to the non-Catholic Observers that their departure produced "a solitude around us which we did not know before the Council, and which now saddens us". In this very place the echo of the Council resounded in the Pope's words when, on 29 September 1969, Montini resolutely opened a path by requesting forgiveness for the division among Christians: "Should any fault be attributable to us for this separation, let us humbly ask God for forgiveness and let us also ask forgiveness of our brothers and sisters who may have felt offended by us; and let us be ready, for our part, to forgive the offences to which the

Catholic Church was subjected, and to forget the pain that she bore in the long series of disagreements and separations". Pope Francis has continued on this path, invoking "forgiveness and mercy for any behaviour on the part of Catholics towards Christians of other Churches that did not reflect the values of the Gospel", and inviting "all Catholic brothers and sisters to forgive if, today or in the past, they have suffered offences from other Christians". It is impossible to "erase what is past", but we must not "allow the weight of past transgressions to continue to pollute our relationships". To be sure, "the mercy of God will renew our relationships".

G.M.V.

In Lund on 31 October for the joint ecumenical commemoration with the Lutheran World Federation

Francis to visit Sweden for the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation

Pope Francis will travel to Sweden on 31 October to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. This historic announcement was issued by the Holy See Press Office on Monday, 25 January, the final day of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The statement indicates that His Holiness intends to participate "in a joint ceremony of the Catholic Church and the World Lutheran Federation to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, scheduled to take place in Lund".

The joint statement was issued by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity revealing that the ecumenical commemoration will be presided by Francis along with Bishop Mumb A. Younan and Rev. Martin Junge, respectively the President and General Secretary of the LWF, in collaboration with the Church of Sweden and the Catholic Diocese of Stockholm.

The Joint Commemoration will highlight the solid ecumenical developments between Catholics and Lutherans and the gifts received through dialogue. The event will include a joint celebration based on a recently published Catholic-Lutheran "Common Prayer" liturgical guide.

The LWF is "approaching the Reformation anniversary in a spirit of ecumenical

accountability," says the Rev. Dr Martin Junge. "I'm carried by the profound conviction that, by working towards reconciliation between Lutherans and Catholics, we are working towards justice, peace and reconciliation in a world torn apart by conflict and violence". On behalf of the Catholic Church, Cardinal Kurt Koch, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU) explains further: "By concentrating together on the centrality of the question of God and on a Christocentric approach, Lutherans and Catholics will have the possibility of an ecumenical commemoration of the Reformation, not simply in a pragmatic way, but in the deep sense of faith in the crucified and resurrected Christ".

The local authorities also approve. "It is with joy and expectation" that the Church of Sweden "welcomes the LWF and the Catholic Church", says Church of Sweden Archbishop Antje Jackelén. "We shall pray together with the entire ecumenical family in Sweden", he continues, "that the commemoration will contribute to Christian unity in our country and throughout the world".

These statements are echoed by Anders Arborelius, OGD, Bishop of the Catholic Church in Sweden, who observes: "The ecumenical situation in our part of the world is unique and interesting. I hope that this meeting will

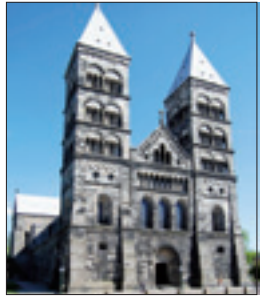
help us look to the future so that we can be witnesses of Jesus Christ and His gospel in our secularized world".

The event in Lund is part of the reception process of the study document *From Conflict to Communion*, which was published in 2013, and has since been widely distributed to Lutheran and Catholic communities. The document is the first attempt by both dialogue partners to describe together at an international level the history of the Reformation and its intentions.

Earlier this year, the LWF and PCPCU sent to LWF member churches and Catholic Bishops' Conferences the jointly prepared "Common Prayer", which is a liturgical guide to help churches commemorate the Reformation anniversary together. It is based on the study document, "From Conflict to Communion: Lutheran-Catholic Common Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017", and features the themes of thanksgiving, repentance and commitment to common witness with the aim of expressing the gifts of the Reformation and asking forgiveness for the division which followed theological disputes.

The year 2017 will also mark 50 years of the international Lutheran-Catholic dialogue, which has yielded notable ecumenical results, most sig-

nificant of which is the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (DDJ). The DDJ was signed by the LWF and the Catholic Church in 1999, and affirmed by the World Methodist Council in 2006. The declaration nullified centuries-old disputes between Catholics and Lutherans over the basic truths of the doctrine of justification, which was at the centre of the 16th century Reformation.



The Cathedral of Lund

Celebrating the conversion of St Paul

At the conclusion of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Pope Francis passed through the Holy Door of St Paul's Basilica on Monday evening, 25 January, together with Metropolitan Gennadios, Orthodox Archbishop of Italy and Malta and Exarch for Eastern Europe of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and with Archbishop David Moxon, Personal Representative in Rome of the Archbishop of Canterbury and Director of the Anglican Centre. Entering the Holy Door in procession with them were also Cardinal Kurt Koch and Bishop Brian Farrell, respectively the President and Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity; 10 representatives of other Churches and Confessions and 20 Benedictine monks, led by their Abbot, Fr Roberto Dotto and by the Abbot Primate of the Order, Notker Wolf.

The Pope also performed another two significant acts with Metropolitan Gennadios and Archbishop Moxon: first they prayed together at the Tomb of St Paul, then Francis invited them to stand beside him to impart the closing benediction together. The two ecumenical representatives also read the orations after the Psalms, while the two readings proposed for the Week of Prayer were recited by Dr Valdo Beralto, the Waldensian Secretary General of the Italian Biblical Society, and by Maria Agnese Pui, a collaborator of the Vatican's ecumenical dicastery.

At the end of the celebration, Cardinal Koch gave an address referring back to the Pontiff's homily, emphasizing common commitment and declaring "to all the wonderful deeds of God", recalling the theme of the Octave. It is an important mission for the Jubilee, which aims to help Christians to live together the Gospel of mercy and all that unites them already. Numerous representatives of other Churches and Confessions in Rome and in Italy gathered at St Paul's for the occasion. They were welcomed by Msgr Andrea Palmieri, Undersecretary of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. There were 15 Cardinals, including Cardinal Sodano, Dean of the College of Cardinals, and

Archpriest Harvey, who greeted the Pope upon his arrival. Many priests and prelates of the Roman Curia were also in attendance, among them Archbishop Becciu, Substitute of the Secretariat of State, Archbishop Fisichella, President of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization, and Archbishop Gallagher, Secretary for Relations with States, who, along with Archbishop Ganswein, Prefect of the Papal Household, accompanied the Pope on this ecumenical pilgrimage of the Jubilee Year.

Also attending were graduate students of the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, who were in Rome on a study visit timed precisely for the Week of Prayer. They were accompanied by their Director, Rev. Ioan Sauca, of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Romania, and Msgr Andrzej Choromanski, Official of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. With them were also young Orthodox and Eastern Orthodox students, whose studies in Rome are sponsored by the Committee for Cultural Cooperation with the Orthodox Churches. The evening prayer was sung by the Sistine Chapel Choir under the direction of Msgr Palombella, assisted by the choir leader. An additional highlight was the contribution of the choir of the Lutheran *Frauenkirche* Church of Dresden, Germany, which, during the closing procession, intoned the most composed specifically for the occasion by their director, Mathias Grunert.



I have given you an example

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

ons, according to the local custom and wishes of the Bishop, who might choose poor people even where it is the practice that they be canons: "videtur enim eo pacto maiorem humilitatem, et charitatem prae se ferre, quam lavare pedes Canonicis". This meaningful gesture of the washing of feet, although not applied to the entirety of the People of God and reserved to the clergy, did not exclude local customs which take into account the poor or young people (e.g. the *Missale Parisiense*). The *Caeremoniale Episcoporum* expressly prescribed the *Mandatum* for cathedrals and collegiate churches.

With the reform of Pius XII which once more moved the *Missa in cena Domini* to the evening, the washing of feet could take place, for pastoral reasons, during the Mass, after the homily for "duodecim viros selectos", placed "in medio presbyterii vel in ipsa aula ecclesiae"; the celebrant washes and dries their feet (the kiss is no longer mentioned). This now goes beyond the rather clerical and reserved sense, taking place in the public assembly with the direction for "twelve men" which makes it more explicitly an imitative sign, almost a sacred representation, that facilitates what Jesus did and had in mind on the first Holy Thursday.

The *Missale Romanum* of 1970 retained the recently reformed rite,

simplifying some elements: the number "twelve" is omitted; it takes place "in loco apto"; it omits one antiphon and simplifies the others; *Ubi caritas* is assigned to the presentation of gifts; the concluding part is omitted (*Pater noster*, verses and prayer), as this formerly took place outside of the Mass. The reservation solely to "viri" however remained for mimetic value.

The current change foresees that individuals may be chosen from amongst all the members of the People of God. The significance does not now relate so much to the outward imitation of what Jesus has done, rather as to the meaning of what he has accomplished which has a universal importance, namely the giving of himself "to the end" for the salvation of the human race, his charity which embraces all people and which makes all people brothers and sisters by following his example. In fact, the *exemplum* that he has given to us so that we might do as he has done goes beyond the physical washing of the feet of others to embrace everything that such a gesture expresses in service of the tangible love of our neighbour. All the antiphons proposed in the *Missale* during the washing of feet recall and illustrate the meaning of this gesture both for those who carry it out and for those who receive it, as well as for

those who look on and interiorise it through the chant.

The washing of feet is not obligatory in the *Missa in cena Domini*. It is for pastors to evaluate its desirability, according to the pastoral considerations and circumstances which exist, in such a way that it does not become something automatic or artificial, deprived of meaning and reduced to a staged event. Nor must it become so important as to grab all the attention during the Mass of the Lord's Supper, celebrated on "the most sacred day on which our Lord Jesus Christ was handed over for our sake" (i.e. *Communicantes* of the Roman Canon for this Mass). In the directions for the homily we are reminded of the distinctiveness of this Mass which commemorates the institution of the Eucharist, of the priestly Order and of the new commandment concerning fraternal charity, the supreme law for all and towards all in the Church.

It is for pastors to choose a small group of persons who are representative of the entire People of God – lay, ordained ministers, married, single, religious, healthy, sick, children, young people and the elderly – and not just one category or condition. Those chosen should offer themselves willingly. Lastly, it is for those who plan and organise the liturgical celebrations to prepare and dispose everything so that all may be helped to fruitfully participate in this moment: the *anamnesis* of the "new commandment" heard in the Gospel which is the life of every disciple of the Lord.

*Archbishop Secretary of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments

Anti-Christian vandalism in Jerusalem



The Basilica of the Dormition of Mary in Jerusalem was vandalized on Sunday, 17 January. Threatening messages and a design depicting a bloody sword were written on parts of an exterior wall. A strong condemnation came in a statement from the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem: "It is deplorable that episodes of hate come 50 years after *Nostra Aetate* which laid the framework for interreligious dialogue between the Catholic faith and other faiths and which turned a new page with Judaism". Israeli Premier Benjamin Netanyahu described it as "an act which must be absolutely condemned, an unacceptable act. Israel is a place where freedom to worship exists both for Christians and other religions". Israel "is the only place in the Middle East where the Christian population is growing", Netanyahu added. Two suspects have been arrested.

With the President of the Republic of the Commonwealth of Dominica

On Friday morning, 22 January, in the Vatican Apostolic Palace, the Holy Father received in audience the President of the Commonwealth of Dominica, H.E. Mr Charles Angelo Savarin, 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, reference was made to existing good bilateral relations, expressing the opportunity for a fruitful joint collaboration between the

State and the Catholic Church, who offers a significant contribution to the promotion of the dignity of the person, as well as in the sectors of the education of the young and assistance to those most in need.

Finally, attention turned to various themes of regional and global relevance, with particular reference to safeguarding the environment and the matter of climate change and natural disasters, which cause grave damages and claim many victims from among the Island's population.



The journey continues

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

area of ecumenical education and formation, with an official of the PCPCU participating in the work of the WCC Commission on Education and Ecumenical Formation. The PCPCU has for many years appointed and financed a full-time Catholic professor on the staff of the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, near Geneva, which is attached to the WCC. Each year the PCPCU offers two full scholarships to Bossey for Orthodox students. Each January it also organizes and sponsors a week-long visit to Rome by the students and staff of the Institute. The programme includes visits to various dicasteries of the Roman Curia, encounters with representatives of religious orders and Catholic lay movements, visits to theological faculties, and guided tours to important Christian historical sites. The programme culminates in an audience with the Holy Father and the group's participation in the ecumenical vespers presided by the Pope on the closing day of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

The collaboration between the PCPCU and the WCC also includes other

projects related to specific WCC initiatives as decided by its general assembly. Since the assembly in Busan the WCC has implemented a new programme called 'Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace', which aims to promote justice and peace in a world filled with conflict, injustice and pain. Two Catholic representatives are involved in different programmatic areas of this project on the international level.

Vatican II opened a new page in the history of relations between the Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches. After a period of estrangement, Vatican II generated a spirit of rapprochement and mutual understanding. Since then, relations between the two can be described as a "common journey". Due to different visions on some doctrinal, moral or social issues this ecumenical journey has not always been an easy one. Yet, in spite of these difficulties the journey continues as both partners still affirm their irrevocable commitment to the ecumenical goal of full visible unity.

*Official of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity

To the Roman Rota the Pope expresses hope for better marriage preparations and he asks for closeness to wounded families

The Church's dream

"The family, founded upon an indissoluble, unitive and procreative marriage, belongs to the 'dream' of God and that of the Church". The Pope emphasized this on Friday morning, 22 January, as he inaugurated the judicial year of the Roman Rota. In the Clementine Hall, during an audience with the Dean and prelates of the ancient tribunal, Francis recalled the importance of their mission, which is particularly relevant in our day. Touching upon the twofold prerogative of the Roman Rota as "Tribunal of the family" and "Tribunal of the truth of the sacred bond", the Pontiff stressed that the Church is called to "show God's unfailing and merciful love toward families, particularly those wounded by sin and by the trials of life", and at the same time to "proclaim the irrevocable truth of marriage according to God's plan". The following is a translation of the Pope's address which was given in Italian.

Dear Brothers,

I extend a warm welcome to you and I thank the Dean for his introductory remarks.

The ministry of the Apostolic Tribunal of the Roman Rota has always been an auxiliary to the Successor of Peter in order that the Church, irrevocably connected with the family, might continue to proclaim the plan of God, the Creator and Redeemer, for the sacredness and beauty of the institution of the family. It is an ever-timely mission but particularly relevant in our day.

Along with the definition of the Roman Rota as *Tribunal of the family*¹ I would like to highlight its other prerogative, namely, that it is the *Tribunal of the truth of the sacred bond*. These two aspects are complementary.

The Church can, indeed, show God's unfailing and merciful love toward families, particularly toward those wounded by sin and the trials of life, and proclaim the irrevocable truth of marriage according to God's plan. This service is primarily entrusted to the Pope and to Bishops.

Throughout the Synod on the family, begun by the grace of God two years ago, we were able to accomplish deep and sapiential discernment in a spirit and manner of true collegiality. It is out of this that the Church has indicated to the world that, among other things, there can be no confusion between the family desired by God and any other kind of union.

With this same spiritual and pastoral attitude your work both in adjudicating and in contributing to permanent formation assists and promotes the *opus veritatis*. When by way of your service the Church claims to speak the truth of marriage in a particular case, for the good of the faithful, she always takes into consideration that many who live in an objective state of error, whether by free choice or other unhappy life circumstance,² nonetheless continue to be recipients of the merciful love of Christ and hence of the Church herself.

The family, founded upon an indissoluble, unitive and procreative marriage, belongs to the "dream" of God and that of the Church, for the salvation of humanity.³ In the words of Blessed Paul VI, the Church has always turned "a special gaze, full of concern and love, upon the family and its problems. By way of marriage and the family, God has in his wisdom united two of the greatest

human realities: the mission of passing on the life and the mutual and legitimate love between one man and one woman, through which they are both called to fulfillment in the reciprocal gift of self that is not only physical but especially spiritual. Or better put: God desired to make spouses participants in his love, in the personal love that God has for each of them and through which he calls them to help each other and give of themselves to one another so as to reach the fullness of their personal lives; and of the love that God bears for humanity and all its children, through which God desires the multiplication of human beings that they, too, may be rendered participants in his life and his eternal happiness."⁴



The family and the Church, on different levels, help to accompany mankind toward the end of its existence. They certainly do so in the teachings they pass on, but also with the very nature of each as a community of life and love. Indeed, if the family can rightly be called "domestic church", the Church can rightly be named the family of God. Therefore, "the family spirit" is a constitutional charter for the Church: this is how Christianity must appear, and this is how it must be. It is written in bold characters: 'you who were far off' – St Paul says – '[...] are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God' (Eph 2:17, 19). The Church is and must be the family of God."⁵

Precisely because she is mother and teacher, the Church knows that among Christians there are those



who are of strong faith, formed out of love and reinforced by good catechesis and nourished by prayer and a sacramental life, while others are of weak faith, overlooked and unformed, poorly educated or simply forgotten.

It is worth clearly reiterating that the essential component of marital consent is not the quality of one's faith, which according to unchanging doctrine can be undermined on the plane of the natural (cf. *CIC* c. 1055 §§1,2). Indeed, the *habitus fidei* is infused at the moment of Baptism and continues to

have a mysterious influence in the soul, even when faith has not been developed and psychologically speaking seems to be absent. It is not uncommon that couples are led to true marriage by the *instinctus naturae* and at the moment of its celebration they have a limited awareness of the fullness of God's plan. Only later in the life of the family do they come to discover all that God, the Creator and Redeemer, has established for them. A lack of formation in the faith and error with respect to the unity, indissolubility and sacramental dignity of marriage invalidate marital consent

only if they influence the person's will (cf. *CIC* c. 1099). It is for this reason that errors regarding the sacramentality of marriage must be evaluated very attentively.

The Church, thus, with a renewed sense of responsibility continues to propound marriage in its essential elements – offspring, the good of the spouses, unity, indissolubility and sacramentality⁶ – not as an ideal meant only for the few, notwithstanding modern models fixated on the ephemeral and the passing, but rather as a reality that in Christ's grace can be lived out by all baptized faithful. Therefore, a *fortiori*, pastoral urgency involving all Church structures is leading us toward a shared intention to provide adequate preparation for marriage in a kind of new catechumate – I emphasize this: a kind of new catechumate – strongly hoped for by various Synod Fathers.⁷

Dear brothers, the time in which we live is a challenging one both for families and for us shepherds called to accompany them. With this awareness I bid you good work for the new year that the Lord has given us. I assure you of my prayers and I am counting on yours. May Our Lady and St Joseph lead the Church to grow in the spirit of the family and help families to feel ever more a living and active part of the People of God. Thank you.

Notes

¹ Pius XII, *Address to the Roman Rota*, 1 October 1940: *L'Osservatore Romano*, 2 October 1940, p. 1.

² G.B. Montini, *Pastoral Letter to the Archdiocese of Milan for the Beginning of Lent 1960*. "Perhaps this scourge has an extremely generic name, yet in this tragically real case it is indeed *egoism*. If *egoism* governs the domain of human love, namely the family, it demoralizes it, saddens it and dissolves it. The art of loving is not as easy as is commonly believed. To teach it, instinct alone does not suffice; much less passion nor even pleasure."

³ Cf. Pius XI, Encyclical Letter *Casti connubii*, 31 December 1930: *AAS* 22(1930), 541.

⁴ Paul VI, *Address to participants in the 13th National Congress of the Centro Italiano Femminile*, 12 February 1966: *AAS* 58 (1966), 219. St John Paul II in his *Letter to Families* states that the family is "the first and most important" way of the Church (*Gratissimam sane*, 2 February 1994: *AAS* 86 [1994], 868).

⁵ *General Audience Catechesis*, 7 October 2015.

⁶ Cf. Augustinus, *De bono coniugali*, 24, 32; *De Genesi ad litteram*, 9, 7, 12.

⁷ "We think this preparation for marriage will be facilitated if the formation of the family is presented to the youth and if comprised of those intent on establishing their own hearth and home as a vocation, as a mission, as a great duty, which endows life with a noble purpose and fills it with its gifts and virtues. This presentation neither deforms nor exaggerates reality" (G.B. Montini, *Pastoral Letter to the Archdiocese of Milan*, op. cit.).

Morning Mass at the Domus Sanctae Marthae

Thursday, 21 January

The ultimate instrument

On Thursday morning, during Mass at Santa Marta, Pope Francis cautioned against envy, a sin that can lead a person to kill. The first reading was taken from the First Book of Samuel (18:6-9, 19:1-7). It tells of "King Saul's entrance into the city after the victory against the Philistines" which, the Pope said, was won with the "duel between David and Goliath". Truly "it is the victory of the whole people". For this reason of the people "celebrated: it was almost a ritual celebration". The Bible, Francis explained, recounts "that when King Saul died in battle, the army returned in silence after sunset: they were victorious, but did not celebrate because the king was dead". This time, however, "they celebrated as was customary".

Thus, the Scripture states that "the women came out of all the cities", singing and dancing to celebrate the victory. It was even "a ritual of joy: let's remember, said Francis, when King David danced before the ark: everyone sang, with timbrels, with songs of joy, and with instruments of music".

The Bible also adds that the women were dancing and singing: "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands". They were words "that were improvised at the time, perhaps because they fit the song". Thus, "David had killed the Philistine – it's true! – he was the instrument, and the people had the sense that the king was the Lord's anointed one". And so "they sang: they knew the story of David and they broke out into song".

Meanwhile, "Saul, rather than being happy about this celebration, was very displeased by it". Evidently, "Saul's heart was somewhat askew", Francis explained, because "he did the math: 'They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed thousands!'". In other words, "it was only a song, but he took it badly: why?"

The question, the Pontiff continued, is that there was something in Saul's heart "that incited him to take offence: he was jealous". He "felt an attack of jealousy there", because of that song. Thus the Bible tells us that "he was very angry". His heart "began to work in that direction". And "it worsened", inducing Saul to wonder about David: "what more can he have but the kingdom?". Therefore, he "eyed David from that day on", and constantly imagined: "This man will betray me!". For this reason, the Pope stated, Saul "decided to kill" David. And "the reason was not the song" but instead "it was his heart, sick with jealousy, that led Saul to envy".

Francis noted what an "ugly thing envy is!". Indeed it is an "ugly sin", and "jealousy and envy grow in the heart like wicked grass: it grows and smotheres the good grass". Thus, "all that seems to make shade for it harms it: it is not at peace. It is a tormented heart, it is an ugly heart". Thus, as we heard, "the envious heart leads to killing, to death".

Indeed, Scripture states clearly that "through the devil's envy death



Sadao Watanabe, "Jesus Calls the 12 Apostles"

entered the world". It is no coincidence, the Pope recalled, that "envy is also one of the works of the flesh listed by the Apostles when they say: 'the works of the Holy Spirit are these; the works of the flesh are these...'"

Francis reiterated that "envy kills and it doesn't tolerate another having something that I don't have". It always creates suffering, "because the heart of an envious or jealous person suffers: it is a suffering heart". This kind of "suffering leads [the heart] to desire the death of others".

Indeed, Francis warned, "how often in our communities – we needn't go very far to see this – out of jealousy one kills with the tongue". It so happens that "one envies another and gossip begins – and gossip kills". The Bible passage also recounts that King Saul, on the advice of his son Jonathan, stopped seeking to kill David. Then, however, "after time, in an abundance of rage", Saul actually tried to kill David, "as he was playing the lyre". Hence, envy "is a malady that comes and goes".

Continuing on, the Pontiff added: "Thinking about and reflecting on this passage of Scripture, I ask myself – and everyone – to look to see if there is something in my heart that can be ascribed to jealousy or to envy, which always leads to death and inhibits me from being happy". Because, he continued, "this sickness always leads one to look at another's advantage as if it is to your detriment". And "this is an ugly sin: it is the beginning of many, many crimes".

"Let us ask the Lord", the Pope continued, to "give us the grace not to open our heart to jealousy, not to open our heart to envy, because these things always lead to death". He then recalled the attitude of Pilate, an intelligent man. "Mark says in the Gospel that Pilate realized that the chief scribes delivered Jesus to him out of envy".

Thus "envy – as interpreted by Pilate, who was very intelligent but cowardly! – is what led to Jesus' death". It was "the instrument, the ultimate instrument: they delivered Jesus to him out of envy".

Before returning to the celebration, Francis asked "the Lord for the grace to never deliver, out envy, a

brother, a sister of the parish, of the community, or even a neighbour: each person has his or her sins, each person has his or her virtues. Each one has his or her own". He then recommended that we "see the good and not kill with gossip out of envy or jealousy".

Friday, 22 January

The twelve pillars

"Praying and witnessing" are the "two tasks of bishops", who are the "pillars of the Church". But should they weaken, it is the People of God who suffer. This is why, during Mass at Santa Marta on Friday morning, Pope Francis recommended persistent prayers for the successors of the twelve Apostles.

The Pontiff's reflection on the figure and the mission of the bishop began from the day's passage from the Gospel of Mark (3:13-19). "There is a word, in this passage of the Gospel, which draws our attention: Jesus 'appointed'". This word "appears twice". Mark writes: "He appointed twelve, whom he also named Apostles". And then again Mark repeats: "He appointed the twelve", and he named them, one after another". Hence, the Pontiff explained, "from among the people who followed him, the Gospel tells us, Jesus called to him those that he wanted". In other words, "there is a choice: Jesus chose those he wanted". And, of course, "he appointed the twelve, whom we call Apostles". Indeed, Francis continued, "there were others: there were disciples", and on one occasion "the Gospel speaks of 72". But "they were something else".

The "twelve were appointed 'that they might be with him and he might send them forth to preach and have authority to drive out demons'", the Pope explained. "It is the most important group that Jesus chose, so 'that they might be with him', closer, and that 'he might send them forth to preach' the Gospel" and "to have the authority to drive out demons", Mark adds. These very "twelve are the first bishops, the first group of bishops".

These twelve "elected ones", Francis pointed out, "were conscious of the importance of this election, such that after Jesus was assumed into

heaven, Peter spoke to the others and explained to them that, in light of Judas' betrayal, something had to be done". Thus, those who had been with Jesus, from the Baptism of John until the ascension, chose "a witness 'with us' – Peter says – to the Resurrection". This is how, the Pope continued, "Judas' place is filled, it is taken by Matthias: Matthias was elected".

Then, "the liturgy of the Church", referring to "certain expressions of Paul", calls the twelve "the pillars of the Church". Yes, the Pontiff affirmed, "the Apostles are the pillars of the Church. And the bishops are the pillars of the Church. The election of Matthias was the Church's first episcopal ordination".

"Today I would like to say a few words about bishops", Francis said. "We bishops have the responsibility of being witnesses: witnesses that the Lord Jesus lives, that the Lord Jesus is risen, that the Lord Jesus walks with us, that the Lord Jesus saves us, that the Lord Jesus gave his life for us, that the Lord Jesus is our hope, that the Lord Jesus always welcomes us and forgives us". This is "the witness". As a result, Pope Francis continued, "our life must be this: a witness, a true witness to the Resurrection of Christ".

When Jesus, as Mark tells us, makes "this choice" of the twelve, he has two reasons. First of all "that they might be with him". This is why "the bishop is obliged to be with Jesus". Yes, "it is a bishop's first duty: to be with Jesus". It is also true "at that point, in the early times, when the problem arose that the orphans and widows were not well looked after, the bishops – these twelve – gathered and pondered what to do". And "they introduced the figure of the deacon, saying: 'let the deacons look after the orphans and the widows'". Meanwhile, Peter says that the twelve have "two tasks: praying and proclaiming the Gospel".

So, Francis explained, "the bishop's first task is to be with Jesus in prayer". Indeed, "the bishop's first task is not making pastoral plans... no, no!". It is "praying: this is the first task". While "the second task is being a witness, that is, preaching: preaching the salvation that the Lord Jesus brought us".

The two tasks are not easy, the Pontiff acknowledged, but "it is precisely these two tasks that strengthen the pillars of the Church". In fact, "should these pillars weaken, because the bishop doesn't pray or he prays very little, or forgets to pray; or because the bishop does not proclaim the Gospel, occupying himself with other things, the Church also weakens; she suffers. The People of God suffer". This happens "because the pillars are weak".

For this reason, Francis stated, "I would like to encourage you today to pray for us bishops: because we too are sinners, we too have weaknesses, we too run the risk Judas had: he too was chosen as a pillar". Yes, the Pope continued, "we too run the risk of not praying, of doing something other than proclaiming

Those who engage in pilgrimage work are called to offer "an affectionate, festive, cordial and patient welcome". On Thursday morning, 21 January, Pope Francis received a group of pilgrimage workers and rectors of shrines in the Paul VI Hall on the occasion of their Jubilee. The following is a translation of the the Pope's address which was delivered in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Good morning!

I cordially welcome all of you, workers of the pilgrimages to the shrines. Going on pilgrimage to the shrines is one of the People of God's most eloquent expressions of faith, and it manifests the piety of generations of people who have humbly believed and entrusted themselves to the intercession of the Virgin Mary and the Saints. This popular religiosity is an authentic form of evangelization which always needs to be promoted and enhanced, without minimizing its importance. It is curious that in the *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, Bl. Paul VI speaks of popular religiosity, but says that it is better to call it "popular piety"; then, in the Aparecida Document, the Latin American Episcopate goes one step further and speaks of "popular spirituality". All three concepts are valid, but in concert. In the shrines, indeed, our people live out their deep spirituality, that piety which has for centuries shaped the faith with simple but very meaningful devotions. Let us consider how strongly, in some of these places, one prays to Christ Crucified, or prays the Rosary or the *Via Crucis*...

It would be erroneous to believe that those who go on pilgrimage live not a personal but an "en masse" spirituality. In reality, pilgrims bring with them their own history, their own faith, the light and dark features of their own life. Everyone bears in his or her heart a special hope and a particular prayer. Those who enter a shrine immediately feel at home, welcomed, understood,



To participants in the Jubilee for those who work on pilgrimages and at shrines

Welcome others and 'give it your all'

and supported. I really appreciate the biblical figure of Hannah, the mother of the prophet Samuel. In the temple of Shiloh, with a heart swelled with sadness, she prayed the Lord to have a son. The priest Eli, however, thought her a drunken woman and wanted to cast her out (cf. 1 Sam 1:12-14). Hannah is a fine example of the many people one can encounter in our shrines. Gazing upon the Crucifix or a image of Our Lady, a prayer is offered with tears in their eyes, brimming with faith. A shrine is truly a privileged space to meet the Lord and physically touch his mercy. To confess in a shrine is to have the experience of physically touching the mercy of God.

This is why the key word I would like to emphasize together with you today is *welcome*: welcome the pilgrims. In welcoming, so to speak, "let's give it our all". An affectionate, festive, cordial and patient wel-

come. It also means patience! The Gospels present us Jesus always welcoming those who approach him, especially the sick, sinners, the marginalized. Let us recall his expression: "He who welcomes you welcomes me, and he who welcomes me welcomes him who sent me" (cf. Mt 10:40). Jesus spoke of welcoming, but above all he practiced it. When it is said that sinners – like Matthew or Zacchaeus – welcomed Jesus in their house and at their table, it is because first of all they felt welcomed by Jesus, and this changed their lives. It is interesting that the Book of the Acts of the Apostles ends with the scene of Paul who, here in Rome, "welcomed all who came to him" (Acts 28:30). His house, where he lived as a prisoner, was the place where he proclaimed the Gospel. Welcoming is truly crucial for evangelization. At times, simply a word, a smile is enough to

make a person feel welcomed and accepted.

Pilgrims who arrive at a shrine are often tired, hungry, thirsty... So often this physical condition reflects that of the interior. Thus, these people need to be properly welcomed both materially and spiritually. It is important for pilgrims who cross the threshold of the shrine to feel treated more as family members than guests. They must feel at home, awaited, loved and looked upon with eyes of mercy. Whoever they may be – young or old, rich or poor, sick and troubled or curious tourists – let them find due welcome, because in every person there is a heart in search of God, at times without being fully aware of it. Let us ensure that every pilgrim may have the joy of feeling finally understood and loved. In this way, returning home they will feel nostalgia for what they experienced and they will want to return, but above all will want to continue the journey of faith in their daily lives.

Ministers of God's forgiveness offer a truly special welcome. A shrine is a house of forgiveness, where each person meets the tenderness of the Father who has mercy on all, excluding none. Those who approach the confessional do so because they are penitent, they regret their sins. They feel the need to approach. They clearly sense that God does not condemn them, but welcomes them and embraces them like the father of the prodigal son, in order to restore their filial dignity (cf. Lk 15:20-24). Priests who minister in the shrines must have a heart permeated with mercy; their attitude must be that of a father.

Dear brothers and sisters, let us live this Jubilee with faith and joy. Let us live it as one great pilgrimage. In a special way, you are living out your service as a corporal and spiritual work of mercy. For this I assure you of my prayers, through the intercession of Mary our Mother. And you, with your prayers, please accompany me on my pilgrimage. Thank you.

On the Feast of St Agnes

The blessing of the lambs

On Thursday morning, 21 January, Pope Francis presided at the ceremony of the blessing of the lambs in the Chapel of Urban VIII in the Apostolic Palace. The two lambs – whose wool will be used to make the palliums – were blessed in the Basilica of St Agnes Outside-the-Walls located on Via Nomentana. The rite, which was held on the feast of the Roman virgin and martyr, was led by Msgr Marini, Master of Apostolic Ceremonies. Attending the rite were Archbishop Gänswein, Prefect of the Papal Household, Msgr Rodrigo Ewart; Msgr Pinto, Dean of the Tribunal of the Roman Rota; Msgr Bartolacci; Msgr Ceretto and Msgr La Rosa, Lateran canons; Msgr Frisina, Rector of the Basilica of Santa Cecilia in Trastevere; Fr Edoardo Parisotto, Parish Priest of St Agnes Outside-the-Walls, with Fr Fabio Cherobim; Fr Giacomo Brière, Abbot of the Trappist Abbey of the Three Fountains, with Sr Danielle and Sr Marie-Noël. Presenting the Pontiff the baskets holding the lambs were the custodians of the Lateran Basilica: Antonio Di Marco and Francesco Amendola, and two gestatorial chair bearers, Filippo Giovagnoli and Nicola Pace. Also participating were two women religious of the Holy Family of Nazareth – Sr Goretti and Sr Teresita – who, according to



a tradition which dates back to 1884, prepared the lambs in their home on the Esquiline Hill; and the Abbess Maria Giovanna Valenziano, along with Maria Letizia and Sr Margaret of the Benedictine Monastery of Santa Cecilia in Trastevere, who will weave the palliums together with their community. After the rite, under the guidance of the dean of Augusto Pellegrini Hall, the lambs were taken back to the monastery.

Cardinal Loris Francesco Capovilla tells a story about the Italian film director Pasolini

While the Pope was passing by

SILVIA GUIDI

The film *Il Vangelo secondo Matteo* (*The Gospel According to St Matthew*) grew out of the friendship between its director, Pier Paolo Pasolini, and Fr Giovanni Rossi, the founder of the *Pro Civitate Christiana* association which, according to its bylaws, aims to dialogue with atheists, agnostics and non-practitioners. Paradoxically, the film also resulted from a missed encounter with John XXIII. In a video interview conducted by Msgr Dario Edoardo Viganò, director of the Vatican Television Centre, Cardinal Loris Francesco Capovilla, formerly the private secretary to Pope Roncalli, told how the film came about.

Pasolini held John XXIII in such great esteem that he dedicated the film to his memory, but on 4 October 1962, Pasolini chose to sidestep an encounter with him. Pasolini was in Assisi that day, a guest at the Cittadella, the site of *Pro Civitate Christiana*, for the annual panel discus-

sion on cinema organized by the association.

He was supposed to speak about the screenplay and the filming of *Accattone*, but it was announced that afternoon that Pope Roncalli, who was visiting Loreto, had surprisingly decided to end his day in Assisi. Crowds immediately filled the streets of the city and the conference was postponed in order to allow everyone to pay their respects to the Pope.

Fr Rossi and the other priests asked the guest to join them, but Pasolini declined the invitation and spent the afternoon in the room provided to him by the Umbrian association, reading the first book he was able to get his hands on, the Gospel according to Matthew. In every room of the Cittadella there was an edition of the Gospel that begins with the story of Levi, the tax collector who would become a disciple of Jesus. Fr Giovanni Rossi and the other priests returned late that evening.

"Pier Paolo, I hope you will be pleased to know that when the Pope gave us his blessing we thought of you", Fr Rossi said to his friend when he returned after dinner. "Thank you. Actually today I thought of you too", Pasolini replied. "I am going to make a film based on the Gospel of Matthew. I decided after reading the little book I found on the nightstand, as I was laying on the cot. However, you will have to help me. I am not a believer. And I am a Marxist", the poet from Casarsa continued.

It was not just an offhanded remark but a sincere request, Cardinal Capovilla explained in the video interview. "Pasolini told Fr Andrea Carraro: 'I don't want to do anything that could offend your faith' and for this reason he went to the Holy Land. He accepted all the observations and advice of the biblicists he consulted. I remember that, among the many critics was Cardinal Giovanni Urbani who, after watching the film in Venice, confirmed, with the New Testament in his hand, that truly the director had faithfully followed the text of the Gospel. Pasolini struggled somewhat in filming the scene of the Resurrection, which is perhaps the least successful part, but his film remains a great expression of intelligence and love".

Il Vangelo secondo Matteo would not have been born, Cardinal Capovilla added, without the example of faith and the greatness of heart of Cardinal Andrea Carlo Ferrari, who had been Archbishop of Milan until 1921, for whom Rossi had been secretary, sharing in his successes but also in his struggles and disappointments. "I have built many houses and they all fell down on top of me", Fr Rossi loved to say about himself, with bitter irony.



Grace blossoms in so many places, even amid run-around projects and fallen buildings. This work stands out among the accomplishments of his apostolate, unblemished and forever young, with the timeless freshness of the classics. The film that Pasolini dedicated to Jesus – according to Emilio Ranzato – is a celluloid fresco, so beautiful, bare and definitive as to seem sculpted in stone.

Morning Mass

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

the Gospel and driving out demons". This is why the Pope encouraged prayer "that the bishops might be what Jesus wanted and that we all might bear witness to the Resurrection of Jesus".

After all, he added, "the People of God pray for the bishops. During every Mass we pray for the bishops: we pray for Peter, the head of the episcopal college, and we pray for the local bishop". But "this may not suffice: we say the name out of habit and move on". It is important "to pray for the bishop from the heart, to ask the Lord: 'Lord, take care of my bishop; take care of all the bishops, and send us bishops who are true witnesses, bishops who pray and bishops who help us, through their preaching, to understand the Gospel, to be certain that you, Lord, are living, you are among us'".

Before returning to the celebration, the Pope again encouraged prayer "for our bishops: it is the task of the faithful". Indeed, "the Church without a bishop cannot move forward". Therefore, "we are all obliged to pray for our bishops, but it is a duty of love, the duty of children to the Father, the duty of brothers and sisters, that the family may remain united in the confession of Jesus Christ, living and risen".



In Jerusalem

The seal of King Hezekiah comes to light

King Hezekiah – who ruled from 727-698 BC – would authenticate documents with a clay seal. The royal "bullae", as it is also referred to, depicts a sun with two down-ward turned wings, flanked by two symbols of life and the inscription: "Belonging to Hezekiah [son of] Ahaz King of Judah". It was announced on 2 December 2015 that he seal was unearthed at the foot of the southern wall of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, during an excavation project conducted by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's Institute of Archaeology under the direction of Dr Eilat Mazar. It has been dated to the time of King Hezekiah or shortly thereafter, and is thought to have originated in the royal building that once stood next to it. The Israeli archeologists also found approximately 30 other seals. The backsides of these seals bare traces of cords which most likely means that the seals had been used to close sacks containing foodstuffs. Hezekiah who vigorously countered idolatry and faced the Assyrians, is discussed at length in various texts of the Hebrew Bible including the second Book of Kings (18-20), the second Book of Chronicles (29-32) and that of Isaiah (36-39). According to the second Book of Kings (18:5-6), Hezekiah "trusted in the Lord the God of Israel; so that there was none like him among all the kings of Judah after him.... For he held fast to the Lord; he did not depart from following him, but kept the commandments which the Lord commanded Moses".



Photograph by Ouvia Tadmor
(© Eilat Mazar)

To the Christian Workers Movement the Pope denounces the lawlessness that leads to corruption

A new humanism of work

"We must form, educate in a new humanism of work, where man, and not profit, is at the centre; where the economy serves man rather than it being served by man". Pope Francis emphasized this in an audience in the Paul VI Hall on Saturday morning, 16 January, at which he received leaders and members of the Christian Workers Movement. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's address which was delivered in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Good morning!

With pleasure I welcome you and I thank the President for his words to me. I extend a fraternal welcome to the Pastors who wished to be here with you, and several of them have come from far away. I greet all of you and I thank your two representatives, Maria and Giovanni, for the testimony they wrote.

In her testimony, Maria mentioned your vocation, speaking of the "vocation of work". It's true: work is a vocation, for it arises from the call that God addressed to man from the beginning, that he "cultivate and keep" our common home (cf. Gen 2:15). Thus, despite the evil that has corrupted the world as well as human action, "it is through free, creative, participatory and mutually supportive labour that human beings express and enhance the dignity of their lives" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 192). How can we correctly respond to this vocation, which calls us to actively imitate the tireless work of the Father and Jesus who, the Gospel says, "are ever active" (cf. Jn 5:17)?

I would like to suggest three words that can help us. The first is *education*. To educate means to "draw out". It is the capacity to draw forth the best from one's heart. It is not just about teaching some technical skill or imparting ideas, but is about rendering both ourselves and the world around us more human. And it refers in a special way to work: we need to formulate a new "humanism of work". For we live in a time when workers are being exploited; in a time, where work is not really at the service of personal dignity, but is slave labour. We must form, educate in a new humanism of work, where man, and not profit, is at the centre; where the economy serves man rather than it being served by man.

Another aspect is important: education helps people not to believe in the deception of those who would like to convince them that work, one's daily effort, the gift of oneself and one's study do not have value. I would add that today, in the world of work – and in every environment – it is essential to educate and follow the luminous and demanding path of honesty, avoiding the shortcuts of favouritism and recommendations. There is underlying corruption here. There are always these temptations, large or small, but it always pertains to "moral commerce", which is unworthy of man: it must be rejected, by habituating the heart



Fortunato Depero, "Workers" (1925-1939)

to remain free. Otherwise it creates a false and noxious mentality which must be fought: that of lawlessness, which leads to the corruption of people and of society. Lawlessness is like an octopus in hiding: it is concealed, submerged, but with its tentacles it seizes and poisons, polluting and doing so much harm. Educating is a great vocation: as St Joseph trained Jesus in the art of carpentry, you too are called to help the younger generations to discover the beauty of truly human work.

The second word I would like to impart to you is *sharing*. Work is not only a vocation of the individual person, but an opportunity to enter into relationships with others: "Underlying every form of work is a

concept of the relationship which we can and must have with what is other than ourselves" (Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'*, n. 125). Work should unite people, not separate them, rendering them closed and distant. Occupying so many hours in the day, it also offers us the opportunity to share everyday life, to take an interest in those who are at our side, to receive the presence of others as a gift and a responsibility.

In his written testimony, Giovanni spoke of a form of sharing that is implemented in your Movement: "Civil Service Plans", which enable you to approach people and new contexts, making their problems and hopes your own. It is important that others are not only beneficiaries of certain care, but of actual plans. Everyone makes plans for themselves, but planning for others enables us to take a step forward: placing intelligence at the service of love, rendering the person more whole and life more happy, because one is capable of giving.

The last word I would like to convey to you is *witness*. The Apostle Paul encouraged witnessing the faith also through activity, overcoming laziness and idleness. He gave a very strong and clear rule: "If any one will not work, let him not eat" (2 Thess 3:10). Even in that time there were those who made others work, in order to eat. Today, however, there are people who would like to

work, but cannot do so, and struggle even to eat. You encounter so many young people who do not work. Truly, as you said, they are "the new excluded ones of our time". Consider that youth unemployment has reached 40 per cent in some European countries, our Europe, 47 per cent in other countries, 50 per cent in others. What does a young person without work do? Where does he or she end up? In addition, in psychological illness, in suicide. Youth suicide statistics are not always published. This is a tragedy: it is the tragedy of the new excluded ones of our time. They are deprived of their dignity. Human justice requires access to work for everyone. Divine mercy also challenges us: in facing people in difficulty and challenging situations – I think also of the young for whom getting married and having children is an issue, because they do not have a stable enough job or a house – preaching does not help; it is instead important to pass on hope, to comfort through presence, to support with real help.

I encourage you to bear witness starting from your personal lifestyle and that of the association: a witness of gratuitousness, of solidarity, of the spirit of service. When disciples of Christ are transparent in heart and sensitive in life, they bring the Lord's light to the places where they live and work. I wish you this, while I apologize for the delay: you have patience, don't you! But the [morning's] audiences were prolonged. I bless you all, your families, and your commitment. Please, do not forget to pray for me. Thank you.

Optimism for women religious in the United States

Vocations on the rise

A new study on Catholic sisters in the USA has debunked some common assumptions. In response to the many Cassandras, the report *Understanding U.S. Catholic Sisters Today* drafted by Kathleen Sprows Cummings, Director of the Cushman Center for the Study of American Catholicism at the University of Notre Dame, testifies that the number of women religious in the country is about the same as it was in the first half of the 20th century: just under 50,000. Significant differences with those days are certainly not lacking, but the idea of overflowing convents in the 20th century is incorrect, and the great pessimism usually linked to the future of the religious life is exaggerated. Indeed, while it may be true that the number of sisters in the U.S. has decreased by 72 per cent in the last 50 years – it has in fact fallen from 181,421 in 1965 (the largest figure ever attained) to nearly 50,000 today (only nine per cent of whom are under 60) – "many U.S. Catholic women are

still drawn to religious life. There are approximately 1,200 women in formation at the present time, a number that includes 150 women in contemplative monasteries and roughly 1,050 women preparing to be sisters". Additionally, a recent study conducted by Georgetown University's Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) revealed that about eight per cent of single women born after 1981 have given at least some consideration to the option of the religious life and two per cent of these considered it "very seriously". This translates to 250,000 single women interested in this way of life. Thus, despite the decrease, religious life has excellent possibilities for survival, albeit with fewer sisters and in different forms but without relinquishing its identity, as many predict. "Some already see signs of hope, especially in a younger generation that is bringing new energy and optimism to religious life". The first step in understanding today's reality is realizing that the vocational path is very dif-



ferent from that of previous generations. While in the past women were guided in their choice by their Catholic school teachers, today this transmission no longer exists; it has been replaced, for example, by recourse to the new forms of media and the web, where it is possible to find discernment programmes and other similar opportunities in order to become acquainted with the various congregations. Moreover, those entering religious life today are generally more mature and better educated than in previous generations.

Pope Francis' message for the World Day of Social Communications

Networks of mercy

"Communication and Mercy: A Fruitful Encounter" is the theme for Pope Francis' message for the 50th World Day of Social Communications, which will be celebrated in many countries on Sunday, 8 May. In the message, the Holy Father emphasized that "Emails, text messages, social networks and chats can also be fully human forms of communication. It is not technology which determines whether or not communication is authentic, but rather the human heart and our capacity to use wisely the means at our disposal". The following is the English text of the message.



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The Holy Year of Mercy invites all of us to reflect on the relationship between communication and mercy. The Church, in union with Christ, the living incarnation of the Father of Mercies, is called to practise mercy as the distinctive trait of all that she is and does. What we say and how we say it, our every word and gesture, ought to express God's compassion, tenderness and forgiveness for all. Love, by its nature, is communication; it leads to openness and sharing. If our hearts and actions are inspired by charity, by divine love, then our communication will be touched by God's own power.

As sons and daughters of God, we are called to communicate with everyone, without exception. In a particular way, the Church's words and actions are all meant to convey mercy, to touch people's hearts and to sustain them on their journey to that fullness of life which Jesus Christ was sent by the Father to bring to all. This means that we ourselves must be willing to accept the warmth of Mother Church and to share that warmth with others, so that Jesus may be known and loved. That warmth is what gives substance to the word of faith; by our preaching and witness, it ignites the "spark" which gives them life.

Communication has the power to build bridges, to enable encounter and inclusion, and thus to enrich society. How beautiful it is when people select their words and actions with care, in the effort to avoid misunderstandings, to heal wounded memories and to build peace and harmony. Words can build bridges between individuals and within families, social groups and peoples. This is possible both in the material world and the digital world. Our words and actions should be such as to help us all escape the vicious circles of condemnation and ven-



geance which continue to ensnare individuals and nations, encouraging expressions of hatred. The words of Christians ought to be a constant encouragement to communion and, even in those cases where they must firmly condemn evil, they should never try to rupture relationships and communication.

For this reason, I would like to invite all people of good will to rediscover the power of mercy to heal wounded relationships and to restore peace and harmony to families and communities. All of us know how many ways ancient wounds and lingering resentments can entrap individuals and stand in the way of communication and reconciliation. The same holds true for relationships between peoples. In every case, mercy is able to create a new kind of speech and dialogue. Shakespeare put it eloquently when he said: "The quality of mercy is not strained. It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven upon the place beneath. It is twice blessed: it blesteth him that gives and him that takes" (*The Merchant of Venice*, Act IV, Scene 1).

Our political and diplomatic language would do well to be inspired by mercy, which never loses hope. I ask those with institutional and political responsibility, and those charged with forming public opinion, to remain especially attentive to the way they speak of those who think or act differently or those who may have made mistakes. It is easy to yield to the temptation to exploit such situations to stoke the flames of mistrust, fear and hatred. Instead, courage is needed to guide people towards processes of reconciliation. It is precisely such positive and creative boldness which offers real solutions to ancient conflicts and the opportunity to build lasting peace. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" (Mt 5:7-9)

How I wish that our own way of communicating, as well as our service as pastors of the Church, may never suggest a prideful and triumphant superiority over an enemy, or demean those whom the world considers lost and easily discarded.

Mercy can help mitigate life's troubles and offer warmth to those who have known only the coldness of judgment. May our way of communicating help to overcome the mindset that neatly separates sinners from the righteous. We can and we must judge situations of sin – such as violence, corruption and exploitation – but we may not judge individuals, since only God can see into the depths of their hearts. It is our task to admonish those who err and to denounce the evil and injustice of certain ways of acting, for the sake of setting victims free and raising up those who have fallen. The Gospel of John tells us that "the truth will make you free" (Jn 8:32). The truth is ultimately Christ himself, whose gentle mercy is the yardstick for measuring the way we proclaim the truth and condemn injustice. Our primary task is to uphold the truth with love (cf. Eph 4:15). Only words spoken with love and accompanied by meekness and mercy can touch our sinful hearts. Harsh and moralistic words and actions risk further alienating those whom we wish to lead to conversion and freedom, reinforcing their sense of rejection and defensiveness.

Some feel that a vision of society rooted in mercy is hopelessly idealistic or excessively indulgent. But let us try and recall our first experience of relationships, within our families. Our parents loved us and valued us for who we are more than for our abilities and achievements. Parents naturally want the best for their children, but that love is never dependent on their meeting certain conditions. The family home is one place where we are always welcome (cf. Lk 15:11-32). I would like to encourage everyone to see society not as a forum where strangers compete and try to come out on top, but above all as a home or a family, where the door is always open and where everyone feels welcome.

For this to happen, we must first listen. Communicating means sharing, and sharing demands listening and acceptance. Listening is much more than simply hearing. Hearing is about receiving information, while listening is about communication,

and calls for closeness. Listening allows us to get things right, and not simply to be passive onlookers, users or consumers. Listening also means being able to share questions and doubts, to journey side by side, to banish all claims to absolute power and to put our abilities and gifts at the service of the common good.

Listening is never easy. Many times it is easier to play deaf. Listening means paying attention, wanting to understand, to value, to respect and to ponder what the other person says. It involves a sort of martyrdom or self-sacrifice, as we try to imitate Moses before the burning bush: we have to remove our sandals when standing on the "holy ground" of our encounter with the one who speaks to me (cf. Ex 3:5). Knowing how to listen is an immense grace, it is a gift which we need to ask for and then make every effort to practice.

Emails, text messages, social networks and chats can also be fully human forms of communication. It is not technology which determines whether or not communication is authentic, but rather the human heart and our capacity to use wisely the means at our disposal. Social networks can facilitate relationships and promote the good of society, but they can also lead to further polarization and division between individuals and groups. The digital world is a public square, a meeting-place where we can either encourage or demean one another, engage in a meaningful discussion or unfair attacks. I pray that this Jubilee Year, lived in mercy, "may open us to even more fervent dialogue so that we might know and understand one another better; and that it may eliminate every form of closed-mindedness and disrespect, and drive out every form of violence and discrimination" (*Misericordiae Vultus*, n. 23). The internet can help us to be better citizens. Access to digital networks entails a responsibility for our neighbour whom we do not see but who is nonetheless real and has a dignity which must be respected. The internet can be used wisely to build a society which is healthy and open to sharing.

Communication, wherever and however it takes place, has opened up broader horizons for many people. This is a gift of God which involves a great responsibility. I like to refer to this power of communication as "closeness". The encounter between communication and mercy will be fruitful to the degree that it generates a closeness which cares, comforts, heals, accompanies and celebrates. In a broken, fragmented and polarized world, to communicate with mercy means to help create a healthy, free and fraternal closeness between the children of God and all our brothers and sisters in the one human family.

From the Vatican, 24 January 2016

Franciscus