

# L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO

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Message for the World Day of Peace 2016

## Overcome indifference and win peace

The “globalization of indifference” today “represents a menace to the human family”. This conviction forms the basis of Pope Francis’ message for the 49th World Day of Peace, which will be celebrated on 1 January 2016 on the theme: “Overcome Indifference and Win Peace”. According to the Pontiff it is precisely “indifference to one’s neighbour, born of indifference to God”, which fuels disinterest and a lack of engagement”. Likewise, environmental pollution arises from such conduct and in turn gives rise to new situations of insecurity and tensions on an international level. “How many wars have been fought, and how many will continue to be fought?”, the Pope asks. The message concludes with a “threefold appeal” to world leaders, whom the Pontiff exhorts to “refrain from drawing other peoples into conflicts or wars”; to “forgive or manage in a sustainable way the international debt of the poorer nations”; and to “adopt policies of cooperation which, instead of bowing before the dictatorship of certain ideologies, will respect the values of local populations and, in any case, not prove detrimental to the fundamental and inalienable right to life of the unborn”.



William Blake, “The Body of Abel found by Adam and Eve” (c. 1826, detail)

PAGES 4-6

### Dates of publication

We inform our readers that the final issue (n. 53) of our newspaper will be printed on Wednesday, 30 December, and that the first issue of 2016 will be printed on Friday, 8 January.

In the Basilica of St John Lateran

### Opening the Holy Door

PAGE 12/13

Visit to Mexico announced

### To the Mother of Mercy



On the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the Pope announces his upcoming journey to the land of her apparition.

PAGE 12/13

At the General Audience the Pontiff speaks about confession and the Father’s forgiveness

## A sign of the Jubilee

And he links the start of the Holy Year with Vatican II

*“Salvation is not paid for. Salvation is not bought. The Door is Jesus, and Jesus is gratis”. Pope Francis spoke at the General Audience on Wednesday, 16 December, reminding the faithful present in St Peter’s Square to approach the sacrament of confession and to pass through the Holy Doors that “are the true Doors of Mercy” in this Jubilee Year. The following is a translation of the Holy Father’s address, which was given in Italian.*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,  
Good morning!

On Sunday the Holy Door was opened in the Cathedral of Rome, the Basilica of St John Lateran, and a *Door of Mercy* was opened in the Cathedral of every diocese of the world, and also in shrines and churches indicated by bishops. The Jubilee is throughout the world, not only in Rome. I wanted this sign of the Holy Door to be present in every particular Church, so that the Jubilee of Mercy could be an experience shared by each person. The Holy Year, therefore, has begun in the entire Church and is being celebrated in every diocese as in Rome. Also, the first Holy Door was opened in the very heart of Africa. Rome, of course, is the visible sign of universal communion. May this ecclesial communion become ever more intense, so that the Church may be the living sign of the Father’s love and mercy in the world.

The date 8 December was also meant to highlight this need, by linking, separated by 50 years, the beginning of the Jubilee with the conclusion of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council. In fact, the Council contemplated and introduced the Church to the light of the mystery of communion. Scattered

throughout the world and articulated in many particular Churches, however, it is always and only the one Church of Jesus Christ, the one that he wanted and for which he offered himself. The “one” Church that lives of the very communion of God.

This mystery of communion, which makes the Church a sign of the Father’s love, grows and matures in our heart, when the love, which we recognize in the Cross of Christ and in which we immerse ourselves, enables us to love as we are loved by Him. It is an unending Love, which has the face of forgiveness and mercy.

However, mercy and forgiveness must not remain as pleasant words, but must be made manifest in daily life. *Loving and forgiving are tangible and visible signs that faith has transformed our hearts* and allow us to express God’s very life in ourselves. Loving and forgiving as God loves and forgives. This is a programme of life that can know no interruptions or exceptions, but it pushes us always to go farther without ever tiring, with the certainty of being sustained by the paternal presence of God.

This great sign of Christi-



CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

# VATICAN BULLETIN

## AUDIENCES

Monday, 14 December

H.E. Mr Maithripala Sirisena, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, with his entourage

Archbishop Christophe Pierre, titular Archbishop of Gunela, Apostolic Nuncio in Mexico

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

Cardinal Walter Kasper, President emeritus of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity

The members of the Administrative Board of the "Asociación de Magistrados y Funcionarios del Ministerio público de la Defensa de la República Argentina"

## CHANGES IN EPISCOPATE

The Holy Father appointed Msgr Rolf Steinhäuser from the clergy of Cologne, Germany, as Auxiliary Bishop of Cologne, assigning him the titular episcopal See of Thuburnica. Until now he has been Canon of the Metropolitan Chapter of the same Archdiocese, director of the Edith Stein Retreat House and diocesan head of the new evangelization (11 Dec.).

Bishop-elect Steinhäuser, 63, was born in Cologne, Germany. He was ordained a priest on 24 June 1977. He has served in parish ministry and as: head of youth apostolate in Bonn; director of the office for youth pastoral ministry of the Archdiocesan Curia in Cologne; dean of the City of Düsseldorf.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Rutilio Juan Del Riego Jánez, titular Bishop of Daimlaig, from his office as Auxiliary of San Bernardino, USA. It was presented in accord with cann. 411 and 401 § 1 of the Code of Canon Law (11 Dec.).

The Holy Father appointed Fr James Patrick Powers from the clergy of Superior, USA, as Bishop of Superior. Until now he has been diocesan administrator of the said diocese and parish priest of Saint Joseph Parish in Rice Lake (15 Dec.).

Bishop-elect Powers, 62, was born in Baldwin, Wisconsin. He was ordained a priest on 20 May 1990. He has served in parish ministry and as: adjunct judicial vicar; vicar general; spiritual father to the Teens Encounter Christ group and member of the Priest Personnel Board.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Paulo Sérgio Machado of São Carlos, Brazil. It was presented in accord with can. 401 § 2 of the Code of Canon Law (16 Dec.).

The Holy Father appointed Msgr John Gregory Kelly from the clergy of the Diocese of Dallas, USA, as Auxiliary Bishop of Dallas, assigning him the titular episcopal See of Jamestown. Until now he has been vicar for the clergy (16 Dec.).

Bishop-elect Kelly, 59, was born in LeMars, Iowa. He holds a BA in philosophy and a Master of Divinity. He was ordained a priest on 15 May 1982. He has served in parish ministry and as: chaplain of the University of Dallas; head of priestly vocations; vicar forane; rector *ad interim* at the Holy Trinity Seminary; member of the College of Consultors of the Presbyteral Council and of the Board of Directors of the university.

## RELATIONS WITH STATES

The Holy Father appointed Archbishop Vito Rallo, titular Archbishop of Alba, as Apostolic Nuncio in Marocco. Until now he has served in Burkina Faso and in Niger (12 Dec.).

## ADVENT SERMON

On Friday morning, 11 December, in the presence of the Holy Father, Fr Raniero Cantalamessa, OFM Cap., Preacher of the Papal Household, delivered the second Advent Sermon in the Vatican's Redemptoris Mater Chapel.

## NECROLOGY

Archbishop Rrok Kola Mirdita of Tiranë-Durrës, Albania, at age 76 (7 Dec.).

Bishop Matthew Shija, Bishop emeritus of Kahama, Tanzania, at age 91 (9 Dec.).

Bishop Dermot Patrick O'Mahony, titular Bishop of Thiava, Auxiliary emeritus of Dublin, at age 80 (10 Dec.).

Bishop Jiří Padour, OFM Cap, Bishop emeritus of České Budějovice, Czech Republic, at age 72 (11 Dec.).

## Ambassador of Hungary presents his Letters of Credence



On Monday, 7 December, the Holy Father received H.E. Mr Eduard Habsburg-Lothringen, Ambassador of Hungary, for the presentation of the Letters accrediting him to the Holy See.

H.E. Mr Eduard Habsburg-Lothringen, 48, was born in Munich, Germany. He is married and has six children. He holds a BA, a master's and a doctorate in philosophy. He has served as a producer of cartoons (1996-2001); a writer at ZDF/ORF television (2002); spokesperson for Bishop Klaus Küng of St Pölten (2009-2014); actor and writer on the television show *Wo Grafen schlafen* (2012-2014); head of communications for the Habsburg family (2014); and actor and writer (2012-2014).

## Ambassador of Peru presents her Credentials

H.E. Ms María Elvira Velásquez Rivas-Plata, 59, was born in Lima, Peru. She holds a degree in international relations, a master's in sciences and a certificate in diplomatic studies. She entered the diplomatic service in 1985 and has served as third secretary to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (1985); third and then second secretary at the Embassy in Great Britain and alternate permanent representative at the International Maritime Organization (1989-1997); counsellor to the Embassy and then minister counsellor in the United States (1997-2002); minister counsellor in Austria and permanent representative at the international organizations in Vienna (2006-2009); and consul general in Loja, Ecuador (2009-2012). She has also served at the Ministry for



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Foreign Affairs as director of Maritime and Antarctic Affairs, as well as director general of treaties. Since 2013 she has served at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs with the rank of ambassador.

## EASTERN CHURCHES

The Holy Father gave his assent to the decision by the Synod of Bishops of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church to establish the Eparchy of Kamyanets-Podilskiy for Ukrainians, Ukraine, with its headquarters in Khmelntsiykyi, with territory taken from the Archeparchy of Ternopil-Zboriv, making it a suffragan of the said Archeparchy (11 Dec.).

## Graduates of the Studio Rotale

It was announced on 15 December that in the fall session of the Studio Rotale course, Chiara Ercoli, Giuseppe Grauso, Maria Rosaria Nobile, Danilo Onofri, Maria Polverino and Chiara Verdoliva earned the certificate of Rotal Advocate.

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# At the General Audience

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

an life is then transformed into many other signs that are characteristic of the Jubilee. I think of those who will pass through one of the Holy Doors, which this year are the true Doors of Mercy. The Door points to Jesus himself, who said: "I am the door; if anyone enters by me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture" (Jn 10:9). *Passing through the Holy Door is the sign of our trust in the Lord Jesus who came not to judge but to save* (cf. Jn 12:47). Be careful that no one rather swift or too shrewd tells you that you have to pay: no! Salvation is not paid for. Salvation is not bought. The Door is Jesus, and Jesus is gratis! He himself speaks about those who do not enter as they should, and he simply says that they are thieves and robbers. Again, be mindful: salvation is free. Passing through the Holy Door is a sign of the true conversion of our heart. When we pass through that Door it is good to remember that we must also keep the door of our heart wide open. I am before the Holy Door and I ask: "Lord, help me to thrust open the door of my heart!". The Holy Year will not be very effective if the door of our heart does not allow the passage of Christ who urges us to go toward others, in order to bring him and his love. Thus, as the Holy Door stays open, because it is the sign of the welcome that God himself holds for us, may our door, that of the heart, also be always wide open so as to exclude no one. Not even he or she who bothers me: no one.

Another important sign of the Jubilee is *confession*. Approaching the Sacrament by which we reconcile

ourselves with God is equal to directly experiencing his mercy. It is finding the Father who forgives: God forgives everything. God understands us even in our limitations, and he even understands us in our contradictions. Not only this, but He tells us with his love that precisely when we recognize our sins he is



even closer and he spurs us to look forward. He says even more: that when we recognize our sins and we ask for forgiveness, there is a celebration in Heaven. Jesus celebrates: this is his mercy: let us not be discouraged. Onward, forward with this!

How often have I heard: "Father, I can't forgive my neighbour, a coworker, the lady next door, my mother-in-law, my sister-in-law". We have all heard this: "I can't forgive". But how can we ask God to forgive

us, if we are unable to forgive? Forgiving is something great, yet forgiving is not easy, because our heart is poor and with its efforts alone we cannot do it. However, if we open ourselves up to welcome God's mercy for ourselves, in turn we become capable of forgiveness. So often I have heard: "I couldn't see

## SPECIAL GREETINGS

In the joyous climate of the vigilant expectation of the birth of Jesus, Face of the Father's mercy, I am pleased to warmly greet the Italian-speaking faithful. I am happy to welcome the new priests of the Legionaries of Christ and their family members; the delegation of the Municipality of Bolsena; the tango dancers and the soldiers from the aviation training centre and the commanders of the defence forces. I exhort everyone to intensify your prayer and good works in these days, so that your encounter with the mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God may fill your hearts with that joy, which he alone can give.

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

I address a special greeting to *young people*, to the *sick* and to *newlyweds*. Let us entrust ourselves to Mary, mistress of faith and model of obedience to the Lord. Dear *young people*, may you be able to experience Christmas with the same faith with which Mary received the announcement of the Angel Gabriel. Dear *sick people*, may you ask her to obtain the intimate peace that Jesus brought the world. Dear *newlyweds*, may you imitate the example of the Mother of Jesus with prayers and virtues.

New book of children's letters to the Pontiff

## Dear Pope Francis, I love you

The texts and drawings below were taken from an Italian book: "Letters to Pope Francis. A Dialogue between children and the Pope by way of the messages that arrive in the Vatican", edited by Alessandra Buzzetti. Pope Francis personally he gave his consent

to the making of this book, whose proceeds will go to support five hundred children assisted within the Vatican walls, the young patients of the Santa Marta Pediatric Dispensary, which provides medicine, food and clothes to needy families.

Dear Pope Francis, I am 10 years old. I have one older sister. It's just that she is sick with anorexia and I would like you to pray for her. Unfortunately, since she fell ill, she says she has lost her faith. Meanwhile, I play the piano and I hope one day that you can attend one of my concerts\*.

Pray for us. And I will pray for you. One question: How do you manage to pray for everyone?

Bye.  
\* If you prefer, and perhaps it is easier, I can come to you: I only need a piano. I send you my most heartfelt greetings.

LILIANA, from the Varese Prealps

Dear Pope, I love you very much. I like you very much. When you were greeting all the people in wheelchairs, I was very touched. Could you please pray for my grandma who is in a wheelchair?

Ah! Another thing, convince all the bad people to believe in Jesus and tell them not to explode bombs and kill so many people. I look forward to your reply. Merry Christmas.

ALESSANDRA



Message for the World Day of Peace 2016

# Overcome indifference and win peace

*The following is the English text of the Holy Father's message for the 49th World Day of Peace which will be celebrated on 1 January 2016.*

1. *God is not indifferent! God cares about mankind! God does not abandon us!* At the beginning of the New Year, I would like to share not only this profound conviction but also my cordial good wishes for prosperity, peace and the fulfilment of the hopes of every man and every woman, every family, people and nation throughout the world, including all Heads of State and Government and all religious leaders. We continue to trust that 2016 will see us all firmly and confidently engaged, on different levels, in the pursuit of justice and peace. Peace is both God's gift and a human achievement. As a gift of God, it is entrusted to all men and women, who are called to attain it.

Maintaining our reasons for hope

2. Sadly, war and terrorism, accompanied by kidnapping, ethnic or religious persecution and the misuse of power, marked the past year from start to finish. In many parts of the world, these have become so common as to constitute a real "third world war fought piecemeal". Yet some events of the year now ending inspire me, in looking ahead to the new year, to encourage everyone not to lose hope in our human ability to conquer evil and to combat resignation and indifference. They demonstrate our capacity to show solidarity and to rise above self-interest, apathy and indifference in the face of critical situations.

Here I would mention the efforts to bring world leaders together at COP21 in the search for new ways to confront climate change and to protect the earth, our common home. We can also think of two earlier global events: the Addis Ababa Summit for funding sustainable development worldwide and the adoption of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, aimed at ensuring a more dignified standard of living for all the world's peoples, especially the poor, by that year.

For the Church, 2015 was a special year, since it marked the 50th anniversary of two documents of the Second Vatican Council which eloquently expressed her sense of solidarity with the world. Pope John XXIII, at the beginning of the Council, wanted to open wide the win-

dows of the Church and to improve her communication with the world. The two documents, *Nostra Aetate* and *Gaudium et Spes*, are emblematic of the new relationship of dialogue, solidarity and accompaniment which the Church sought to awaken within the human family. In the Declaration *Nostra Aetate*, the Church expressed her openness to dialogue with non-Christian religions. In the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, based on a recognition that "the joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the people of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted, are the joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well",<sup>1</sup> the Church proposed to enter into dialogue with the entire human family about the problems of our world, as a sign of solidarity, respect and affection.<sup>2</sup>

Along these same lines, with the present Jubilee of Mercy I want to invite the Church to pray and work so that every Christian will have a humble and compassionate heart, one capable of proclaiming and wit-



A poor man in New Delhi (AP)

nessing to mercy. It is my hope that all of us will learn to "forgive and give", to become more open "to those living on the outermost fringes of society – fringes which modern society itself creates", and to refuse to fall into "a humiliating indifference or a monotonous routine which prevents us from discovering what is new! Let us ward off destructive cynicism!"<sup>3</sup>

There are many good reasons to believe in mankind's capacity to act together in solidarity and, on the basis of our interconnection and interdependence, to demonstrate concern for the more vulnerable of our brothers and sisters and for the protection of the common good. This attitude of mutual responsibility is rooted in our fundamental vocation to fraternity and a life in common. Personal dignity and interpersonal relationships are what constitute us as human beings whom God willed to create in his own image and likeness. As creatures endowed with inalienable dignity, we are related to all our brothers and sisters, for whom we are responsible and with

whom we act in solidarity. Lacking this relationship, we would be less human. We see, then, how indifference represents a menace to the human family. As we approach a new year, I would ask everyone to take stock of this reality, in order to overcome indifference and to win peace.

## Kinds of indifference

3. Clearly, indifference is not something new; every period of history has known people who close their hearts to the needs of others, who close their eyes to what is happening around them, who turn aside to avoid encountering other people's problems. But in our day, indifference has ceased to be a purely personal matter and has taken on broader dimensions, producing a certain "globalization of indifference".

The first kind of indifference in human society is indifference to God, which then leads to indifference to one's neighbour and to the environment. This is one of the grave consequences of a false humanism and practical materialism allied to relativism and nihilism. We have come to think that we are the source and creator of ourselves, our lives and society. We feel self-sufficient, prepared not only to find a substitute for God but to do completely without him. As a consequence, we feel that we owe nothing to anyone but ourselves, and we claim only rights.<sup>4</sup> Against this erroneous understanding of the person, Pope Benedict XVI observed that neither man himself nor human development can, on their own, answer the question of our ultimate meaning.<sup>5</sup> Paul VI likewise stated that "there is no true humanism but that which is open to the Absolute, and is conscious of a vocation which gives human life its authentic significance".<sup>6</sup>

Indifference to our neighbour shows itself in different ways. Some people are well-informed; they listen to the radio, read the newspapers or watch television, but they do so mechanically and without engagement. They are vaguely aware of the tragedies afflicting humanity, but they have no sense of involvement or compassion. Theirs is the attitude of those who know, but keep their gaze, their thoughts and their actions focused on themselves. Sadly, it must be said that today's information explosion does not of itself lead to an increased concern for other people's problems, which demands openness and a sense of solidarity.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, the information glut can numb people's sensibilities and to some degree downplay the gravity of the problems. There are those who "simply content themselves with blaming the poor and the poor

countries themselves for their troubles; indulging in unwarranted generalizations, they claim that the solution is an 'education' that would tranquilize them, making them tame and harmless. All this becomes even more exasperating for the marginalized in the light of the widespread and deeply rooted corruption found in many countries – in their governments, businesses and institutions – whatever the political ideology of their leaders".<sup>8</sup>

In other cases, indifference shows itself in a lack of concern for what is happening around us, especially if it does not touch us directly. Some people prefer not to ask questions or seek answers; they lead lives of comfort, deaf to the cry of those who suffer. Almost imperceptibly, we grow incapable of feeling compassion for others and for their problems; we have no interest in caring for them, as if their troubles were their own responsibility, and none of our business.<sup>9</sup> "When we are healthy and comfortable, we forget about others (something God the Father never does): we are unconcerned with their problems, their sufferings and the injustices they endure.... Our heart grows cold. As long as I am relatively healthy and comfortable, I don't think about those less well off."<sup>10</sup>

Because we dwell in a common home, we cannot help but ask ourselves about the state of its health, as I sought to do in *Laudato Si'*. Water and air pollution, the indiscriminate exploitation of forests and the destruction of the natural environment are often the result of man's indifference to man, since everything is interrelated. Then too, there is the way we treat animals, which has an effect on the way we treat other people,<sup>11</sup> and the cases where people freely do elsewhere what they would never dare do at home.<sup>12</sup>

In these and in other situations, indifference leads to self-absorption and a lack of commitment. It thus contributes to the absence of peace with God, with our neighbour and with the environment.

## Peace threatened by globalized indifference

4. Indifference towards God transcends the purely private sphere of the individual and affects the public and social sphere. As Benedict XVI pointed out, "the glorification of God and human peace on earth are closely linked".<sup>13</sup> Indeed, "without openness to the transcendent, human beings easily become prey to relativism and find it difficult to act justly and to work for peace."<sup>14</sup> Disregard and the denial of God, which lead man to acknowledge no norm above himself and himself alone, have produced untold cruelty and violence.<sup>15</sup>

On both the individual and communitarian levels, indifference to one's neighbour, born of indifference to God, finds expression in dis-



interest and a lack of engagement, which only help to prolong situations of injustice and grave social imbalance. These in turn can lead to conflicts or, in any event, generate a climate of dissatisfaction which risks exploding sooner or later into acts of violence and insecurity.

Indifference and lack of commitment constitute a grave dereliction of the duty whereby each of us must work in accordance with our abilities and our role in society for the promotion of the common good, and in particular for peace, which is one of mankind's most precious goods.<sup>16</sup>

On the institutional level, indifference to others and to their dignity, their fundamental rights and their freedom, when it is part of a culture shaped by the pursuit of profit and hedonism, can foster and even justify actions and policies which ultimately represent threats to peace. Indifference can even lead to justifying deplorable economic policies which breed injustice, division and violence for the sake of ensuring the wellbeing of individuals or nations. Not infrequently, economic and political projects aim at securing or maintaining power and wealth, even at the cost of trampling on the basic rights and needs of others. When people witness the denial of their elementary rights, such as the right to food, water, health care or employment, they are tempted to obtain them by force.<sup>17</sup>

Moreover, indifference to the natural environment, by countenancing deforestation, pollution and natural catastrophes which uproot entire communities from their ecosystem and create profound insecurity, ends up creating new forms of poverty and new situations of injustice, often with dire consequences for security and peace. How many wars have been fought, and how many will continue to be fought, over a shortage of goods or out of an insatiable thirst for natural resources?<sup>18</sup>

#### From indifference to mercy: the conversion of hearts

5. One year ago, in my Message for the 2015 World Day of Peace, with the motto "No Longer Slaves, but Brothers and Sisters", I evoked the first biblical icon of human brotherhood, that of Cain and Abel (cf. Gen 4:1-16). I meant to attract attention to how from the very beginning this original brotherhood

was betrayed. Cain and Abel were brothers. Both came forth from the same womb, they were equal in dignity and created in the image and likeness of God; but their relationship as brothers was destroyed. "It was not only that Cain could not stand Abel; he killed him out of envy."<sup>19</sup> Fratricide was the form of betrayal, and Cain's refusal to acknowledge Abel as his brother became the first rupture in the family relations of fraternity, solidarity and mutual respect.

God then intervened to remind man of his responsibility towards his fellows, as he had also done when Adam and Eve, our first parents, ruptured their relationship with him, their Creator. "Then the Lord said to Cain: 'Where is Abel your brother?' He said, 'I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?' But the Lord replied: 'What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground'" (Gen 4:9-10).

Cain said he did not know what had happened to his brother, that he was not his brother's keeper. He did not feel responsible for his life, for his fate. He did not feel involved. He was indifferent to his brother, despite their common origin. How sad! What a sorry tale of brothers, of families, of human beings! This was the first display of indifference between brothers. God, however, is not indifferent. Abel's blood had immense value in his eyes, and he asked Cain to give an account of it. At the origin of the human race, God shows himself to be involved in man's destiny. Later, when the children of Israel were slaves in Egypt, God once more intervened to tell Moses: "I have seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters; I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey" (Ex 3:7-8). We should note the verbs which describe God's intervention: he sees, hears, knows, comes down and delivers. God does not remain indifferent. He is attentive and he acts.

In the same way, in Jesus his Son, God has come down among us. He took flesh and showed his solidarity with humanity in all things but sin. Jesus identified with us: he became "the first-born among many

brethren" (Rom 8:29). He was not content merely to teach the crowds, but he was concerned for their welfare, especially when he saw them hungry (cf. Mk 6:34-44) or without work (cf. Mt 20:3). He was concerned not only for men and women, but also for the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, plants and trees, all things great and small. He saw and embraced all of creation. But he did more than just see; he touched people's lives, he spoke to them, helped them and showed kindness to those in need. Not only this, but he felt strong emotions and he wept (cf. Jn 11:33-44). And he worked to put an end to suffering, sorrow, misery and death.

Jesus taught us to be merciful like our heavenly Father (cf. Lk 6:36). In the parable of the Good Samaritan (cf. Lk 10:29-37), he condemned those who fail to help others in need, those who "pass by on the other side" (cf. Lk 10:31-32). By this example, he taught his listeners, and his disciples in particular, to stop and to help alleviate the sufferings of this world and the pain of our brothers and sisters, using whatever means are at hand, beginning with our own time, however busy we may be. Indifference often seeks excuses: observing ritual prescriptions, looking to all the things needing to be done, hiding behind hostilities and prejudices which keep us apart.

Mercy is the heart of God. It must also be the heart of the members of the one great family of his children: a heart which beats all the more strongly wherever human dignity – as a reflection of the face of God in his creatures – is in play. Jesus tells us that love for others – foreigners, the sick, prisoners, the homeless, even our enemies – is the yardstick by which God will judge our actions. Our eternal destiny depends on this. It is not surprising that the Apostle Paul tells the Christians of Rome to rejoice with those who rejoice and to weep with those who weep (cf. Rom 12:15), or that he encourages the Corinthians to take up collections as a sign of solidarity with the suffering members of the Church (cf. 1 Cor 16:2-3). And St John writes: "If any one has the world's goods and sees his brother or sister in need, yet refuses help, how does God's love abide in him?" (1 Jn 3:17; cf. Jas 2:15-16).

This then is why "it is absolutely essential for the Church and for the credibility of her message that she herself live and testify to mercy. Her language and her gestures must transmit mercy, so as to touch the hearts of all people and inspire them once more to find the road that leads to the Father. The Church's first truth is the love of Christ. The Church makes herself a servant of this love and mediates it to all people: a love that forgives and expresses itself in the gift of oneself. Consequently, wherever the Church is present, the mercy of the Father must be evident. In our parishes, communities, associations and movements, in a word, wherever there are Christians, everyone should find an oasis of mercy."<sup>20</sup>

We too, then, are called to make compassion, love, mercy and solidarity a true way of life, a rule of conduct in our relationships with one

another.<sup>21</sup> This requires the conversion of our hearts: the grace of God has to turn our hearts of stone into hearts of flesh (cf. Ezek 36:26), open to others in authentic solidarity. For solidarity is much more than a "feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far."<sup>22</sup> Solidarity is "a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all"<sup>23</sup> because compassion flows from fraternity.

Understood in this way, solidarity represents the moral and social attitude which best corresponds to an awareness of the scourges of our own day, and to the growing interdependence, especially in a globalized world, between the lives of given individuals and communities and those of other men and women in the rest of the world.<sup>24</sup>

#### Building a culture of solidarity and mercy to overcome indifference

6. Solidarity, as a moral virtue and social attitude born of personal conversion, calls for commitment on the part of those responsible for education and formation.

I think first of families, which are called to the primary and vital mission of education. Families are the first place where the values of love and fraternity, togetherness and sharing, concern and care for others are lived out and handed on. They are also the privileged milieu for transmitting the faith, beginning with those first simple gestures of devotion which mothers teach their children.<sup>25</sup>

Teachers, who have the challenging task of training children and youth in schools or other settings, should be conscious that their responsibility extends also to the moral, spiritual and social aspects of life. The values of freedom, mutual respect and solidarity can be handed on from a tender age. Speaking to educators, Pope Benedict XVI noted that: "Every educational setting can be a place of openness to the transcendent and to others; a place of dialogue, cohesiveness and attentive listening, where young people feel appreciated for their personal abilities and inner riches, and can learn to esteem their brothers and sisters. May young people be taught to savour the joy which comes from the daily exercise of charity and compassion towards others and from taking an active part in the building of a more humane and fraternal society."<sup>26</sup>

Communicators also have a responsibility for education and formation, especially nowadays, when the means of information and communication are so widespread. Their duty is first and foremost to serve the truth, and not particular interests. For the media "not only inform but also form the minds of their audiences, and so they can make a significant contribution to the education of young people. It is important never to forget that the connection between education and

## Message for the World Day of Peace 2016

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

communication is extremely close: education takes place through communication, which influences, for better or worse, the formation of the person<sup>27</sup>.

Communicators should also be mindful that the way in which information is obtained and made public should always be legally and morally admissible.

Peace: the fruit of a culture of solidarity, mercy and compassion

7. While conscious of the threat posed by a globalization of indifference, we should also recognize that, in the scenario I have just described, there are also many positive initiatives which testify to the compassion, mercy and solidarity of which we are capable.

Here I would offer some examples of praiseworthy commitment, which demonstrate how all of us can overcome indifference in choosing not to close our eyes to our neighbour. These represent good practices on the way to a more humane society.

There are many non-governmental and charitable organizations, both within and outside the Church, whose members, amidst epidemics, disasters and armed conflicts, brave difficulties and dangers in caring for the injured and sick, and in burying the dead. I would also mention those individuals and associations which assist migrants who cross deserts and seas in search of a better life. These efforts are the spiritual and corporal works of mercy on which we will be judged at the end of our lives.

I think also of the journalists and photographers who shape public opinion on difficult situations which trouble our consciences, and all those devoted to the defence of human rights, especially the rights of ethnic and religious minorities, indigenous peoples, women and children, and the most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters. Among them are also many priests and missionaries who, as good pastors, remain at the side of their flock and support them, heedless of danger and hardship, especially during armed conflicts.

How many families, amid occupational and social difficulties, make great sacrifices to provide their children with a "counter-cultural" education in the values of solidarity, compassion and fraternity! How many families open their hearts and homes to those in need, such as refugees and migrants! I wish to thank in a particular way all those individuals, families, parishes, religious communities, monasteries and shrines who readily responded to my appeal to welcome a refugee family.<sup>28</sup>

Finally, I would mention those young people who join in undertaking works of solidarity, and all those who generously help their neighbours in need in their cities and countries and elsewhere in the world. I thank and encourage every-

one engaged in such efforts, which often pass unobserved. Their hunger and thirst for justice will be satisfied, their mercy will lead them to find mercy and, as peacemakers, they will be called children of God (cf. Mt 5:6-9).

### Peace in the sign of the Jubilee of Mercy

8. In the spirit of the Jubilee of Mercy, all of us are called to realize how indifference can manifest itself in our lives and to work concretely to improve the world around us, beginning with our families, neighbours and places of employment.

Civil society is likewise called to make specific and courageous gestures of concern for their most vulnerable members, such as prisoners, migrants, the unemployed and the infirm.

With regard to prisoners, it would appear that in many cases practical measures are urgently needed to improve their living conditions, with particular concern for those detained while awaiting trial.<sup>29</sup> It must be kept in mind that penal sanctions have the aim of rehabilitation, while national laws should consider the possibility of other establishing penalties than incarceration. In this context, I would like once more to appeal to governmental authorities to abolish the death penalty where it is still in force, and to consider the possibility of an amnesty.

With regard to migrants, I would ask that legislation on migration be reviewed, so, while respecting reciprocal rights and responsibilities, it can reflect a readiness to welcome migrants and to facilitate their integration. Special concern should be paid to the conditions for legal residency, since having to live clandestinely can lead to criminal behaviour.

In this Jubilee Year, I would also appeal to national leaders for concrete gestures in favour of our brothers and sisters who suffer from the lack of *labour, land and lodging*. I am thinking of the creation of dignified jobs to combat the social plague of unemployment, which affects many families and young people, with grave effects for society as a whole. Unemployment takes a heavy toll on people's sense of dignity and hope, and can only be partially compensated for by welfare benefits, however necessary these may be, provided to the unemployed and their families. Special attention needs to be given to women – who unfortunately still encounter discrimination in the workplace – and to some categories of workers whose conditions are precarious or dangerous, and whose pay is not commensurate to the importance of their social mission.

Finally, I express my hope that effective steps will be taken to improve the living conditions of the sick by ensuring that all have access to medical treatment and pharmaceuticals essential for life, as well as the possibility of home care.

Looking beyond their own borders, national leaders are also called to renew their relations with other peoples and to enable their real participation and inclusion in the life of the international community, in order to ensure fraternity within the family of nations as well.

With this in mind, I would like to make a threefold appeal to the leaders of nations: to refrain from drawing other peoples into conflicts or wars which destroy not only their material, cultural and social legacy, but also – and in the long term – their moral and spiritual integrity; to forgive or manage in a sustainable way the international debt of the poorer nations; and to adopt policies of cooperation which, in-



René Magritte, "Deep Waters" (1941, detail)

stead of bowing before the dictatorship of certain ideologies, will respect the values of local populations and, in any case, not prove detrimental to the fundamental and inalienable right to life of the unborn.

I entrust these reflections, together with my best wishes for the New Year, to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, our Mother, who cares for the needs of our human family, that she may obtain from her Son Jesus, the Prince of Peace, the granting of our prayers and the blessing of our daily efforts for a fraternal and united world.

From the Vatican, 8 December 2015  
Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary,  
Opening of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy

Francis

<sup>1</sup> SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 1.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 3.

<sup>3</sup> Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy *Misericordiae Vultus*, 14-15.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. BENEDICT XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate*, 43.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 16.

<sup>6</sup> Encyclical *Populorum Progressio*, 42.

<sup>7</sup> "As society becomes ever more globalized, it makes us neighbours but does not make us brothers. Reason, by itself, is capable of grasping the equality between men and of giving stability to their civic coexistence, but it cannot establish fraternity" (BENEDICT XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate*, 19).

<sup>8</sup> Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 60.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 54.

<sup>10</sup> Message for Lent 2015.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'*, 92.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 51.

<sup>13</sup> Address to the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See, 7 January 2013.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Cf. BENEDICT XVI, Intervention during the Day of Reflection, Dialogue and Prayer for Peace and Justice in the World, Assisi, 27 October 2011.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 217-237.

<sup>17</sup> "Until exclusion and inequality in society and between peoples are reversed, it will be impossible to eliminate violence. The poor and the poor peoples are

accused of violence, yet without equal opportunities the different forms of aggression and conflict will find a fertile terrain for growth and eventually explode. When a society – whether local, national or global – is willing to leave a part of itself on the fringes, no political programmes or resources spent on law enforcement or surveillance systems can indefinitely guarantee tranquility. This is not the case simply because inequality provokes a violent reaction from those excluded from the system, but because the socioeconomic system is unjust at its root. Just as goodness tends to spread, the toleration of evil, which is injustice, tends to expand its baneful influence and quietly to undermine any political and social system, no matter how solid it may appear" (Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 59).

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'*, 31 and 48.

<sup>19</sup> Message for the 2015 World Day of Peace, 2.

<sup>20</sup> Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy *Misericordiae Vultus*, 12.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 13.

<sup>22</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 38.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Catechesis for the General Audience, 7 January 2015.

<sup>26</sup> Message for the 2012 World Day of Peace, 2.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Angelus Address, 6 September 2015.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Address to Delegates of the International Association of Penal Law, 23 October 2014.

Looking back at Francis' visit to the US and Cuba

## An Apostolic tour de force

GREG ERLANDSON

Pope Francis' historic visit to the United States was an apostolic tour de force. From the first images of him descending from the plane at Joint Base Andrews military facility in Maryland and getting into his black Fiat 500L to the final Mass in Philadelphia before almost one million people, the pope from the "ends of the earth" captured the attention of our nation.

### By Our Sunday Visitor

Published here are excerpts from the foreword of a recently-printed book, "Pope Francis Speaks to the United States and Cuba: Speeches, Homilies and Interviews", published by *Our Sunday Visitor*. The President and Publisher of the U.S. Catholic weekly newspaper introduces the volume which compiles the Holy Father's words during his Apostolic visit.

Most immediately arresting were the images: The first pope to speak to the U.S. Congress, flanked by a Catholic vice president and a Catholic speaker of the House; the embrace of Sophia Cruz, the little girl who broke through security for a papal hug; the slow drive through the throngs in Central Park in New York; the encounter with the prisoners at Curran-Fromhold prison in Philadelphia; the visit with the

homeless at a Catholic Charities shelter.

The 24/7 news coverage feasted on these images and more, and Catholics and non-Catholics alike were transfixed. The visual media culture of the United States meshed with a pope who is keenly aware that he often preaches most eloquently through his actions and gestures. Stroking the face of a handicapped child communicates the abounding mercy of God more directly than a hundred homilies.

Yet what can be lost in the tumult of images is that his words were both profound and pastorally arresting. Take his first sentences to Congress: "I am most grateful for your invitation to address this joint session of Congress in 'the land of the free and the home of the brave'. I would like to think that the reason for this is that I too am a son of this great continent, from which we have all received so much and toward which we share a common responsibility".

Invoking a cherished American self-descriptor – "land of the free and the home of the brave" – the pope established his fellowship with his listeners – "I too am a son of this great continent" – and laid out the essence of his message – gratitude for our blessings and responsibility for what he so often refers to as "our common home".

For the pope, there were always multiple audiences. Not only was he addressing those before whom he stood but also a national and a global audience. Not only was he

addressing Catholics, but also the great religious mosaic of America's citizenry, including nonbelievers. This realization shaped his speech. His language in speaking to Congress strove to highlight guiding principles. To the clergy and religious at vesper, his language was more direct and more intimate. And to the prisoners, he was humble and empathetic: "All of us have something we need to be cleansed of, or purified from. May the knowledge of that fact inspire us to live in solidarity, to support one another and seek the best for others".

Each of the Pope's speeches, both in the United States and in Cuba, merit rereading. The nuances of his message – for example, his reference to religious liberty in his White House address, which is then elaborated on both at the United Nations and in Philadelphia – will become more clear and insightful with each review. At the same time, when the speeches and homilies are taken together, the great themes of this papal visit leap from the page: the care for others, the need for dialogue, the importance of encounter, the condition of the planet, the abundant mercy and providence of God. Pope Francis challenged each one of us: "What about you? What are you going to do?"

In the conclusion of his homily at the Canonization Mass for St Junipero Serra in Washington, D.C., he exhorts us to rise to the occasion: "Fr Serra had a motto which inspired his life and work, a saying he lived his life by: *siempre adelante!* Keep moving forward! For him, this was the way to continue experien-



Pope Francis delivers address to U.S. Congress

cing the joy of the Gospel, to keep his heart from growing numb, from being anesthetized. He kept moving forward, because the Lord was waiting.... Today, like him, may we be able to say: Forward! Let's keep moving forward!"

### Audience with the President of Sri Lanka



On Monday, 14 December, in the Vatican Apostolic Palace, the Holy Father received in audience the president of Sri Lanka, H.E. Mr Maithripala Sirisena, who subsequently met with Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State, accompanied by Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher, secretary for Relations with States.

The cordial discussions, which began with a recollection of Francis' visit to Sri Lanka last January, focused on certain aspects of the country's recent history and the process of peace and reconciliation that is underway, with the hope that it may contribute to promoting stable social harmony. Furthermore, the contribution of the Catholic Church in various sectors of society and the importance of interreligious dialogue were shown to be important.

There was also an exchange of opinions on the theme of the environment and an evaluation of the results of the Conference on climate change which recently concluded in Paris.

Fr Cantalamessa preaches second Advent sermon

### If not a saint a failure

One is either a saint or a failure. Fr Raniero Cantalamessa, Preacher of the Papal Household, minced no words in his Second Advent Sermon, given on Friday, 11 December, in the Redemptoris Mater Chapel of the Apostolic Palace. In his meditation based on the fifth chapter of *Lumen Gentium* ("The universal call to holiness in the Church"), the Franciscan priest emphasized that baptized people are "saints by vocation", and thus, "we are true, successful human beings to the extent that we are saints". He added that "the contrary of a saint is not a sinner but a failure!"

Fr Cantalamessa, who wished to link this cycle of preaching to the 50-year anniversary of the closing of Vatican II several days before the inauguration of the Jubilee, underscored that the Year of Mercy celebrates the Church's very faithfulness to the promise of the Council. In fact, in the opening address of the Council, Pope John XXIII pointed to mercy as the new approach and style of the Council. The call to holiness, Fr Cantalamessa said, is among "the most



needed and most pressing" accomplishments of the Council. It is also, however, "the one most at risk of being neglected", because it is required only by "God and one's conscience", and not by "pressures or interests from any particular group in the Church". Indeed, he added, "at times one has the impression that in certain circles and in certain religious communities", some people seem to "put more effort into placing their own founders and brothers on pedestals than into imitating their examples and virtues".

For the Jubilee

### Pope's visits in Italy postponed

On Thursday morning, 10 December, during a press conference in Milan, Cardinal-Archbishop Angelo Scola, stated that he had received a communication from the Secretariat of State stating that, since the Pope's activities have increased due to the Jubilee, the Pontiff has decided to postpone his pastoral visits in Italy. Accordingly – as also stated in a communique of the Holy See Press Office – the papal visit to Milan, which had officially been scheduled for 7 May, has been postponed until 2017. Cardinal Scola also stated that the papal visit will be the concluding event of the Archbishop's pastoral visit throughout his diocese, which is currently underway.



Former Archbishop of Santa Cruz de la Sierra

## Cardinal Terrazas Sandoval dies

Archbishop emeritus Julio Terrazas Sandoval of Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, died on Wednesday evening, 9 December, following a long illness which led him to be hospitalized on numerous occasions. The Redemptorist priest passed away at his home in Santa Cruz de la Sierra. Pope Francis accompanied the Cardinal's final days with prayers. The two had long been united by the bonds of friendship. On learning of the Cardinal's death the Holy Father sent a telegram to Archbishop Sergio Alfredo Gualberti Calandrina of Santa Cruz de la Sierra. The following is a translation of the telegram which was published on 10 December, along with a brief biography of the late Cardinal.

Deeply saddened by the death of dear Cardinal Julio Terrazas Sandoval, Archbishop emeritus of Santa Cruz de la Sierra, I express my deepest condolences to the pastors, clergy and faithful of this particular Church. I unite myself to them with fervent prayers of intercession that the Lord may grant His peace to him who remained faithful to the ministry he received with the light of faith and the strength of hope, who with generosity and courage dedicated his life in service of the Gospel, of justice and of peace.

At this inevitably painful time, so close to the mystery of the Lord's coming that is full of hope, I invoke the maternal intercession of the Virgin Mary and I wholeheartedly impart my Apostolic Blessing to those who are mourning this grievous loss.

FRANCIS PP.

Julio Terrazas Sandoval was born on 7 March 1936 in Vallegrande, Bolivia. He entered the Redemptorist seminary of St Bernard in Chile in 1952, then did his novitiate in Salta, Argentina. In 1957, he made his religious profession for the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, founded by St Alfonso Maria de' Liguori. After his studies in Cordoba, where he met Jorge Mario Bergoglio, he was ordained a priest on 29 July 1962. He served as superior of the Redemptorist community of Vallegrande and as vicar forane until 1978. He was ordained a bishop on 8 June 1978, subsequent to his appointment as titular Bishop of Apisa maius and Auxiliary of the Archdiocese of La Paz. He was appointed Bishop of Oruro on 9 January 1982. He was raised to the dignity of archbishop and appointed to the Archdiocese of Santa Cruz de la Sierra on 6 February 1991. In the consistory of 21 February 2001 – in which Bergoglio, too, was created a cardinal – John Paul II created Terrazas Sandoval cardinal with the Title of San Giovanni Battista de' Rossi. He thereby became the first Bolivian born cardinal and the second cardinal in Bolivia's history. He resigned his position as Archbishop of Santa Cruz de la Sierra on 25 May 2013.

Cardinal Terrazas Sandoval served seven terms as President of the Bolivian Episcopal Conference, and several years as President of CELAM's Com-

mission for Laity. He was a true "patriarch" of the Church of Bolivia, undoubtedly one of the country's most well-known people, and recognized by some as the only leader capable of unifying Bolivia. Recently Bolivia's Chamber of Deputies unanimously awarded him the "Deputy Marcelo Quiroga Santa Cruz - Parliamentary Order of Democratic Merit", one of the country's highest honours. His voice was always raised clearly and decisively against injustice and violence; he expressly called for a radical conversion against corruption, drug trafficking and organized terrorism, and fought to oppose social exclusion and racism. Along with the country's bishops he launched various appeals to maintain unity and resolve problems in a climate of dialogue, mutual respect and reconciliation. This commitment led to the Spanish daily *El País* naming him 11th of the top 100 most outstanding people in the Latin American world, calling him a "first rate mediator and diplomat".

In the Vatican he took part in the synods on the family (1980) and on the laity (1987), in the extraordinary assembly for 20 years of the opening of the Second Vatican Council (1982), and in the special assembly for America (1997). In the Roman Curia he was also a member of the Pontifical Council for the Laity and of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

Archpriest of the Basilica of St Mary Major

## Cardinal Furno dies

At the age of 94, Cardinal Furno died on Wednesday, 9 December, at Gemelli Polyclinic in Rome where he had been hospitalized after a fall. On learning of his death the Holy Father sent a telegram to Cardinal Angelo Sodano, Dean of the College of Cardinals. The following is a translation of the telegram published on 10 December, along with a brief biography of the late Cardinal.

I have learned the news of the departure of dear Cardinal Carlo Furno and I wish to express to you and to the entire College of Cardinals my heartfelt condolences, remembering with a grateful heart his valuable contribution to the Holy See for many decades, especially as Apostolic Nuncio, Archpriest of the papal Basilica of St Mary Major and Grand Master of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem. I offer fervent prayers of suffrage that the Lord and the Patroness Virgin Mary *Salus Populi Romani* welcome him into joy and eternal peace and I impart my Apostolic Blessing to you, and to all those who share the sorrow of the death of such an exemplary Cardinal.

FRANCIS PP.

Carlo Furno was born on 2 December 1921 in Bairo Canavese, in the province of Turin, Italy. In 1938 he began studying philosophy in the seminary of the Diocese of Ivrea, where later he also studied theology and was ordained a priest on 25 June 1944. After his ordination, he served in parish ministry in Turin for three years and then entered the Faculty of Theology of the Pontifical Salesian Athenaeum of Crocetta in Turin. After one year at the Athenaeum, he moved to Rome where he earned a doctorate *in utroque iure* in 1953. In the meantime he graduated from the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy, after which he was sent to the Apostolic Nunciature in Colombia as an official and then served also as secretary. After serving four years in Colombia, he worked at the Nunciature in Ecuador and at the Apostolic Delegation in Jerusalem. In September 1962 he began work in the Secretariat of State. During his 11 years there he also taught diplomacy at the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy from 1966 to 1973. On 1 August 1973 Pope Montini appointed him titular Archbishop of Abari and Apostolic Nuncio in Peru. Then on 16 September he received his episcopal ordination. While in Peru, he intervened on behalf of the Holy See in 1975 at the second conference of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization on the theme of industrial acceleration in developing countries.

On 25 November 1978 John Paul II transferred him to the Apostolic Nuncio in Lebanon. On 21 August 1982 he was appointed apostolic representative in Brazil, where he remained for 10 years. While in Brazil he welcomed Pope Wojtyła during his Apostolic visit in 1991. On 15 April 1992 Archbishop Furno was called to Rome as Apostolic Nuncio in Italy, where he served until 1994. The following year he served as the Pope's special envoy to the celebrations of the 100th anniversary of the evangelization of the Central African Republic. This was his first of sever-

al assignments as the Pontiff's special envoy. Then he went to Lima and Quito where he helped to reach a peace accord, and the following year he was sent as papal envoy to both Brazil and Cuba.

During the consistory of 26 November 1994 John Paul II created him Cardinal Deacon of the Sacro Cuore di Cristo Re.

From 16 December 1995 to 27 June 2007 he was Grand Master of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem. From 29 September 1997 to 27 May 2004, he was the Archpriest of the Basilica of St Mary Major, where he presided at numerous



celebrations during the Holy Year of 2000.

The Cardinal's funeral was presided by the Dean of the College of Cardinals, Cardinal Angelo Sodano, on Friday, 11 December, at the Altar of the Chair in St Peter's Basilica. Several other prelates concelebrated, including Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State. The Holy Father presided at the Rite of *ultima commendatio* and *valdictio*. Cardinal Furno is now buried in the Basilica of St Mary Major.



Celso Costantini first Apostolic Delegate in China

## Captivating missionary strategy

Published here is a translation of the preface, written in Italian by the Secretary of State, to a book by Christian Gabrieli entitled "Un protagonista tra gli eredi del Celeste Impero. Celso Costantini, delegato apostolico in Cina 1922-1933" ("A Key Player among the Heirs of the Celestial Empire. Celso Costantini, Apostolic Delegate to China 1922-1933") (Edizioni Dehoniane Bologna, 267 pp.).

PIETRO PAROLIN

"We respect the Chinese people; it is just that the Church seeks freedom for her mission, for her work; no other condition". This is how Pope Francis answered a journalist's question on 18 August 2014, just as a Roman pontiff managed to fly over the air space of the People's Republic of China for the first time. He continued by citing the 2007 letter Benedict XVI had addressed to Catholics in the land of Confucius. "That Letter is still timely today... The Holy See is always open to contacts: always, because it has genuine esteem for the Chinese people".

That "always" that Francis reiterated casts us back to the deep furrow traced out in China by his distinguished predecessors, especially since the time the first Apostolic Delegate, the then future Cardinal Celso Costantini, was sent there. The accomplishments achieved by these faithful interpreters of the Petrine ministry, from 1922 to 1933, will leave their indelible marks on history. They are the subject of this study, which validates the reasoning of those who consider Costantini as the artisan of the new course of the Catholic Church among the heirs of the Celestial Empire.

The picture painted by this volume is altogether original, impressive, fascinating and stimulating. It is original because its composition is based on unpublished authoritative sources

made available by the Holy See, with particular regard to the Roman Pontiff and the correspondence of his Secretary of State and that of the Sacred Congregation *Propaganda Fide* with the Apostolic Delegate to China. The author, thanks to his historical and juridical expertise, managed to extract the finest material from the treasure trove of documents outlined. Indeed, future treatises on the Chinese question, for the period indicated, will be of no comparison to this publication.

What is impressive is the sheer amount of activities accomplished by Costantini, analyzed here. They are the primary roots of ecclesial development in China, because they continue to bear abundant fruit even today. Among the most impressive of these accomplishments are: the first Chinese Plenary Council organized by the future cardinal from Pordenone, which he presided at in Shanghai in 1924, as Pontifical Legate; the consecration of the first six Chinese bishops in 1926 and the promotion of indigenous clergy to significant ecclesiastical offices; the constitution of the first Chinese clerical religious institute, the *Congregatio discipulorum Domini*, which he founded in 1927; the establishment of the Fu Ren Catholic University that same year in Peking; and the inauguration of the general association of Chinese Catholic youth, which took place in 1929 at the headquarters of the

Apostolic Delegation.

The missionary strategy that emerges in this work is fascinating. In fact, Costantini was sent to China to set in motion the programme outlined by the Apostolic Letter *Maximum Illud* promulgated in 1919 by Benedict XV. Costantini had to navigate through the countless difficulties and turbulent waters within the country. But his objectives were clear: to separate the Catholic missions from the harsh conditioning of colonial powers, particularly by France, which was jealous of its protectorate; "to plant" the Church by entrusting her to indigenous clergy; to inject the lymph of the Gospel into the veins of the great Chinese civilization by eliminating foreign bodies imported from the West. This programme attracted the interest and appreciation of the national government, as it also converged with the Republic's ideals captured in the motto "Return China to the Chinese".

The stimulating aspect is in the results reached by the author and is left to the reader to uncover. This was accomplished thanks to an impeccable understanding between the Holy See and the first Apostolic Delegate to Peking. The portrait of Costantini in these pages does not present him as simply a man carry-

Celso Costantini in an official photo



From 12 to 18 February

## Pope Francis in Mexico

The Pope will visit Mexico from 12 to 18 February 2016. The official schedule for the Apostolic Journey was released by the Holy See Press Office after the Pope's announcement during Mass on 12 December for the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

The Pope's flight will take off from Rome's Fiumicino airport on Friday the 12th at 12:30 local time. It is scheduled to arrive in Mexico City at 7:30 that evening at the Benito Juárez International Airport, where an official welcome will take place.

On Saturday, 13 February, Pope Francis will begin the day at the National Palace with a welcome ceremony and a courtesy visit with the President of the Republic, followed by a meeting with authorities, representatives of civil society and the diplomatic corps. Thereafter, in the Cathedral, Francis will meet with the bishops of Mexico. In the afternoon he will celebrate Mass in the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

On Sunday the 14th the Pope will travel by helicopter to Ecatepec, where he will celebrate Mass in the morning at the study centre. After

returning to Mexico City the Holy Father will visit the Federico Gómez children's hospital. He will finish the day with a cultural meeting in the national auditorium.

On Monday the 15th, Francis will travel by plane to Tuxtla Gutiérrez and then by helicopter to San Cristóbal de Las Casas. There, in the municipal sport centre, he will celebrate Mass with the indigenous communities of Chiapas. He will then have lunch with representatives of the indigenous communities. This will be followed by a visit to the Cathedral of San Cristóbal de Las Casas, after which the Holy Father will return by helicopter to Tuxtla Gutiérrez for a meeting with families in the Victor Manuel Reyna stadium. He will return by plane to Mexico City in the evening.

The Pope will fly to Morelia on Tuesday morning, 16 February, where he will celebrate Mass with priests, men and women religious, consecrated people and seminarians. After visiting the cathedral the Holy Father will attend a meeting with



A pilgrim inside the Basilica of Guadalupe (Reuters)

young people in the José María Morelos y Pavón stadium before returning to Mexico City by plane.

A flight on Wednesday morning the 17th will take the Pontiff to Ciudad Juárez for a visit to the penitentiary. Afterwards he will meet with representatives of the world of labour at the Bachilleres college in the state of Chihuahua. He will celebrate Mass that afternoon at the Ciudad Juárez fairgrounds. A farewell ceremony will be held at approximately 7:15 pm at the Abraham González International Airport before Francis' return flight takes off. The papal plane is scheduled to land in Rome at 2:45 pm on Thursday, 18 February.

## Cardinal Terrazas Sandoval

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

In September 2004 he served as Pope Wojtyła's special envoy to the Eucharistic Congress of Argentina.

During the Pontiff's journey to Bolivia this past July, in addition to being hosted in the cardinal's home, Francis went personally to embrace the Cardinal in the clinic where he was then recovering. The following day, as a gesture of gratitude, notwithstanding the precarious condition of his health, Terrazas Sandoval had himself discharged and participated in the Pontiff's meeting with the country's bishops.

Four months later the cardinal had a relapse and his condition worsened. Thus, on 5 December, Francis sent him a letter to express his closeness to him, assuring the cardinal of his "prayers to the Almighty, asking that he grant you abundant gifts of peace and spiritual consolation".

Funeral services for Cardinal Terrazas Sandoval were celebrated on Friday afternoon, 11 December, in Santa Cruz de la Sierra.



Mass on the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe

## To the Mother of Mercy in Mexico

Pope Francis will travel to the Shrine of the Virgin of Guadalupe in Mexico on 13 February 2016; to venerate the "Mother of Mercy". The Holy Father announced this at Mass in St Peter's Basilica on Saturday, 12 December, the liturgical Feast of the Patroness of Latin America. The following is a translation of the Pope's homily which he delivered in Spanish.

"The Lord, your God, is in your midst [...] he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love, he will exult over you with loud singing" (Zeph 3:17).

These words of the prophet Zephaniah, addressed to Israel, may also be referred to our Mother, the Virgin Mary, to the Church, to each one of us, to our souls, all of which God loves with merciful love. Yes, God loves us so much that he even rejoices and takes pleasure in us. He loves us with gratuitous love, limitless love and expects nothing in return. He does not like Pelagianism. His merciful love is the most striking attribute of God, whose synthesis is condensed in the Gospel message, the faith of the Church.

The word "mercy" [*misericordia*] is composed of two words: misery and heart [*miseria* and *corae*]. The heart indicates the capacity to love; mercy is that love which embraces the misery of the human person. It is a love that "feels" our poverty as its own, with a view to freeing us of it. "In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins" (1 Jn 4:10). "The Word became flesh" with the intention of sharing all our frailties – with the intention of experiencing our human condition, even unto taking the Cross upon himself, with all the pain of human existence. Such is the depth of his compassion and mercy: self-abasement in order to become a companion at the service of wounded humanity. No sin can erase his merciful closeness or prevent him from outpouring the grace of conversion, provided we invoke it. Indeed, sin itself renders more radiant the love of God who sacrificed his Son to ransom a slave. This mercy of God comes to us with the gift of the Holy Spirit which, in Baptism, enables,

generates and nourishes the new life of his disciples. For, howsoever serious and grave the sins of the world may be, the Spirit, who renews the face of the earth, makes possible the miracle of a life that is more human, more full of joy and hope. Let us, too, shout with jubilation: "The Lord is my God and Saviour!"

"The Lord is near", the Apostle Paul tells us, and nothing should perturb us. He is close by. He is not alone but is with his Mother. She said to St Juan Diego: "Why are you afraid? Am I not here who am your Mother?". He is near. He and his Mother. The greatest mercy lies in his being in our midst, in our being in his presence and company. He walks with us, he shows us the path of love, he lifts us up when we fall and with such tenderness he supports us in our labours, he accompanies us in every circumstance of life. He opens our eyes to see our wretchedness and that of the world, but at the same time he fills us with hope. "The peace of God [...] will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus" (Phil 4:7). St Paul tells us. This is the source of our peaceful and happy life; nothing can deprive us of this peace and joy, despite the suffering and trials of life. The Lord gently opens his heart to us, opens us to his love. The Lord is allergic to formality. Let us cultivate this experience of mercy, peace and hope during the journey we are on during Advent and in the light of the Jubilee Year. Proclaiming the Good News to the poor, like John the Baptist, performing works of mercy, is a good way to await Jesus' Birth at Christmas. It is in emulating him, who gave everything, who gave himself. This is his mercy, expecting nothing in return.

In Mary, God rejoices and is espe-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

*A time of great forgiveness has begun, Pope Francis said on Sunday, 13 December, after opening the Holy Door of the Basilica of St John Lateran. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's homily which was delivered in Italian.*

The invitation extended by the Prophet to the ancient city of Jerusalem is also addressed today to the whole Church and to each one of us: "Rejoice... exult!" (Zeph 3:14). The reason for joy is expressed with words which inspire hope, and which can look to the future with serenity. The Lord revoked all condemnation and has decided to live among us.

This Third Sunday of Advent draws our gaze towards Christmas, which is now near. We cannot let ourselves be taken in by weariness; sadness in any form is not allowed, even though we may have reason, with many concerns and the many forms of violence which wound our humanity. The coming of the Lord, however, must fill our hearts

Pope Francis opens the Holy Door of the Basilica of St John Lateran

## A time of great forgiveness

with joy. The prophet in whose very name – Zephaniah – is inscribed the content of this announcement, opens our hearts to trust: "God protects" his people. In a historical context of great tyranny and violence, especially by men of power, God makes it known that he will reign over his people, that he will no longer leave them at the mercy of the arrogance of their leaders, and that he will free them from all anguish. Today, we are asked to "let not our hands grow weak" (cf. Zeph 3:16) due to doubt, impatience or suffering.

The Apostle Paul vigorously resumes the teaching of the prophet Zephaniah and reiterates: "The Lord is at hand" (Phil 4:5). Because of this we should rejoice always, and to everyone graciously bear witness to the closeness and care that God has for each person.

We have opened the Holy Door, here and in all the Cathedrals of the world. Even this simple sign is an invitation to joy. The time of great forgiveness be-

gins. It is the Jubilee of Mercy. It is time to rediscover the presence of God and his fatherly tenderness. God does not love rigidity. He is Father; he is tender. He does everything with the tenderness of the Father. We too are like the crowds who ask John, "What then shall we do" (Lk 3:10). The response of the Baptist is immediate. He invites us to act justly and to look after the needs of those who are in need. What John demands of his interlocutors, however, is what is reflected in the law.

We, however, are asked for a more radical commitment. Before the Holy Door that we are called to pass through, we are asked to be instruments of mercy, knowing that we will be judged on this. Those who are baptized know that they have a greater task. Faith in Christ leads to a lifelong journey: to be merciful like the Father. The joy of passing through the

Door of Mercy is accompanied by a commitment to welcome and witness to a love that surpasses justice, a love that knows no boundaries. It is for this infinite love that we are responsible, in spite of our contradictions.

*"The Jubilee of Mercy is a time "to rediscover the presence of God and his fatherly tenderness. God does not love rigidity. He is Father; he is tender"*

Let us pray for ourselves and for all who pass through the Door of Mercy, that we may understand and welcome the infinite love of our Heavenly Father, who recreates, transforms and reforms life.

At the Angelus the Pontiff calls for commitment and dedication in carrying out the agreement made in Paris

## A sign of solidarity

*No one is excluded from salvation, Pope Francis said, because God is "anxious to show mercy to everyone". The Holy Father prayed the Angelus with the faithful in St Peter's Square on Sunday, 13 December, underlining the value of the climate agreement made in Paris. The following is a translation of the Pope's words which were delivered in Italian.*

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

In today's Gospel, there is a question posed three times: "What shall we do?" (Lk 3:10, 12, 14). It is raised to John the Baptist by three categories of people: First, the crowd in general; second, the publicans or tax collectors; and, third, some soldiers. Each of these groups questions the prophet on what must be done to implement the conversion that he is preaching. John's reply to the question of the crowd is sharing essential goods. He told the first group, the crowd, to share basic necessities, and therefore says: "He who has two coats, let him share with him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise" (v. 11). Then, he tells the second group, the tax collectors, to collect no more than the amount owed. What does this mean? No taking "bribes", John the Baptist is clear. And he tells the third group, the soldiers, not to extort anything from anyone and to be content with their wages (cf. v. 14). There are three answers to the three questions of these groups. Three answers for an identical path of repentance, which is manifested in concrete commitments to justice and solidarity. It is the path that Jesus points to in all his preaching: the path of diligent love for neighbour.

From John the Baptist's admonitions, we understand the general tendencies of those who at that time held power, in various forms. Things have not changed very much. However, no

category of people is excluded from following the path of repentance to obtain salvation, not even the tax collectors, considered sinners by definition: not even they are excluded from salvation. God does not preclude anyone from the opportunity to be saved. He is – so to speak – anxious to show mercy, to show it towards everyone, and to welcome each one into the tender embrace of reconciliation and forgiveness.

We feel that this question – "What shall we do?" – is ours also. Today's liturgy tells us, in the words of John, that it is necessary to repent, to change direction and take the path of justice, solidarity, sobriety: these are the essential values of a fully human and genuinely Christian life. Repent! It sums up the message of the Baptist. And the Liturgy of this Third Sunday of Advent helps us to rediscover a special dimension of repentance: joy. Whoever repents and approaches the Lord, feels joy. The prophet Zephaniah says to us today: "Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion!", addressing Jerusalem (Zeph 3:14). And the apostle Paul exhorts the Christians of Philippi: "Rejoice in the Lord always" (Phil 4:4). Today, it takes courage to speak of joy, which, above all, requires faith! The world is beset by many problems, the future is burdened by uncertainties and fears. Yet, Christians are a joyful people, and their joy is not something superficial and ephemeral, but deep and stable, because it is a gift from the Lord that fills life. Our joy comes from the certainty that "the Lord is at hand" (Phil 4:5): he is close with his tenderness, his mercy, his forgiveness and his love.

May the Virgin Mary help us to strengthen our faith, so that we are able to welcome the God of joy, the God of mercy, who always wants to live in the midst of his children. May our Mother teach us to share tears with

those who weep, in order to be able to also share a smile.

*After praying the Angelus with the faithful, the Holy Father said:*

The climate conference has just ended in Paris with the adoption of an agreement, which many are defining as historic. Its implementation will require concerted commitment and generous dedication by each one. With the hope that it may guarantee special attention to the most vulnerable populations, I urge the entire international community to continue with solicitude the path taken, in a sign of solidarity that will become more and more active.

Next Tuesday, 15 December, the Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization will begin in Nairobi. I address the countries that will participate, so that the decisions that will be taken will consider the needs of the poor and the most vulnerable, as well as the legitimate aspirations of developing countries and the common good of the entire human family.

In all the cathedrals of the world, the Holy Doors are opening, so that the Jubilee of Mercy may be fully experienced in the particular Churches. I hope that this important time may inspire many to become instruments of God's tenderness. As an expression of the works of mercy, "Doors of Mercy" are being opened in places of hardship and marginalization. In this regard, I greet the inmates of prisons around the world, especially those of the Padua prison, who today are spir-



Archpriest opens the Holy Door of St Paul Outside-the-Walls

## A new starting point

With a call to rediscover the spiritual and corporal works of mercy, Cardinal James Michael Harvey opened the Holy Door of the Papal Basilica of St Paul Outside-the-Walls on Sunday morning, 13 December. The Archpriest of the Basilica celebrated the solemn rite and Mass.

During his homily, Cardinal Harvey

asked those present to entrust themselves to the Lord and to see this Jubilee Year as a new starting point. In the Holy Year of Mercy, he said, "the Church, in the name of Christ, the Good Samaritan par excellence, proclaims with renewed strength and insistence to all of humanity, to Christians and non-Christians, that God's love is stronger than our sins". Thus, he said, "Christ's invitation to the Church to convert is always accompanied by a strong call for hope". Cardinal Harvey continued: "This is the time for the Church once again to find the meaning of her mission and to make everyone feel the love of God who forgives, consoles and gives hope. He comes to save us from the condition of weakness in which we live and his help consists in allowing us to welcome his presence and closeness".



New document from the Pontifical Council for Religious Relations with the Jews

## The gifts and the calling of God

On Thursday, 10 December, a new document of the Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews was presented in the Holy See Press Office. The text, "The Gifts and the Calling of God are Irrevocable: A Reflection on the Theological Questions Pertaining to Catholic-Jewish Relations", was presented 50 years after the promulgation of *Nostra Aetate*. At its core is the different way in which Jews and Christians understand the revealed Word of God. Among those presenting at the conference was Fr Norbert Hofmann, Secretary of the Commission, who illustrated the process of writing the document, pointing out that Jewish consultants read the text and made suggestions for improvement. "The document

took two-and-a-half years to write; the first drafts date back to 2013. Pope Benedict XVI was in favour of such a document. It was only with the approval of Pope Francis, a short time after his election, that the work was able to begin". Also presenting at the conference were Cardinal Kurt Koch, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, and Rabbi David Rosen, International Director of the Interreligious Affairs of the American Jewish Committee, excerpts of whose presentations are published on pages 12-13. The following is an abbreviated version of the new document. The complete document can be found at [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va).

Fifty years ago, the declaration *Nostra Aetate* of the Second Vatican Council was promulgated. Its fourth passage presents the relationship between the Catholic Church and the Jewish People in a new theological framework. The following reflections aim at looking back with gratitude on all that has been achieved over the last decades in Jewish-Catholic relations, providing at the same time a new stimulus for the future. Stressing once again the unique status of this relationship within the wider ambit of interreligious dialogue, theological questions are further discussed, such as the relevance of revelation, the relationship between the Old and the New Covenants, the relationship between the universality of salvation in Jesus Christ and the affirmation that the Covenant of God with Israel has never been revoked, and the Church's mandate to evangelize in relation to Judaism. This document

presents Catholic reflections on these questions, placing them in a theological context, in order that their significance may be deepened for members of both faith traditions. The text is not a magisterial document or doctrinal teaching of the Catholic Church, but is a reflection prepared by the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews on current theological questions that have developed since the Second Vatican Council. It is intended to be a starting point for further theological thought with a view to enriching and intensifying the theological dimension of Jewish-Catholic dialogue.

1. *A brief history of the impact of Nostra Aetate (n. 4) over the last 50 years.*

Great steps have been taken in the dialogue over the last 50 years, and from a detached co-existence we have arrived at a deep friendship. The Conciliar declaration *Nostra*

*Aetate* (n. 4) definitively clarified, for the first time, the theological position of the Catholic Church with respect to Judaism; the document has had a profound impact on many levels.

2. *The special theological status of Jewish-Catholic dialogue.*

Due to the Jewish roots of Christianity, the dialogue with Judaism cannot in any way be compared with the dialogue with the other world religions. Jesus can only be understood in the Jewish context of his time, even though as the Messiah of Israel and the Son of God he transcends that historical horizon.

3. *Revelation in history as 'Word of God' in Judaism and Christianity.*

God reveals himself in his Word, he communicates with humanity. For Jews, this Word is present in the Torah; for Christians, the Word of God is incarnated in Jesus Christ.



"White Crucifixion", Marc Chagall, 1938

However, the Word of God is indivisible and calls people to respond in such a way that enables them to live in the right relationship with God.

4. *The relationship between the Old and New Testament and the Old and New Covenant.*

There is an indissoluble unity between the Old and the New Testament, even though the two Testaments are interpreted differently by Jews and Christians on the basis of their respective religious traditions. For Christians, the Old Testament is to be comprehended and interpreted in the light of the New Testament. The Old and the New Testament are part of the one and only history of the Covenant between God and his people, even though the New Testament is to be considered as the fulfilment of the promises of the Old.

5. *The universality of salvation in Jesus Christ and God's unrevoked Covenant with Israel.*

Through Jesus Christ – and through his death and resurrection – all people have a part in salvation, all are saved. Although Jews cannot believe in Jesus Christ as the universal redeemer, they have a part in salvation, because the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable (cf. Rom 11:29). How that can be possible remains an unfathomable mystery in the salvific plan of God.

6. *The Church's mandate to evangelize in relation to Judaism.*

While in the dialogue with Judaism Catholics bear witness to their faith in Jesus Christ, they refrain from active attempts at conversion or mission towards Jews. The Catholic Church does not envisage any institutional mission towards the Jews.

7. *The goals of dialogue with Judaism.*

Engaging in fraternal dialogue, Jews and Catholics must learn to understand one another better, to seek reconciliation increasingly, and to commit themselves together to promote justice, peace and the care of creation, and to make every effort to oppose anti-Semitism. They must intensify their cooperation in the humanitarian sphere in assisting the poor, the vulnerable, and the marginalized, in order to become, together, a blessing for the world.

## From enemies to friends

KURT KOCH

According to the wishes of Pope Francis a special General Audience was assembled on Wednesday, 28 October 2015, because on the same day 50 years before, the Declaration *Nostra Aetate* of the Second Vatican Council was promulgated. This audience was also attended by many representatives of other religions. Their presence is explained by the fact that the conciliar text marked a change in the attitude of the Catholic Church toward other religions and is therefore understood as a *plaidoyer*, a plea for religious dialogue. The 50th anniversary celebration of *Nostra Aetate* took place from 26 to 28 October, with a large international conference at the Pontifical Gregorian University. The over 400 people present then attended the papal audience on 28 October, which marked the conclusion of the commemoration. On that occasion, the Holy Father highlighted the importance of interreligious dialogue and of cooperation among the various religions in facing the serious problems and the great challenges of the present time: "The world, looking to us believers, exhorts us to cooperate amongst ourselves and with men and women of good will who profess no religion, asking us for effective responses regarding numerous issues: peace, hunger, the poverty that afflicts millions of people, the environmental crises, violence, especially that committed in the name of religion, corruption, moral decay, the crisis of the family, of the economy, of finance, and especially of hope". For the Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, this anniversary is a fitting occasion to present a new document, which resumes the theological principles of the fourth passage of *Nostra Aetate*, expanding and analyzing them, where relations between the Cath-

olic Church and Judaism are concerned. While it is true that, in the course of the history of the Church there is no shortage of official declarations with regard to Judaism or to the coexistence of Catholics and Jews, it is also true that *Nostra Aetate* (n. 4) presents, for the first time, a Council's decisive theological position with regard to Judaism. The declaration expressly recalls the Jewish roots of Christianity. Jesus and his first disciples were Jews, marked by the Jewish tradition of their time; thus only in this context is it possible to understand them correctly.

The document that I am presenting is entitled "Why the Gifts and the Calling of God are Irrevocable: A Reflection on Theological Issues Pertaining to Catholic-Jewish Relations". It is an explicitly theological document, which is intended to take up and clarify issues that have emerged in recent decades in Jewish-Catholic dialogue. Before this text, no other document of a strictly theological nature has been published by our Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews. The three preceding documents pertained instead to concrete topics, useful to the dialogue with Jews from an essentially practical point of view.

I would like to briefly touch upon the history of the Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, recalling that it was instituted by Bl. Pope Paul VI on 22 October 1974. The same year as its founding, the Commission of the Holy See published, on 1 December 1974, its first official document, entitled "Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing the Conciliar Declaration *Nostra Aetate* (n. 4)". The primary objective and innovation of this document was that of approaching Judaism in order to know it in the way in which it perceives itself. The document is inten-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

A Jewish perspective on the new document 'The Gifts and the Calling of God'

## A compass for reconciliation

DAVID ROSEN

Firstly let me express my profound gratitude to Cardinal Koch, Bishop Farrell and Fr Hofmann, for the invitation to share the podium at this press conference. As Fr Hofmann has noted, the presence here of Jewish representatives is itself a powerful and eloquent testimony of the rediscovered fraternity between Catholics and Jews. And even though the document released is addressed to and for the Catholic faithful, in as much as it concerns the relationship of the Church to the Jewish People, it is graciously respectful to the latter to have a Jewish presence at such a press conference. This is most heartening, reflecting the truly revolutionary change in the Catholic approach towards Jews and Judaism.

Indeed as this document notes, section 4 of the Second Vatican Council's Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions which deals with the Church's relationship to the Jewish People (and which this document describes as the "heart" of *Nostra Aetate*), was remarkable above all precisely for ushering in this new positive approach of "fundamental esteem" and which has been described as a Copernican revolution in the Church's attitude towards Judaism and Jewry.

As Cardinal Koch noted in his presentation at the official celebration of the 50th anniversary of *Nostra Aetate* here in Rome six weeks ago "For the first time in history, (an) ecumenical council expressed itself explicitly and positively with regard to the relationship between the Catholic Church and Judaism", serving as a "compass toward reconciliation between Christians and Jews, valid both for the present and for the future."

*Nostra Aetate* opened up the way for subsequent Popes to further affirm the unique bond between the Church and the Jewish People which this text documents, and to see Jewry as a living source of Divine inspiration for the Church. In the words of Pope Francis, "God continues to work among the people of the Old Covenant and to bring forth treasures of wisdom which flow from their encounter with His word" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 249).

The upshot of this positive regard for the Jewish people is the clear repudiation affirmed in this document of any "replacement or supersession theology which sets against one another ... a Church of the Gentiles [against a] rejected Synagogue whose place it takes."

What this document reveals accordingly is not only the advancement of the recommendations of the 1974 Guidelines on *Nostra Aetate*, to appreciate and respect Jewish self-understanding; but also a deepening recognition of the place of Torah in the life of the Jewish people; and (in accordance with the Pontifical Biblical Commission's work) an acknowledgement of the integrity of Jewish reading of the Bible that is different from the Christian one. Indeed the very fact that the docu-

ment also quotes extensively from Jewish rabbinical sources is further testimony of this respect.

Allow me to reiterate again the point that both Cardinal Koch and Fr Hofmann have made, that this is a Catholic document reflecting Catholic theology. Inevitably then, there are passages in it that do not and cannot resonate with a Jewish theology. However as already mentioned, to its great credit, this document seeks to reflect a sincere comprehension of Jewish self-understanding.

Perhaps then I may be permitted in the spirit of our mutual respect and friendship to point out that to fully respect Jewish self-understanding, it is also necessary to appreciate the centrality that the Land of Israel plays in the historic and contemporary religious life of the Jewish People, and that appears to be missing.

Indeed even in terms of the historical survey of the milestones along this remarkable journey since *Nostra Aetate*, the establishment of full bilateral relations between the State of Israel and the Holy See (very much guided and promoted by St Pope John Paul II) was one of the historic highlights. Moreover, the preamble and the first article of the Fundamental Agreement between the two parties, precisely acknowledges this significance. Without *Nostra Aetate*, the establishment of these relations would surely not have been feasible. The Fundamental Agreement not only

paved the way for the historic papal pilgrimages to the Holy Land and thus to the establishment of the bilateral commission with the Chief Rabbinate of Israel, but arguably reflected more than anything else the fact that the Catholic Church had truly repudiated its portrayal of the Jewish people as condemned wanderers to be homeless until the final advent.

The document's reference to the state of religious minorities as the litmus test regarding Religious Freedom, is particularly pertinent in the Middle East today; and thus the situation of Christians in Israel to which the document refers, stands in marked contrast to most other places in the region.

However, allow me to observe that the importance of the Jewish-Christian relationship in the Holy Land is not simply to prove the question of Religious Freedom. It is also a litmus test of the degree to which *Nostra Aetate* and the subsequent teaching of the Magisterium are internalized precisely where

Christians are a minority and Jews are a majority and not only vice-versa; and in this regard there still remains much educational work to be done.

The reference to peace in the Holy Land as pertinent to the Catholic-Jewish relationship is also important. The peoples there live in mutual alienation and disappointment, and I believe that the Catholic Church can play an important role in rebuilding trust, such as the initiative of prayer for peace taken by Pope Francis. Let me express the hope that there soon will be further initiatives to enable religion to be a source of healing rather than conflict; and to ensure that these are coordinated with those who have the political authority to pave the way

greater than the sum of their different parts. I strongly echo the sentiments in this document that there is much more that we can do together both in addressing the ills of modern society and in combatting prejudice, bigotry and anti-Semitism which the Church has forcefully condemned and which is reiterated in this document.

Finally let me come to the subject of "complementarity" to which the document refers, based on Pope Francis' own words in *Evangelii Gaudium* concerning "read[ing] the texts of Hebrew Scriptures together ... and "min[imizing] the riches of God's word". This document further expands the notion of complementarity when it declares that "on the one hand ... the Church without Israel would be in danger of losing its locus in the history of salvation"; and then adds "by the same token Jews could ... arrive at the insight that Israel without the Church would be in danger of remaining too particularist and of failing to grasp the universality of its experience of God."

Permit me to note that there is hardly a symmetry in these regards. The former expresses an understanding of the intrinsic character of the Church, while the latter warns against a possible misunderstanding and maybe even abuse of the Jewish concept of election and loss of a sense of universal responsibility. Not only is there a profound asymmetry between the two in as much as the Church's need for Israel is a matter of Christianity's foundational self-understanding; but the real danger of ethnic insularity is hardly something of which Judaism was unaware before the emergence of Christianity and for which Judaism is specifically in "need" of the Church. This warning is most prominent in Hebrew prophetic scripture, perhaps most dramatically in the writing of Amos, and is articulated throughout Talmudic and mediaeval Jewish literature.

And on the other hand, one might note that an assertively universal doctrine is in just as much danger, as it can become exclusive, imperialist and triumphalist, even more so.

Nevertheless, Jewish luminaries over the centuries have indeed themselves articulated a concept of complementarity in seeing Christianity as a Divine vehicle by which the universal truths that Judaism brought to the world, can in fact be more effectively disseminated throughout the universe beyond the limitations posed by Jewish Peoplehood.

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, one of the greatest rabbinical leaders of the 19th century, even saw the break between Church and Synagogue as a necessary part of that Divine plan to facilitate Christianity's universal task.

Some have gone a little further in this regard to understand the concept of complementarity in the parallel role in which the Jewish fo-



Marc Chagall, "The Praying Jew" (1914, Museum of Modern Art, Venice)

to enable the land and the city of peace to fulfil its name.

Let me express my particular appreciation for the document's emphasis on the responsibility of "educational institutions, particularly [those for] the training of priests, [to] integrate into their curricula both *Nostra Aetate* and the subsequent documents of the Holy See regarding the implementation of the Conciliar declaration". Arguably this remains the most notable challenge in taking the achievements from their Olympian heights down to the grass roots universally.

Similarly the call for joint action could not be more timely. The document refers to the International Jewish-Catholic Liaison Committee's collaboration in Argentina in 2004; and I might add that subsequently there was significant collaboration at the ILC meeting in Cape Town where Jewish and Catholic healthcare organizations and initiatives working particularly with the victims of AIDS, were brought together to facilitate collaboration and become

Daniele Luchetti's film on Bergoglio

## A balance between tradition and innovation

EMILIO RANZATO

As Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio arrives in Rome for the conclave of 2013, another journey is taking place, showing us memories of his youth: his decision to become a priest, the difficult years of Videla's dictatorship, fighting alongside the poor, such as in the battle to prevent the evacuation of a neighbourhood on the outskirts of Buenos Aires. Taking part in the conclave might mean giving up daily contact with his people, but not his material and spiritual defences. *Chiamatemi Francesco* [*Call me Francis*] opened in theatres in Italy on 3 December. Daniele Luchetti directs the film with a rather impersonal but substantially balanced touch. He sets aside the feverish realism of his better known films, such as *Mio fratello è figlio unico* [*My brother is an only child*] (2007) and *La nostra vita* [*Our life*] (2010), and takes a cue from the world of television, both in the placid and relatively nondescript aesthetics, and in the educational and documentary tone of the narrative, intentionally superficial in regard to certain historical issues. In the case of such a popular and beloved protagonist and of a product intended for the general public, it is not necessarily a bad choice – quite the contrary. Just as in the best television productions, it is not so much a portrait as a cross section whose purpose is to present the topic to the spectator without pretending to be an in-depth analysis.

Given this generic background, the screenplay – written by the director with Martín Salinas – has the virtue of portraying the young Ber-



goglio with few but appropriate characteristics. The result is a man who finds a balance between tradition and innovation, doctrine and extremely practical social needs, in a historical period in which, especially in his country, one could easily lose his points of reference. A character who at a crucial time was able to see further than many in certain circumstances.

To this end, with a rather simple but certainly effective play on contrasts, the story places the future Pope alongside other figures that instead risk losing their way, lured by the comforts of condescending to the regime or, on the contrary, being shortsighted with respect to the dangerous ambiguity of supporting, even if only spiritually, environments that see armed resistance as the only solution for the country.

The next part of the film portrays Bishop Bergoglio in the peripheries of Buenos Aires, committed to aiding the poorest of the poor. It reveals a characteristic of the protagonist which more or less subtly runs the length of the film, namely his distance – more mental than practical – from the ecclesiastical structures, which he respects but sometimes slowly judges in interpreting the changing times and the ever newly arising needs of the most defenceless. From here the film passes directly but coherently to the sense of bewilderment of the more contemporary Bergoglio, in the days of the conclave that will elect him Pope, and then withdraws to his tender childhood memories, as if to ward off the omen of his imminent assignment.

It is in these moments, which return to Bergoglio near the Vatican at

sunset, that Luchetti's direction shows itself in a poetic fashion. Especially in the parallel editing of the epilogue, which initially seems to contrast the Church of the poor, represented by the residents of Argentina's peripheries who are following the election on television, with the official Church, personified by the cardinals in the conclave. A corresponding clip which instead unfolds in a meaningful synthesis of the moment of the announcement: the joyful smile of the new Pope resembles that of his compatriots from whom he is torn only physically, and whom, henceforth, he will be even better able to defend.

The film's final images, using actual footage, show the Pontiff immediately after the *habemus papam* announcement. The stirring yet harmonious contrast lends proof that the film is not off the mark in its portrayal of the character.

As for the rest, Luchetti's touch can be perceived in the direction of the actors and, as always, his work is outstanding. The choice of Rodrigo de la Serna for the lead role was particularly inspired. De la Serna, known for his role in Francis Ford Coppola's *Tetro* (2009), not only gives a strong performance but also resembles a young Bergoglio.

## Rabbi Rosen

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

cus on the communal covenant with God and the Christian focus on the individual relationship with God may serve to balance one another. Indeed there are those who have suggested that the communal autonomy that Judaism affirms, may serve more appropriately as a model for a modern multicultural society, while Christianity may provide a better response for individual alienation in the contemporary world.

Another suggestion of some theologians regarding such complementarity relates to the relationship between the Jewish reminder that the Kingdom of Heaven has not yet fully arrived, and the Christian awareness that in some ways that Kingdom has already rooted itself in the here and now.

However the very fact that we can talk about complementarity is itself a powerful demonstration of how far we have come along this remarkable journey of transformation and reconciliation between Catholics and Jews over the last half century. This has been in no small part due to the quotidian work and leadership of the Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations with the Jewish People, and the document released today is one more significant milestone along this truly wondrous path for which we must all give thanks to the One Creator and Guide of Heaven and Earth.

## Cardinal Koch on the new document

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

ded principally to address the way that *Nostra Aetate* (n. 4) can be satisfactorily translated in practice, in various contexts. Eleven years later, on 24 June 1985, the Commission of the Holy See published a second document entitled "Notes on the correct way to present the Jews and Judaism in preaching and catechesis in the Roman Catholic Church". Although the text is already connoted exegetically and theologically, its form is mainly practical: in fact it focuses on the mode in which Judaism is presented in Catholic preaching and catechesis. A third document of the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews was introduced to the public on 16 March 1998. It addresses the Shoah and is entitled "We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah". This document was especially wanted by our Jewish partners, given the importance that the tragedy of the Shoah occupies in their long history of persecution.

With respect to these first three documents, the present document is of a very different character and direction. The context which provided

the right occasion for its preparation was already mentioned: the 50th anniversary of the promulgation of *Nostra Aetate* (n. 4). However, what is the reason that motivated its drafting? What does this document set out to do? The preamble emphasizes that it is not an official document of the Magisterium of the Catholic Church, but a study document of our Commission, the intent of which is to analyze the theological dimension of the Jewish-Catholic dialogue. The document thus does not seek to present definitive doctrinal statements, but to furnish a starting point and an impetus for further theological discussions. An important objective of Pope Francis and of our Commission is indeed the deepening of the religious and theological dialogue between Jews and Catholics. *Nostra Aetate* (n. 4) previously mentioned theological issues requiring further reflection. It is precisely to this reflection that the present document seeks to lend its contribution. It invites theologians and, more generally, all those who are interested in the Jewish-Christian dialogue to recognize, consider and

discuss the various points espoused in the document.

With this brief overview of the contents of the new document, I have sought to highlight the fact that the dialogue with Judaism, after 50 years, now rests on solid ground, since much has been realized in this span of time. For this we must be grateful to God, without whose help we would not have reached this point: "Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain" (Ps 127[126]:1). We are naturally thankful for every effort made both by Jews and by Catholics in favour of promoting our dialogue. It is just as important however to remember, as the document emphasizes, that, especially from a theological standpoint, we are only at a new beginning: many questions remain open and require further study. For this reason, I hope that the present document is well received by all those who are involved in Jewish-Christian dialogue or who may be interested in it, and that it provides an inspirational incentive for reflection, for conversations and for future exchanges.

The Pope to an association of Catholic school parents on its 40th anniversary

# Values not to be sold off

Educating children is a duty and an inalienable right

*"Never sell off the human and Christian values to which you are witnesses in the family, at school, and in society". Pope Francis spoke to members of the Associazione di Genitori delle Scuole Cattoliche [Association of Catholic School Parents], whom he received on Saturday morning, 5 December, in the Clementine Hall, on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of its founding. The following is a translation of the Pope's address, which he delivered in Italian.*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am pleased to welcome you all, representatives of the Associazione di Genitori delle Scuole Cattoliche on the 40th anniversary of your founding. You are here not only to confirm yourselves in your journey of faith but also to express the truth of the commitment that distinguishes you: that of having freely chosen to be educators in accordance with the heart of God and of the Church.

An important World Congress organized by the Congregation for Catholic Education took place recently. On that occasion I highlighted the importance of promoting education in the *fullness of humanity*, because speaking of Catholic educa-



Church the abundance of mercy that makes your work a daily service to others. As parents, you are *depositories of the duty and of the primary and inalienable right to educate your children*, and in this regard to give the school positive and constant help with the task. It is your right to demand proper education for your children, an education that is *integral and open to the most authentic human and Christian values*. It is also your task, however, to ensure that the school is equal to the educational role entrusted to it, particularly when the education it offers claims to be "Catholic". I pray the Lord that Catholic schools may never take for granted the meaning of this adjective! Indeed, being *Catholic* educators makes all the difference.

And so we must ask ourselves: what are the requirements that enable a school to call it-

self truly Catholic? This can be a good thing to do in your Association. You have certainly done so and are doing so; but the results are never achieved once and for all. For example, we know that Catholic schools must pass on an *integral, not ideological* culture. But what does this mean in practice? And further, we are convinced that Catholic schools are called to foster *harmony in diversity*. How can this be concretely implemented? It is a challenge that is anything but easy. Thanks be to God, there are so many positive experiences in Italy and in the world which may be known and shared.

In the meeting St John Paul II had with you in June 1998, he reaffirmed the importance of the "bridge" that must exist between school and society. May you never forget the need to construct an educational community in which, to-

gether with the teachers, the various operators and students, you parents are able to be *protagonists in the educational process*.

Do not withdraw from the world but be active, like leaven in dough. The invitation I address to you is simple but bold: *may you be able to make a difference in the quality of formation*. May you be able to find the ways and means so as not to pass unobserved behind the scenes of society and culture, not to create an uproar, and not with projects packed with rhetoric. May you be able to distinguish yourselves through your constant attention to the person and in a special way to the lowliest, to those who are discarded, rejected and forgotten. May you be able to distinguish yourselves not by your "façade" but rather by educational coherence rooted in the

Christian vision of mankind and of society.

At a time when the economic crisis is also making itself felt heavily in comprehensive schools, many of which are being forced to close, the temptation of "numbers" surfaces more insistently, and with it that of discouragement. Yet, in spite of all, I repeat to you: what makes the difference is the quality of your presence, and not the quantity of the resources that you can invest in this field. The quality of your presence here, by building bridges. And I am glad that you, [addressing the President], discussing schools spoke of children, parents and grandparents also. Because grandparents have a lot to do! Do not disregard the grandparents, who are the living memory of the people!

Never sell off the human and Christian values to which you are witnesses in the family, in schools, and in society. Make your contribution generously so that Catholic schools never become a "fall-back" solution or an insignificant alternative among the various educational institutions. Collaborate in order that Catholic education may have the *face of that new humanism* which emerged from the Ecclesial Convention in Florence. Strive to ensure that Catholic schools are *truly open to all*. May the Lord Jesus who in the Holy Family of Nazareth increased in stature, in wisdom and in grace (cf. Lk 2:52) accompany your steps and bless you in your daily commitment.

Thank you for this meeting, thank you for your work and thank you for your witness. I assure you of my remembrance in prayer, and please do not forget to pray for me.



tion is equivalent to speaking of humans, of humanism. I called for *inclusive* education which makes room for everyone and avoids elitism in selecting the beneficiaries of its commitment.

The same challenge lies before you today. Your Association is dedicated to the service of schools and families, contributing to the delicate task of *building bridges between schools and territories, between schools and families, and between schools and civil institutions*. Restoring the educational pact because the educational pact has collapsed into ruin, because the educational pact is broken! And we must restore it. Building bridges: there is no nobler challenge! Building union where division is advancing, generating harmony when the logic of exclusion and marginalization seems to have the upper hand.

As an ecclesial association you draw from the very heart of the

## On the Feast of the Virgin of Guadalupe

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

cially pleased. In one of the prayers dearest to Christians, the *Salve Regina*, we call Mary "Mother of Mercy". She has experienced divine mercy, and has hosted in her womb the very source of this mercy: Jesus Christ. She, who has always lived intimately united to her Son, knows better than anyone what He wants: that all men be saved, and that God's tenderness and consolation never fail anyone. May Mary, Mother of Mercy, help us to understand how much God loves us.

To Holy Mary we entrust the suffering and joy of the peoples throughout the American Continent, who love her as mother and recognize her as "Patroness" under the beloved title of Our Lady of Guadalupe. May "the sweetness of her countenance watch over us in this Holy Year, so that all of us

may rediscover the joy of God's tenderness" (cf. Bull *Misericordiae Vultus*, n. 24). We ask her that this Jubilee Year may be a planting of merciful love in the hearts of individuals, families and nations. May she repeat to us: "Do not be afraid. Am I not here who am your Mother?", Mother of Mercy. May we convert and become merciful people, and may all Christian communities be oases and sources of mercy, witnesses to a charity that does not permit exclusion. To profoundly supplicate her for this I shall go to venerate her at her Shrine on 13 February. Thus, I shall implore her for all this for the whole of America, of whom she is the special Mother. I shall implore her to guide the footsteps of her American people, a pilgrim people looking for the Mother of Mercy and asking her for just one thing: to show them her Son Jesus.

# Morning Mass at the Domus Sanctae Marthae

Thursday, 10 December

## A father's caress

A father or a mother says to their child: "Do not be afraid, I am here" and pampers the child with caresses. This is the privileged condition of humanity: small, weak, but reassured, supported and forgiven by a God who loves them. At the beginning of the Jubilee, Pope Francis took the opportunity to return to the theme of the Father's mercy while reflecting on the daily Liturgy in the Mass at Santa Marta on Thursday morning. The Cardinal Advisors also participated in the Mass.

The reflection was inspired by the Responsorial Psalm, which repeated:



Katie M. Berggren, "Fatherhood"

"The Lord is merciful and great in love". The Pope called it "a confession of faith" in which the Christian recognizes that God "is mercy, and he is great, but great in love". This statement is simple only in appearance, because "understanding the mercy of God is a mystery, it is a journey that must be made throughout life".

In order to help to better enter into this mystery, the Pope referred to the Reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah (41:13-20), which is God's monologue to his people. It tells of how God "told his people that he had chosen them not because they were great or powerful", but "because they were the smallest of all, the poorest of all". Pope Francis explained that God is truly "in love with this poverty", with this "littleness".

It is a text from which this love clearly emerges: "a tender love, a love like that of a father or mother" speaking to their child "who wakes up during the night frightened by a dream". God speaks with the same concern to his people and says: "I will hold your right hand, rest assured, fear not". Using imagery to describe the condition of littleness, he continues: "You worm of Jacob, you men of Israel, I will help you, your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel, fear not".

Do not be afraid. With regard to

these words, the Pope returned to the example of family life: "We all know the caresses of a mother and father, when children are restless with fear". Parents too say: "Don't be afraid, I am here". The Lord reminds each one of us, tenderly: "I am in love with your littleness, with your nothingness", and he tells us: "Do not be afraid of your sins, I love you so much, I am here to forgive you". This, in essence, the Pope explained, "is God's mercy".

Continuing his reflection, Pope Francis gave the example of a saint ("I think it was St Jerome, but I am not sure", he confided), recalling how the saint was said to have been very penitent in his life, offering sacrifices and prayers, and that God always asked more of him. The saint

continued to ask: "Lord what can I give you?", until he said, "But Lord, I have nothing more to give you, I have given you everything". And the answer he received was: "No, one thing is missing" — "What is missing Lord?" — "Give me your sins". With this story, the Pope sought to emphasize that "the Lord wants to take our weaknesses, our sins and our weariness, upon himself". It is an approach that we also find in the Gospels, in Jesus, who said: "Come to me, all you who are weary and tired and I will give you rest". Francis said that God repeats it over and over again: "I am the Lord your God who will hold your right hand, fear

not little one, do not be afraid. I will give you strength. Give me everything and I will forgive you, I will give you peace". These, the Pope added, are "God's caresses", the caresses "of our Father, when he expresses himself with his mercy".

We men, the Pontiff continued, "are so nervous" and "when something does not go well, we shout and we are impatient". While God instead comforts us: "Do not worry, you've made a big mistake, yes, but do not worry; don't be afraid, I forgive you". In this way he welcomes us entirely, even with our mistakes and our sins. This is precisely what is repeated in the Psalm: "The Lord is merciful and great in love". Thus, the Pope said in conclusion, "we are small. He has given us everything. He asks us only for our miseries, our littleness and our sins, to embrace and caress us".

Recalling the prayer recited at the beginning of the Mass, "Lord, awaken the faith of your people", Francis concluded by inviting everyone to ask the Lord "to awaken in all of us, and in all the people, faith in this fatherhood, in this mercy, in his heart", and to ask that "this faith in his fatherhood and mercy" makes us "a bit more merciful toward others".

Monday, 14 December

## A grandmother's lesson

"God forgives everything; otherwise the world would not exist": these words, spoken by an elderly Portuguese woman to Jorge Bergoglio in 1992, provide a real "lesson" at the beginning of the Holy Year of Mercy. Warning against falling into "clerical rigidity", the Pope suggested instead choosing without hesitation the road of hope and mercy that makes us "free". At Mass on Monday morning in the Chapel of Santa Marta, Pope Francis again recommended letting your "eyes be opened", so as to go beyond in order to see and to speak the truth.

"In the First Reading", the Pope noted immediately, "we heard a passage from the Book of Numbers" (24:2-7, 15-17) about the "story of Balaam: he was a prophet, but he was also a man, who had defects. He too sinned". Francis remarked that "we all have sins, everyone, we are all sinners". But "do not be afraid", he reassured, "God is greater than our sins".

The Pope explained that Balaam "is 'hired out' to a certain Balak, a general and king, who wants to destroy the people of God", and who sends Balaam "to prophesy against the people of God". However, "on the journey, Balaam meets the angel of the Lord and his heart is changed, he sees the truth". Nevertheless, "he does not change parties: today I belong to this political party and then go over to this other one. He changes from error to truth and tells what he sees".



Rudolf Behrend, "The Prodigal Son"

"It is beautiful", Pope Francis added, "the way the Book of Numbers tells this story: 'The oracle of Balaam, the oracle of the man whose eyes are opened'". In fact, the Pope explained, "when his heart is changed he converts, his eyes are opened and he sees afar, he sees the truth, with an open heart, with the heart — with good will you always see the truth — and he speaks the truth".

"It is a truth that gives hope, because he has the desert before him, the desert is right in front of him, and he sees the tribes of Israel: 'How fair are your tents, your encampments, O Israel! Like valleys that stretch afar, like gardens beside a river, like aloes that the Lord has planted, like cedar trees beside the waters'". Thus, "beyond the desert he sees fruitfulness, beauty and victory".

But "what has happened in Balaam's heart?" The fact, Pope Francis said, is that "he opened his heart and the Lord gave him the virtue of hope". And "hope is that Christian virtue that we have as a great gift from God that lets us see far beyond, beyond the problems, beyond the pain and difficulties, beyond our sins". It shows us "the beauty of God".

"Hope", therefore, is the key word, he said. And "when I am with a person who has the virtue of hope and is in a difficult moment in his life — be it a disease, concern for a son or daughter or someone in the family, or anything. But he has this virtue, in the midst of pain his eyes have been opened. He has the freedom to see beyond, always beyond". This is precisely "the hope, the prophecy that the Church gives us today: she needs men and women of hope, even in the midst of problems". Because "hope opens horizons, hope is freeing, it does not enslave and it always finds a way to set a situation straight".

In the passage from the Gospel of Matthew (21:23-27) from the day's Liturgy, the Pope continued, "we see instead men who do not have this

freedom, who have no horizons, men who are closed in their calculations". Such that the chief priests and elders of the people ask the Lord: "By what authority are you doing these things?". When Jesus poses his next question, they make their calculations. "If I say this I have this danger, and if I say that..." Then they answer "we do not know". However, the Pope remarked, "human calculations close the heart, they block freedom". It is "hope" that "lightens" our load. Therefore, it is "this hypocrisy of the doctors of the law that we see in the Gospel, which closes the heart: it enslaves us. These men were slaves".

For his part, "Balaam had the freedom to say to the one who had 'hired him out': 'I see this, if you do not like it, that's your problem; but I tell you what I see'". Instead, "they do not have freedom, they are slaves to their rigidity". Pope Francis affirmed that we can say "that both, not technically, are close to the Church, they are men of the Church: Balaam, a prophet; and these doctors of the law".

"How beautiful is the freedom, magnanimity and hope of a man and a woman of the Church", the Pope affirmed. And "how awful and how much harm is done by the rigidity of a woman and man of the Church:



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

clerical rigidity, which has no hope".  
 "In this Year of Mercy", the Pope said, "there are these two paths". On one side there are "those who have hope in the mercy of God and know that God is Father", that "God always forgives", and that he forgives "everything". That "beyond the desert there is the embrace of the Father, forgiveness". However, on the other hand "there are also those who take refuge in slavery, in its very rigidity, and they know nothing of God's mercy". The doctors mentioned in the Gospel of Matthew "had studied, but their knowledge did not save them".

"I would like to conclude", the Pope said, "with a story that happened to me in 1992. An image of Our Lady of Fatima had arrived in the diocese. In a large mass for the sick – it was immense, held in a big field, with so many people – I went to confess there. I heard confessions from noon until almost six, when Mass had ended. There were many confessors". Right "when I got up to go to celebrate a confirmation elsewhere", Pope Francis said, "I was approached by an elderly woman; she was 80 years old, with eyes that saw beyond, eyes full of hope". And "I said to her: 'Grandma, have you come to confess? But you have no sins!'. The woman responded: 'Father, we all have sins!'. Fr Ber-

goglio continued the conversation: "Will the Lord, perhaps, not forgive them?". The woman, strong in her hope, said: "God forgives everything, because if God did not forgive everything, the world would not exist".

In considering "these two types of people" – those who are "free" in their "hope, that which brings you the mercy of God"; and those who are "closed, the legalistic, the truly selfish, slaves to their rigidity" – Pope Francis recommended we take the lesson he received from the elderly Portuguese woman: "God forgives everything, he is only waiting for you to draw close to him".

Tuesday, 15 December

### Three traits

What are the features of the People of God? What should the Church be like? This was the theme of Pope Francis' homily for the Mass at Santa Marta on Tuesday morning.

In the day's passage from the Gospel according to Matthew (21:28-32), Jesus states to the chief priests and elders: "Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you". The Pontiff pointed out Jesus' "energy" in reproaching those who were considered masters of "how to think, judge, and live". The prophet Zephaniah too, in the First

## Mass in the Chapel of Santa Marta

Reading (3:1-2, 9-13), "takes on the voice of God and says: 'Woe to her that is rebellious and defiled, the oppressing city! She listens to no voice, she accepts no correction. She does not trust in the Lord, she does not draw near to her God'". It is basically "the same reprimand" aimed "at the chosen people, at the clerics of those times". Moreover, the Pope emphasized, "to say to a priest, to a chief priest, that a harlot is holier than he in the kingdom of Heaven" is a very strong charge.

Jesus "had the courage to speak the truth". However, Francis said, considering certain reprimands, one has to wonder: "What should the Church be like? The people we read about in the Bible were indeed 'men of the church'. They were 'heads of the Church'. Jesus came, John the Baptist came, but those men 'didn't listen'. In the passage, the prophet recalls that although God chose his people, 'this people became a rebellious city, an impure city. They did not accept how the Church should be, how the People of God should be'".

However, the prophet Zephaniah communicates God's promise to the people: "I will forgive you". That is, the Pope explained, in order "for the People of God, the Church, all of us to be faithful, the first step is to feel we are forgiven".

After the promise of forgiveness, there is also the explanation of "how the Church is supposed to be: 'For I will leave in the midst of you a people humble and lowly. They shall seek refuge in the name of the Lord'". Thus, the faithful People of God, Francis continued, must "have these three traits: humble, lowly, with trust in the Lord". At this point the Pontiff began his analysis of each of the three fundamental features.

First of all the Church has to be "humble". In other words a Church should "not show off her powers, her grandeur". However, the Pope advised, "humility doesn't mean a lethargic, weary person" with a demure expression, because this "is not humility, this is theatrics! This is feigned humility". True humility, instead, begins "with the first step: 'I

am a sinner"'. Francis explained that if "you are not able to tell yourself that you are a sinner and that others are better than you, you are not humble". Thus, "the first step for a humble Church is feeling that she is a sinner" and the same is true for "all of us". On the other hand, if "any of us has the habit of looking at others' defects and gossiping", this is not humility. It is instead "thinking that you are the judge of others". The prophet says: "I will leave in the midst of you a humble people". This, the Pontiff advised, is a grace, and "we must ask for this grace, that the Church may be humble, that I may be humble, that each one of us may be humble".

His meditation then passed on to the second trait: the People of God "is poor". In this regard Pope Francis recalled that poverty is "the first of the Beatitudes", but what does it mean to be "poor in spirit"? It means "being attached only to God's treasures". It definitely does not mean "a Church that exists attached to money, that thinks about money, that thinks about how to earn money...". For example, the Pope explained, there was someone who "innocently" said to the people that in order to pass through the Holy Door "you have to make an offering". This, the Pontiff clarified, "is not the Church of Jesus, this is the Church of those chief priests, attached to money".

To further explain his thoughts, Francis recalled the story of Deacon Lawrence – the "treasurer of the diocese", – who, when the emperor asked him to "bring the riches of the diocese" to turn them over in order to avoid being killed, St Lawrence returned "with the poor". Thus the poor are actually "the treasure of the Church". You can even be "the head of a bank", as long as "your heart is poor, not attached to money" and you place yourself "at the service" of others. "Poverty", the Pope added, is characterized by "this detachment" which leads us to "serve the needy". He concluded this line of reasoning by directing a question to each person: "Am I or am I not poor?".

Lastly, the third trait: the People of God "shall seek refuge in the name of the Lord". This too brings up a very direct question: "Where do I place my trust? In power, in friends, in money? In the Lord!".

Thus it is this "legacy that the Lord promises us: 'I will leave in the midst of you a people humble and lowly. They shall seek refuge in the name of the Lord'. Humble because they feel they are sinners; poor because their heart is attached to God's treasures, and if they have them it is only to administer them; seeking refuge in the Lord because they know that the Lord alone can guarantee what is good for them". This is why Jesus had to tell the chief priests, "who did not understand these things", that "a harlot would enter the kingdom of God before them". And, the Pontiff concluded, as we await the Lord this Christmas, let us ask that he give us "a humble heart", a heart that is "poor" and above all that seeks "refuge in the Lord", because "the Lord never disappoints".

## For the Activities of Public Juridical Persons of the Church in the Healthcare Sector

### New commission established

Pope Francis has issued a legal decree – signed by Cardinal Pietro Parolin – creating the Pontifical Commission for the Activities of Public Juridical Persons of the Church in the Healthcare Sector. The new special commission will help healthcare organizations belonging to the Church and to Church organizations manage their finances and stay true to their founding mission and spirit. The decree, called a rescript, was published on Saturday, 12 December.

The new commission will be composed of a president and six experts in the fields of healthcare, real estate, management, business administration, and finance. It will have the power to carry out general studies to ascertain the sustainability of the healthcare systems of the juridical persons of the Church, and to prepare long-range operational sustainability strategies in keeping with the Social Doctrine of the Church.



Jean Louis Forain, "The Good Samaritan"



Pope Francis addresses the Bishops of Germany

# Pastoral conversion

*Pope Francis emphasized "pastoral conversion" to the German Bishops on their "ad Limina" visit on Friday, 20 November. The renewal of Church structures, he said, can only be understood "as part of an effort to make them more mission-oriented". The following is a translation of the address which the Pope consigned to the Bishops in German.*

Dear Brothers,

I am glad to be able to greet you here in the Vatican on the occasion of your *ad Limina* visit. The pilgrimage to the Tombs of the Apostles is an important moment in every bishop's life. It means a renewal of his bond with the universal Church, which advances through space and time as the People of God on the move, faithfully bearing the patrimony of the faith over the course of the centuries and to all peoples. I warmly thank Cardinal Reinhard Marx, President of the German Bishops' Conference, for his courteous greeting. I express my gratitude to all of you for helping me to carry out the Ministry of Peter through your prayers and your work in the particular Churches. I thank you especially for the great support that the Church in Germany offers people across the world through her numerous charitable works.

We are living in an exceptional moment in time. Hundreds of thou-



sands of refugees have come to Europe or have set out in search of refuge from war and persecution. The Christian Churches and many individual citizens of your country are providing an enormous amount of aid in order to accommodate these people, giving them assistance and human closeness. In the spirit of Christ let us continue to face the challenge of the enormous number of destitute people. At the same time let us support all humanitarian initiatives that aim to render the liv-

ing conditions in their countries of origin more bearable.

There is a great difference between the Catholic communities in the East and West of Germany, as there is between those in the North and South. The Church works with professionalism in social and charitable milieux everywhere and is very active in the educational field. It is necessary to ensure that in these institutions attention is paid to the Catholic profile; in this way they will be a positive factor that is not to be underestimated in the construction of a livable society. Moreover one notes a very strong decrease in attendance at Sunday Mass, as well as in the sacramental life, particularly in the regions with a Catholic tradition. In the 1960s almost every member of the faithful attended Mass every Sunday, whereas now the faithful often represent less than 10 per cent. Ever fewer people are receiving the sacraments. The sacrament of Penance has almost disappeared. Fewer and fewer Catholics receive Confirmation or contract a Catholic marriage. The number of vocations to the priestly ministry and to the consecrated life has dwindled noticeably. Given these facts one can truly speak of an erosion of the Catholic faith in Germany.

What can we do? It is first necessary to overcome resignation which paralyzes. Of course it is not possible to rebuild what existed in the past from the remains of the "beautiful times gone by". However, we can let ourselves be inspired by the lives of the early Christians. It suffices to think of Priscilla and Aquila, St Paul's faithful. As a married couple they testified with convincing words (cf. Acts 18:26), but above all with their lives, that the truth founded on Christ's love for his Church is truly worthy of faith. They opened their home to the proclamation of the Gospel and drew strength for their mission from the Word of God. The example of these "volunteers" can prompt us to reflect,

given the trend towards increasing institutionalization. New structures are inaugurated from which in the end the faithful are absent. It is a sort of new Pelagianism which leads us to put faith in administrative structures and perfect organizations. Excessive centralization, rather than proving helpful, complicates both the Church's life and her missionary dynamic (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 32). The Church is not a closed system that constantly rotates around the same



questions and doubts. The Church is alive, she addresses human beings in their reality, she knows how to touch and enliven them. Her face is not set, her body moves; grows and has feelings: she is the Body of Jesus Christ.

The current imperative is pastoral conversion, in other words "The renewal of [the Church's] structures demanded by pastoral conversion can only be understood in this light: as part of an effort to make them more mission-oriented, to make ordinary pastoral activity on every level more inclusive and open, to inspire in pastoral workers a constant desire to go forth and in this way to elicit a positive response from all those whom Jesus summons to friendship with himself". (*Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 27). Of course, the conditions in today's society are not entirely favourable. A certain worldliness prevails. This worldliness deforms souls, it stifles the awareness of reality: a worldly person lives in an artificial world which he or she builds. It is as if they surround themselves by darkened glass in order not to see outside. It is hard to reach them. However faith tells us that it is God who acts first. This certainty leads us first of all to prayer. We pray for the men and women of our cities and our dioceses and we also pray for ourselves that God may send us a ray of divine charity through our darkened glass, touching hearts so that they can understand his message. We must go among people with the ardour of those who received the Gospel first. And "whenever we make the effort to return to the source and to recover the original freshness of the Gospel, new avenues appear, new paths of creativity open up, with different forms of expression, more eloquent signs and words with renewed meaning for today's world. Every form of authentic evangelization is always "new" (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 11). It is thus possible to present new ways and forms of catechesis to help young people and families to joyfully rediscover the authentic common faith of the Church.

In this context of the new evangelization it is indispensable that the bishop diligently carry out his mandate to teach the faith – the faith passed on and lived in the living communion of the universal Church – in the many fields of his pastoral ministry. As a caring father, the prel-

ate will stand beside the theological faculties, helping the teachers to rediscover the great ecclesial importance of their mission. Fidelity to the Church and to her Magisterium does not run counter to academic freedom but demands a humble attitude of service to God's gifts. The *sentire cum Ecclesia* must distinguish in a particular way those who educate and shape the new generations. Furthermore, the presence of theological faculties at State educational institutes offers a real opportunity to pursue dialogue with society. Make good use too of the Catholic University of Eichstätt with its faculty of theology and its various departments in other fields of study. Since it is the only Catholic University in your country, this institution is invaluable to the whole of Germany, hence appropriate commitment on the part of the entire Bishops' Conference is to be hoped for in order to reinforce its supra-regional importance and to promote an interdisciplinary exchange on present and future issues in accordance with the Gospel spirit.

Then, turning one's gaze to the parish communities in which faith is mainly experienced and lived, the bishop must have the sacramental life especially at heart. I would like to underline two points: Confession and the Eucharist. The upcoming Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy will be an opportunity for rediscovering the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. Confession is the place in which God's forgiveness and mercy are received as a gift. It is in Confession that the transformation of every individual member of the faithful and the reform of the Church begin. I trust that during the Holy Year, and after it too, greater attention will be paid to this sacrament, so important for spiritual renewal, in diocesan and parish pastoral programmes. It is equally necessary to always highlight the close connection between the Eucharist and Ordination to the Priesthood. Experience has shown that pastoral programmes which do not give sufficient importance to priests in their ministry of governing, teaching and sanctifying with regard to the Church's structure and to sacramental life, are doomed to fail. The precious cooperation of the lay faithful, especially where vocations are lacking, cannot replace the priestly min-

The Holy Father cautions that respect for nature and creation is the great challenge for the future of mankind

# The cry of mother earth

*We must listen "to the cry of mother earth", because "respect for creatures and for creation is the great challenge for the future of mankind". Pope*

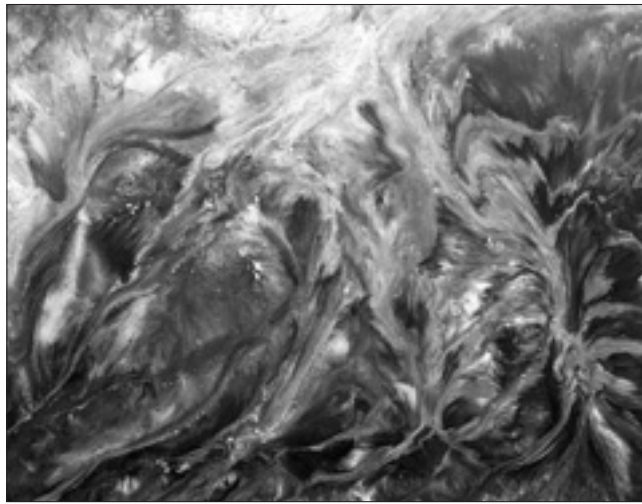
*Francis spoke to participants at the fifth Festival of the Social Doctrine of the Church, which was held in Verona, Italy, from 26 to 29 November.*

*During his visit to Africa, the Pope sent a video message to festival participants, which was broadcast on Friday evening, 27 November. The following is a translation of the Pope's address which was delivered in Italian.*

Dear ones,

A warm greeting to all of you who are attending the fifth Festival of the Social Doctrine of the Church. I know that this year you have chosen the theme "The challenge of reality", referring to what I wrote in the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*: "There also exists a constant tension between ideas and realities. Realities simply are, whereas ideas are worked out. There has to be continuous dialogue between the two, lest ideas become detached from realities. It is dangerous to dwell in the realm of words alone, of images and rhetoric" (n. 231). In order to ward off the danger of living outside reality it is necessary to open our eyes and heart.

Our life is made up of many things, of an incursion of news, of many problems: all of this drives us not to see, not to notice the problems of the people who are beside us. Indifference seems to be a medicine that protects us from getting involved, becoming a way to be more at peace. This is indifference. But this noninvolvement is a manner of upholding selfishness and it makes us glum. Being close to people, pouring the oil of consolation, touching the flesh of the other, taking on his problems, expands the heart, puts love back into circulation and makes us feel well. This con-



Antonino Nicotra (Cadmon) "Mother Earth"

creteness and this closeness is the path that Jesus points to when he says: "I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink..." (cf. Mt 25:31-46). Bending down – these are the words: bending down – to the other is the most direct way to expand the heart, to kindle love, inspire thought, and invent practical and innovative responses to problems.

The challenge of reality also calls for the capacity to dialogue, to build bridges in place of walls. This is the time to dialogue, not to defend off-setting rigidity. I invite you to face "the challenge of finding and sharing a 'mystique' of living together, of mingling, of encounter, of embracing and supporting one another, of stepping into this tide which, although a bit chaotic, can become a genuine experience of fraternity, a caravan of solidarity, a sacred pil-

grimage" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 87). Dialogue opens up to those who are different and recomposes a picture of the many segments of our society, creating the conditions for a harmonious design.

The challenge of reality, however, calls for change. Everyone perceives the need for change because we realize that something is wrong. Consumerism, the idolatry of money, too many forms of inequality and injustice, and the homogenization of prevailing thought are a burden from which we must free ourselves by recovering our dignity and committing ourselves to sharing, knowing that the solution to concrete problems comes not from money but from the fraternity which takes on the burdens of the other. True change begins first and foremost with us and is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. People interiorly changed by the Spirit also contribute to social change. Change is then required of our structures: it is preferable to be flexible in order to better respond to concrete needs, than to protect structures and remain cast in plaster. Cleaning up a bit, increasing transparency, recovering freshness, genuineness and agility is good for structures and for people: we will once again find the impulse and the enthusiasm of doing something good at the service of our brothers and sisters. New needs and new forms of poverty require new solutions. In the experience of closeness we will also find the inspiration and strength to give concrete shape to the change that everyone desires.

One last thing to emphasize: the ecological challenge. This calls for listening to the cry of mother earth: respect for creatures and for creation is a great challenge for the future of mankind. Mankind and creation are inextricably linked: today "we have to realize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of

the earth and the cry of the poor" (Encyclical *Laudato Si'*, n. 49).

The theme of caring for the earth, that is to say for our common home, is very broad; someone might think that what we are able to do has no concrete effect, is not enough to generate change. The theme certainly pertains to politics, the economy, and strategic choices on development, but nothing can replace our personal commitment. Moderation, conscientious consumption, a lifestyle that accepts creation as a gift and excludes predatory forms and exclusive ownership, is the concrete way through which a new sensitivity is created. If many of us live in this manner, the whole of society will feel it in a positive way and the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor will become audible to everyone.

Dear beloved, let us look ahead with courage! The challenges of reality are many, and we have the task and the joy of turning them into opportunities.

I renew my warm greeting to all the participants of the fifth Festival of the Social Doctrine of the Church and particularly to the many volunteers who freely make themselves available. I extend a greeting to the Bishop of Verona who is hosting this event, and I thank Don Vincenzi for the service of spreading, knowing and testing the Social Doctrine of the Church. Thank you!

Richard Albert dies

## Dedicated to the least and to justice

"An entire life dedicated to serving others. The Catholic Church has lost a true man of the people. His efforts and his vision to better the lives of the most vulnerable people in his country shall not be forgotten". In announcing the death of Msgr Richard J. Albert, H.E. Ms Portia Simpson Miller, the Prime Minister of Jamaica, remembered him with these words. A native of the USA, Msgr Albert died on Monday, 1 December, at the University of West Indies Hospital in Kingston, after a nearly 40-year pastoral mission on the island. He was 69 years old.

Fr Albert's work gained media attention in 2006 when he publicly condemned the corruption and injustice in the Caribbean country. He was also instrumental in the founding of St Patrick's Foundation and the Stella Maris Foundation, two important charitable organizations. In November 2011 he received the *Servitour Pacis* award from the Path of Peace Foundation.

## German 'ad Limina'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

istry or even make it appear merely optional. With no priest there is no Eucharist. And the pastoral care of vocations begins with the ardent desire to have priests in the hearts of the faithful. Lastly, one of the bishop's tasks which is never sufficiently appreciated is the commitment to life. The Church must never tire of being an advocate for life and must not neglect to proclaim that human life is to be protected unconditionally from the moment of conception until natural death. Here we can never make compromises without also becoming guilty ourselves of taking part in the unfortunately very widespread throw-away culture. What gaping wounds our society must suffer for having discarded the weakest and most defenceless – the lives of unborn children as well as

of the elderly and the sick! In the end we shall all bear the painful consequences.

Dear Confreres, I hope that your meetings with the Roman Curia in these days may serve to enlighten the journey of your particular Churches in the coming years, helping you to rediscover more and more your great spiritual and pastoral patrimony. You will thus be able to confidently carry on your appreciated work in the mission of the universal Church. Please continue to pray for me so that with God's help I may carry out my Petrine Ministry. I likewise entrust you to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of the Apostles Peter and Paul, as well as of your country's Blessed and Saints. I warmly impart my Apostolic Blessing to you and to the faithful of your dioceses.

On the papal rescript 'ex audientia' regarding the reform of annulment procedures introduced in August by Francis

## Implementing and observing

PIO VITO PINTO\*

In the introductory report with which he opened the Ordinary Synod, Cardinal Erdő outlined one of the main objectives of the Synod Assembly. Indeed, the Cardinal stated that, "By virtue of the sacrament of marriage the Christian family becomes an asset for the Church, but its inclusion in the context of the Church is also beneficial to the family, which receives help on the spiritual and communitarian levels and also in times of difficulty, help

help these faithful to decide to choose sacramental marriage".

The rescript issued by Pope Francis on the reform of the marriage process set forth in the two *motu proprio* of 15 August 2015 is a clear demonstration that the juridical reform is perfectly consistent with the ecclesiological vision of his Pontificate, as clearly confirmed by his actions in recent weeks after he has steadily delineated as much in his *Magisterium* since the beginning.

In the homily of the opening Mass of the Jubilee Year on 8 December, the Pontiff expressed his full adherence to the Second Vatican Council: "A genuine encounter between the Church and the men and women of our time. An encounter marked by the power of the Spirit, who impelled the Church to emerge from the shoals which for years had kept her self-enclosed so as to set out once again, with enthusiasm, on her missionary journey. It was the resumption of a journey of encountering people where they live: in their cities and homes, in their workplaces. Wherever there are people, the Church is called to reach out to them and to bring the joy of the Gospel, and the mercy and forgiveness of God".

Even before this in the important commemorative speech on the 50th anniversary of the institution of the Synod of Bishops, Pope Francis summarized this conciliar ecclesiology, highlighting that the hierarchical role of the Roman Pontiff is aimed at service and is expressed as "the supreme

witness to the *fides totius Ecclesiae*, 'the guarantor of the obedience and the conformity of the Church to the will of God, to the Gospel of Christ, and to the Tradition of the Church'".

The pontifical rescript, published on Friday, 11 December, is divided in two parts and is based on this ecclesiological foundation, definitively interpreting and integrating the two *motu proprio*.

In the first part, since there is understandable resistance to any landmark legislation like the law of reform of the marriage process, the Pope wished to reiterate – as occurred with John Paul II in the promulgation of the Code of Canon Law in 1983 – that the law has indeed been promulgated and it must be observed (see Apostolic Constitution *Sacra Disciplinae Leges*). Pope Francis' current rescript, much like John Paul II's promulgation of the Code, conforms to the *lex suprema*, which is the *salus animarum*, of which the Successor of Peter is the first teacher and servant.

The second part of the rescript specifically regards the Roman Rota as the Apostolic Tribunal, which has always been noted for the *sapientia* of

Emmanuel Garibay, "Conversion" (2005)



## The closeness of the Church

On Monday, 7 December, Pope Francis signed and then consigned to the Dean of the Roman Rota a rescript *ex audientia* regarding the implementation of the recent reform to the Church's process for annulment. The decree addresses the role of the Tribunal of the Roman Rota, which is the Church's highest appellate court. The rescript has six main points, most dealing with technical matters of legal procedure within the Rota, and with the relationship of the Rota to other courts in the Church's legal system. The rescript affirms in its preamble the desire to serve the supreme law, which is the salvation of souls, and that all the Church's legal structures serve therefore as vehicles of reconciliation and renewal for the faithful.

in safeguarding the matrimonial union and in discerning the respective obligations or eventual shortcomings".

The reality and mission of the Church as defined by the divine Founder himself, Jesus Christ, thus was clear to the Synod Fathers. The Church viator is not the Church of people who are perfect, but rather the community of faithful who daily recognize themselves as sinners and thus in need of conversion, a point Pope Francis stresses in his ecclesiology.

Thus, the Synod taught that the great number of wounded faithful, or those who find it difficult to adhere to the truths of the Gospel in the practice of the faith, do not represent a burden but an opportunity. Many of these "wounded", once reconciled and healed, are ready to become true missionaries of the beauty of the conjugal sacrament and of the Christian family. It is fitting to once again quote the words of Cardinal Erdő: "The practical insertion of Christian marriage and the family into the reality of the Church requires the ecclesial community to look mercifully and realistically upon those faithful who cohabit or live only in civil marriage because they do not feel prepared to celebrate the sacrament, given the difficulties that such a decision can entail today. If the community is able to demonstrate that it is open to these people in the different situations of life, and clearly present the truth about matrimony, this could

its jurisprudential decisions, which refers to the formula of generic doubt. (Instead the lower tribunals have the obligation to articulate specific doubt, such as the exclusion of offspring.) This manifests, in terms of the ecclesial diakonia, the solicitude of justice in its twofold sacredness: on the one hand, it is the very defence of the truth of the marriage bond, and on the other it is the right of the baptized person to receive from the Church the prompt and gratuitous declaration of such truth of the bond itself.

\*Dean of the Roman Rota

Icon of the Nativity from Kimisis Tis Theotokou Greek Orthodox Church of the Hamptons, New York



We, the staff of the English edition of *L'Osservatore Romano*, send our very best wishes to all our readers around the world. May you have a very holy and happy Christmas.

Mary Nolan, Anna Morghen, Elizabeth Simari, Beth Madeline and Philippa Wooldridge