

L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO

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Vatican City

Friday, 17 January 2014

To the Diplomatic Corps the Pope calls for negotiated solutions to conflicts and condemns hunger, abortion and human trafficking

The royal road

And at Sunday's Angelus he announces 19 Cardinals will be created at the Consistory of 22 February



Papal politics

GIOVANNI MARIA VIAN

A broad vision and a big heart is what must characterize the service of the Cardinals of the Church of Rome and what Pope Francis explicitly recommended in a letter he penned and what coloured the traditional address to the Diplomatic Corps, namely to the entire world. An address which calls to mind the perfect expression Paul VI set forth at Castel Gandolfo on 5 August 1963, just a few weeks after his election, as a kind of spiritual programme for his pontificate which had just commenced: "papal politics: an ever watchful initiative for the good of others".

Pope Francis wished to emphasize that papal politics spring from the Pope's "heart as a pastor" and his concern "for the joys and sufferings of humanity". These words echo the beginning of one of the most famous documents of the Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*. He first addressed concern for the family, which should resemble the Holy Family of the newborn Jesus: an open community with room for everyone and where fraternity is learned.

The Bishop of Rome certainly did not conceal the difficulties which families today have to face, from the weakening sense of belonging, to adverse conditions, and for this reason he asks for suitable policies aimed at supporting and strengthening the family. Once again the Pope highlighted the weakness of the two age groups in society – the elderly and the young – which have been ostracized by a culture of the ephemeral which ultimately exhausts itself in avid consumerism and myopia which puts the very future of many societies at risk.

This closure is what must be combated in order to favour a culture of encounter, as for example

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There is no other way: the royal road to peace must be that "of diplomacy and dialogue". Benedict XV previously affirmed this during World War I in his *Letter to Leaders of Peoples at War* on 1 August 1917. Pope Francis repeated this a hundred years after that terrible time. On Monday, 13 January, the Holy Father received the members of the diplomatic corps accredited to the Holy See in the Royal Hall for the traditional greeting in the new year.

In his extensive address, the Holy Father lists a number of the tragedies plaguing peoples and nations – ranging from Syria to the entire Middle East, from Africa to Asia – as well as "threats to peace" such as hunger, abortion, emigration, the effects of environmental disasters, and the modern day forms of slavery such as human trafficking. We must follow the clear indications which will finally lead to stable and lasting peace. The model of the family, the

Pope said, should inspire the birth of an open community, in which there is a place for everyone, old and young, poor and rich, near and far.

At the Angelus on Sunday, 12 January, the Holy Father announced the names of 19 prelates which he will create cardinals in the upcoming consistory of 22 February.

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Baptism of thirty-two infants

Like links in a chain



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The Pope on the role of the Baptized

Disciples and missionaries

On Wednesday, 15 January, the Pope continued his reflection on Baptism, focusing on its role in the transmission of the faith. He spoke about the history of Christianity in Japan, where for centuries the faith was severely persecuted, "thousands killed" and "not a priest was left" in the land, yet by the grace of Baptism alone the faith was preserved.

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VATICAN BULLETIN

AUDIENCES

Wednesday, 8 January

Bishop Nunzio Galantino, General Secretary *ad interim* of the Italian Episcopal Conference (CEI)

Thursday, 9 January

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

Archbishop Carlos José Nájuez of Córdoba, Argentina, with Auxiliary: Bishop Pedro Javier Torres, titular Bishop of Castellum in Numidia

H.E. Mr Séverin Mathias Akeo, Ambassador of the Ivory Coast, for the presentation of his Letters of Credence

Hon. Mr Nicola Zingaretti, President of the Region of Lazio

Hon. Mr Ignazio Marino, Mayor of Rome

Prefect Mr Riccardo Carpino, Special Commissioner of the Province of Rome

Friday, 10 January

Cardinal Wilhelm Jacobus Eijk, Archbishop of Utrecht, the Netherlands

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

Saturday, 11 January

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

Archbishop Beniamino Stella, Prefect of the Congregation for the Clergy

Hon. Ms Ileana Argentin

Tuesday, 14 January

Cardinal Óscar Andrés Rodríguez Maradiaga, SDB, Archbishop of Tegucigalpa, Honduras

Cardinal Severino Poletto, Archbishop emeritus of Turin, Italy

Cardinal Peter Kodwo Appiah Turkson, President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace

His Grace Anthony Palmer, Bishop and International Ecclesiastical Officer of Evangelical Episcopal Churches

CHANGES IN EPISCOPATE

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Rodrigo Mejía Saldarriaga, SJ, titular Bishop of Vulturia, from his office as Apostolic Vicar of Soddo, Ethiopia. It was presented in accord with can. 401 § 1 of the Code of Canon Law. He is succeeded by Bishop Tsegaye Kemei Derara, who was until now the Coadjutor Vicar of the said Apostolic Vicariate (12 Jan. 2014).

EASTERN CHURCHES

The Holy Father established the Eparchy of St Thomas the Apostle of Melbourne for Syro-Malabars, Australia, and appointed Bishop Bosco Puthur as the first Eparch, transferring him from the titular episcopal see of Foratiana and from his office as Bishop of the Major Archiepiscopal Curia (11 Jan. 2014).

The Holy Father at the same time appointed Bishop Bosco Puthur, Eparchial Bishop of St Thomas the Apostle of Melbourne for Syro-Malabars to the office of Apostolic Visitor for the Syro-Malabars resident in New Zealand (11 Jan. 2014).

Bishop Puthur, 67, was born in Parappur, India. He was ordained a priest on 27 March 1971. He was ordained a bishop on 13 February

2010, subsequent to his appointment as titular Bishop of Foratiana and Bishop of the Major Archiepiscopal Curia (11 Jan. 2014).

The Holy Father gave his assent to the canonical election by the Synod of Bishops of the Chaldean Church of Fr Habib Al-Naufali as Archbishop of Bassorah for Chaldeans, Iraq; of Fr Yousif Thomas Mirkis, OP, as Archbishop of Kerkuk for Chaldeans; and of Fr Saad Sirop to the office of Auxiliary Bishop of the Patriarchate of Babylon for Chaldeans, Iraq, to whom he assigned the titular episcopal see of Hirta (11 Jan. 2014).

Archbishop-elect Al-Naufali, 53, was born in Baqofa, Iraq. He was ordained a priest on 29 June 1998. He has served in parish ministry and as director of the library of Babel College, as a lawyer of the Eparchial Tribunal of First Appeal, and as a member of the Union of Iraqi Authors and Writers. Since 2003 he has served as head of the Chaldean Mission in London.

Archbishop-elect Mirkis, 64, was born in Mosul, Iraq. He holds a doctorate in theology and history of religions, as well as a degree in ethnology. He was ordained a priest on 26 March 1980. He co-founded the department of philosophy and theology at Babel College, where he taught and was director of studies. He has served as superior of the Dominicans in Baghdad, as editor-in-chief of the magazine *Al-Fiker Al-Masili* and of the publishing house *Al-Nasira*; as a member of the Union of Iraqi journalists, of the Union of third world journalists in Berlin.

Bishop-elect Sirop, 41, was born in Baghdad, Iraq. He was ordained a priest on 13 October 2001. He holds a licence and a doctorate in philosophy. He has served in parish ministry and as director of studies and vice-rector of the department of philosophy and theology at Babel College, as dean of Chaldean priests in Baghdad, and as secretary of the Commission for Christian Youth in Baghdad.

The Holy Father assigned the titular episcopal see of Foratiana to H.E. Mar Bawai Soro, who is serving in the Eparchy of St Peter the Apostle of San Diego for Chaldeans, California, USA (11 Jan. 2014).

The Holy Father appointed Archbishop emeritus Basile Georges Casmoussa of Mosul and Bishop of the Syro-Catholic Patriarchal Curia, as Apostolic Visitor for the Syrian faithful resident in Western Europe (13 Jan. 2014).

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The Holy See and the Convention of the Rights of the Child

A dignity to protect

The Committee of the Convention of the Rights of the Child is meeting from 13-31 January in Geneva in its 65th session. The purpose of the committee is to examine the reports submitted by certain countries (Russia, Germany, Portugal, Yemen) on the implementation of the Convention in their own country. This is requested of all signatories – including the Holy See which in 1990 ratified the Convention and was among the very first to do so – who are obliged to present a report on the implementation of the principles and directives of the Convention. The Committee, said Archbishop Silvano M. Tomasi, head of the Holy See delegation in an interview with Vatican Radio, “presents its observations, suggestions, advice to every state that has ratified the convention”, in order to “start a dialogue between the state involved and the experts”. Like the other states, the Holy See is participating in this exercise, and above all is seizing this important occasion “to reaffirm the value and the procedures of the convention and to accept any good advice that is given, that can be helpful in the protection of children”, stated Archbishop Tomasi.

As explained in a note by Fr Federico Lombardi, the Holy See presented its initial report on 2 March 1994 and the second report (which officially includes the third and the fourth) on 27 September 2011. On this basis – and after receiving suggestions from the group of the non-governing organizations which are participating in the alternative process of evaluation – the Committee asked the Holy See a series of questions to obtain further information with the non-mandatory request that the answers be handed in “preferably” by 1 November 2013. The offices of the Holy See thus continued to work on their answers in November and they were sent to Geneva on 30 November. The date chosen by the Committee to meet with the Holy

See delegation in order to discuss the report and the answers to the supplemental questions was yesterday, 16 January.

Both the report and additional information provided dedicate a large introductory section to explaining and specifying the particular nature of the Holy See as a subject of international law which adheres to the Convention, especially in its distinction and its relation to Vatican City State – also part of the Convention – and in relation to the Catholic Church, as community of faithful spread throughout the world whose members are subject to the laws of the States in which they live and work.

The Church’s commitment to protecting children is well-known, as Archbishop Tomasi highlighted in his address yesterday at the committee’s session. “Various institutions of the Catholic Church around the world”, he said, “have been engaged in assuring a broad range and scale of vital social, health, and educational services, thereby accompanying families to form and protect children.” One need only think of the network of Catholic schools at all levels sponsored by religious orders, dioceses and parishes which provide education “to more than 50 million children worldwide, often delivered in rural areas and among marginalized populations”.

There could be no excuse for any form of violence or exploitation of children. Such crimes can never be justified, whether committed in the home, in schools, in community and sports programmes, in religious organizations and structures. This is the Holy See’s long-standing policy, said Archbishop Tomasi. This was made clear by John Paul II, Benedict XVI and now by Pope Francis who announced the creation of the Commission for the Protection of Minors with the aim of promoting the inviolable dignity of minors: in body, mind and spirit.

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At the General Audience the Pope continues his reflection on the Sacrament of Baptism

All disciples and missionaries

At the General Audience on Wednesday, 15 January, the Holy Father expanded on last week's reflection on Baptism, focusing on its role in the transmission of the faith from generation to generation. He made special mention of the history of Christianity in Japan, where the faith was severely persecuted, the "members of the clergy were expelled and thousands of faithful killed". For centuries, it was by the grace of Baptism alone that the faith was preserved. The following is a translation of the Pope's catechesis which was given in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Good morning!

Last Wednesday we started a brief cycle of catecheses on the Sacraments, beginning with Baptism. And I would like pause again on Baptism today, in order to stress an important fruit of this Sacrament: it makes us members of the Body of Christ and of the People of God. St Thomas Aquinas states that whoever receives Baptism is incorporated in Christ, almost as one of his own limbs, and becomes aggregated to the community of the faithful (cf. *Summa Theologiae*, III, q. 69, art. 5;



Commission of Cardinals overseeing IOR reestablished

The Holy Father has renewed, for another 5 year term, the Commission of Cardinals overseeing the Institute for the Works of Religion (IOR). The Commission is now made up of the following Cardinals: Christoph Schönborn, Archbishop of Vienna; Thomas Christopher Collins, Archbishop of Toronto; Jean-Louis Tauran, President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue; Santos Abril y Castelló, Archbishop of the Papal Basilica of St Mary Major; Archbishop Pietro Parolin, titular Archbishop of Acquapendente and Secretary of State.



q. 70, art. 1), that is, the People of God. In the school of the Second Vatican Council, we say today that Baptism allows us to enter the *People of God*, to become members of a *People on a journey*, a people on pilgrimage through history.

In effect, as from generation to generation life is transmitted, so too from generation to generation, through rebirth at the baptismal font, grace is transmitted, and by this grace the Christian People journeys through time, like a river that irrigates the land and spreads God's blessing throughout the world. From the moment that Jesus said what we heard in the Gospel Reading, the disciples went out to baptize; and from that time until today there is a chain in the transmission of the faith through Baptism. And each one of us is a link in that chain: a step forward, always; like a river that irrigates. Such is the grace of God and Such is our faith, which we must transmit to our sons and daughters, transmit to children, so that once adults, they can do the same for their children. This is what Baptism is. Why? Because Baptism lets us enter this People of God that transmits the faith. This is very important. A People of God that journeys and hands down the faith.

In virtue of Baptism we become *missionary disciples*, called to bring the Gospel to the world (cf. Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 120). "All the baptized, whatever their position in the Church or their level of instruction in the faith, are agents of evangelization.... The new evangelization calls for personal involvement" (*ibid.*) from everyone, the whole of the People of God, a new kind of personal involvement on the part of each of the baptized. The People of God is a *disciple People* – because it receives the faith – and a *missionary People* – because it transmits the faith. And this is what Baptism works in us: it gives us Grace and hands on the faith to us. All of us in the Church are disciples, and this we are forever, our whole lifelong; and we are all missionaries, each in the place the Lord has assigned to him or her. Everyone: the littlest one is also a missionary; and the one who seems to be the greatest is a disciple. But one of you might say: "Bishops are not disciples, Bishops know everything; the Pope knows everything, he is not a disciple". No,

the Bishops and the Pope must also be disciples, because if they are not disciples, they do no good. They cannot be missionaries, they cannot transmit the faith. We must all be disciples and missionaries.

There exists an indissoluble bond between the *mystical* and the *missionary* dimension of the Christian vocation, both rooted in Baptism. "Upon receiving faith and Baptism, we Christians accept the action of the Holy Spirit who leads to confessing Jesus as Son of God and calling God 'Abba', Father.... All of us who are baptized ... are called to live and transmit communion with the Trinity, for evangelization is a calling to participate in the communion of the Trinity" (*Final Document of Aparecida*, n. 157).

No one is saved by himself. We are the community of believers, we are the People of God and in this community we share the beauty of the experience of a love that precedes us all, but that at the same time calls us to be "channels" of grace for one another, despite our limitations and our sins. The communitarian dimension is not just a "frame", an "outline", but an integral part of Christian life, of witness and of evangelization. The Christian faith is born and lives in the Church, and in Baptism families and parishes celebrate the incorporation of a new member in Christ and in his Body which is the Church (cf. *ibid.*, n. 175b).

On the subject of the importance of Baptism for the People of God, the history of the *Christian community in Japan* is exemplary. It suffered severe persecution at the start of the 17th century. There were many martyrs, members of the clergy were expelled and thousands of faithful killed. No priest was left in Japan, they were all expelled. Then the community retreated into hiding, keeping the faith and prayer in seclusion. And when a child was born, the father or mother baptized him or her, because the faithful can baptize in certain circumstances. When, after roughly two and a half centuries, 250 years later, missionaries returned to Japan, thousands of Christians stepped out into the open and the Church was able to flourish again. They survived by the grace of Baptism! This is profound: the People of God transmits the faith, baptizes her children and goes forward. And they maintained, even in

secret, a strong communal spirit, because their Baptism had made of them one single body in Christ: they were isolated and hidden, but they were always members of the People of God, members of the Church. Let us learn a great deal from this history!

SPECIAL GROUPS

I greet all the English-speaking pilgrims present at today's Audience. Upon you and your families I invoke God's blessings of joy and peace!

I greet the priests of the Istituto Secolare della Regalità, the Lions Club with Bishop Luigi Renzo and the Lancieri di Aosta, who have provided aid to immigrants in Lampedusa. I exhort everyone to live out their ecclesial roles with generosity, that the Lord may fill our hearts with the joy that he alone can give.

I address a special greeting to *young people*, to the *sick* and to *newlyweds*. Last Sunday we celebrated the Solemnity of the Baptism of the Lord, a good occasion to rethink our belonging to Christ in the faith of the Church. Dear *young people*, rediscover daily the grace that comes from Baptism. You, dear *sick people*, draw strength from Baptism to confront moments of pain and discouragement. And you, dear *newlyweds*, understand how to translate the commitment of Baptism on your path of family life.

Celebrating Georg Ratzinger's 90th birthday



Wednesday, 15 January, was the 90th birthday of Msgr Georg Ratzinger, the older brother of Benedict XVI. The two celebrated in the heart of the Vatican Gardens at the former Monastery of Mater Ecclesiae, the current residence of the Pope emeritus. But they did not celebrate alone, even the band of the Swiss Guard stopped by to play for the occasion.

Christians hid in the forest to escape persecution in Taketa

Japanese catacombs

CRISTIAN MARTINI GRIMALDI

Taketa – also known as “little Kyoto” – is located in the Oita prefecture at the centre of Kyushu, surrounded by a mountain range at the source of the River Ono. It is an area of natural beauty, known throughout Japan for its thermal waters. These waters were also there in the days of the early missionaries. In fact, some say – though it is only a rumour – that the missionaries had come to Taketa to enjoy the healing baths. What is certain is that a samurai, baptized by Francis Xavier in Oita, went to Taketa where many local farmers were fascinated by his example and began to follow his faith. Initially, more than 200 people converted to Christianity, and Taketa soon became the area with the greatest presence of Christians in Japan. In a city with a population of 40,000 people more than 30,000 chose this new religion.

The missionaries leaving from Nagasaki, the primordial centre of Christianity in Japan, had to pass through here to reach Kyoto, then capital of the state.

Everything changed when the persecutions began. Many people were forced to choose Buddhism to avoid death, while others – it is believed around half – lived their Christian faith in secret. The forest surrounding the city soon became the hiding place where Christians could practice their faith underground. They carved small caves into the mountains where they could gather and pray.

Today it is possible to visit these man-made chapels dug out of the rock. Until recently, only one of them was known to exist. Then, three years ago, the commissioner of the cultural heritage of Taketa, inspired by a novel that he read – the *Code of Xavier*, written by a Japanese author from Osaka whose ancestors lived in Taketa – which blended history and fiction, had an intuition: what if more of these caves existed? With a torch and helmet he began to look through the forest and found seven more.

Upon my arrival in Taketa, I was welcomed by the Mayor Katsuji Syuto and invited to the home of an elderly lady. It was no ordinary dwelling. It was in fact in this building that those who had been suspected of secretly practicing the faith were gathered up and were forced to tread on sacred images (*fumi-e*) depicting the face of Christ or the Virgin Mary. We know this with certainty because it is precisely here that one of the many underground chapels scattered around the territory of Taketa at that time was discovered. The floor, on which sacred symbols were trampled, collapsed under the enormous weight of the people who were gathered here, exposing another room – probably a private wine cellar – which was used by Christians for their ceremonies. On that occasion, the leader of the city was immediately sentenced to death.

The owner led the way to the basement. I noticed that just above the entrance there was an image of a Shinto deity. It is a sign that the law, years later, had the upper hand: what was likely a house belonging to a Christian family is today a dwelling distinguished by the signs of what was then the dominant religion.

But this basement was only one of many hiding places that the Christians were forced to invent to avoid being discovered. Persecuted Christians gathered mostly in the forests of Taketa, in groups of 20 or 30, so as not to arouse suspicion from the authorities. They would celebrate Mass at midnight, often assisted by a few brave missionaries who lived hidden in one of the mountain caves. It is interesting to imagine what one might have seen at one of these meetings: candles and torches in the darkness, moving in unison through the forest, they must have taken the appearances of so many mysterious fireflies in the night. Thousands risked their lives and everything in order to draw closer to a “light” even more splendid and mysterious.

Taketa's are true open catacombs. To date, eight have been found, but it is believed that there are at least one hundred.

It is because of the conformation of Taketa's volcanic rock, which is very resistant, that after four centur-

ies we can visit in the middle of the forest these man-made caves that Christians used to sustain their faith when everything around them was threatening its survival.

Other caves exist in the vicinity of Nagasaki that were used for similar purposes, but they are natural caves. No one dug them out. Are they not a living and clear mark left behind by faithful in search of that stillness which is a natural haven for the constant renewal of one's most intimate spirituality.

The man who discovered them was called Goto Atsusi. His ancestors were hidden Christians. The idea of associating these places with Christianity with these places came to him as he noted that the caves were located precisely on ground we known to have belonged to a Christian samurai. “Some of the caves were already known but were thought to be dedicated to a Shinto deity”, says Goto, a man who is tall even by Western standards, good-looking and about 40 years of age. “For example”, he continued, “the cult of the fox, *inari* in Japanese. *Inari* was an inscription often found in these caves. It is thought that it was a



One of the grottos made by persecuted Christians

transformation of the acronym INRI. Although it is more probable that the opposite occurred. Or that Christians had left the inscription INRI and then, after the end of the persecutions, those same inscriptions were transformed into the cult of the fox. It is likely that one of the faithful Shinto changed the writings to reclaim those places for their religion, or perhaps to conceal the existence of areas which were devoted to the religion of the “enemy”. Then there is a precise model that can be

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Now a global crisis

Threats to religious freedom

SAYEEDA WARSI*

Since taking on my role in 2012 as the first ever UK Minister for faith, I have made the issue of religious freedom a personal priority. The threat to religious freedom, I believe, has become a global crisis. As a result, the UK government has elevated it to a key priority in our human rights work, and, more broadly, we have shown that we understand the huge importance of religion at home and abroad.

An illustration of that approach came when I led the largest ever UK ministerial delegation to the Holy See, nearly two years ago. My speech to the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy focused on the need for people to feel stronger in their religious identities, more confident in their beliefs – to recognise that accepting and even defending another faith does not diminish your own. Given the continued plight of Christians in the Middle East and beyond, that argument has become more relevant, and the need to heed it more urgent.

The bitterest irony of this persecution – ostracism, discrimination, abuse, forced conversion, torture and even murder – is that it is taking place in a region where Christianity has its roots. Sometimes these cases are examples of collect-

ive punishment: people lashing out at Christian minorities in response to events happening many miles away. Other times, a Christian is just a convenient ‘other’ – a scapegoat.

What is taking place is not acceptable. The UK government is committed to standing up to such persecution, and that requires international political consensus. To that end, last September in New York I convened a second meeting of international leaders to discuss what more politicians can do to promote freedom of religion or belief and fight religious intolerance within our societies. In February I met the Pope of the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria Theodoros II in Cairo and in October I met with Patriarch Gregorios III to discuss the plight of Christians in Syria and I explained our readiness to speak up on behalf of all who are targeted because of their religion or belief.

In all this I believe we should be making a very powerful argument: that not only is religious freedom a good thing in itself; it is a good thing for economies and societies to progress and flourish. This formed the basis of my speech at Georgetown University last year, when I argued that we must appeal both to states, groups’ and indi-

viduals’ moral obligations, and to their desire for prosperity.

In doing so, we must make sure our approach is not sectarian in itself. Christians defending Christians, Muslims defending Muslims – that will not put a stop to the rising tide of religious persecution. Instead we need a cross-faith response to the problem. That will be the primary focus of an international conference, the first of its kind, which I will be hosting in 2014. As Pope Francis said in *Evangelii Gaudium*, “interreligious dialogue is a necessary condition for peace in the world, and so it is a duty for Christians as well as other religious communities”. History teaches us that we have only defeated intolerance and hatred when we have all come together, whatever the cause. The majority communities need to defend the minorities.

So that is our approach: non-sectarian; promoting the benefits of religious pluralism; demonstrating the fact that accepting and co-existing with another faith is in no way a diminishment of your own faith, but, in fact, the most powerful demonstration of confidence in your beliefs.

*Baroness, Minister of the United Kingdom for Faith and Communities

At the Angelus the Pope announces the creation of 19 Cardinals at the upcoming Consistory

Sign of the universality of the Church

Pope Francis will create 19 new Cardinals at the Consistory to be held on 22 February. He made this announcement on Sunday, 12 January, to the faithful gathered in St Peter's Square following the Angelus. In his reflection before the Marian prayer, the Pope had also encouraged the faithful to commit themselves to works of charity towards the less fortunate during "this time of mercy". The following is a translation of the Holy Father's reflection, which was delivered in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Good morning!

Today is the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. This morning I baptized 32 infants. With you I thank the Lord for these creatures and for every new life. I am glad to baptize babies. I like it very much! Every newborn child is a gift of joy and hope, and each baby that is baptized is a miracle of faith and a celebration for the family of God.

Today's page from the Gospel emphasizes that, when Jesus had received baptism from John in the River Jordan, "the heavens were opened" to him (Mt 3:16). This fulfills the prophecies. In fact, there is an invocation which the liturgy has us repeat during the Season of Advent: "O that thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down" (Is 64:1). If the heavens remain closed, our horizon in this earthly life is dark and without hope. Instead, in celebrating Christmas, once again faith has given us the certainty that the heavens have been rent with the coming of Christ. And on the day of the baptism of Christ we continue to contemplate the heavens opened. The manifestation of the Son of God on earth marks the beginning of the great time of mercy, after sin had closed the heavens, raising itself as a barrier between the human being and his Creator. With the birth of Jesus the heavens open! God gives us in Christ the guarantee of an indestructible love. From the moment the Word became flesh it is therefore possible to see the open heavens. It was possible for the shepherds of Bethlehem, for the Magi of the East, for the Baptist, for Jesus' Apostles, and for St Stephen, the first martyr, who exclaimed: "Behold, I see the heavens opened!" (Acts 7:56). And it is possible for each one of us, if we allow ourselves to be suffused with God's love, which is given to us for the first time in Baptism by means of the Holy Spirit. Let us allow ourselves to be invaded by God's love! This is the great time of mercy! Do not forget it: this is the great time of Mercy!

When Jesus received the baptism of repentance from John the Baptist, showing solidarity with the repentant people – He without sin and with no need for conversion – God the Father made his voice heard from heaven: "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased" (v. 17). Jesus receives approval from the heavenly Father,

who sent him precisely that he might accept to share our condition, our poverty. Sharing is the true way to love. Jesus does not dissociate himself from us, he considers us brothers and sisters and he shares with us. And so he makes us sons and daughters, together with him, of God the Father. This is the revelation and source of true love. And this is the great time of mercy!

Does it not seem to you that in our own time extra fraternal sharing and love is needed? Does it not seem to you that we all need extra charity? Not the sort that is content with extemporaneous help which does not involve or stake anything, but that charity that shares, that takes on the hardship and suffering of a brother. What flavour life acquires when we allow ourselves to be inundated by God's love!

Let us ask the Holy Virgin to support us by her intercession in our commitment to follow Christ on the way of faith and charity, the path traced out by our Baptism.

After the Angelus, the Holy Father said the following:

I extend my cordial greeting to you all, especially to the families and faithful who have come from various parishes in Italy and other countries, as well as the associations and various groups.

Letter to Cardinals-elect

With a simple and humble heart

The following is an English translation of the letter Pope Francis wrote personally in Italian to each of the Cardinals who will be created at the Consistory on 22 February.



Dear Brother,

On this the day on which your designation to take part in the College of Cardinals is made public, I would like to send you my warm greeting as well as the assurance of my closeness and of my prayer. I hope that, as a member of the Church of Rome, "clothed in the virtue and sentiments of the Lord Jesus (cf. Rom 13:14), you may help me with fraternal efficacy in my service to the Universal Church.

The Cardinalate does not signify a promotion, an honour nor a

Today I wish to address a special thought to the parents who have brought their children to Baptism and to those who are preparing for the Baptism for their child. I join in the joy of these families, with them I thank the Lord, and I pray that the Baptism of these children may help their parents to rediscover the beauty of the faith and return in a new way to the Sacraments and to the community.

As already announced, on 22 February, the Feast of the Chair of St Peter, I will have the joy of holding a Consistory, during which I shall name 16 new Cardinals, who – belonging to 12 nations from every part of the world – represent the profound ecclesial relationship



between the Church of Rome and the other Churches spread throughout the world.

The following day I shall preside at a solemn concelebration with the new Cardinals, while on 20 and 21 February I will hold a Consistory with all of the Cardinals in order to reflect on the topic of the family.

Here are the names of the new Cardinals:

1. Archbishop Pietro Parolin, titular Archbishop of Acquafredda, Secretary of State.

2. Archbishop Lorenzo Baldisseri, titular Archbishop of Diocletiana, Secretary General of the Synod of Bishops.

3. Archbishop Gerhard Ludwig Müller, Bishop emeritus of Regensburg, Germany; Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

4. Archbishop Beniamino Stella, titular Archbishop of Midila, Prefect of the Congregation for the Clergy.

5. Archbishop Vincent Gerard Nichols of Westminster, Great Britain.

6. Archbishop Leopoldo José Brenes Solórzano of Managua, Nicaragua.

7. Archbishop Gérald Cyprien Lacroix of Quebec, Canada.

8. Archbishop Jean-Pierre Kutwa of Abidjan, the Ivory Coast.

9. Archbishop Orani João Tempesta, O. Cist., of São Sebastião do Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

10. Archbishop Gualtiero Bassetti of Perugia-Città della Pieve, Italy.

11. Archbishop Mario Aurelio Poli of Buenos Aires, Argentina.

12. Archbishop Andrew Yeom Soo jung of Seoul, Korea.

13. Archbishop Ricardo Ezzati Andrello, SDB, of Santiago de Chile, Chile.

14. Archbishop Philippe Nakellen-tuba Ouédraogo of Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.

15. Archbishop Orlando B. Quevedo, OMI, of Cotabato, the Philippines.

16. Bishop Chibly Langlois of Les Cayes, Haiti.

In addition to these members of the College of Cardinals I shall appoint three Archbishops emeritus for their distinguished service to the Holy See and the Church:

– Archbishop Loris Francesco Capovilla, titular Archbishop of Mesembria;

– Archbishop emeritus Fernando Sebastián Aguillar, CME, of Pamplona, Spain;

– Archbishop emeritus Kelvin Edward Felix of Castries, the West Indies.

Let us pray for these new Cardinals so that, clothed in virtue and the sentiments of the Lord Jesus, the Good Shepherd, they may effectively help the Bishop of Rome in his service to the universal Church.

I wish everyone a good Sunday and a good lunch. Goodbye!

Francis

From the Vatican, 12 January 2014

To the diplomatic corps the Pope expresses his wish for an end to violence in Syria, in the Middle East and in Africa

The royal road of peace

Fraternity as the foundation and pathway to peace. Pope Francis took up the central theme of his message for this year's World Day of Peace in his address to members of the diplomatic corps accredited to the Holy See, whom he received in audience on 13 January, in the Vatican's Hall of Kings. The following is the English text of the Pope's address, which was given in Italian.

Your Eminence, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is now a long-established tradition that at the beginning of each new year the Pope meets the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See to offer his greetings and good wishes, and to share some reflections close to his heart as a pastor concerned for the joys and sufferings of humanity. Today's meeting, therefore, is a source of great joy. It allows me to extend to you and your families, and to the civil authorities and the peoples whom you represent, my heartfelt best wishes for a year filled with blessings and peace.

Before all else, I thank you Dean, Jean-Claude Michel, who has spoken in your name of the affection and esteem which binds your nations to the Apostolic See. I am happy to see you here in such great numbers, after having met you for the first time just a few days after my election. In the meantime, many new Ambassadors have taken up their duties and I welcome them once again. Among those who have left us, I cannot fail to mention, as your Dean has already done, the late Ambassador Alejandro Valladares Lanza, for many years the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, whom the Lord called to himself several months ago.

The year just ended was particularly eventful, not only in the life of the Church but also in the context of the relations which the Holy See maintains with states and international organizations. I recall in particular the establishment of diplomatic relations with South Sudan, the signing of basic or specific accords with Cape Verde, Hungary and Chad, and the ratification of the accord with Equatorial Guinea signed in Rome. On the regional level too, the presence of the Holy See has expanded, both in Central America, where it became an Extra-Regional Observer to the *Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana*, and in Africa, with its accreditation as the first Permanent Observer to the Economic Community of West African States.

In my Message for the World Day of Peace, dedicated to *fraternity as the foundation and pathway to peace*, I observed that "fraternity is generally first learned within the family..." (*Message for the 2014 World Day of Peace*, 8 December 2013, 1), for the family "by its vocation... is meant to spread its love to the world around it" (*ibid.*) and to contribute to the growth of that spirit of service and sharing which builds peace (cf. *ibid.*, 10). This is the message of the Grib, where we see the Holy Family, not alone and isolated from the world, but surrounded by shepherds and the Magi, that is by an open community in which there is room for

everyone, poor and rich alike, those near and those afar. In this way we can appreciate the insistence of my beloved predecessor Benedict XVI that "the language of the family is a language of peace" (Benedict XVI, *Message for the 2008 World Day of Peace*, 8 December 2007, 3: *AAS* 100 [2008], 39).

Sadly, this is often not the case, as the number of broken and troubled families is on the rise, not simply because of the weakening sense of belonging so typical of today's world, but also because of the adverse conditions in which many families are forced to live, even to the point where they lack basic means of subsistence. There is a need for suitable policies aimed at supporting, assisting and strengthening the family!

It also happens that the elderly are looked upon as a burden, while young people lack clear prospects for their lives. Yet the elderly and the young are the hope of humanity. The elderly bring with them wisdom born of experience; the young open us to the future and prevent us from becoming self-absorbed (cf. Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 108). It is prudent to keep the elderly from being ostracized from the life of society, so as to preserve the living memory of each people. It is likewise important to invest in the young through suitable initiatives which can help them to find employment and establish homes. We

must not stifle their enthusiasm! I vividly recall my experience at the World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro. I met so many happy young people! What great hope and expectation is present in their eyes and in their prayers! What a great thirst for life and a desire for openness to others! Being closed and isolated always makes for a stifling, heavy atmosphere which sooner or later ends up creating sadness and oppression. What is needed instead is a shared commitment to favouring a culture of encounter, for only those able to reach out to others are capable of bearing fruit, creating bonds, creating bonds of communion, radiating joy and being peacemakers.

The scenes of destruction and death which we have witnessed in the past year confirm all this – if ever we needed such confirmation. How much pain and desperation are caused by self-centredness which gradually takes the form of envy, selfishness, competition and the thirst for power and money! At times it seems that these realities are destined to have the upper hand. Christmas, on the other hand, inspires in us Christians the certainty that the final, definitive word belongs to the Prince of Peace, who changes "swords into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks" (cf. Is 2:4), transforming selfishness into self-giving and revenge into forgiveness.

It is with this confidence that I wish to look to the year ahead. I continue to

be hopeful that the conflict in Syria will finally come to an end. Concern for that beloved people, and a desire to avert the worsening of violence, moved me last September to call for a day of fasting and prayer. Through you I heartily thank all those in your countries – public authorities and people of good will – who joined in this initiative. What is presently needed is a renewed political will to end the conflict. In this regard, I express my hope that the Geneva 2 Conference, to be held on 22 January, will mark the beginning of the desired peace process. At the same time, full respect for humanitarian law remains essential. It is unacceptable that unarmed civilians, especially children, become targets. I also encourage all parties to promote and ensure in every way possible the provision of urgently-needed aid to much of the population, without overlooking the praiseworthy effort of those countries – especially Lebanon and Jordan – which have generously welcomed to their territory numerous refugees from Syria.

Remaining in the Middle East, I note with concern the tensions affecting the region in various ways. I am particularly concerned by the ongoing political problems in Lebanon, where a climate of renewed cooperation between the different components of civil society and the political powers is essential for avoiding the further hostilities which would undermine the stability of the country. I think too of Egypt, with its need to regain social harmony, and Iraq, which struggles to attain the peace and stability for which it hopes. At the same time, I note with satisfaction the significant progress made in the dialogue between Iran and the Group of 5+1 on the nuclear issue.

Everywhere, the way to resolve open questions must be that of diplomacy and dialogue. This is the royal road already indicated with utter clarity by Pope Benedict XV when he urged the leaders of the European nations to make "the moral force of law" prevail over the "material force of arms" in order to end that "needless carnage" (cf. *Pope XV, Letter to the Leaders of the Peoples at War*, 1 August 1917: *AAS* 9 [1917], 421-423), which was the First World War, whose centenary occurs

this year. What is needed is courage "to go beyond the surface of the conflict" (Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 228) and to consider others in their deepest dignity, so that unity will prevail over conflict and it will be "possible to build communion amid disagreement" (*ibid.*). In this regard, the resumption of peace talks between Israelis and Palestinians is a positive sign, and I express my hope that both parties will resolve, with the support of the international community, to take courageous decisions aimed at finding a just and lasting solution to a conflict which urgently needs to end. I myself intend to make a pilgrimage of peace to the Holy Land in the course of this year. The exodus of Christians from the Middle East and North Africa continues to be a source of concern. They want to continue to be a part of the social, political and cultural life of countries which they helped to build, and they desire to contribute to the common good of societies where they wish to be fully accepted as agents of peace and reconciliation.

In other parts of Africa as well, Christians are called to give witness to God's love and mercy. We must never cease to do good, even when it is difficult and demanding, and when we endure acts of intolerance if not genuine persecution. In vast areas of Nigeria violence persists, and much innocent blood continues to be spilt. I think above all of the Central African Republic, where much suffering has been caused as a result of the country's tensions, which have frequently led to devastation and death. As I assure you of my prayers for the victims and the many refugees, forced to live in dire poverty, I express my hope that the concern of the international community will help to bring an end to violence, a return to the rule of law and guaranteed access to humanitarian aid, also in the remotest parts of the country. For her part, the Catholic Church will continue to assure her presence and cooperation, working generously to help people in every possible way and, above all, to rebuild a climate of reconciliation and of peace among all groups in society. Reconciliation and peace are likewise fundamental priorities in other parts of Africa. I think in particular of



Mali, where we nonetheless note the promising restoration of the country's democratic structures, and of South Sudan, where, on the contrary, political instability has lately led to many deaths and a new humanitarian crisis.

The Holy See is also closely following events in Asia, where the Church desires to share the joys and hopes of all the peoples of that vast and noble continent. On this, the fiftieth anniversary of diplomatic relations with the Republic of Korea, I wish to explore from God the gift of reconciliation on the peninsula, and I trust that, for the good of all the Korean people, the interested parties will tirelessly seek out points of agreement and possible solutions. Asia, in fact, has a long history of peaceful coexistence between its different civil, ethnic and religious groups. Such reciprocal respect needs to be encouraged, especially given certain troubling signs that it is weakening, particularly where growing attitudes of prejudice, for allegedly religious reasons, are tending to deprive Christians of their liberties and to jeopardize civil coexistence. The Holy See looks, instead, with lively hope to the signs of openness coming from countries of great religious and cultural traditions, with whom it wishes to cooperate in the pursuit of the common good.

Peace is also threatened by every denial of human dignity, firstly the lack of access to adequate nutrition. We cannot be indifferent to those suffering from hunger, especially children, when we think of how much food is wasted every day in many parts of the world immersed in what I have often termed "the throwaway culture". Unfortunately, what is thrown away is not only food and dispensable objects, but often human beings themselves, who are discarded as "unnecessary". For example, it is frightful even to think there are children, victims of abortion, who will never see the light of day; children being used as soldiers, abused and killed in armed conflicts; and children being bought and sold in that terrible form of modern slavery which is human trafficking, which is a crime against humanity.

Nor can we be unmoved by the tragedies which have forced so many people to flee from famine, violence and oppression, particularly in the Horn of Africa and in the Great Lakes Region. Many of these are living as fugitives or refugees in camps where they are no longer seen as persons but as nameless statistics. Others, in the hope of a better life, have undertaken perilous journeys which not infrequently end in tragedy. I think in particular of the many migrants from Latin America

bound for the United States, but above all of all those from Africa and the Middle East who seek refuge in Europe.

Still vivid in my memory is the brief visit I made to Lampedusa last July, to pray for the numerous victims of the refugee crisis in the Mediterranean. Sadly, there is a general indifference in the face of these tragedies, which is a dramatic sign of the loss of that "sense of responsibility for our brothers and sisters" (*Homily at Mass in Lampedusa*, 8 July 2013), on which every civil society is based. On that occasion I was also able to observe the hospitality and dedication shown by so many people. It is my hope that the Italian people, whom I regard with affection, not least for the common roots which unite us, will renew their praiseworthy commitment of solidarity towards the weakest and most vulnerable, and, with generous and coordinated efforts by citizens and institutions, overcome present difficulties and regain their long-standing climate of constructive social creativity.

Finally, I wish to mention another threat to peace, which arises from the greedy exploitation of environmental resources. Even if "nature is at our disposition" (*Message for the 2014 World Day of Peace*, 8 December 2013, 9), all too often we do not "respect it or consider it a gracious gift which we must care for and set at the service of our brothers and sisters, including future generations" (*ibid.*). Here too what is crucial is responsibility on the part of all in pursuing, in a spirit of fraternity, policies respectful of this earth which is our common home. I recall a popular saying: "God always forgives, we sometimes forgive, but when nature – creation – is mistreated, she never forgives!". We have also witnessed the devastating effects of several recent natural disasters. In particular, I would mention once more the numerous victims and the great devastation caused in the Philippines and other countries of Southeast Asia as a result of typhoon Haiyan.

Your Eminence, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Pope Paul VI noted that peace "is not simply the absence of warfare, based on a precarious balance of power; it is fashioned by efforts directed day after day towards the establishment of an order willed by God, with a more perfect justice among men and women" (Encyclical Letter *Populorum Progressio*, 26 March 1967, 76: *AAS* 59 [1967], 294-295). This is the spirit which guides the Church's activity throughout the world, carried out by priests, missionaries and lay faithful who with great dedication give freely of

themselves, not least in a variety of educational, healthcare and social welfare institutions, in service to the poor, the sick, orphans and all those in need of help and comfort. On the basis of this "loving attentiveness" (Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 199) the Church cooperates with all institutions concerned for the good of individuals and communities.

At the beginning of this new year, then, I assure you once more of the readiness of the Holy See, and of the Secretariat of State in particular, to cooperate with your countries in fostering those bonds of fraternity which are a reflection of God's love and the basis of concord and peace. Upon you, your families and the peoples you represent, may the Lord's blessings descend in abundance. Thank you.

Relations with 180 States

There are currently 180 states which maintain diplomatic relations with the Holy See. The European Union, the Sovereign Military Order of Malta and the State of Palestine – a mission of special character – also enjoy diplomatic relations. On 22 February 2013 diplomatic relations were established with South Sudan, at the level of an apostolic nunciature and embassy. With regards to international organizations, on 21 January 2013 the Holy See became an extra-regional observer of the Central American Integration System (SICA) and on 12 December of this year it was accredited as the first permanent observer to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). There are 82 embassies which have offices located in Rome, including the European Union and the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, the mission of the State of Palestine, the League of Arab States, the International Organization for Migration and the Office of the High Commissioner of the United Nations for Refugees. This year the embassies of Armenia and Ghana were re-located to Rome. Over the course of 2013 two agreements were signed regarding the legal status of the Catholic Church in Cape Verde (10 June) and in Chad (6 November). On 21 October an agreement which was signed on 20 June 1997 was altered regarding the financing of Church activities and on several issues of patrimony.

Papal politics

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

in Syria, where every-day war sows destruction, atrocities and death. The day of fasting and prayer which the Pope called for in September was important and gave rise to unexpected consensus, but now "a renewed political will" is urgently needed to end the conflict, as the Geneva Conference approaches. And while the diplomats listened to the papal address, behind closed doors a meeting was being held at the Pontifical Academy for Sciences on the tragic situation in Syria.

Regarding the international scene, and the concern over tension and violence in Lebanon, Iraq and Egypt, in Africa and Asia, one notices that the effort to assist millions of refugees fleeing from Syria to Lebanon and Jordan, is having positive results, in addition to the progress being made on the nuclear situation in Iran. This is the royal road which the Holy See never tires of indicating; indeed, the Holy See has been actively working for over a century on the frontiers of peace. For this reason, he takes up Benedict XV's call to end the "needless carnage" caused by the tremendous international conflicts, whose centenary Pope Francis also recalled.

With trust and firmness, the Pope pointed to every glimmer of hope, but did not shy away from denoun-

cing recurring and persistent tragedies which continue to claim countless lives, including many children, due to hunger, abortion, war and human trafficking; all of which are "crimes against humanity". Peace – Paul VI used to repeat, as his successor recalled today – is not simply the absence of warfare but is "fashioned by efforts directed day after day". And yet it is necessary for everyone to contribute to building peace, without distinction.

G.M.V.



Audience for the Gentlemen of the Papal Household

With gentility and friendliness

The Gentlemen of the Papal Household are lay attendants in the Apostolic Palace, who serve in a ceremonial capacity, greeting and escorting dignitaries who are granted a private audience with the Holy

Father. On Friday, 10 January, in the Clementine Hall, Pope Francis received them in audience with their families to thank them for their service. The following is a translation of the Pope's greeting from the Italian.

Dear Friends,

I greet you all and I thank you for your service, which consists in welcoming and accompanying the many dignitaries who come to meet the Successor of Peter, as well as being present at official ceremonies and receptions. Dear Gentlemen, the various authorit-

ies and other dignitaries who come to visit the See of Peter have their first contact with, and form their first impression of, this Household through you. As your title indicates, the qualities of gentility and friendliness go with your role of setting people at ease. These human qualities find their most authentic source in a

life inspired by faith, which gives a testimony that is consistent with the Gospel and untainted by a worldly manner.

We are already at the end of the Christmas Season and we all have been moved by the wonder of God made Child in the Grotto of Bethlehem, by the amazement that the Son of God became, for love of us, the Son of Mary, that he made himself small and fragile. We should be vigilant and pray that this interior light does not fade and that we can carry in our daily life, in the family and at work, the joy of the faith, which is expressed in charity, in benevolence and in tenderness.

I entrust to Mary, the Mother of God and our Mother, all of you and your families, that she may accompany and sustain you. I bless you and I wish you a peaceful and prosperous year. And let us pray for one another!



Millions visit the Vatican Museums

Good but disconcerting news

Nearly 5.5 million people (5,459,000 to be exact) visited the Vatican Museums in 2013. This is both good and disconcerting news. Good because it confirms the exceptional international attraction of the Pope's museum (the Uffizi – Italy's most popular art collection – boasts about 2 million visitors a year). And disconcerting because such a high number of people requires serious study due to the sheer "human pressure": the wear and tear on the facility, an increased risk of damage, overcrowding and stress on the visitors.

Clearly we cannot close our doors nor cap the number of entries; it may be the only chance for some who come from Chile, Australia, Canada or Brazil, to Rome to see the Sistine Chapel and Raphael Rooms, the *Laocoön* and the *Apollo Belvedere*. We can, however, regulate the flow of visitors by channeling them throughout the entire day, extending opening hours and limiting lines through online-booking. These provisions are already in place and have gradually been tested and refined in recent years. If we had not made such provisions, we would never have been able to manage the 5.5 million people in 2013. This number would have simply overwhelmed us.

The other fundamental commitment, to which last year's budget compels us, is the need for constant and methodical upkeep of the collections.

The ordinary and additional maintenance, preventive and planned conservation must be ever more strengthened.

We must observe the "good practices", which alone allow the Museums to face the challenge of visitors by budgeting for them. (*Antonio Paolucci*)

VATICAN BULLETIN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

Archbishop Casmooussa, 75, was born in Karakoche, Iraq. He was ordained a priest on 10 June 1962. He was ordained a bishop on 9 December 1999, subsequent to the Synod of Syro-Catholic Church electing him Archbishop of Mosul. In 2010 he was transferred to the office of Bishop of the Patriarchal Curia of Antioch for Syrians.

The Holy Father established the Apostolic Exarchate for Maronite faithful resident in Western and Central Africa with the see in Ibadan, Nigeria. He appointed Fr Simon Faddoul as the first Apostolic Exarch, without the title of bishop. Until now he has been President of *Caritas-Liban* (13 Jan. 2014).

The Holy Father appointed Fr Simon Faddou of the said Apostolic Exarchy as Apostolic Visitor for the Maronite faithful of Southern Africa (13 Jan. 2014).

Fr Faddoul, 56, was born in Dik El Mehdi, Lebanon. He holds a licence in education and teacher training and in education and scholastic administration, as well as a doctorate in education and administration. He was ordained a priest on 9 August 1987. He has served in parish

ministry in the United States, Cyprus and Lebanon.

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Georges Chihane, as Eparchial Bishop of Cairo and of Sudan for Maronites, as Apostolic Visitor for Maronite faithful in the countries of North Africa which are not part of his eparchial territory (13 Jan. 2014).

Chorbishop Chihane, 60, was born in Haret Sakhr, Lebanon. He was ordained a priest on 12 August 1979. He holds a diploma in pastoral catechetics. He has served in parish ministry in Lebanon, France and Jordan. He also served in *Caritas* in Kesrouan and as head of vocations in the Vicariate of Jounieh. He is a chaplain of the Neocatecumenal Way.

PONTIFICAL COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA

On Wednesday, 15 January 2014 the Holy Father adopted the following measures for the Pontifical Commission for Latin America:

- he confirmed Cardinal Marc Ouellet, PSS, as President;
- he confirmed Prof. Guzmán Carriquiry as Secretary;
- he appointed Archbishop Lorenzo Baldisseri, titular Archbishop-

of Diocletiana, General Secretary of the Synod of Bishops, as Counsellor;

– he confirmed Cardinal Antonio Cañizares Llovera, Cardinal William Joseph Levada, Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, Cardinal Francesco Montersisi, Archbishop Jean-Louis Brugues, OP, Archbishop José Horacio Gómez, Bishop Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo as Counsellors;

– he confirmed as Members: Cardinal Nicolás de Jesús López Rodríguez, Cardinal Jaime Lucas Ortega y Alamino, Cardinal Norberto Rivera Carrera, Cardinal Julio Terrazas Sandoval, C.S.S.R., Cardinal Oscar Andrés Rodríguez Maradiaga, SDB, Cardinal Juan Luis Cipriani Thorne, Cardinal Cláudio Hummes, OFM, Cardinal Jorge Liberato Urosa Savino, Cardinal Francisco Robles Ortega, Cardinal Odilo Pedro Scherer, Cardinal Paolo Romeo, Cardinal Raymundo Damasceno Assis, Cardinal Rubén Salazar Gómez, Cardinal Stanisław Ryłko, Archbishop Emilio Carlos Berlie Belaunzarán, Archbishop Mario Antonio Cargnello, Archbishop Héctor Rubén Aguer, Archbishop Nicolás Cotugno Fanizzi, SDB, Archbishop Héctor Miguel Cabrejos Vidarte, OFM, Archbishop Geraldo Lyrio Rocha, Archbishop Leopoldo José Brenes Solórzano, Archbishop José Guadalupe Martín Rábago,

Archbishop Orlando Antonio Corrales García, Archbishop Juan José Asenjo Pelegrina and Bishop Franz-Josef Overbeck.

START OF MISSION

On Tuesday, 5 November 2013, Archbishop Mirosław Adamczyk, titular Archbishop of Otricoli, began his mission as Apostolic Nuncio to The Gambia with the presentation of his Letters of Credence to H.E. Sheikh Prof. Alhaji Dr Yahya A.J.J. Jammeh, President of the Republic.

On Wednesday, 20 November 2013, Archbishop Nikola Eterović, titular Bishop of Cibale, began his mission as Apostolic Nuncio to the Federal Republic of Germany with the presentation of his Letters of Credence to H.E. Mr Joachim Gauck, President of the Republic.

NECROLOGY

Bishop emeritus Salvatore Nicolosi of Noto, Italy, at age 91 (10 Jan. 2014)

Bishop emeritus Alphonsus Augustus Sowada, OSC, of Agats, Indonesia, at age 80 (11 Jan. 2014).

Bishop emeritus Francis Deniau of Nevers, France, at age 77 (12 Jan. 2014).

To Orthodox students sponsored by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity

Not guests but brothers

On Saturday, 11 January, the Pope greeted the clergy and laity from the Orthodox Churches and Eastern Orthodox Churches, who are completing their theological formation in Rome at Catholic institutions. The audience marked the 50th anniversary of the institution of the Catholic Committee for Cultural Collaboration with Orthodox Churches and Eastern Orthodox Churches. The following is a translation of the Pope's address, which was given in Italian.

Your Eminence,
Dear Brothers in the Episcopate,
Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am meeting with you at the start of this year, in which we recall the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the *Catholic Committee for Cultural Collaboration with the Orthodox Churches and the Eastern Orthodox Churches*. I greet especially Cardinal Kurt Koch, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, under whose direct responsibility the *Committee* acts, and I thank him for his words, as well as

Bishop Johan Bonny of Antwerp, President of the *Committee*.

The Second Vatican Council had not yet concluded, when Paul VI established the *Catholic Committee for Cultural Collaboration*. The path of reconciliation and fraternal renewal between the Churches, wonderfully marked by the first historic meeting between Pope Paul VI and the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras, also needed the experience of friendship and sharing that had been born from the mutual understanding of the exponents of the different Churches, and in particular among the young people entering sacred ministry. Thus was born, by the initiative of the Eastern Section of the then Secretariat for the Promotion of Christian Unity, this *Committee*. Today as then, with the help of generous benefactors, it allocates scholarships to members of the clergy and lay people in the Orthodox Churches and Eastern Orthodox Churches who wish to complete their theological studies at academic institutions of the Catholic Church,



and sustains other joint ecumenical projects.

I express my warm thanks to all the benefactors who have supported and continue to support the *Committee*. With gratitude I greet the members of the Management Board, convened in Rome for the annual reunion. Without your valuable contribution, this work would not be possible. Therefore, I encourage you to continue in your work. May God bless you and make fruitful your much appreciated collaboration.

I address a special greeting to you, dear students, who are completing your theological studies in Rome. Your time with us is important between the Churches of today

and especially of tomorrow. I thank God for giving me this beautiful occasion to meet with you and to tell you that the Bishop of Rome wishes you well. I wish for each one of you a joyous experience of the Church and of the City of Rome, enriching both from the spiritual and cultural aspects, and may you feel not as guests but as brothers among brothers. I am sure, on the other hand, that by your presence you are an asset to the communities of study which you attend.

Dear brothers and sisters, I assure you of my remembrance in prayer, and I trust also in yours for me and for my ministry. May the Lord bless you and may Our Lady protect you.

Encouragement for those working with the disabled



Pope Francis encourages all people who work with the disabled, assuring them of his interest in initiatives which aim to support those with disabilities. The Holy Father expressed this on Saturday morning, 11 January, during his meeting with Hon. Ileana Argentin. Ms Argentin, a disabled person herself, known for her commitment, qualification and skill in the field – first in the City of Rome and now in Italy's Parliament. She recently wrote a letter to the Pope and he responded by inviting her to the Apostolic Palace.

They discussed, among other things, the issue of how to assist parents of children who are seriously disabled and who are concerned about the future of their children after their own deaths. They also touched on the difficulties that these parents face in taking care of their other children. Furthermore they examined how to overcome the structural obstacles in public buildings and churches which limit the mobility of the disabled.

Archbishop Parolin with U.S. Secretary of State

John Kerry in the Vatican

On Tuesday morning, 14 January, Archbishop Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State, met with John Kerry, US Secretary of State, at the Vatican. The important and productive meeting lasted for an hour and forty minutes. H.E. Mr Kenneth Francis Hackett, US Ambassador to the Holy See, along with three staff members of the US Secretary of State, attended the meeting. Accompanying Archbishop Parolin were Archbishop Dominique Mamberti, Secretary for Relations with States, and two officials versed in the topics under discussion.

In view of the Geneva II International Peace Conference, scheduled to take place on 22 January, they addressed the situation in the Middle East, particularly in Syria. They acknowledged the wishes and concerns of the Holy See, which Pope Francis had recently highlighted in his address to the Diplomatic Corps. They discussed the importance of the success and the continuation of negotiations between Israel and Palestine. Africa was also a topic of conversation, particularly the situation in the Sudan region which is becoming increasingly serious. They expressed hope that the parties involved might reach a solution through mediation.

Lastly, the Holy See expressed its concern, which it shares with US Bishops, regarding the situation of healthcare reform, especially as it affects religious freedom and conscientious objection. They also discussed the President of the United States' plan to fight poverty and improve the living conditions of the poor.



At the Museum of Biblical Art in New York

Once upon a time in America



C. E. Peterson, "River Baptism, Carson City, Nevada" (1880-1886)

"Take Me to the Water: Immersion Baptism in Vintage Music and Photography 1890-1950": this is the title of the new exhibition that will be on display until 16 February at the Museum of Biblical Art (MOBIA), which reopened on 11 January in New York. The exhibition recounts, with the help of images and audio recordings, the immersion baptisms that took place in lakes, rivers and ponds in the US at the end of the 19th century and in the first half of the 20th century. A treasure of photography in sepia and black and white, with video and audio recordings that bring the emotion of the moment to life. From Massachusetts to Louisiana to states like Nevada: one of the exhibition's most striking features is the way the surrounding environment participates in the event. And yet the central focus is the individuals baptized, all of them adults, and of various religious denominations. Communities that – from different shores – pray, sing and rejoice with their chaplains and every new member of their group. A printed catalogue and CD accompany the exhibition and help to illustrate this step back in time for those who cannot go to New York.

Morning Mass at the Domus Sanctae Marthae

Thursday, 9 January

Love is not a soap opera

In his homily at Holy Mass Pope Francis commented on the first Reading from the Letter of St John (4:11-18), wherein the word "abide" recurs almost as a refrain. The Apostle John "tells us many times that we should abide in the Lord," the Pope said. "And he also tells us that the Lord abides in us". Essentially, he said, St John sums up the Christian life as an "abiding", as a mutual indwelling – we in God and God in us. "Do not abide in the spirit of the world, do not abide in superficiality, do not abide in idolatry, do not abide in vanity. No, abide in the Lord!" the Holy Father said. And the Lord, he added, "reciprocates this" so that "he remains in us". Indeed, "he first remains in us" even though "many times we turn him away". Yet if we do, "we cannot remain in him".

"He who abides in love abides in God and God in him," St John writes further on. In practice, the Pope said, the Apostle tells us how "this abiding is the same as abiding in love". And he added that "it is beautiful to hear this said about love". Yet he warned that "the love of which John speaks is not the love of which soap operas are made! No, it is something else!".

In fact, the Holy Father continued: "Christian love always possesses one quality: concreteness. Christian love is concrete. Jesus himself, when he speaks of love, tells us concrete things: feed the hungry, visit the sick". They are all "concrete things" for indeed "love is concrete".

Pope Francis then warned: "When this concreteness is lacking" we end up "living a Christianity of illusions, for we do not understand the heart of Jesus' message". Love that is not concrete, he said, becomes "an illusory love". Citing the day's Gospel from St Mark (6:45-52), he explained that the disciples had this sort of love when they looked at Jesus and believed they were seeing a ghost" and "an illusory love that is not concrete does not do us good".

"But when does this occur?" the Pope asked. The Gospel, he said, could not be clearer. When the disciples believed they are seeing a ghost, the Holy Father said quoting the Gospel text, "they were utterly astounded, for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened". And "if your heart is hardened, you cannot love. You think that to love is to imagine things. No, love is concrete!".

There is a basic criteria for truly living in love, he continued. "The criteria is to abide in the Lord and the Lord in us, and the criteria of Christian concreteness is the same, always: The Word came in the flesh". The criteria is "the Incarnation of the Word, God made Man" and "Christianity without this foundation is not true Christianity. The key to Christian life is faith in Jesus Christ, the Word of God made Man".

Pope Francis also suggested a way to "get to know" the style of concrete love. He explained that "there are several consequences of this cri-

teria". He proposed two. The first is that "love is found more in deeds than words. Jesus himself said: it is not those who call me 'Lord, Lord', who talk much, who shall enter the Kingdom of heaven; but those who do the will of God". The invitation set before us, then, is to be "concrete" by doing "the deeds of God".

There is a question we must each ask ourselves: "If I abide in Jesus, if I abide in the Lord, if I abide in love, what do I do for God – not what do I think or what do I say – and what do I do for others?". Therefore, he said "the first criteria is to love with deeds, not with words". "The wind carries away our words: today they are here and tomorrow they are gone".

The "second criteria for concreteness," the Pope continued, is that "in love it is more important to give than to receive". The person "who loves, gives, gives things, gives life, gives himself to God and to others". Instead, the person "who does not

ways abide in love" and that "he might abide in us".

Friday, 10 January

The parrot's creed

At Holy Mass Pope Francis took up the thread of his reflection the previous day, as he continued to comment on the first Letter of St John. The Apostle "insists and greatly emphasizes the word which, for him, sums up the Christian life: to abide, to abide in the Lord," he said. "Over the last days, we have seen how he envisions this abiding: we in the Lord and the Lord in us. This means abiding in love, for the two main commandments are love of God and neighbour".

For John, then, the heart of the Christian life is "to abide in the Lord, and for the Lord to abide in us, to abide in love. And that is why the Spirit has been given to us. It is

overcomes the world, the prince of the world".

The fundamental question we need to ask ourselves is this: "What is this faith?". Pope Francis recalled how Jesus spoke about this faith and revealed its power in passages such as those which tell of the woman with the haemorrhage, or the Canaanite woman, or the man who drew near to him asking for a healing in faith – "great is your faith" – or of the man born blind. The Pope also recalled the Lord's words that "the man who has faith the size of a mustard seed can move mountains".

"This faith," the Pope added, "demands two attitudes from us: confession and trust. First, "faith means confessing God; but the God who has revealed himself to us from the time of our fathers until now: the God of history". That is what we profess in the Creed. Yet as he noted, "it is one thing to recite the Creed from the heart and quite another to recite it like a parrot: I believe in God, I believe in Jesus Christ, I believe...". The Pope then suggested an examination of conscience: "Do I believe what I say? Is this confession of faith true or I am saying it from memory because I have to say it? Or do I believe by halves?".

Therefore, we must "confess the faith ... all of it, not only a part. All of it!" However, he added, we must also "guard it as it has come down to us through the Tradition. All the faith!". The Pope then indicated the "sign" for recognizing if we "confess the faith well": adoration. "Whoever confesses the faith well," he said, "all of the faith, is capable of adoring God". It is a "sign that may appear somewhat strange, because we know how to petition God, how to thank God. But to adore God, to praise God is more. Only someone with a strong faith is able to adore".

The Pope then added: "I dare say the thermometer of the Church's life is a bit low: we Christians do not have a great ability to adore, because we are not convinced about the profession of faith. Or we are convinced only halfway". We need to recover the ability "to praise and to adore", he said.

Regarding the second attitude, Pope Francis recalled how "the man or woman with faith trusts God. They trust. Paul, in the dark moments of his life, said: I know well in whom I have trusted. In God. In the Lord Jesus". And "trusting leads us to hope. As the confession of faith leads us to the adoration and praise of God, trust in God leads us to an attitude of hope".

"There are many Christians with a watered down hope" that is not "strong". What is the reason for this "weak hope"? A lack of "strength and courage to trust in the Lord". To be "Christian victors", Pope Francis said, we must believe "by confessing the faith, and also keeping watch over our faith, and trusting in God, in the Lord. And this is the victory that overcomes the world: our faith".

"To abide in the Lord, to abide in love," he repeated, "on God's part we need the Holy Spirit. But on our part, we need to confess the faith which is a gift, and to trust in the



love and who is selfish always seeks to receive. He seeks always to have things, to have the advantage". Hence the spiritual counsel "to abide with an open heart, and not like the disciples whose hearts were closed" and who therefore did not understand. Pope Francis repeated: "it is a matter of abiding in God" and of "God abiding in us. It is a matter of abiding in love".

The sole "criteria of abiding in our faith in Jesus Christ the Word of God made flesh is the very mystery that we celebrate in this season". And he reaffirmed that "the two practical consequences of this Christian concreteness, of this criteria, are that love is found more in deeds than words, and that in love it is more important to give than to receive".

"As we gaze on the Child in these final three days of the Christmas Season", Pope Francis concluded, "let us renew our faith in Jesus Christ, who is true God and true Man. And let us ask for the grace to be granted this concreteness of Christian love so that we might al-

the Holy Spirit who carries out this work of abiding". In the passage of St John's Letter (4:19-5:4) proclaimed in the liturgy, the Apostle answers a question that comes quite naturally to us: for our part, what do we have to do in order to live out this "abiding"? Taking up the words of the Apostle, Pope Francis replied: whoever abides in God, whoever has been born of God, whoever abides in love overcomes the world, "and this is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith". Faith enables us to live out this abiding, while "on God's part the Holy Spirit carries out this work of grace".

"It is powerful," the Pope exclaimed. "The victory that overcomes the world is our faith. Our faith can do all things: it is the victory!". "It would be beautiful" to repeat this truth often, he said, "because so many times we are defeated Christians. The Church is full of defeated Christians, who do not believe that faith is a victory, who do not live this faith. Defeat comes if we do not live out this faith. Yet it



Lord Jesus in order to adore, praise and be people of hope”.

Pope Francis concluded his homily, praying that “the Lord might enable us to understand and live this beautiful word” of the Apostle John proposed in the day’s liturgy: “and this is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith”.

Saturday, 11 January

What a priest should be

In his homily at Holy Mass in the Chapel of Santa Marta, Pope Francis continued his reflection on the first Letter of St John, in which the Apostle says: “I write this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life” (5:13).

Pope Francis began by noting that St John is expounding on the verse proclaimed in the liturgy yesterday: “And this is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith” (5:4). “Our faith is the victory against the spirit of the world,” he said. “Our faith is this victory which enables us to go forward in the name of the Son of God, in the name of Jesus”.

The Holy Father then posed this question: What is our relationship with Jesus like? This is a fundamental question, he said, since “our relationship with Jesus strengthens our victory”. To priests who were present at the Mass, he added that this question is especially important “for us as priests: what is my relationship with Jesus Christ like?”

“The strength of a priest is rooted in this relationship,” the Pontiff added, commenting on the day’s Gospel “when Jesus’ popularity increased, he went to the Father”. As St Luke recounts: “He withdrew to the wilderness and prayed” (cf. 5:12-16). Thus, Pope Francis noted, “as there was more and more talk about Jesus and large crowds were coming to him to listen to him and be healed, afterwards he went to the Father”. Thus, he said, Jesus’ attitude “is a rock of comparison for us who are priests: do we or do we not go to Jesus?”.

A series of questions priests might ask themselves flow from this, the Pope said. “What place does Jesus Christ have in my life as a priest? Is it a living relationship, disciple to Master, brother to brother, poor man to God? Or is it a bit artificial, like a relationship that doesn’t come from the heart?”.

“We are united through the Spirit and when a priest distances himself from Jesus Christ, instead of being anointed [unto], he ends up becoming unctuous [untuoso]”. “How much unctuous priests harm the Church! Those who place importance and power in artificial things,

in vanities”, those who have “an affected attitude and way of speaking”. How many times, he added “do we hear with dismay: but this is a priest?”; he seems more like a “butterfly” because “he is always fluttering about vanities” and “he does not have a relationship with Jesus Christ: he has lost the anointing; he is unctuous”.

Yet with all of our limitations, the Pope continued, “we are good priests if we go to Jesus Christ, if we seek the Lord in prayer: the prayer of intercession, the prayer of adoration”. If instead “we distance ourselves from Jesus Christ, we have to compensate for this with other worldly attitudes”. But the priest, the Pope forcefully stated, “adores Jesus Christ, the priest speaks with Jesus Christ, the priest seeks Jesus Christ and allows himself to be sought by Jesus Christ. This is the centre of our lives. If we do not have this, we lose everything! And then what shall we give to the people?”

The Pope then repeated the Collect prayer from the liturgy and said: “We have asked that the mystery which we celebrate, the Word made flesh in Jesus Christ among us, might increase each day. We asked for this grace: that our relationship with Jesus Christ ... might grow in us”.

“It is beautiful to find priests who have given their lives as priests”. Priests of whom the people say: “But yes, he has a bit of a temper, he’s got this and that, but he is a priest! And the people have a nose about these things!” Instead, “when the people see ‘idolatrous’ priests, to say it in a word, who instead of having Jesus have their little idols – some are devotees of the god of Narcissus – they say: poor things!” “It is a relationship with Jesus Christ” that saves us “from worldliness and from the idolatry that makes us unctuous” since this relationship enables us to remain “in the anointing”.

Addressing himself directly to those who were present – among them a group of priests from Genoa accompanied by their Cardinal Archbishop Angelo Bagnasco – Pope Francis concluded his homily: “To you who have so kindly come to concelebrate here with me, my hope for you is this: lose everything in life but do not lose this relationship with Jesus Christ. This is your victory. Onward with this!”

Monday, 13 January

God’s love is an art

In his homily in the Chapel of Santa Marta, Pope Francis commented on the day’s Gospel from St Mark (1:14-20). There the evangelist

recounts Jesus’ journey to Galilee following John’s arrest, and the calling of the first of his disciples. Pope Francis noted that, along the way, Jesus “proclaims the Gospel with the same words as John: the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent. The same thing that John had said, Jesus says. John had prepared the way for Jesus. And Jesus follows it”.

“God in his love prepares the way, and he prepares our lives for each of us,” the Holy Father said. “He does not make us Christians through spontaneous generation. He prepares our path, he prepares our lives over time”. And he added: “It seems that Simon, Andrew, James, and John were definitively chosen”, but that does not mean that from that moment on they were “definitively faithful”. In reality, he said, “they made mistakes; they made non-Christian suggestions to the Lord and in fact they denied him. And Peter more than the others. They became frightened and they left, they abandoned the Lord”.

God carries out this work of preparation over the course of many generations. As an example, Pope Francis pointed to Hannah, the second wife of Elkanah, who was described the day’s first Reading from the Book of Samuel (1 Sm 1:8). Hannah, who was “sterile, wept” while the other wife, Peninnah, who had children, derided her. Yet Hannah’s weeping was part of the preparation for the birth of the great Samuel. “The Lord prepares us over many generations,” the Pope said. “And when things do not go well, he involves it in the story” and sets things aright. “In Jesus’ own genealogy, there are men and women who

were sinners,” the Pontiff recalled. “But what did the Lord do? He entered into their affairs, he corrected the path; he set things aright. We think of the great David, a great sinner and then a great saint. The Lord knows. When the Lord tells us: with eternal love have I loved you, he is referring to this.

“Such is the Lord’s eternal love,” the Holy Father repeated. “Eternal and yet concrete. His love is an art, he goes along making history and preparing the way for each one of us. And this is God’s love”.

The Pope then turned to a group of priests who were con-celebrating the Mass on the occasion of their 60th anniversary of Ordination. He said to them: “you are thinking about your 60 years of saying Mass. So many things have happened. So many things. The Lord was there also to prepare the way for others, which we do not know, but he knows”. He is “the Lord of the preparation, who has always loved us and never abandons us”. Perhaps, he said, “the act of faith to believe this is not easy, it is true. Because our rationalism tells us: why would the Lord, with all the people he has to deal with, think of me? And yet he has prepared the way for me, by our mothers, our grandmothers, our fathers, our grandfathers, and by our great grandparents, everyone: this is what the Lord does. And this is his love: concrete, eternal and also an art”.

“Let us pray,” Pope Francis concluded, “asking for the grace to understand God’s love. But we never truly understand it, eh! We feel it, we weep over it, but to understand it, we cannot understand. This too tells us how great a love this is”.

Japanese catacombs

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

seen at each site, Goto says, “together with the chapel excavated in the rock there is always a natural cave, larger in size, where the faithful would gather, and next to this was a source of water for the sacraments”. Three of the most important roles for the hidden Christians were: the *chokata*, i.e. the one who organized the meetings of the faithful, the *oshihekata* who was the catechist, and then the *muzukata*, who was in charge of baptisms. “We knew about the existence of the *kakure kirishitan* from the time I was a child. They were the Christians who hid here until professing the Christian faith was no longer prohibited. But something quite extraordinary happened: when the prohibition of Christianity ceased, the hidden Christians disappeared as well. Most likely they all became Buddhists”.

In a way they were like animals living in captivity, which once freed die from the inability to adapt to their new environment. The Christians, now with nothing to hide, did not know how to adapt the faith that they had nurtured for two centuries in secret.

Today 25,000 people live in Taketa and of these only 300 are Christians. Catholics can be counted on one hand. To this day there

is not a single Catholic church. The few faithful are forced to travel to Oita by train or bus, a journey of more than an hour in the mountains.

In Taketa, however, the caves are not the only testament to the Christian presence of the past. There are also several Christian cemeteries scattered throughout the area. To visit one of them, we had to travel by car for an hour through charming back roads surrounded by a thick greenery through which the sun barely manages to shine. We took a dirt road and after a few minutes we got out of the car and ventured over a hilllock through the mud and grass wet with the afternoon rain. We found ourselves in the midst of what seemed to be an abandoned cemetery. Some of the gravestones were unusual. They were different from the typical gravestones you see here, which are vertical and decorated with symbols of Buddhist deities. Many of these gravestones were flat. They mark the presence of the departed Christians. We were literally walking on history. Forced to conform to a religion their hearts did not know, these Christians sought in the afterlife redemption from a life lived in bad conscience: death rendered them a justice that, while living, they were never able to obtain.

Thirty-two infants baptized in the Sistine Chapel

Like links in a chain

The Pope baptized 32 infants in the Sistine Chapel on Sunday morning, 12 January, the Solemnity of the Baptism of the Lord. "These children", he said in a homily given off-the-cuff, "are a link in a chain". He also reminded the parents of their particular responsibility for forming their children, by handing on to them the Christian Faith. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's homily, which was delivered in Italian.

Jesus did not need to be baptized, but the first theologians say that, with his body, with his divinity, in baptism he blessed all the waters, so that the waters would have the power to confer baptism. And then, before ascending to Heaven, Jesus told us to go into all the world to baptize. And from that day forward up until today, this has been an uninterrupted chain: they baptized their children, and their children their own, and those children... And also today this chain continues.

These children are a link in a chain. You parents have a baby boy or girl to baptize, but in some years they will have a child to baptize, or a grandchild... Such is the chain of faith! What does this mean? I would like to tell you only this: you are those who trans-

mit the faith, the transmitters; you have a duty to hand on the faith to these children. It is the most beautiful inheritance you will leave to them: the faith! Only this. Today, take this thought home with you. We must be transmitters of the faith. Think about this, always think about how to hand on the faith to your children.

Today the choir sings, but the most beautiful choir is the children making noise... Some of them will cry, because they are uncomfortable or because they are hungry: if they are hungry, mothers, feed them with ease, because they are the most important ones here. And now, with this awareness of being transmitters of the faith, let us continue with the rite of Baptism.



Audience with the Pontifical Gestatorial Chair Bearers

Men who know how to hold children

On Friday, 10 January, the Holy Father received the gestatorial chair bearers [Sediari] in the Consistory Hall. He thanked them especially for their tenderness to little children at public audiences. The following is an English translation of the Pope's address.

Dear Sediari,

It is my pleasure and joy to welcome you for this exchange of good wishes, along with your families. We are at the start of a new year and still living in the liturgical season of Christmas, which will close this Sunday with the celebration of the Baptism of the Lord. The mystery of the birth of Jesus calls us to witness by our lives to the humility, the simplicity and the

spirit of service that he taught us. Also in your daily work, you have the possibility of imitating these characteristics of the Son of God, "who came not to be served, but to serve" (Mt 20:28). Lived out with this interior attitude, work can become an apostolate, a precious occasion to transmit to those you encounter the joy of being Christian. This is possible if we stay in active dialogue with the Lord through prayer, in order to grow in his friendship and to learn from him how to be ready to welcome.

In these months I have become aware of the ideals that inspire your work. Love for the Church and the Holy See, welcoming warmth, patience, calm and serene behaviour: these constitute a nice visiting card for those who come

to the Apostolic Palace to meet the Pope. For all of this, I thank you warmly – really, I thank you warmly – and I feel indebted to you! I also thank you for the tenderness with which you bring the little children to me during public audiences. I asked one of you: "And you, how many children do you have? Because you know how to carry them, it shows!".

I renew my good wishes to you for peace and every good; I assure you of my prayer for you, and I am counting on yours as well! Thank you!



A surprise visit

On 21 December, 2013, Pope Francis made a surprise informal visit to the room where the pontifical gestatorial chair bearers prepare for their daily service. Augusto Pellegrini, the Dean of the Hall of the Papal Antechamber, thanked the Pope for coming which, he said, "expanded our hearts with joy, emotion and gratitude". After presenting the Pope with the four main chair bearers and 22 others (retirees, students, civil servants, artisans, professionals), who are called upon for audiences or for the visits of ambassadors and heads of state, the Dean called the event a privilege and a grace, remarking that this is the kind of "spiritual kinship" that is created over time through the diligence of service. He particularly recalled the testimony of the elderly chair bearers, who, up until the Pontificate of John Paul I, carried the gestatorial chair on their shoulders. Among those present were those who served Pope Pius XII.

