

# L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO

WEEKLY EDITION  IN ENGLISH*Unicuique suum Non praevalent*

Forty-seventh year, number 4 (2330)

Vatican City

Friday, 24 January 2014

Pope Francis launches another appeal at the General Audience for Syria

## The urgency of peace

And prayer and conversion for an end to division among Christians

*The Holy Father again prayed for an end to violence and war this morning. At the General Audience on Wednesday, 22 January, the Holy Father launched this appeal in view of peace talks under way in Geneva.*

Today in Montreux, Switzerland, an international conference has opened to promote peace in Syria, which will be followed by negotiations that will be held in Geneva beginning on 24 January. I pray to the Lord that he touch the hearts of all so that, seeking solely the greater good of the Syrian people, so sorely tried, they may spare no effort to bring about without delay a cessation of the violence and an end to the conflict, which has already caused far too much suffering. For the beloved Syrian nation, I wish a decisive path of reconciliation, of harmony and of rebuilding with the participation of all citizens, where each may find in the other not an enemy, not a rival, but a brother to welcome and to embrace.

THE POPE'S CATECHESIS ON PAGE 3



*The Holy See at the international conference on Syria*

There is no military solution to the crisis

PAGE 4

*At the Angelus*

Welcome and protect immigrants

PAGE 7

*The Holy Father's envoy to the 450th anniversary of the closing session of the Council*

The miracle of Trent

WALTER BRANDMÜLLER ON PAGE 8/9

*Differences do not preclude unity in Christ*

Under the same roof

BR ALOIS ON PAGE 15

The Pope joins the 41st March for Life in Washington, DC

## The voice of the most vulnerable

On Wednesday, 22 January, Pope Francis tweeted to some 8 million followers: "I join the March for Life in Washington with my prayers. May God help us respect all life, especially the most vulnerable". At that moment, across the Atlantic, people from every walk of life in the U.S. were braving the bitter cold to peacefully protest the Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion in 1973.

Hundreds of thousands of marchers – from all walks of life and professions of faith, especially young people calling themselves, "the Pro-Life Generation" – travelled across the country to meet at the steps of Capitol Hill.

University students came out in large numbers, mobilizing themselves in response to an appeal posted by Archbishop Joseph Edward Kurtz of Louisville, President of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops: "We march in memory of those lost to abortion. We march for the voiceless children to defend their right to life – especially for those like my brother Georgie, born with Down syndrome, whose



lives all too often are deemed unworthy to see the light of day. We march for the women considering abortion, that in our concern for their needs, they will find the strength to choose life".

*Message for the Summit in Davos*

A humane approach to the economy

PAGE 5

## A shining star for ecumenism

KURT KOCH\*

This year the *Week of Prayer for Christian Unity* (18-25 January) is under an especially bright ecumenical star. The theme of the Week is taken from the First Letter to the Corinthians, in which Paul launches a vehement appeal for unity and poses a question that challenges our consciences: "Has Christ been divided?" (1 Cor 1:13). Faced with this question, what immediately comes to mind is the tragedy of divided Christianity. Indeed, the rupture that still exists in the Church today should be taken as the division of what by its nature is indivisible, that is, the unity of the Body of Christ. It is precisely this painful problem that prompted the drafting of the Second Vatican Council's Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis redintegratio*, whose 50th anniversary we celebrate this year.

The focal point of 2014 is the commemoration of the historic meeting between the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, Athenagoras, and the Bishop of Rome, Pope Paul VI, in Jerusalem 50 years ago – on 5 and 6 January 1964. At that time, their mutual intention to reestablish charity between the two Churches was proclaimed and sealed by the exchange of a brotherly kiss between the two Church leaders representing Andrew and Peter; this will remain for us the enduring icon of ecumenical openness to reconciliation.

This meeting in Jerusalem paved the way to that historic event of 7 December 1965, just before the close of Vatican II. At the Cathedral of Phanar in Constantinople and at the Basilica of St Peter in Rome, the highest representatives of the two Churches removed their excommunication of the other from 1054, so as to avoid "anything which can harm this charity". Patriarch Athenagoras and Pope Paul VI, acting in the name of their Churches declared in a binding way that the tragic events of 1054 were no longer part of the official content of the Churches.

The meeting of 1964 and the act of 1965 are the starting point for an ecumenical dialogue of charity between the Catholic Church and Orthodox Churches, a dialogue that must be further deepened, both today and in the future.

\*Cardinal-President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity

*With Eastern Orthodox Churches*

The philosophy of encounter

GABRIEL QUICKE ON PAGE 3

# VATICAN BULLETIN

## AUDIENCES

Thursday, 16 January

Cardinal Roger Michael Mahony, Archbishop emeritus of Los Angeles, USA

Cardinal Vinko Puljić, Archbishop of Vrhbosna, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Archbishop Georges Paul Pontier of Marseille, President of the Episcopal Conference of France; Bishop Pascal Delannoy of Saint-Denis, Vice-President; and Archbishop Pierre-Marie Carré of Montpellier, Vice-President; and Fr Olivier Ribadeau Dumas, Secretary General

Friday, 17 January

Cardinal Juan Luis Cipriani Thorne, Archbishop of Lima, Peru

Cardinal Kurt Koch, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity

Cardinal Angelo Scola, Archbishop of Milan, Italy, with a delegation of the Expo Milano 2015

Archbishop Aldo Giordano, titular Archbishop of Tamada, Apostolic Nuncio to Venezuela, with his relatives

Saturday, 18 January

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

Cardinal Karl Lehmann, Bishop of Mainz, Federal Republic of Germany

Monday, 20 January

Cardinal Fernando Filoni, Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples

Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, President of the Pontifical Council for the Family

Bishop Alain de Raemy, titular Bishop of Turrus in Mauretania, Auxiliary Bishop of Lausanne, Geneva and Fribourg, Switzerland

Bishop Nunzio Galantino of Cassano all'Ionio, and Secretary General *ad interim* of the Italian Episcopal Conference

## CHANGES IN EPISCOPATE

The Holy Father appointed Msgr Stephen J. Berg from the clergy of Fort Worth, as Bishop of Pueblo, USA. Until now he has been Diocesan Administrator of the said diocese (15 Jan.).

Bishop-elect Berg, 62, was born in Miles City, Montana, USA. He holds a BA in music. After graduation he worked for several years in horticulture. He then entered the seminary and was ordained a priest on 15 May 1999. He has served in parish ministry and as moderator of the Curia, as spiritual director at Holy Trinity Seminary in Dallas, Texas.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Ramón López Carroz, O. de M., of Bom Jesus do Gurguéia, Brazil. It was presented in accord with can. 401 § 1 of the Code of Canon Law (15 Jan.).

The Holy Father appointed Fr Marcos Antônio Tavoni as Bishop of Bom Jesus do Gurguéia, Brazil. Until now he has been Parish Priest of the Church of Cristo Redentor in

Taguatinga in the Archdiocese of Brasília (15 Jan.).

Bishop-elect Tavoni, 46, was born in São Carlos, Brazil. He was ordained a priest on 30 November 1996. He has served in parish ministry and as rector of the Major Interdiocesan Seminary Divino Espírito Santo and of the Mater Dei Centre for Higher Studies; as professor of theology and spiritual director of the Casa Santa Marta; as moderator of the first archdiocesan Synod; as coordinator of the Commission for drawing up the Archdiocesan Directory for Christian Initiation; as episcopal vicar of the São Pedro Region; as a member and secretary of the Presbyteral Council of Palmas for two terms.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop César Ramón Ortega Herrera of Barcelona, Venezuela. It was presented in accord with can. 401 § 1 of the Code of Canon Law (20 Jan.).

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Jean-Louis Giasson, PME, of Yoro, Honduras. It was presented in accord with can. 401 § 2 of the Code of Canon Law (21 Jan.).

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Philippe Guenecy of Langres, France. It was presented in accord with can. 401 § 1 of the Code of Canon Law (21 Jan.).

The Holy Father appointed Fr Joseph de Metz-Noblat as Bishop of Langres, France. Until now he has been Vicar General of Verdun, France (21 Jan.).

Bishop-elect Metz-Noblat, 54, was born in Cherbourg, France. He earned a licence in civil law and began a career in the navy and obtained the rank of commander; he later became head of personnel at a metallurgical plant. He then entered the seminary and obtained a licence in canon law. He was ordained a priest on 28 May 1987. He subsequently served in parish ministry and as chaplain of the Mouvement Eucharistique des Jeunes; as head of the diocesan vocation service and of youth ministry; as superior of the interdiocesan propaedeutic seminary Saint Jean-Baptiste at Nancy; as a defender of the bond and adjunct judicial vicar of the interdiocesan tribunal; and as national director of the Apostolic Union of Clergy.

## RELATIONS WITH STATES

The Holy Father appointed Archbishop Martin Krebs, titular Archbishop of Taborenta, as Apostolic Nuncio to Tonga. He is currently Apostolic Nuncio to New Zealand, the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Palau, Samoa, the Federal States of

Micronesia, Vanuatu and Apostolic Delegate to the Pacific Ocean (18 Jan.).

## SPECIAL ENVOY

The Holy Father appointed Cardinal Antonio Cañizares Llovera, Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, as his special envoy to the closing celebrations of the jubilee year proclaimed in Panama for the fifth centenary of the establishment of the first Diocese, Santa Maria di Antigua, on the mainland of the American Continent, which will take place on 14 and 15 February 2014 (18 Jan.).

## START OF MISSION

On 26 September 2013, Archbishop Martin Krebs, titular Archbishop of Taborenta, began his mission to the Independent State of Samoa with the presentation of his Letters of Credence to the Chief of State, His Highness Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Efi.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

## The Holy See and the Republic of Cameroon sign an agreement

On Monday, 13 January, in the headquarters of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Yaoundé under the *Framework-Agreement between the Holy See and the Republic of Cameroon on the legal status of the Catholic Church in Cameroon* was signed. Signing for the Holy See were: Archbishop Piero Pioppo, titular Bishop of Torcello and Apostolic Nuncio to Cameroon, and for the Republic of Cameroon, H.E. Mr Pierre Moukoko Mbondjo, Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The agreement, which contains nine articles, regulates the relations between the Church and State, which in the framework of independence and the autonomy of both states provides for both to work together for the moral, spiritual and material well-being of the human person and for promoting the common good. It entered into force upon its signature, in accordance with article 9 of the agreement.

## Ambassador of the Ivory Coast presents his Credentials to the Pope



On Thursday morning, 9 January, the Holy Father received in audience H.E. Mr Séverin Mathias Akeo, Ambassador of the Ivory Coast, for the presentation of his Letters of Credence accrediting him to the Holy See

H.E. Mr Séverin Mathias Akeo, 65, is married with a daughter. He holds a degree in geography and a certificate from the *Institut International d'Administration Publique de Paris* in diplomacy. He has served as: an official at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1977-79); first secretary in Lagos (1979-87); head of personnel management at the Sub-direction of personnel of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1988-94); first secretary and then counsellor in Washington, D.C. (1994-2002); vice-director of the Department of the United Nations and of International Organizations at the Minister of Foreign Affairs (2003-05); first counsellor in Seoul (2006-08). Since November 2008 he served as director with the rank of ambassador of the department of human resources at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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At the General Audience Pope Francis speaks about the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

## The scandal of division

*Pope Francis once again called for an end to violence in Syria. At the General Audience on Wednesday, 22 January, the Holy Father launched this appeal in view of peace talks under way in Geneva. In his catechesis he spoke about the scandal of division among Christians, taking up the theme of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (18-25 January): "Has Christ been divided?" (Cor 1:17). The following is a translation of the Pope's catechesis, which was given in Italian.*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,  
Good morning!

Last Saturday the *Week of Prayer for Christian Unity* began and will conclude this coming Saturday, the Feast of the Conversion of the Apostle St Paul. This invaluable spiritual initiative has brought Christian communities together for more than a century. It is a time dedicated to prayer for the unity of all the baptized, according to the will of Christ: "that they may all be one" (Jn 17:21). Every year, an ecumenical



group from a region of the world, under the guidance of the World Council of Churches and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, suggests the theme and prepares reflections for the *Week of Prayer*. This year it was proposed by the Churches and Ecclesial Communities of Canada, and they made reference to the question posed St Paul proposed to the Christians of Corinth: "Has Christ been divided?" (1 Cor 1:13).

Of course, Christ was not divided. But we should recognize with sincerity and pain that our communities continue to live in division that is scandalous. Division among us Christians is a scandal. There is no other word: a scandal. "Each one of you," St Paul wrote, "says, 'I belong to Paul,' or 'I belong to Apollos,' or 'I belong to Cephas,' or 'I belong to Christ'" (1:12).

Even those who professed Christ as their leader were not applauded by Paul, because they used the name of Christ to separate themselves from others within the Christian community. But the name of Christ creates communion and unity, not division! He came to bring communion among us, not to divide us.

Baptism and the Cross are central elements of the Christian discipleship which we share. Division, however, weakens the credibility and effectiveness of our work in evangelization and risks stripping the

Cross of its power (cf. 1 Cor 1:17).

Paul rebukes the Corinthians for their disputes, but he also gives thanks to the Lord "because of the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus, that in every way you were enriched in him with all speech and all knowledge" (1 Cor 1:4-5). These words of Paul are not a mere formality, but a sign that he sees primarily – and for this he sincerely rejoices – the gifts given by God to the community. The Apostle's attitude is an encouragement for us and for every Christian community to joyfully recognize God's gifts in other communities. Despite the suffering of division, which sadly still exist, let us welcome the words of St Paul as an invitation to sincerely rejoice for the graces God has given to other Christians. We have the same Baptism, the same Holy Spirit who gave us the Grace: let us recognize it and rejoice in it.

It is beautiful to recognize the grace with which God blesses us and, still more, to find in other Christians something we need, something that we could receive like a gift from our brothers and our sisters. The group from Canada who prepared the texts for this Week of Prayer did not invite communities to think about what they could give to their neighbour Christians, but urged them to meet with one another in order to understand what they



all can receive each from the others. This requires something more. It requires much prayer, it requires humility, it requires reflection and continual conversion. Let us go forward on this path, praying for the unity of Christians, that this scandal lessens and that it may cease among us.

### TO SPECIAL GROUPS

During this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity I am particularly pleased to greet the students of the ecumenical Graduate School of Bossey. May your studies help to advance ecumenical dialogue and understanding. I also greet the pilgrimage of British Army Chaplains and the delegation from the Jewish Federation of Chicago. Upon all the English-speaking pilgrims present at today's Audience I cordially invoke God's blessings of joy and peace!

In dialogue with the Eastern Orthodox Churches

## The philosophy of encounter

GABRIEL QUICKE\*

In recent months we have seen the images of Syrians fleeing from their country to seek refuge in Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq. The plight of these refugees takes our thoughts back to the Christians who are living in the Middle East, a region which extends from the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates to the banks of the Nile. This painful reality reminds us that Christ still today is suffering and poor. Christ is still hungry, thirsty and cold. Pope Francis has repeatedly expressed his concern over the plight of those Christians who are suffering the consequences of conflict and tension in many areas of the Middle East. The Holy Father has invited us to fast and pray for peace in Syria and other war-torn countries. Ecclesial charity seeks solidarity and peace, it wants to nourish the hungry Christ, to quench Christ's thirst, to clothe Christ's nakedness, to visit Christ where he is sick and to welcome the exiled Christ.

The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU) is in frequent contact with the Churches to which these Christians belong. Here below we publish a brief overview of the ecumenical endeavours involving the Churches in the Middle East or which flow from their missionary work.

Representatives from the Catholic Churches and from the Eastern Orthodox Churches; i.e., the ancient Churches with which the separation arose in the 4th and 5th centuries, met from 23 to 27 January 2013, as members of the international Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches, under the co-presidency, for the Catholics, of Cardinal Kurt Koch, President of the PCPCU and, for the Orthodox, of the Metropolitan Bishop of Damiette of the Orthodox Coptic Church. The meeting took place in Rome at the Domus Internationalis Paulus VI and was hosted by the PCPCU.

The members of the Commission

deepened their study of communion and of the communication that existed between the Churches up to the middle of the 5th century of Christian history. They also studied the importance of the role of martyrdom and monasticism in the life of the early Church. In particular, the role of the mutual recognition of saints was examined. A large portion of the time was dedicated to a careful examination of a draft document entitled, *The Exercise of Communion in the Life of the Early Church and its Implications for our Search for Communion Today*.

Regarding relations with the Malankara Churches in India, since 1989 two parallel dialogues have taken place annually in Kerala (Southern India): one with the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church and the other with the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church. The discussions deal principally with ques-



Athenagoras and Paul VI in Jerusalem, 1965

tions linked to three themes: the history of the Church, ecclesiology and common witness. The Catholic delegation includes representatives of the Holy See (led by Bishop Brian Farrell, Secretary of the PCPCU) and

Holy See Statement at the international conference on Syria

## There is no military solution to the crisis

On 22 January Archbishop Silvano M. Tomasi spoke at the International Conference on Syria in Montreux, Switzerland. The following is his statement which was given in English.

Mr Secretary General,

1. Representatives of the Syrian population and of the international community come together today, at this Geneva II Conference, to take concrete steps towards a peaceful future for the Syrian people and the Middle East. Confronted with the indescribable suffering of the Syrian people, a sense of solidarity and common responsibility prompts us to engage in a dialogue which is based on honesty, mutual trust, and concrete steps. Dialogue is the only way forward. There is no military solution to the Syrian crisis. The Holy See is convinced that violence leads nowhere but to death, destruction and no future.

2. My Delegation is happy to contribute to this critical process, in itself a sign of a political will that gives priority to negotiations over guns, to people over inordinate power. For this reason all religious leaders, in particular, converge on this conviction that violence has to stop because too much suffering has been inflicted on all the people of Syria and on the entire region. Recent meetings of religious representatives of different confessions have reconfirmed this constructive approach that is based on the equal dignity of every person created in

the image of God and open to others.

3. The time has come to take concrete steps to implement the good intentions expressed by all parties to the current conflict. In this context, the Holy See renews its urgent appeal to all the parties concerned for the full and absolute respect for humanitarian law and offers the following proposals:

a.) As invoked by all men and women of good will, an immediate cease-fire without preconditions and the end to violence of all kinds should become a priority and the urgent goal of these negotiations. All weapons should be laid down and specific steps should be taken to



stop the flow of arms and arms funding that feed the escalation of violence and destruction to leave room for the instruments of peace. The money invested in arms should be redirected to humanitarian assistance. The immediate cessation of violence is in the interest of all. It is a humanitarian imperative, and represents the first step to reconciliation.

b.) The cessation of hostilities should be accompanied with increased humanitarian assistance and the immediate start of reconstruction. Millions have been displaced and are in life threatening situations. Family life has been disrupted. Educational and health facilities have been destroyed or made inoperative.

c.) The war brought about the economic collapse of many regions of Syria. Reconstruction efforts should start together with negotiations and should be sustained by the generous solidarity of the international community. In this process, young people should be given a preferential consideration so that through their employment and work they may become protagonists for a peaceful and creative future for their country.

d.) Community rebuilding calls for dialogue and reconciliation sustained by a spiritual dimension. The Holy See strongly encourages all religious faiths and communities in Syria to reach a deeper mutual knowledge, a better understanding and a restoration of trust.

e.) It is important that regional and international powers favor the ongoing dialogue and that regional problems be addressed. Peace in Syria could become a catalyst of peace in other parts of the region, and a model of that peace that is so urgently needed.

4. Beyond the tragedies of the current crisis, new opportunities and original solutions for Syria and its neighbors can come about. A just approach would be to recognize that the existence of cultural, ethnic and religious diversity and pluralism should not be a negative factor or, worse, an inevitable source of conflict, but rather the possibility for every community and individual to contribute their gifts to the common good and the development of a richer and more beautiful society. There is a role for everyone where citizenship provides equal participation in a democratic society with equal rights and duties. In this way no one is forced to leave his country because of intolerance and the inability to accept differences. In fact, the equality assured by common citizenship can allow the individual to express for himself and in community with others the fundamental values all persons hold indispensable to sustain their inner identity. Such an understanding and development of society opens the way to a durable and fruitful peace.

Mr Secretary General,

5. Since the Syrian crisis began, the Holy See has been following its developments with deep concern and has consistently advocated that all parties involved commit themselves to the prevention of violence and to the provision of humanitarian assistance to all victims. The voice of the Holy Father has been raised on numerous occasions to remind people of the futility of violence, inviting a negotiated resolution of problems, calling for a just and equitable participation of everyone in the life of society. Together with an invitation to pray for peace, He has promoted an active response on the part of Catholic organizations and institutions to the emerging needs. Memorable remains the Holy Father's proposal for a Day of Prayer and Fasting for peace in Syria and the Middle East that was received worldwide with an overwhelmingly positive response.

6. Allow me to conclude by echoing the words of Pope Francis: "I ask each party in this conflict to listen to the voice of their own conscience, not to close themselves in solely on their own interests, but rather to look at each other as brothers [and sisters] and decisively and courageously to follow the path of encounter and negotiation, and so overcome blind conflict." "It is neither a culture of confrontation nor a culture of conflict which builds harmony within and between peoples, but rather a culture of encounter and a culture of dialogue, this is the only way to peace."

Mr Secretary General, the people of Syria have lived together in peace throughout history, and can do so again.

## The philosophy of encounter

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

members of Churches of different rites: of the Latin Church, the Syro-Malabar Church and of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church.

The Joint Commission for dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church met for its 16th meeting at the patriarchal centre of Puthencruz on 16 December 2013. The meeting was co-chaired by bishop Farrell and by Metropolitan Kuriakose Mar Theophilose, president patriarchal Vicar in Germany, Switzerland and Austria. Among the main points were the petrine ministry according to liturgical tradition and Syrian patristic and the discussion of a document that came out in October 2012 issued by The North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation and Catholics entitled: *Steps towards a Reunited Church: A Sketch of an Orthodox-Catholic Vision for the Future*.

The Joint Commission for dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church met for its 23rd encounter at the Sophia Centre of Kottayam, on 18-19 December 2013. The co-presidents were Bishop Farrell and the Metropolitan Gabriel Mar Gregorios, president of the Department for Ecumenical Relations for the Syro-Malankara Orthodox Church. Various topics were

discussed, including the work of the Holy Spirit and the spiritual renewal of the Church, the foundation and epistemological understanding of canon law in the Orthodox tradition, and the challenges raised by pentecostals and by the new Christian churches. The Joint Commission is working on a document on the praxis of the principle of economy in the administration of the Sacraments to other Christians in specific pastoral situations from an Orthodox point of view, and on the Catholic theological principles relative to the administration of the sacraments to other Christians.

The ecumenical meetings and the exchange of visits remind us that dialogue cannot be separated from the life of the Churches. The dialogue of truth and the dialogue of charity are closely knit. An ecumenical visit leads to better mutual understanding and this in turn is necessary for advancing the theological dialogue and creating bridges of mutual trust and friendship. Tawadros II, pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of St Mark, and Head of the Coptic Orthodox Church of Egypt (the largest Christian Church in the Middle East), made a five-day visit to Rome, his first visit abroad since his enthronement. His journey to Rome gave him the opportunity to meet with – in addition to the vari-

ous Coptic communities present in Italy – Pope Francis, who received him in a private audience on 10 May 2013 and spent some moments in prayer together with him. Prior to the audience, the Patriarch also visited the PCPCU. The meeting with Pope Francis took place 40 years after Paul VI's historic meeting with Tawadros II's predecessor, Shenouda III, during which a Joint Declaration was signed stating the commitment of the two Churches to the promotion of reconciliation and unity.

Another visit worthy of mention was that of Baselios Marthoma Pausos II, Catholicos of the East and Malankara Metropolitan, with Pope Francis on 5 September 2013. He also visited the tomb of the Apostle Peter and was received at the PCPCU office.

Ecumenical visits highlight one fact: people do not have simply one meeting or one conversation; every person is a meeting point, every person is a partner in dialogue. This philosophy of encounter requires a "spirituality of communion", an "ecumenism of life". Through a spirit of welcome and friendship the wounds of the past can be healed and what divided us can become a renewed opportunity for such healing.

\*Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity

Message for the Summit in Davos

# A humane approach to the economy

The Holy Father sent a letter to founder and president, Klaus Schwab, for the opening of the 44th annual meeting of the World Economic Forum, held from 22-25 January, in Davos-Klosters, Switzerland. The letter was delivered by Cardinal Peter Kodwo Appiah Turkson, President of the Pontifical Council of Justice and Peace. The following is the English text of Pope Francis' message.



To Professor Klaus Schwab  
Executive Chairman  
of the World Economic Forum

I am very grateful for your kind invitation to address the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum, which, as is customary, will be held at Davos-Klosters at the end of this month. Trusting that the meeting will provide an occasion for deeper reflection on the causes of the economic crisis affecting the world these past few years, I would like to offer some considerations in the

hope that they might enrich the discussions of the Forum and make a useful contribution to its important work.

Ours is a time of notable changes and significant progress in different areas which have important consequences for the life of humanity. In fact, "we must praise the steps being taken to improve people's welfare in areas such as health care, education and communications" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 52), in addition to many other areas of human activity, and we must recognize the fundamental role that modern business activity has had in bringing about these changes, by stimulating and developing the immense resources of human intelligence. Nonetheless, the successes which have been achieved, even if they have reduced poverty for a great number of people, often have led to a widespread social exclusion. Indeed, the majority of the men and women of our time still continue to experience daily insecurity, often with dramatic consequences.

In the context of your meeting, I wish to emphasize the importance that the various political and economic sectors have in promoting an inclusive approach which takes into consideration the dignity of every human person and the common good. I am referring to a concern that ought to shape every political and economic decision, but which at times seems to be little more than an

afterthought. Those working in these sectors have a precise responsibility towards others, particularly those who are most frail, weak and vulnerable. It is intolerable that thousands of people continue to die every day from hunger, even though substantial quantities of food are available, and often simply wasted. Likewise, we cannot but be moved by the many refugees seeking minimally dignified living conditions, who not only fail to find hospitality, but often, tragically, perish in moving from place to place. I know that these words are forceful, even dramatic, but they seek both to affirm and to challenge the ability of this assembly to make a difference. In fact, those who have demonstrated their aptitude for being innovative and for improving the lives of many people by their ingenuity and professional expertise can further contribute by putting their skills at the service of those who are still living in dire poverty.

What is needed, then, is a renewed, profound and broadened sense of responsibility on the part of all. "Business is – in fact – a vocation, and a noble vocation, provided that those engaged in it see themselves challenged by a greater mean-



Klaus Schwab's welcoming address on Tuesday evening, 21 January (AP)

ing in life" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 203). Such men and women are able to serve more effectively the common good and to make the goods of this world more accessible to all. Nevertheless, the growth of equality demands something more than economic growth, even though it presupposes it. It demands first of all "a transcendent vision of the person" (Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, 11), because "without the perspective of eternal life, human progress in this world is denied breathing-space" (*ibid.*). It also calls for decisions, mechanisms and processes directed to a better distribution of wealth, the creation of sources of employment and an integral promotion of the poor which goes beyond a simple welfare mentality.

I am convinced that from such an openness to the transcendent a new political and business mentality can take shape, one capable of guiding all economic and financial activity within the horizon of an ethical approach which is truly humane. The international business community can count on many men and women of great personal honesty and integrity, whose work is inspired and guided by high ideals of fairness, generosity and concern for the authentic development of the human family. I urge you to draw upon these great human and moral resources and to take up this challenge with determination and farsightedness. Without ignoring, naturally, the specific scientific and professional requirements of every context, I ask you to ensure that humanity is served by wealth and not ruled by it.

Dear Mr Chairman and friends,

I hope that you may see in these brief words a sign of my pastoral concern and a constructive contribution to help your activities to be ever more noble and fruitful. I renew my best wishes for a successful meeting, as I invoke divine blessings on you and the participants of the Forum, as well as on your families and all your work.

From the Vatican, 17 January 2014

Franciscus

The presentation of the lambs to the Pope

## On the Feast of St Agnes

On Tuesday morning, 21 January, Pope Francis presided over the ceremonial presentation of the lambs in the Domus Sanctae Marthae. The wool of the lambs – that were blessed in the Basilica of St Agnes Outside-the-Walls, on Via Nomentana – will be used to make the pallia. The ceremony, which took place on the liturgical Feast of the Roman virgin and martyr, was directed by Msgr Guido Marini, Master of Papal Liturgical Celebrations.

Present at the ceremony were Msgr Pio Vito Pinto, dean of the Tribunal of the Roman Rota, with Msgr Antonio Bartolucci; Msgr Giacomo Ceretto and Msgr Natalino Zagotto, the canons of the Basilica of St John Lateran; Msgr Marco Frisina, rector of the Basilica of St Cecilia in Trastevere; Fr Franco Bergamin, pastor of the Basilica of St Agnes Outside-the-Walls, with Fr Edoardo Parisotto, assistant pastor, and Fr Fabricio Mendes, a collaborator; Fr Tommaso Gerogeon and Sr Bernarda Hoshiba, from the General Curia of the Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance; and Fr Loris Tomassini, from the Frattocchie Trappist Monastery; Francesco Amendola and Ennio



Rocchi, custodians of the Basilica of St John Lateran. The ceremony was also attended by Sr Gabriella Wedrzycka and Sr Ewa Jankowska, of the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth who accepted the responsibility to raise these lambs in their home in Rome, according to a tradition that dates back to 1884, when their Founder, Blessed Frances Siedliska first accept the

responsibility. Also present were mother superior Giovanna Maria Valenziano, with Sr Rosaria Gissi, from the Benedictine monastery of St Cecilia in Trastevere, who with their community weave the pallia. At the end of the ceremony, Nicola Pace and Filippo Giovagnoli, two papal chair-bearers, along with Augusto Pellegrini delivered the lambs to the monastery.

Pastoral visit to the Roman parish of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Castro Pretorio

## The power of the lamb

On Sunday afternoon, 19 January, Pope Francis made a pastoral visit to the parish of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Castro Pretorio, not far from Termini train station, in Rome. Concelebrating the Holy Mass were Cardinal Agostino Vallini, Vicar of Rome, and Cardinal Giuseppe Versaldi, Deacon of Sacred Heart Parish. Bishop Matteo Zuppi, Auxiliary of the central sector, and Salesian Bishop

Mario Toso, Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, were also present, together with the parish priest Don Valerio Baresi and many others. After Mass, the Holy Father spent 40 minutes meeting with the organizers of the parish youth group. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's homily at Mass on the passage from John's Gospel (1:29-34), which was delivered in Italian.

This passage from the Gospel is beautiful. John was baptizing; and Jesus, who had been baptized prior to this – some days before – was coming towards him and came before John. And John felt the power of the Holy Spirit within him to bear witness to Jesus. Looking at him, and looking at the people around Him, he said: "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world". And he bore witness to Jesus: this is Jesus, this is the One who has come to save us; this is the One who will give us the power of hope.



Jesus is called the Lamb: He is the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world. Someone might think: but how can a lamb, which is so weak, a weak little lamb, how can it take away so many sins, so much wickedness? With Love. With his meekness. Jesus never ceased being a lamb: meek, good, full of love, close to the little ones, close to the poor. He was there, among the people, healing everyone, teaching, praying. Jesus, so weak, like a lamb. However, he had the strength to take all our sins upon himself, all of them. "But, Father, you don't know my life: I have a sin that... I can't even carry it with a truck...". Many times, when we examine our conscience, we find some there that are truly bad! But he carries them. He came for this: to forgive, to make peace in the world, but first in the heart. Perhaps each one of us feels troubled in his heart, perhaps he experiences darkness in his heart, perhaps he feels a little sad over a fault... He has come to take away all of this, He gives us peace, he forgives everything. "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away sin": he takes away sin, it's root and all! This is salvation Jesus brings about by his love and his meekness. And in

listening to what John the Baptist says, who bears witness to Jesus as the Saviour, our confidence in Jesus should grow. Many times we trust a doctor: it is good, because the doctor is there to cure us; we trust in a person: brothers and sisters can help us. It is good to have this human trust among ourselves. But we forget about trust in the Lord: this is the key to success in life. Trust in the Lord, let us trust in the Lord! "Lord, look at my life: I'm in the dark, I have this struggle, I have this sin..."; everything we have: "Look at this: I trust in you!". And this is a risk we must take: to trust in Him, and He never disappoints. Never, never! Listen carefully, young people, who are just beginning life now: Jesus never disappoints. Never. This is the testimony of John: Jesus, the good One, the meek One, will end as a lamb, who is slain. Without crying out. He came to save us, to take away sin. Mine, yours and that of the whole world: all of it, all of it.

And now I invite you to do something: let us close our eyes, let us imagine the scene on the banks of the river, John as he is baptizing and Jesus who is approaching. And let us listen to John's voice: "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes



away the sin of the world". Let us watch Jesus and in silence, each one of us, say something to Jesus from his heart. In silence. (*Pause for silence*).

May the Lord Jesus, who is meek, who is good – he is a lamb – who came to take away sin, accompany us on the path of our life. So be it.

To officers and agents of the General Inspectorate for Public Security at the Vatican

## In St Peter's Square come rain or shine

Pope Francis extended his heartfelt thanks to the officers and agents of the General Inspectorate for Public Security at the Vatican, who he received in audience on Monday morning, 20 January, in the Clementine Hall. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's address, which was delivered in Italian.

Dear Chief Inspector,  
Distinguished Ladies and Gentleman,  
Dear Officers and Agents,

I welcome you and address my cordial greeting to each one of you, which I extend to your families and to your loved ones. I thank the General Commissioner for the courteous words which he has addressed to me on behalf of all who are present and of all who belong to the General Inspectorate for Public Security at the Vatican. This traditional meeting, my first, offers me the occasion to express to you my gratitude for your service, especially that which you carry out in St Peter's Square: in the cold, in the heat, in the rain, in the wind, always.... This counts so much! We are all aware of the constant need to ensure the special

character of this unique place be protected, preserving its character as a sacred and universal space. And for this, a discreet yet attentive vigilance is needed. In effect, in St Peter's Square people are calm, they move about peacefully, they enjoy a sense of peace. And this is also thanks to you, who maintain public order.

I also think of your commitment during larger gatherings of the faithful, who come from all over the world to meet the Pope, to pray at the tomb of St Peter and at those of his Successors, especially John XXIII and John Paul II.

Your work requires technical and professional training combined with attentive vigilance, kindness and dedication. The pilgrims and tourists, as well as all those who work in the various offices of the Holy See, know that they can count on your cordial assistance.

I thank you especially for the work carried out efficiently in the days that preceded the Conclave, following the renouncement of Pope Benedict. I wish to take the opportunity of this meeting to renew the



most sincere thanks – on my own behalf and that of my collaborator's – to all those who did their best to make sure that everything would be carried out in an orderly and peaceful manner.

And I would like to express my hope that the time spent in service at the Vatican will be for each of you an opportunity to grow in faith. Faith is the most precious treasure that your families have entrusted to you and that you are also called to

transmit to your children. It is important to rediscover the message of the Gospel and to welcome it in the depths of one's own conscience and in concrete daily life, courageously bearing witness to God's love in every sphere, also at work.

I entrust you to the Virgin Mary, so that as a caring Mother she may protect each one of you, your families and your work. I ask you to please pray for me – I need it – and from my heart I bless you.

At the Angelus Pope Francis invites the faithful to replace power and pride with love and humility

## Welcome migrants and protect them from human trafficking

*Pope Francis wanted publicly to thank all those who work to welcome and assist migrants and refugees, by defending them from the "merchants of human flesh". He did so at the conclusion of the Angelus on Sunday morning, 19 January in St Peter's Square, following a reflection on love of Jesus, who took the sins of mankind upon himself for our redemption. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's reflection, which was delivered in Italian.*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,  
Good morning!

With the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, which was celebrated last Sunday, we entered in the liturgical season called "ordinary" time. On this Second Sunday, the Gospel presents us with the scene of the encounter between Jesus and John the Baptist at the River Jordan. The one who recounts it is the eyewitness, John the Evangelist, who before becoming a disciple of Jesus, was a disciple of the Baptist, together with his brother James, with Simon and Andrew, all from Galilee, all fishermen.

The Baptist then sees Jesus who is approaching amid the crowd and, inspired from on High, he recognizes in him the One sent by God; he therefore points him out with these words: "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (Jn 1:29).

The verb that is translated as "take away" literally means "to lift up", "to take upon oneself". Jesus came into the world with a precise mission: to liberate it from the slavery of sin by taking on himself the sins of mankind. How? By loving. There is no other way to conquer evil and sin than by the love that leads to giving up one's life for others. In the testimony of John the Baptist, Jesus assumes the features of the Lord's Suffering Servant, who "has borne our grief and carried our sorrows" (Is 53:4) unto death on the Cross. He is the true Paschal Lamb, who immerses himself in the river of our sin in order to purify us.

The Baptist sees before him a man who stands in line with sinners to be baptized, though he had no need of it. A man whom God sent into the world as a Lamb to be immolated. In the New Testament, the word "lamb" recurs many times and always in reference to Jesus. This image of the lamb might be surprising; indeed, an animal that is certainly not characterized by strength and robustness takes upon its shoulders such an oppressive weight. The huge mass of evil is removed and taken away by a weak and fragile creature, a symbol of obedience, docility and defenseless love that ultimately offers itself in sacrifice. The lamb is not a ruler but docile, it is not aggressive but peaceful; it shows no claws or teeth in the face of any attack; rather, it bears it and is sub-



missive. And so is Jesus! So is Jesus, like a lamb.

What does it mean for the Church, for us today, to be disciples of Jesus, the Lamb of God? It means replacing malice with innocence, replacing power with love, replacing pride with humility, replacing status with service. It is good work! We Christians must do this: replace malice with innocence, replace power with love, replace pride with humility, replace status with service. Being disciples of the Lamb means not living like a "besieged citadel", but like a city placed on a hill, open, welcoming and supportive. It means not assuming closed attitudes but rather proposing the Gospel to everyone, bearing witness by our lives that following Jesus makes us freer and more joyous.

*After the Angelus, the Holy Father said the following:*

Dear brothers and sisters, today we are celebrating the World Day for Migrants and Refugees with the theme: *Migrants and Refugees: Towards a Better World*, which I developed in the message that was published some time ago. I extend a special greeting to the representatives of the various ethnic communities gathered here, especially the Catholic communities of Rome. Dear friends, you are close to the Church's heart, because the Church

is a people on a journey towards the Kingdom of God which Jesus Christ has brought into our midst. Do not lose the hope in a better world. My hope is that you might live in peace in the countries that welcome you, while preserving the values of the cultures of your homeland. I would like to thank those who work with migrants to welcome and accompany them in difficult moments, to defend them from those whom Blessed Scalabrini called "traffickers in human flesh", who want to enslave migrants! In a particular way, I wish to

thank the Congregation of Missionaries of St Charles, the Scalabrian Fathers and Sisters who do so much good for the Church and who become migrants with the migrants.

At this time, we think of the many migrants, the many refugees, of their sufferings, their lives, many times without work, without documents, in such great sorrow; and we can all together say a pray for migrants and refugees who live in the most serious and difficult situations: *Hail Mary...*

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

Archbishop of Los Angeles on immigration

### The soul of America

In a recent address Archbishop José H. Gomez spoke about the hardships related to immigration in the United States. On 14 January the Archbishop of Los Angeles, California told a story of how some children came to the Cathedral with letters they had written to Pope Francis. "All of them have parents who have been deported or arrested", he said, "and they were asking the Pope to help them". "They know Pope Francis, the son of an immigrant, has the heart to

understand what they are going through".

Archbishop Gomez decided to send the letters to the Holy Father. "Reading them makes my heart ache", he said. "They are so beautiful and so sad". One letter was written on notebook paper by a little girl named Jersey, it included a drawing of a bird flying free in the sky. The note read: "Dear Pope Francisco, Today is my birthday. My birthday wish is I would like to have my dad to be with me. ...It has been so long, that he hasn't been with me on two of my birthdays, last year and today. ... Since my father isn't here my mom and sister have been trying to find a job. ... Since you are the closest to God, I beg you to help my family."

The chairman of the USCCB Committee on Migration continued: "This is what immigration is doing to the soul of America". One out of every four people deported is taken away from an intact family, he said. "In the name of enforcing our laws, we're breaking up families. We're punishing kids for the mistakes of their parents. How we respond to these children is a challenge to our conscience – and it will be a measure of our humanity."

## VATICAN BULLETIN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

On 26 November 2013 Archbishop Jude Thaddeus Okolo, titular Archbishop of Novica, began his mission in the Dominican Republic with the presentation of his Letters of Credence to the President, H.E. Dr Darulo Medina Sánchez.

On 12 December 2013 Archbishop Paul Tschang In-Nam, titular Archbishop of Amantia, began his mission in Thailand with the presentation of his Letters of Cre-

dence to His Royal Highness Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn on behalf of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej.

### NECROLOGY

Bishop emeritus José de Jesús García Ayala of Campeche, Mexico, at age 103 (15 Jan.).

Bishop emeritus John Mackey of Auckland, New Zealand, at age 96 (20 Jan.).

Pope Francis' envoy to the 450th anniversary of the closing session of the Council

# The miracle of Trent

WALTER BRANDMÜLLER

When on 4 December in the year 1563 in the Cathedral of Trent, Cardinal Morone, Principle Legate of the Council, intoned the *Te Deum* and then cried out "Domini, ite in pace" to all who were present, they had come to the end of a very long journey marked by hardship, peril and disappointment. Deeply moved and amid tears, the Fathers embraced, filled with joy and gratitude for the work that had been accomplished. Today we remember that great moment; for with that *Domini, ite in pace*, there began what the Council historian and honorary citizen of this city, Hubert Jedin, called the "miracle of Trent".

Only in retrospect are we able to perceive the power with which the Spirit of God intervened in the future of the Church – and indeed in that of the world – through this Council. He did so with such effect that subsequent



Pius IV – the Pope who closed the council – in a portrait by Bartolomeo Passarotti (1529-1533)

centuries would be defined 'post-tridentine'.

Therefore, if today after 450 years we Christians of the third millennium intone the same *Te Deum*, we cannot and we must not do so solely with our gaze turned nostalgically to the past. Instead, let us celebrate this jubilee with our gaze turned to the Church and to the world of the here and now. What message – we ask – reaches us across the centuries? Is it possible that an answer to the questions we pose still lies hidden in the treasure bequeathed to us by the great Council? Or were those who celebrated the Second Vatican Council as a "departure from Trent" correct? And yet: its own Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, which expounds the teaching on the Church, in 16 passages cites doctrinal documents of the Council of Trent. Therefore, even after 450

years, it is still present in the doctrine and life of the Church.

Recently the Year of Faith called by Benedict XVI concluded, and it served as the occasion for Pope Francis to publish the first Encyclical of his Pontificate, *Lumen Fidei*. A Year of Faith and an Encyclical on faith: they in fact point to the heart of the problems of the present time, a time which mostly no longer wonders about the truth of the faith, or about truth in general. What good is it? What can it do? These are the questions that modern society asks. 'What is the truth?', many ask like Pontius Pilate. And again, if it exists, can truth satisfy us? We, on the other hand, ask: can human life exist without truth? And where do we find this truth?

The Fathers of Trent answered this question – already a pressing one some 450 years ago – by approving as the first Conciliar Decree, that which deals with Sacred Scripture and Tradition. In Scripture and Tradition we find the Gospel, which – as we read in this Decree – was "promised through the prophets in the holy Scriptures, Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, first promulgated with his own mouth, and then commanded to be preached by his Apostles to every creature, as the fountain of every saving truth, and moral discipline".

Therefore, neither philosophical speculation nor human self-awareness, nor other similar things are the contexts wherein the truth that saves man can be found, but rather in the texts whereby God communicates himself to his human creature. This happened once and for all in time and space, i.e., in history. The voice of the Council of Trent is very relevant in today's cultural context, when many people

regard the Sacred Scriptures as a highly venerable work, and yet one of human origin tracing back to the culture of the ancient Near East. Trent forcefully reminds us that the author of the Sacred Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as well as of Sacred Tradition, is the Triune God, who spoke to us first through the mouth of the prophets, but then also through his Son, the eternal *Logos* made man. God's saving address to man, his creature and image – that can be heard in the human word of Sacred Scripture and of the Apostolic Tradition – can alone satisfy man's desire for truth and offer him a solid foundation for his life.

"Every man who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house upon the rock", says the Lord.

Now, the teaching of the Council is addressed to man, to whom the message of the Gospel was and is addressed. "What is man that thou art mindful of him?", the Psalmist asks. Indeed, now as never before, modern man has become a question to himself. The terrible and bloody experiences of

*Those bishops came from a Europe where the Church was bleeding from the wounds inflicted by the mass departure of the faithful in many countries. Dejection and confusion paralyzed many of those who had remained faithful, leaving them looking, without hope, to a dark future.*

the 20th century just ended and the present one make us understand with anguish the drama of the question regarding man. What is man? Is he the superman as Nietzsche saw him, who sets his own parameters of true and false, of good and evil, or, as someone else said, is only a naked monkey who lacks a coat only through a whim of evolution?

Is man a mere cog in the mass production of objects, lacking soul and face, or is he a Promethean master of the world? Man has become an enigma to himself, dragged hither and thither between the obsession with grandeur and despair.

How and what ought we to think about ourselves? Unlike today, people of the age of the Council of Trent posed themselves this question looking to God.

Has man – like all creation – been rendered so corrupt and evil in his inmost depths by Adam's sin as to be struck by all of God's wrath, which can be placated only by the blood and by the death of Christ? Is man truly able to do nothing else but sin? The darkness of these questions is pierced through by the resplendent light of the

Council's Doctrine. The response it offers also holds true today and always.

An ancient prayer, which in the past was said during the Mass, as the wine and water were mixed, contains, with classical significance, the Council's message: *Deus qui dignitatem humanae substantiae mirabiliter candidisti et mirabiliter reformasti*, i.e., God who marvelously created human dignity and wondrously – through Christ – has redeemed it.

This Conciliar Doctrine responds negatively to that dark pessimism which viewed human nature, indeed the whole of creation, as profoundly corrupt due to the sin of our first parents and did not wish to accept the fact that, through the grace of redemption, man is healed in his innermost depths, that he is even created anew and accepted as a beloved son of God.

It was this awareness of not being left defenseless before evil, notwithstanding all the temptations, but rather of having been redeemed and called to eternal glory that freed the faithful's spirit and the heart's best forces. It was man's new self-awareness, inspired by faith in redemption, that produced the extraordinary religious impetus and missionary commitment to Asia and America, the growth of the manifold works of love of neighbour, of the arts and sciences which characterized the period following the Council of Trent.

Even today, could not a believing, in-depth vision of the dignity of human nature, that was wonderfully created and even more wonderfully renewed after so much sin, unleash those same spiritual forces and indicate which paths lead towards a bright future that is pleasing to God and for this very reason good for man?

Sacred Scripture and the Apostolic Tradition, the foundations of the Faith, and the relationship between God and



"Fr. Diego Latinez, at the Council of al Trent" (fresco in the Pontifical University of Salamanca the former college of the Jesuits)



Pasquale Cati, "The Council of Trent" (1588)

man, determined by original sin and by redemption: these were the great and pressing subjects which the Fathers of the Council wanted first to clarify.

The third subject which they addressed was that of the Church. It too concerns the faithful today no less than it did those of the 16th century. At that time, its opponents had mistakenly identified Church by identifying it as an invisible, purely spiritual entity. Today, on the contrary, not a few risk – as Pope Francis has emphasized numerous times – seeing the Church as a purely human, temporal institution, a kind of "non-governmental organization" for making the world a better place. Her true nature – as often happens even today – thus remains hidden.

In order to respond to these misconceptions, the Fathers of Trent at the time made the seven holy Sacraments the object of their doctrinal pronouncements, thus placing the true nature of the Church at the centre of attention. In the Sacraments it is the external sign perceptible to the senses – for example, for the Eucharist the consecration of the bread and wine – which defines and mysteriously produces divine grace. In a similar way, the human and historical figure of the Church is a visible sign of its invisible nature as the mysterious Body of the Risen Christ, as Christ's instrument for the redemption of the world.

Could not understand-

ing in a new and deeper way the divine reality of the Church – which is also present in the world of the third millennium – that is, rediscovering in her earthly and human figure the presence of the divine, bring about the end of the Church's worldliness, which is a presupposition for her effectively carrying out her mission for the eternal salvation of men?

To conclude let us look once more at the past. When the *Concilium Tridentinum* was inaugurated on 13 December 1545, there were only around 100 bishops who entered the Cathedral in procession. None came from Germany, the homeland of the schism. Those bishops came from a Europe where the Church was bleeding from the wounds inflicted by the mass departure of the faithful in many countries. Dejection and confusion paralyzed many of those who had remained faithful, leaving them looking, without hope, to a dark future. "Do not fear little flock", the Lord had said to his Apostles, and so also to their successors who were gathered at Trent. Thus, straight away they dedicated themselves to the work of clarifying and distinguishing the truth of faith from error, and to the work of reform. Their sowing in tears – as the Psalmist says – brought forth a rich harvest which extended even to the continents of Asia and America: a period in the history of the Church and culture to which the Council of Trent gave its name. In fact, the Spirit of God inspires and guides his Church throughout the centuries, until the Lord's return. Therefore, today we should not only be filled with gratitude for this, but also with hope that the Second Vatican Council, which the elders among us experienced first hand, in due time may bear fruit similar to the Council we remember today.

Hubert Jedin and the history of a difficult council

# Resolution after the storm

JOHN W. O'MALLEY

In 1975 Hubert Jedin (1900-1980), emeritus professor of church history at the University of Bonn and perhaps the most distinguished Catholic church historian of the 20th century, published the fourth and final volume of his history of the Council of Trent. It was the fruit of a lifetime of research and writing dedicated to the subject. Jedin's *Geschichte des Konzils von Trent* put our understanding of the council on a newly comprehensive and solid basis. It continues to be the first point of reference for all scholarship related to the council.

Strange though it may seem, we were until Jedin still caught in the grips of two incompatible classics from the 17th century, both written by Catholic priests. Paolo Sarpi's *Istoria del Concilio Tridentino* interpreted Trent as a tragic story of failure of true reform to carry the day and triumph of papal abuse of power. Although Sarpi was a Venetian, he published the book pseudonymously in London in 1619 to avoid censorship. Not until almost 40 years later did the Jesuit Sforza Pallavicino undertake a papally encouraged rejoinder in his two-volume *Istoria del Concilio di Trento*. Important though Pallavicino's works is, it lacks the verve and brilliance of Sarpi's. The two trajectories launched by these two publications continue to influence scholarship, but Jedin's history was a giant step in moving us beyond that impasse.

Few are those, however, who have made their way through Jedin's four formidable volumes. The first two were translated into English in 1977 and 1961. They aroused considerable interest because they appeared just as Vatican Council II (1962-1965) was about to get under way. Many people wanted to know the relationship between these two councils, especially once Vatican II began to be dubbed "the end of the Counter Reformation", just as Trent was considered its embodiment.

But then interest flagged, and Jedin's final two volumes, not published in German until 1970 and 1975, respectively, were never translated into English. In the meantime scholars from Western Europe continued to write books an articles about the council intended for specialists. Among the most important is Alain Tallon's *La France et le Concile de Trente (1518-1563)*, published in 1997. It attempts to balance a French perspective with a historiography on the council dominated by Germans, who according to Tallon were little comprehending of French policy vis-à-vis the council and unsympathetic to it.

Partly because of the excellence of Jedin's *Geschichte* and his many other writings on the council, scholarship especially in Italy has increasingly turned away from the council itself to its implementation and aftermath. The best of this scholarship makes a clear distinction between Trent and

*Tridentinismo* ("Tridentinism"), that is, between what the council actually enacted and how its enactments were afterward interpreted. The distinction clarifies how the council grew into a myth beyond the reality of the event itself. If Jedin moved us beyond one impasse, this more recent scholarship, little of which is available in English, has raised further questions about the impact and meaning of "Trent".

My intention is simple: to provide an introduction to the council that will be accessible to the general reader and perhaps helpful even to the professional historian and theologian. In it I hope to put to rest a few of the myths and misunderstandings that abound about the Council of Trent. I lay out the context in which the council took place, the problems it faced, the solutions it adopted. I provide a framework for understanding the council as a single, though extraordinarily complex, event. The council had an internal logic of sorts that configured its seemingly scattered and uncoordinated elements. Once that logic is grasped, the many and

# History told like a novel

The following are excerpts from the introduction to the book *Trent: What Happened at the Council* (The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press) by the historian John W. O'Malley, a Jesuit priest from the United States of America.

seemingly discrete decisions the council took can be seen to fit into a generally coherent pattern.

I am, like everybody today who writes about the Council of Trent, deeply indebted to Jedin. He was the master who led the way. In the course of the many decades that have elapsed since the 1930s, when Jedin first began writing on the council, his work, not surprisingly, has shown its limitations. Still, it has in the main withstood the test of time remarkably well. Without him, I could not possibly have written this book.

The reform of the papacy was an abiding concern of the council that during the third period burst into a major and prolonged crisis. The concern included the traditional grievances about the luxurious lifestyle of the papal court and the loose morals of some of its members. On a deeper level it extended to curbing or eliminating the financial exactions that the popes laid on clergy and laity for ostensibly pious purposes. Resentment over such exactions in their different forms had simmered for generations. Luther posted his "Ninety-Five Theses" as a reaction to one of them, the "selling" of indulgences, and he capitalized on it in his "Appeal to the Nobility".

The sticking point at Trent, however, was the not unrelated practice of the papal court of giving dispensations from the canons that required bishops to reside in their dio-

# women church world

*His mother kept all these things  
and pondered them in her heart*

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## Cook and theologian

The interview with Sr Rita Mboshu Kongo presents us with an issue that is at the heart of the relationship between women and the Church: women religious are at the service of priests and at the same time are recognized for their abilities in fields that are not only domestic and subordinate. This young Congolese woman has chosen to live her religious experience in a congregation which offers its life to the mission of the ministerial priesthood through prayers and domestic care. But at the same time, thanks to her commitment and intelligence, she has not only earned a degree but also a doctorate in spiritual theology. Thus her education is by no means inferior to that of the priests, professors and boarders at the Capranica College whom she serves. There is only one difference: these young seminarians and priests, who follow a path of study similar to her own, are able to dedicate all of their time to their studies. Is it a waste that such a woman continue to serve the

young men at the Capranica? Perhaps so, according to the superficial idea of female emancipation. Sr Rita teaches us that the charisma of her institute is deeper. She has further expanded this charisma by adding another dimension to her care, one of "exchange and reciprocal support", she forms a bond of mutual respect with young priests and seminarians. Without a doubt, her presence among them is a great testimony of love and humility; she is respected and appreciated precisely because her spiritual path was freely chosen. It would be different if she had been forced into this role by a Church that refuses to recognize her qualities. Sr Rita's words – like those of the many other women to whom we give the opportunity to speak in our newspaper, – "are asking deep questions that must be addressed", like Pope Francis said. (Lucretia Scaraffia)



Drawing by Isabella Ducret

An interview with Sr Rita, a PhD in theology and a cook at the Capranica College

## The vocation to reconcile study and stove

GILBERT TSOGLI

Founded in 1457 by Cardinal Domenico Capranica to encourage the formation for the priesthood of poor young men, the Almo Collegio Capranica is the oldest seminary. Today young people of different nationalities are enrolled there, some preparing for the priesthood, others are already priests continuing their post-graduate studies. Since 1978 the college's kitchen has been run by the Daughters of Mary, the Most Holy, Co-Redemptrix. Sr Rita, who was born in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, also works there.

*How did your vocation begin?*

The story of my vocation began while I was at college, but even if I was drawn to the consecrated life, I had no clear ideas. A priest in my village – who I had known from a young age – was instrumental in my journey of discernment. He had been sent to study in Rome at the Capranica. He helped me to understand what the Lord wanted of me, telling me about the Daughters of Mary, the Most Holy, Co-Redemptrix, and then putting me in touch with them, so as to be able to come to Italy to experience religious life. He knew all about the conditioning that I had undergone from my clan, which had other plans for me.

*What did your family plan for you?*

In the Kete tribe, a matriarchal tribe, the woman is considered the pillar of the clan. So it was up to me as the firstborn to be trained to become a clan leader on the day my maternal grandmother would pass away. I felt this strong responsibility, which made my choice of the religious life difficult. While I was at the college I was drawn to the con-



secrated life, but when I returned to my family all my certainties vanished. Moreover, in Africa girls are generally brought up to have a family. That's why it was necessary for me to leave that environment in order to try to really understand what I felt deep inside me.

*When did you leave the Congo?*

I made the decision to begin my experience with the Daughters of Mary, the Most Holy, and when I was ready to go to Italy, I told my family. They did not take it well. I left with sadness but also with a little trepidation because I did not know what to expect in Italy. However, I was determined. That was in 1996.

*Describe your Congregation.*

Fr Vittorio Dante Forno founded the congregation. He was born in

Sr Rita Mboshu Kongo was born in 1966 in Luebo (now the Democratic Republic of Congo). After obtaining a diploma in general education in 1987, she enrolled in medicine at the University of Kinshasa. To answer the call of the Lord, the young Congolese girl left her own country and arrived in Italy with the Daughters of Mary, the Most Holy, Co-Redemptrix. In 1998 she began her novitiate. She then earned a licence in spiritual theology in 2005 and then in 2011 a doctorate from the Pontifical Institute of Spirituality, the Teresianum of Rome.

Porto Alegre, Brazil, on 2 June 1916, to Sicilian parents. On 9 June 1940, he was ordained, choosing as his motto: *Vivas in me, vivam in te*. The charisma of the Daughters of Mary, the Most Holy, Co-Redemptrix, is the total offering of oneself in silent daily martyrdom, because the whole of their life – prayer, emotions, thoughts and actions – is offered to God as a sacrifice of adoration, reparation, redemption and sanctification, that priests may benefit from grace, to make them ever more effective ministers. The specific aim of the congregation is, in fact, to train people who offer their lives to God, that the mission of the ministerial priesthood produce the full availability of the reception of grace in the hearts of men. The Daughters of Mary express their spirituality through an intense life of prayer of a contemplative and oblationary character.

*How do you fulfill your charisma today and how do you live it out in the Almo Collegio Capranica?*

We live our charisma by carrying out the apostolate in various fields. We assist the poor, troubled teenagers, we support development projects in the Congo. We have served in the college's kitchen since October 1978, upon arriving here through the good offices of Msgr Gualdrini, who was at the time rector of the college. While serving in the kitchen at the Capranica, I continued my studies and obtained a doctorate in spiritual theology.

*Can you tell me more about your education?*

After earning my BA in theology, the Superior General, Mother Salemi, first asked me to continue with a license in spirituality at the Teresianum and then a doctorate at the same institute. I was asked specifically to deepen the spirituality and charisma of our congregation. The title of my thesis was: *A perspective for an inculturated formation in the Congregation of the Daughters of Mary, the Most Holy, Co-Redemptrix, in the Congo*. I chose this theme because Mother Salemi intended to send me back to the Congo to start our apostolate and train other girls wanting to become nuns in our institute.

*How would you summarize your work?*

I think that education should start from what the aspirant is acquainted with. This knowledge requires contact with the places of origin, with the families there. It is essential to know the person before introducing the spiritual content. I insist on the knowledge of the aspirant because

Pope Francis to executive directors and employees of Italy's radio-television network

## History as the root of new initiative

*Moral communication is a responsibility "that the proprietor of a public service cannot abdicate for any reason". Pope Francis said, addressing the executive board of the Italian radio-television network*

*RAI, whom he received in audience on Saturday morning, 18 January, in the Paul VI Hall. The following is a translation of his address which was delivered in Italian.*

Dear Madam President,  
Dear Executive Directors and  
Employees of the RAI,

I extend my welcome to you all! Thank you for having come in such great numbers; And 'thank you' to the President for her words, which I appreciated very much.

This meeting is taking place within the context of the 60th anniversary of RAI's first radio broadcast and its 60th in television; and it is significant that there are representatives present here from several public radio-television networks, and from associations in the field from other countries. The two anniversaries offer an occasion to reflect on the relationship which has existed between the RAI and the Holy See over the past decades, and on the value and demands of public service.

The key word that I would like immediately to highlight is *collabora-*

*tion*. Both in radio and television, the Italian people have always been able to access the words and, subsequently, the images of the Pope and the events of the Church in Italy, through RAI's public service. This cooperation is realized with two Vatican entities: Vatican Radio and the Vatican Television Centre.

In this way, the RAI has offered and still offers the users of its public service the possibility of following both extraordinary and ordinary events. We think of the Second Vatican Council, the elections of the Popes, or of the funeral of Bl. Pope John Paul II; but we think also of the many events that took place during the Jubilee Year 2000, the various celebrations as well as the Pope's pastoral visits in Italy.

The 1950s and 1960s were an age of great development and growth for the RAI. It is good to remember a few steps: in those decades the RAI's broadcasts covered the entire country; in addition, the state-owned corporation undertook to train its directors also abroad; lastly, they increased their productions, including those of a religious nature: we recall, for example, the film *Francesco* produced by Liliana Cavani in 1966, and the *Acts of the Apostles* by Roberto Rossellini in 1969, the latter in collaboration with Fr Carlo Maria Martini.

The RAI, therefore, also through many other initiatives, has been a

witness to the process of change in Italian society in its rapid transformation, and has contributed in a special way to the process of the linguistic and cultural unification of Italy.

Therefore, we thank the Lord for all of this and we carry forward the style of collaboration. However, recalling a past rich in achievements calls us to a renewed sense of responsibility for today and for tomorrow. The past is the root, history becomes the root for new initiatives, the root for present challenges, and the root of a future, of a movement forward! May the future not find us without the responsibility of our identity. May it find us with the root of our history and always going forward. I remind all of you who are present here, and all those who for various reasons could not attend our meeting, that your profession, beyond being informative, is formative, it is a public service, a service to the common good. A service to truth, a service to goodness and a service to beauty. All of the professionals who make up the RAI, the executive board, journalists, artists, clerks, technicians and workers know that they belong to a corporation that produces culture and education, that provides information and entertainment, reaching a great number of Italians every moment of the day. It



*Lou Castel in the film "Francesco d'Assisi" directed by Liliana Cavani*

is a responsibility that the proprietor of a public service cannot abdicate for any reason.

In the end, the ethical quality of communication is the result of conscientious – not superficial – attention, always respectful of people, both those who are the subject of information and the recipients of the message. Each, in his own role and with his own responsibility, is called to be vigilant in maintaining a high level of ethics in communication.

I send my warmest wishes for the year that has just begun to you, executive directors and employees of RAI and to your families, as well as to the distinguished guests of this meeting. My hope is that you will work well, and do your work with trust and hope, in order to be able to transmit it: there is such great need of this!

To the RAI, and to the other networks and associations represented here, I address my hope that in following their aims with determination and constancy, that they may always know how to place themselves at the service of society's human, cultural and civil growth.

## Resolution after the storm

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

ceses and pastors in the parishes, and that stipulated one bishop per diocese, one pastor per parish. The dispensations fostered the widespread abuses of nonresidence and the holding of multiple benefices, at which reforming bishops at Trent took aim. If the heart of the Tridentine reform was to get bishops and pastors back home to do their job, papal practice was the loophole that threatened to make the council's legislation a dead letter. But to deal with the problem meant the council had to deal with the untouchable issue of "the authority of the Apostolic See". The conflict over this issue is a focal point in the drama of the Council of Trent.

Drama? The popular image of Trent is just the opposite of drama. Both admirers and detractors of the council have tended to imagine it as a monolithic and single-minded gathering, untroubled by rancor, confidently poised to take the steps necessary to put the Catholic house in order. The reality was anything but that. The council, extraordinarily difficult to convoke, was even more difficult to hold on course. During it, animosities and substantive differences surfaced that brought the council again and again to the brink of disaster. At the end the council was able to arrive at a considerable measure of resolution, but only after navigating hazardous waters and surviving hurricane-strength storms.

Audience with personnel of the Apostolic Floreria

## With a spirit of sacrifice and patience

*On Friday morning, 17 January, Pope Francis received in audience in the Clementine Hall the personnel of the Apostolic Floreria, the Vatican department that deals with furnishing and decorating areas used for liturgical celebrations, ceremonies and audiences presided at by the*

*Pope in the Vatican and in Rome. Mr Giovanni Amici, Director of the General Services Administration of the Governorate, greeted and thanked the Pope on behalf of all those present. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's address, which was given in Italian.*

I extend a cordial greeting to you and your families, dear friends.

In recent months I have come to realize how valuable your work is. It principally concerns the logistical preparation of the audiences and celebrations held in the Vatican Basilica, in St Peter's Square, in the Paul VI Hall, in the Apostolic Palace and in the other papal basilicas. The arrangement of the areas for the various meetings of the Pope with pilgrims as well as the different activities of the Holy See is an indispensable task to ensure that the areas are attractive and functional.

Your work, which also includes the ordinary maintenance of the Vatican premises, is demanding and requires a spirit of sacrifice and

much patience. I am thinking, for example, of the weekly work of arranging the thousands of chairs for the pilgrims who come for the Gen-



eral Audiences; as well the tasks of your various workshops. I offer you my heartfelt thanks for the care, professionalism and availability with which you carry out your work. I encourage you to persevere in fidelity to your duties and to maintain among yourselves a climate of peace, mutual trust and goodness. This style of life and work will redound to the benefit of the entire working community of the Vatican.

With these wishes, I invoke upon you and your families the protection of St Joseph the Worker, who took care of the Holy Family, Jesus; and with affection I impart my blessing to you. And before invoking Our Lady, let us ask Our Lady also to watch over us. *Hail Mary...*

# Morning Mass at the Domus Sanctae Marthae

Tuesday, 14 January

## Four models

In his homily at Holy Mass, Pope Francis commented on the readings of the day taken from the first Book of Samuel (1:9-20) and the Gospel of Mark (1:21b-28). The Pope noted that the readings contain "four models of preachers: Jesus, the scribes, Eli the priest, and ... the two sons of Eli, who were also priests".

The scribes taught and preached yet placed heavy burdens on the people, "and the poor people could not go forward", the Pope said. Jesus reproves them for not helping them, and he says to the people: "Practice and observe whatever they tell you, but not what they do". The scribes and pharisees acted as though "they were cudgeling the people", the Pope added. Jesus therefore admonishes them, saying: "You shut the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither enter yourselves, nor allow those who would enter to go in".

Pope Francis then reflected on the second model of a preacher, the priest Eli. "He was a poor old man, but I have a certain affection for him", he said. "He was not truly a good man: he was a poor priest, weak, lukewarm and he let things go, he wasn't strong. He let his sons get away with many unpleasant things". The Pope noted as an example Eli's mistaking Hannah for a drunken woman, when she was praying in silence, only moving her lips as she asked the Lord for the gift of a child. "She was praying as humble people do, simply, from the heart, with anguish and moving her lips. Many good women pray in our churches and shrines in this way. And this is how she was praying, asking for a miracle. And the aged Eli, poor old man ... observed her, thinking: this is a drunken woman. And he looked down on her. He was the representative of the faith "who should have taught the faith, but "he looked down on this woman", the Pope said. He tells her: go away, drunken woman!".

"How often do God's people feel unloved by those who should bear witness to the faith, by Christians, by lay Christians, by priests, by bishops!". Returning to Eli, Pope Francis explained why he has a certain sympathy for him: "because in his heart he still had the anointing. When the woman explains her situation to him, Eli tells her: 'Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant your petition which you have made to him'. His priestly anointing shows through. Poor man, he had it hidden under his laziness. He was lukewarm. Poor man!".

The Pope then reflected on Eli's sons. His sons are not seen, the Pope observed, but they were charged with managing the temple. "They were brigands; they were priests, but they were brigands. They went after power and money; they exploited the people, they profited from alms and gifts. The Bible says that they took the best pieces of the sacrifices for themselves to eat. They were exploiters. The Lord severely punished these two!".

Pope Francis likened the sons of Eli to "the corrupt Christian, the corrupt layperson, the corrupt priest, the corrupt bishop. They take advantage of the situation, of the privilege of faith, of being a Christian. And their hearts become corrupt. We think of Judas: perhaps it was through jealousy and envy that he began to dip his hand into the purse" and "thus his heart began to be corrupted. John – the beloved Apostle who loved the whole world, who preached love – says of Judas: he is a thief. Full stop. It's clear: he was corrupt. And from a corrupt heart betrayal also comes. He betrays Jesus".

Pope Francis then contrasted Jesus' way of preaching. What was so special about his preaching? The Gospel says that the people "were astonished by his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes". Jesus, the Pope said, "taught the Law, he taught Moses and the Prophets. So what was so new? He had power, the power of holiness, unclean spirits fled from him. He was close to sinners, he dined with Matthew, a robber, a traitor to the homeland; he forgave the adulterous woman whom the law would have severely punished; he talked about theology with the Samaritan, who was no 'angel', she had her story as well". In short, he said, Jesus "looked into people's hearts, Jesus drew near to people's wounded hearts. Jesus was only interested in the person and in God. And he sought to bring God close to people and people close to God".

The Pope continued: "Jesus is like the Good Samaritan who heals the wounds of life. Jesus is the intercessor who goes away alone to pray for people on the mountain, and he gives his life for people. Jesus wants people to draw close and he seeks them out; and he is moved when he sees them like sheep without a shepherd. All of this is what the people describe as a new attitude. No, it is not a new teaching, it is a way of making it new. Evangelical transparency".

"Let us ask the Lord," Pope Francis concluded, "that these two readings may help us in our Christian lives not to become corrupt like the sons of Eli; not to be lukewarm like Eli; but to be like Jesus, with that zeal to seek out people, to heal people, to love people".

Thursday, 16 January

## An examination of conscience

In his homily at Holy Mass, Pope Francis commented on the day's first Reading (1 Samuel 4:1-11), which recounts Israel's crushing defeat by the Philistines, as well as Psalm 43, which expresses "Israel's prayer after the many defeats she experienced in her history". "Lord, thou hast cast us off and abased us, and hast not gone out with our armies. Though hast made us turn back from the foe; and our enemies have gotten spoil" (v. 9-10).

Such defeats raise questions, the Pope said. "Why did the Lord leave

Israel in the hands of the Philistines? Did the Lord abandon his people? Did he hide his face?". The Pope specified further what the basic question is: "Why did the Lord abandon his people in the battle against their enemies? But they were not just the enemies of the people but the enemies of God". Enemies, he said, who "hated God", who "were pagans".

The Pope looked for "the key to an answer" to this question in a passage from yesterday's first Reading: "The word of the Lord was rare in those days" (1 Samuel 3:1). "The word of the Lord was not present among the people, so much so that Samuel did not understand" who was calling him, Pope Francis said. The people, then, "were living far from God's Word, they had distanced themselves from it". The elderly priest Eli was "weak" and "his sons were "corrupt". "They frightened the people and cudgelled them". Thus, "without God's word, without God's strength" the door was left open to "clericalism" and to "clerical corruption".

However, within this context, the people realized that they were "far from God, and they say: 'let us go in search of the ark'". But they brought the ark into the camp as though it were something magical: they didn't seek the Lord but rather "something magic".

"The Philistines understood the danger" as the ark arrived into the camp amid Israel's "mighty shout", and they asked themselves what it meant. "They learned that the ark of the Lord had come to the camp" (v. 6). In fact, the Pope said, the first Book of Samuel states that the Philistines said: "A god has come into the camp". (v. 7). The Philistines thought that the Israelites had gone to seek God, and that he had really come to their encampment. Yet Israel had not realized that the ark was not their "entrance into life".

The Pontiff went on to note Israel's two battles with the Philistines. In the first there were some 4,000 dead; in the second, 30,000; and then "the ark of God was captured by the Philistines and the two sons of Eli, Ofni and Finees, died".

"This passage from Scripture makes us think about our relationship with God, with the word of God," the Pope said. "Is it a formal relationship, a distant relationship? Does the word of God enter our hearts, change our hearts, does it have this power or not?". Or, he asked, "is it a formal relationship ... but our hearts are closed to this word?".

This series of questions, he said further, "leads us to think about the Church's many defeats, to the many defeats of the people of God". These defeats, he said, are due simply to the fact that the people "do not hear the Lord, do not seek the Lord, do not allow themselves to be sought by the Lord". Then, after the tragedy has already occurred, we turn to the Lord to ask: "But Lord, what happened?". In Psalm 43, we read: "Thou has made us the taunt of our neighbours, the derision and scorn of those about us. Thou hast made us a byword among the na-

tions, a laughingstock among the peoples". And this, he said, leads us "to think about the scandals in the Church, but are we ashamed?".

"So many scandals that I do not wish to mention individually, but we all know about them. We know where they are! Some scandals have been very costly". At this point, Pope Francis spoke bluntly about the "shame of the Church" over the scandals that resound as so many "defeats of priests, bishops and laity".

The problem, the Pope continued, is that "the word of God was rare in those scandals. In those men, in those women, the word of God was rare. They did not have a bond with God. They had a position in the Church, a position of power and comfort" but not "the word of God". The Pontiff added: "It is pointless to say: 'but I wear a medal, I wear a cross: yes, like those who carried the ark without a living relationship with God and God's word!'. Recalling what Jesus' own words regarding scandals, he repeated that they lead to "the decay of the people of God, to weakness and the corruption of priests".

Pope Francis concluded his homily with two thoughts: the word of God and the people of God. Regarding the first, he suggested an examination of conscience: "Is the word of God alive in our hearts? Does it change our lives, or is it like the ark that comes and goes" but "fails to enter our hearts?". Regarding the people of God, he paused to reflect on the harm that scandals cause them: "Poor people ... poor people!" he said. "We do not give them the bread of life to eat! We do not give them the truth! So many times, we give them poisoned food!".

Friday, 17 January

## Così fan tutti

In his homily at Holy Mass, Pope Francis commented on the first Reading from the first Book of Samuel (8:4-7,10-22). Continuing his reflection on this week's readings, the Pope said: "We saw how the people distanced themselves from God, they had lost their knowledge of the word of God; they did not listen to it, they did not meditate on it". And he added: "When the word of God is absent, its place is taken by another word: by one's own word, the word of one's egoism, the word of one's desires, and also the word of the world".

"We saw how the people, who were far from God's word, suffered defeat". Distancing oneself from God, the Pope added, leads to taking a path that inevitably "leads to what we heard about today: the people reject God. Not only do they not listen to the word of God but they reject it" and eventually say "we can govern ourselves, we are free and we want to go down this road".

Samuel, he noted, "suffers because of this and goes to the Lord. And the Lord with good sense says to Samuel: 'Hearken to the voice of the people in all that they say to



you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them”.

Essentially, the Pope explained, “the Lord lets the people continue to distance themselves from him” and he allows them to “experience” the consequences of their departure. “Samuel tries to convince them and he says all the things we have heard, what they king would do with them, with their sons, with their daughters”. And yet, despite all these warnings, “the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel” and they asked to have “a king as judge”.

Pope Francis noted that here we come to “the interpretative key” to understanding the decisive issue. They people respond to Samuel: “We also will be like all the nations”. And so they demand: give us “a king who ‘may judge us’, like the rest of the peoples”.

Their request, the Pope said, was motivated by the fact that they had “forgotten that they were a chosen people, a people of the Lord, a people chosen in love and led forth by the hand” as “a father leads his child”. They “forgot this love” and desired to become like the other peoples.

This desire, Pope Francis explained, “will return as a temptation in the history of the chosen people. We remember the time of Maccabees, when they negotiated their status as a chosen people in order to be like all the other nations. It is a true insurrection. The people rebel against the Lord”. And this, he said, “is the door that opens to worldliness: to doing as everyone does” and not “as you who have chosen me have told me to do”. As a consequence, “they reject the Lord of love, they reject their election, and they seek the path of worldliness”.

Of course, the Pope explained, “it is true that a Christian should be normal, as people are normal. The *Letter to Diognetus* stated this in the early days of the Church. However, there are values that a Christian cannot adopt for himself” for “he must keep before him the word of God which tells him: you are my son, you are chosen, I am with you, I walk with you” and “normalcy of life demands a Christian’s faithfulness to his election”. His must never “sell it off to move towards a worldly kind of uniformity: this was the people’s temptation and it is also ours”.

Pope Francis therefore warned those present against forgetting “the word of God, and what the Lord tells us”, in order to chase after “the word that’s in style”. Such an attitude would lead us to say “the word of the soap operas is in style! Let’s take it: it’s more entertaining!”. This attitude of worldliness, he said “is more subtle and dangerous than the sin of ‘apostasy’, i.e., the sin of breaking with the Lord, since we more readily see the latter for what it is.

To say that “we want to be like all the other nations” also reveals that Israel “felt a certain inferiority complex for not being a normal people”. This led them to say: “We know how we should be, the Lord can stay peacefully at home”. Ultimately, this way of thinking is rooted in the first sin, in giving into the temptation to decide for oneself what is good and what is evil.

“Temptation hardens the heart”, the Pope said. “And when the heart is hardened, when the heart is not open, the word of God cannot enter. It is not by chance that Jesus spoke the words he did to the disciples on the road to Emmaus: ‘O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe’, because their hearts were hardened and so they could not hear the word of God”.

“Worldliness softens the heart”, but in such a way that it “harms it”, he added. “A soft heart is never good. What is good is a heart opened to the word of God, a heart that receives it. Like Our Lady who pondered all these things in her heart, the Gospel says”.

Pope Francis suggested to those present that we we ask the Lord for the grace “to overcome our egoism” and for the “grace of spiritual docility, i.e., to open one’s heart to the word of God” in order “not to do as our brothers did who closed their hearts because they distanced themselves from God and for a long time had not listened to or understood God’s word”. Then he concluded, saying: “may the Lord give us the grace of a heart open to receive God’s word”, in order to “meditate upon it always” and “to take the truth path”.

Monday, 20 January

### The God of surprises

In his homily at Holy Mass, Pope Francis commented on the day’s

Readings from the first Book of Samuel (15:16-23) and the Gospel of St Mark (2:18-22). The Holy Father began by noting that both readings help us “to reflect on the word of God” and “on our attitude towards God’s word”. Citing Hebrews, the Pope said that the word of God is “living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword ... discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (4:12-13). Indeed, he said, “the word of God visits us and illumines the state of our heart, of our soul”; it “discerns”.

Pope Francis noted that the two readings “speak to us about about the disposition we should have in the presence of the word of God”; i.e., “docility”. “Docile to the word of God. The word of God is living. And therefore it comes and says what it wants to say: not what I expect it to say or what I hope it will say or what I want it to say”. The word of God “is free” and it comes as “a surprise, since our God is the God of surprises: he comes and always does new things. He is newness. The Gospel is newness. Revelation is newness”.

“Our God,” the Pope continued, “is a God who always does new things. And he asks from us docility to this newness”. In the Gospel passage, Pope Francis said, “Jesus is clear about this, he is very clear: new wine in fresh wine skins”. Thus, “God must be received with openness to what is new”. And this disposition “is called docility”.

The Pontiff therefore invited those present to ask themselves these questions: “Am I docile to the word of God, or do I always do what I believe the word of God is? Or do I make the word of God pass through an alembic and in the end it is something quite other than what God wants?”. “If I do this,” the Pope warned, citing the Gospel, “I am like a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment”. “And the tear is made worse: if I do this, I become worse”.

Yet, as the Holy Father explained, “adapting oneself to the word of God to be able to receive it” requires “an ascetic attitude”. He gave the example of an electric appliance. If it doesn’t work, one sometimes needs an adaptor. The same is true for us: we always need to adapt ourselves, to adjust ourselves to the newness of God’s word”. Essentially, he said, we need “to be open to new things”.

In his reflection, the Pope then turned to the passage from the first Book of Samuel. “Saul, God’s chosen one, God’s anointed, had forgotten that God is surprise and newness. He had forgotten it. He was enclosed in his thoughts and plans. And so he reasoned in a human way. The Lord said to him: utterly destroy all that they have”. However, as the Pope explained, the custom “whenever anyone conquered, was to take the spoils” to divide them; “and a part of the spoils was used to offer sacrifice”. Saul had therefore selected several beautiful animals for the Lord: “he reasoned according to his own thoughts, according to his heart, enclosed in his habits. And God, our God, is not a God of habits, he is a God of surprises”.

Thus Saul “did not obey God’s word, he was not docile to God’s word”. We read in the Scripture that Samuel “reproved him” for this, saying: “Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord?” Samuel “makes him feel that he hasn’t obeyed: he has not been a servant, he has been lord. He has set himself up as master of God’s word. Indeed, Samuel then also says: “To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams”.

“The word of God continues forward through Samuel,” the Pope added: “rebellion is as the sin of divination, and stubbornness the sin of idolatry” (v. 23).

Samuel’s words “make us think about the nature of Christian freedom, about the nature of Christian obedience”. “Christian freedom and Christian obedience consist in being docile to the word of God; in having the courage to become fresh skins for this new wine ... the courage to discern always, to discern ... what the spirit is doing in my heart, what the spirit wants in my heart, where the spirit is leading me in my heart; and to obey”.

Pope Francis concluded his homily by repeating the two key words of the day: “to discern and to obey”. And he prayed: “Let us ask for the grace of docility to God’s word, to this word that is living and active, that discerns the thoughts and intentions of the heart”.

Tuesday, 21 January

### God chooses the little ones

In his homily at Holy Mass, Pope Francis commented on the day’s first Reading from 1 Samuel (16:1-13a), which recounts the anointing of David. “The Lord’s relationship with his people,” the Pope began, “is a personal relationship, always. It is a person to person relationship. He is the Lord, and the people have a name. Persons have a name. It is not a dialogue between the Almighty and the masses”. Rather, it is something “personal”. “Persons are organized as a people, and the dialogue is with the people; and in a people, each person has a place”.

For this reason, he said, “the Lord never speaks to the people as to ‘the masses’; rather, “he always speaks to them personally”, calling each person by name. The Pope then added that the Lord also “chooses personally”, and he cited the example of the account of Creation. “The same Lord, who fashions man with an artist’s hands, gives him a name: ‘you will be called Adam’. And so began the relationship between God and the human person”.

Pope Francis then pointed out another fundamental aspect: “A relationship exists between God and us, we who are little. God is great and we are little”, and so “when God wants to choose people, also his people, he always chooses the little ones”. So much so, the Pope added, that “he says to his people: I chose you because you are the littlest, those with the least power among all the peoples”.

The supreme example of this “dialogue between God and human lit-

To the members of the Pontifical Antechamber

# The true Master of the House



*"The Pontifical Household belongs to all of the members of the Catholic Church" for "the true Master of the house is the Lord". Pope Francis spoke these words to members of the College of the Personnel of the Pontifical Antechamber, who he received with their families in audience, in the Clementine Hall, on Thursday, 16 January 2014. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's address which was delivered in Italian.*

Dear Friends,

I am very happy to meet you and I wish to offer you and your families my best wishes for the year that has just begun.

You are at home here, and I am grateful to you for the service you perform at the audiences, ceremonies and other official receptions. I greatly appreciate the attention and warmth with which you carry out your work, in a spirit of welcome inspired by love for the Church and the Pope.

Let us ask ourselves: to whom does the Pontifical Household belong? Who is the master of this house? The Pontifical Household belongs to all of the members of the Catholic Church, who may experience here hospitality, family warmth and support for their faith. And the true Master of the House is the

Lord, whose disciples we all are, as servants of his Gospel. This requires that we cultivate a constant dialogue with him in prayer, that we grow in his friendship and intimacy, and that we bear witness to his merciful love towards everyone. Performed in this spirit, your work can become an occasion for communicating the joy of belonging to the Church.

Yesterday's liturgy presented us with the figure of the young Samuel who, dwelling in the Temple of Jerusalem, recognized the voice of the Lord and responded to his call (cf. 1 Sam 3:9). May this setting also be for you a place to listen to God who speaks to you, who calls you to serve him in an ever more mature and generous way.

Dear friends, may the Lord bless your families, and may Our Lady protect them always. I ask you to please pray for me! Thank you.

## women church world women church world

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

in the specific situation of the Congo it is important to know that the girl has been prepared by her family to become a wife and mother, that her wealth is, first and foremost, her husband and children. From this perspective, it is therefore necessary to explain to her that by religious consecration she remains a woman, but totally consecrated to God. Her duties as a wife and mother are spelled out in a spiritual motherhood and spousal relationship. The evangelical counsels must be presented to the aspirant as the capacity to love, to give, to give oneself, such as offering all one's abilities so that, free from every other link, she may love the Lord as her spouse. She is able to love those whom the Lord loves. Thus, the future nun lives her femininity giving all of herself to others according to the African mysticism, based on the value of fertility.

*How were you able to find time to serve in the kitchen while writing your thesis?*

It was not easy, but the Lord is great and listens to the cry of those who call on him in difficult moments of life. It was difficult, but with the grace of God, my determination, a lot of sacrifice, the encouragement of superiors (starting with the rector, Msgr Manicardi), students at the college and my sisters, I carried on, both as cook and student. Certainly the education and training received within my clan have been crucial. Moreover, I received the appointment to join our community serving at the Capranica when I was already on the fourth chapter of my thesis: I only had to write the fifth! Yet, after the first moments of uncertainty in my new ministry, I continued to work at a snail's pace on the writing of the thesis. I did not give in to the inevitable difficulties because I think I have a very strong character.

*When you were writing your thesis, what was your relationship with the students at the Capranica?*

As far as my relationship with the students is concerned, I can only say that it consisted in discussion and mutual support. I still remember with emotion the party after the defense of my thesis with my sisters and the Capranica students in the college refectory.

*How do you live out your commitment in the kitchen as someone with a PhD?*

My title as a doctor of theology does not take away from me my fundamental vocation, which is to be a Daughter of Mary, the Most Holy, Co-Redemptrix. So I live my commitment as a cook in the spirit of our charism. The most important thing for me, in fact, is to be a nun in our institution at the service of the Church where it is needed and where my superiors send me. My work in the kitchen makes me happy to the extent that I collaborate as much as possible to ensure that the students live their ministry fully. But also I try to keep up-to-date culturally, both by participating in meetings and by conversing with students who are preparing to take their license and doctorate.

*How do you evaluate your career as an African girl who came to Italy to be formed in the religious life?*

I think that it is not at all easy to leave Africa and come to start training here. I think it would be better if the girls were initially formed in their homeland because they have stories that need to be known and understood in their context. Not only that: it is also necessary that the aspirant nun also involve her family members. And those involved in formation should meet them, to help them to understand the way of life that their daughter is going to embrace. For me it went well, as well as for other girls formed directly in Italy, but I am of the opinion that it is desirable that at least the initial training should take place in one's own homeland.

## Mass at Santa Marta

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

lteness", he said, is to be found in "Our Lady, in she who said: 'the Lord has looked upon my lowliness, he has looked upon those who are little, he has chosen the little ones'".

"In today's first Reading, we see this attitude of the Lord shine through. As Samuel stands before Jesse's eldest son, he says: 'Surely the Lord's anointed is before him!'. For he was a tall man". However, he added, the Lord says to Samuel: "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the Lord sees not as man sees; man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart".

Therefore, Pope Francis said, "the Lord chooses according to his own criteria". That is why "in the prayer at the beginning of the Mass, in looking to St Agnes, we prayed: 'You, Lord, who choose what is weak in the world to confound the strong...'"

"The Lord chooses David, the youngest, who didn't matter even to his father. He thought he wasn't at home, and perhaps he'd said to him: go look after the sheep because we need to finalize a great affair here and you don't matter". And yet it was David, the youngest, "who was chosen" by the Lord and anointed by Samuel.

"All of us, by virtue of our baptism, have been chosen by the Lord; we are all chosen. He has chosen us one by one. He has given us a name. And he looks upon us. There is a dialogue, because this is the way the Lord loves".

However, as the Pope went on to note, although David was chosen and became king, "he erred" and "perhaps he made many, many mistakes". The Bible, he said, recounts "two weighty mistakes". Yet "what did David do?" the Pope asked. "He humbled himself, he returned to his littleness and said: I am a sinner! He asked for forgiveness and did penance".

Thus, "after the second sin, when he wanted to see how strong the people were, the Lord made him see that the census was an act of pride". And David said: "But punish me and not the people! The people are not at fault, I am the one who is guilty!" In doing so, "David kept watch over his littleness: through repentance, through prayer". And even with tears. For, "as he fled from his enemies he wept, and said: perhaps the Lord will see my tears and have pity on us".

The Pope then asked: "Where is Christian faithfulness to be found?" And he answered: "Christian faithfulness, our faithfulness, is simply a matter of guarding over our littleness so that it may remain in dialogue with the Lord". "Lowliness, humility, meekness are so important in the life of a Christian: they are guardians of littleness". They are the basis for continuing "the dialogue between our littleness and the greatness of the Lord".

Pope Francis concluded his homily with a prayer: "May the Lord grant us, through the intercession of Our Lady - who joyfully sang to God, for he had looked upon her lowliness - the grace of keeping watch over our littleness in his sight".

To the Finnish Ecumenical Delegation for the Feast of St Henry

## The question Paul asks

*On Friday morning, 17 January, the Holy Father greeted the Finnish Ecumenical Delegation on the occasion of the Feast of St Henry, Patron of Finland. The following is the English text of the Pope's greeting, which was given in Italian.*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,  
Dear Friends from Finland,

"Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom 1:7). I offer you a very warm welcome, as my Predecessors, Blessed John Paul II and Benedict XVI, have done for over 25 years, as I receive your ecumenical delegations on the occasion of the Feast of St Henry, Patron of Finland.

Writing to the members of the community of Corinth, marked by divisions, St Paul asked: "Is Christ divided?" (1 Cor 1:13). This question

has been chosen as the theme for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, which we begin tomorrow. Today that same question is being asked of us. Ignoring voices which no longer recognize the full and visible unity of the Church as an achievable goal, we are urged not to grow weary of our ecumenical efforts, but to remain faithful to the petition which the Lord Jesus made to the Father: that "all may be one" (Jn 17:21).

In our day, ecumenism and relationships between Christians are changing significantly. This is due above all to the fact that we profess our faith within a society and a culture increasingly less concerned with God and all that involves the transcendental dimension of life. We see this especially in Europe, but not only here.



For this reason, our witness has to be centred on the core of our faith: the proclamation of God's love made known in Christ his Son. This gives us a great opportunity to grow in communion and unity by promoting that spiritual ecumenism which flows directly from the commandment of love given by Jesus to his disciples. The Second Vatican Council itself alluded to it in these words: "Change of heart and holiness of life, along with public and private prayer for the unity of Christians, should be regarded as the soul of the whole ecumenical movement, and can rightly be called spiritual

ecumenism" (*Unitatis Redintegratio*, n. 8). Ecumenism is a spiritual process, one which takes place in faithful obedience to the Father, in fulfilment of the will of Christ and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

So let us constantly implore the help of God's grace and the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, who leads us to the fullness of truth, the source of reconciliation and communion.

Renewing my warm welcome, I gladly invoke God's blessings on you, on all the Christians of Finland and on the nation.

Theological differences do not preclude unity in Christ

## Under the same roof

BR ALOIS

From 28 December to 1 January, 30,000 young people from European countries gathered together for five days in Strasbourg, France. They were greeted by thousands of families in the city and by small centres on both sides of the French-German border. These days of encounter and two-way listening revealed, both to the young people and those who received them, a strong desire to achieve better understanding among peoples.

The gathering in Strasbourg, a city that symbolizes reconciliation, was the 36th annual meeting organized by our Taizé community, which every year chooses a large European city for the event. By providing more opportunities for building personal relationships, we would like to help young people to acquire a true European awareness. The work of institutions is essential, but without an encounter between people, Europe will not develop.

Europe is indeed experiencing an unprecedented period of peace in its history. And yet even it there is no longer a Wall dividing East and West, walls still exist in consciences. The young people who came to Strasbourg would like a more open and united Europe: with solidarity between all European nations and the poorest peoples of other continents. They now aspire to another economic organization: they ask that economic globalization be associated with globalized solidarity. They expect greater generosity from wealthy nations which can be expressed both through investments in developing countries, that truly favour greater justice, and through a dignified and responsible welcoming of immigrants from these nations.

Young people are aware that, as Christians, they should be the first to show forgiveness and sharing. The wounds of history often leave deep scars and mark mentalities for generations. But humiliations suffered do not necessarily lead to violence. They can be healed. In any case, young people have the chance to make their own contribution, and they can refuse to transmit the grudges and bitterness to the next generation. This does not mean forgetting the painful past, but breaking the chain of ongoing resentment, and as a consequence, gradually healing the memory through forgiveness. Without forgiveness there is no future for society. The tremendous surge that gave rise to the construction of Europe was largely due to this belief.

With young people of different faiths gathering in Strasbourg, we were reminded that, if we seek reconciliation between Christians, it is not for the purpose of retreating into ourselves. We seek it so that it might be a sign of the Gospel and become a leaven of reconciliation among people and nations. Reconciled Christians make the voice of the Gospel resound more clearly in a world that needs conviction for preparing a future of justice and peace.

Today, with Christians divided into many denominations, we run the risk of simply stopping at a peaceful coexistence. How can we go beyond this? At Taizé we are surprised to see that Orthodox, Protestant, and Catholic young people, after spending a few days together on our hill, feel deeply united without reducing their faiths to the lowest common denominator, or changing their values. On the contrary, they are deepening their faith. Fidelity to their origins co-abides with an openness

to people different from themselves. Where does this come from? From the fact that they have agreed to place themselves under the same roof and look together towards God. If this is possible in Taizé, why should it not be possible elsewhere?

I would therefore like to find the right

words to ask Christians from the different Churches: does a moment not come when we need to have the courage to come together under the same roof, instead of waiting for all theological beliefs to be fully harmonized? Is it not possible to express our unity in Christ – who is not divided – knowing that the differences that remain in our expressions of faith do not divide us? There will always be differences: they will need serious debate, but often they can also be a source of enrichment.

Let us do as much as possible with Christians of other confessions, let us not do anything without thinking of others. Here I will give some examples. Praying together once a year during the week of Christian unity is not enough, it runs the risk of becoming only a formal gesture; why not pray together more often? In many places there are interdenominational collaborations, especially in hospitals and prison ministries. Why not multiply the collaborations, rather than doing the same work? This could be implemented even in sensitive areas such as reviving the faith of children and ministering to youth.

In coming together under the same roof, we should not be afraid that the truth of the Gospel might



In the Cathedral of Strasbourg the evening of 30 December 2013

be diluted. We should trust in the Holy Spirit. We do not gather together to become stronger, but to be faithful to Christ, who is meek and humble of heart. From him we learn that the truth is heard through humility.

Finally I wish to address one of the more sensitive issues. Can Christians not consider that the Bishop of Rome is called to support communion among all, a communion in Christ where some theological expressions that imply differences can remain? Does Pope Francis not show us the way by making the proclamation of God's mercy a priority for everyone? Let us not allow this providential moment to be lost. I am aware that I am touching a hot topic, and perhaps doing so clumsily, but, in order to move forward, it seems inevitable to find a way to take this route of reconciled diversity.

At the conclusion of the gathering in Strasbourg, many young people returned to their countries determined to be bearers of peace and forgiveness. They know that everyone can participate in a civilization characterized not by diffidence but by conviction. Sometimes in history it only takes a few people to tip the scale towards peace.

Message for the next World Day of Prayer for Vocations

# Fruit borne of good soil

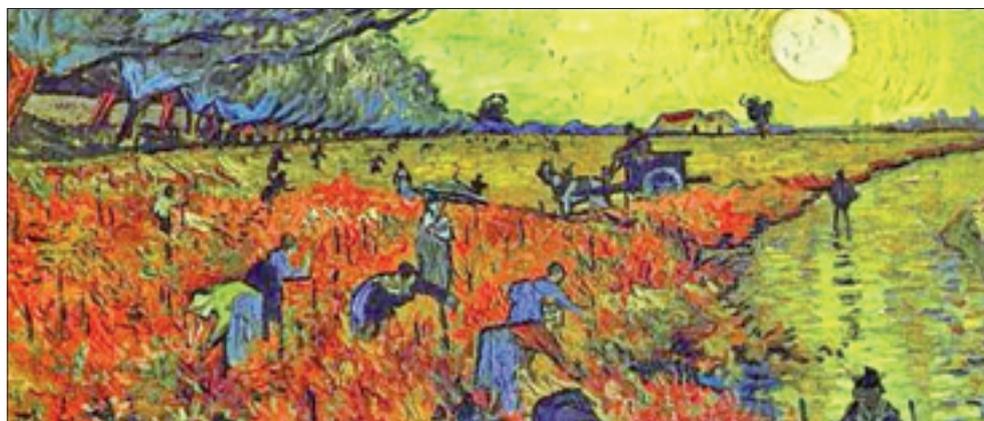
*"Vocations, witness to the truth". This is the theme of the message written by Pope Francis for the 50th World Day of Prayer for Vocations to be celebrated 11 May 2014, the Fourth Sunday of Easter. The following is the English text of the Holy Father's message.*



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

1. The Gospel says that "Jesus went about all the cities and villages... When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest'" (Mt 9:35-38). These words surprise us, because we all know that it is necessary first to plow, sow and cultivate to then, in due time, reap an abundant harvest. Jesus says instead that "the harvest is plentiful". But who did the work to bring about these results? There is only one answer: God. Clearly the field of which Jesus is speaking is humanity, us. And the efficacious action which has borne "much fruit" is the grace of God, that is, communion with Him (cf. Jn 15:5). The prayer which Jesus asks of the Church therefore concerns the need to increase the number of those who serve his Kingdom. St Paul, who was one of "God's fellow workers", tirelessly dedicated himself to the cause of the Gospel and the Church. The Apostle, with the awareness of one who has personally experienced how mysterious God's saving will is, and how the initiative of grace is the origin of every vocation, reminds the Christians of Corinth: "You are God's field" (1 Cor 3:9). That is why wonder first arises in our hearts over the plentiful harvest which God alone can bestow; then gratitude for a love that always goes before us; and lastly, adoration for the work that he has accomplished, which requires our free consent in acting with him and for him.

2. Many times we have prayed with the words of the Psalmist: "It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture" (Ps 100:3); or: "The Lord has chosen Jacob for himself, Israel as his own possession" (Ps 135:4). And yet we are God's "possession" not in the sense of a possession that renders us slaves, but rather of a strong bond that unites us to God



Vincent van Gogh, "The Red Vineyard at Arles" (1888)

and one another, in accord with a covenant that is eternal, "for his steadfast love endures for ever" (Ps 136). In the account of the calling of the prophet Jeremiah, for example, God reminds us that he continually watches over each one of us in order that his word may be accomplished in us. The image is of an almond branch which is the first tree to flower, thus announcing life's rebirth in the springtime (cf. Jer 1:11-12). Everything comes from him and is his gift: the world, life, death, the present, the future, but — the Apostle assures us — "you are Christ's; and Christ is God's" (1 Cor 3:23). Hence the way of belonging to God is explained: it comes about through a unique and personal rela-



Sadao Watanabe, "The Sower and the Seed" (1975)

tionship with Jesus, which Baptism confers on us from the beginning of our rebirth to new life. It is Christ, therefore, who continually summons us by his word to place our trust in him, loving him "with all the heart, with all the understanding, and with all the strength" (Mk 12:33). Therefore every vocation, even within the variety of paths, always requires an exodus from oneself in order to centre one's life on Christ and on his Gospel. Both in married life and in the forms of religious consecration, as well as in priestly life, we must surmount the ways of thinking and acting that do not conform to the will of God. It is an "exodus

that leads us on a journey of adoration of the Lord and of service to him in our brothers and sisters" (*Address to the International Union of Superiors General*, 8 May 2013). Therefore, we are all called to adore Christ in our hearts (1 Pet 3:15) in order to allow ourselves to be touched by the impulse of grace contained in the seed of the word, which must grow in us and be transformed into concrete service to our neighbour. We need not be afraid: God follows the work of his hands with passion and skill in every phase of life. He never abandons us! He has the fulfilment of his plan for us at heart, and yet he wishes to achieve it with our consent and cooperation.

3. Today too, Jesus lives and walks along the paths of ordinary life in order to draw near to everyone, beginning with the least, and to heal us of our infirmities and illnesses. I turn now to those who are well disposed to listen to the voice of Christ that rings out in the Church and to understand what their own vocation is. I invite you to listen to and follow Jesus, and to allow yourselves to be transformed interiorly by his words, which "are spirit and life" (Jn 6:62). Mary, the Mother of Jesus and ours, also says to us: "Do whatever he tells you" (Jn 2:5). It will help you to participate in a communal journey that is able to release the best energies in you and around you. A vocation is a fruit that ripens in a well cultivated field of mutual love that becomes mutual service, in the context of an authentic ecclesial life. No vocation is born of itself or lives for itself. A vocation flows from the heart of God and blossoms in the good soil of faithful people, in the experience of fraternal love. Did not Jesus say: "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (Jn 13:35)?

4. Dear brothers and sisters, this "high standard of ordinary Christian living" (cf. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 31) means sometimes going against the tide and also encountering obstacles, outside ourselves and within ourselves. Jesus himself warns us: the good seed of God's word is of-

ten snatched away by the Evil one, blocked by tribulation, and choked by worldly cares and temptation (cf. Mt 13:19-22). All of these difficulties could discourage us, making us fall back on seemingly more comfortable paths. However, the true joy of those who are called consists in believing and experiencing that he, the Lord, is faithful, and that with him we can walk, be disciples and witnesses of God's love, open our hearts to great ideals, to great things. "We Christians were not chosen by the Lord for small things; push onwards toward the highest principles. Stake your lives on noble ideals!" (*Homily at Holy Mass and the Conferral of the Sacrament of Confirmation*, 28 April 2013). I ask you bishops, priests, religious, Christian communities and families to orient vocational pastoral planning in this direction, by accompanying young people on pathways of holiness which, because they are personal, "call for a genuine 'training in holiness' capable of being adapted to every person's need. This training must integrate the resources offered to everyone with both the traditional forms of individual and group assistance, as well as the more recent forms of support offered in associations and movements recognized by the Church" (*Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 31).

Let us dispose our hearts therefore to being "good soil", by listening, receiving and living out the word, and thus bearing fruit. The more we unite ourselves to Jesus through prayer, Sacred Scripture, the Eucharist, the Sacraments celebrated and lived in the Church and in fraternity, the more there will grow in us the joy of cooperating with God in the service of the Kingdom of mercy and truth, of justice and peace. And the harvest will be plentiful, proportionate to the grace we have meekly welcomed into our lives. With this wish, and asking you to pray for me, I cordially impart to you all my Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, 15 January 2014

Franciscus