

L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO

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At the General Audience Pope Francis speaks about the week of joy

The path to Jesus

Why do you seek the living among the dead?



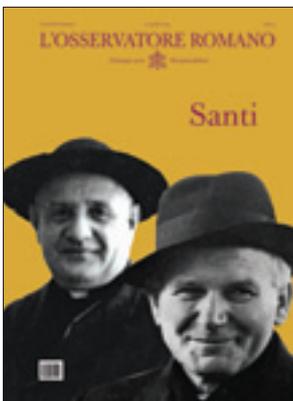
Eugène Burnand, "The disciples Peter and John came running to the tomb on the morning of the Resurrection" (1898, Paris, Musée d'Orsay)

"Why do you seek the living among the dead?". Pope Francis began his General Audience catechesis in St Peter's Square on Wednesday, 23 April, repeating the Angel's question to the women at the sepulchre. The following is a translation of the Pope's reflection, which was given in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Good morning!

This week is the week of joy: we celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus. It is a true and deep joy founded on

Special edition for 27 April



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the certainty that the Risen Christ shall never die again; rather, he is alive and at work in the Church and in the world. This certainty has abided in the hearts of believers since that first Easter morning, when the women went to Jesus' tomb and the angels asked them: "Why do you seek the living among the dead?" (Lk 24:5). "Why do you seek the living among the dead?". These words are like a milestone in history; but are also like a "stumbling block" if we do not open ourselves to the Good News, if we think that a dead Jesus is less bothersome than a Jesus who is alive! Yet how many times along our daily journey do we need to hear it said: "Why do you seek the living among the dead?". How often do we search for life among inert things, among things that cannot give life, among things that are here today and gone tomorrow, among the things that pass away ... "Why do you seek the living among the dead?".

We need this when we shut ourselves in any form of selfishness or self-complacency; when we allow ourselves to be seduced by worldly powers and by the things of this world, forgetting God and neighbour; when we place our hope in worldly vanities, in money, in success. Then the Word of God says to us: "Why do you seek the living

among the dead?". Why are you searching there? That thing cannot give you life! Yes, perhaps it will cheer you up for a moment, for a day, for a week, for a month ... and then? "Why do you seek the living among the dead?". This phrase must enter into our hearts and we need to repeat it. Shall we repeat it three times together? Shall we make the effort? Everyone: "Why do you seek the living among the dead?". [He repeats it with the crowd]. Today when we return home let us say it from the heart in silence and let us ask ourselves this question: why in life do I seek the living among the dead? It will do us good.

It is not easy to be open to Jesus. Nor is it a given that we shall accept the life of the Risen One and his presence among us. The Gospel shows us different reactions: that of the Apostle Thomas, that of Mary Magdalen and that of the two disciples of Emmaus: it does us good to compare ourselves with them. Thomas places a condition on belief, he asks to touch the evidence, the wounds; Mary Magdalene weeps, she sees him but she does

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

The Pope's Prayer Intentions for 2015

PAGE 16

Urbi et Orbi



PAGE 6

Easter Vigil



PAGE 7

Good Friday



PAGES 8 AND 9

Last Supper



PAGES 10 AND 11

VATICAN BULLETIN

AUDIENCES

Thursday, 24 April

Cardinal Beniamino Stella, Prefect of the Congregation for the Clergy

Members of the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference, on a visit *ad Limina Apostolorum*:

– Cardinal Wilfrid Fox Napier, OFM, Archbishop of Durban, with the Auxiliary Bishop Barry Alexander Anthony Wood, OMI, titular Bishop of Babra

– Archbishop Jabulani Aduas Nxumalo, OMI, of Bloemfontein

– Archbishop Stephen Brislin of Cape Town

– Bishop Jan de Groef, M. Afr., of Bethlehem

– Bishop Edward Gabriel Risi, OMI, of Keimoes-Upington

– Bishop Abel Gabuza of Kimberley

– Bishop Peter John Holiday of Kroonstad

– Bishop Michael Wüstenberg of Aliwal

– Bishop Adam Leszek Musialek, SCI, of De Aar

– Bishop Francisco Fortunato De Gouveia of Oudtshoorn

– Bishop Vincent Mduduzi Zungu, OFM, of Port Elizabeth

– Bishop Dabula Anton Mpakou of Queenstown

– Bishop Thomas Graham Rose of Dundee

Bishop Lazzaro You Heung-sik of Daejeon, Korea

H.E. Mr Edi Rama, Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania, with his wife and entourage

CHANGES IN EPISCOPATE

The Holy Father appointed Fr José Augusto Traquina Maria from the clergy of Lisbon, as Auxiliary Bishop of the Patriarchate of Lisbon, Portugal, assigning him the titular episcopal see of Lugura. Until now he has been parish priest of Nossa Senhora do Amparo, Benfica (17 Apr.).

Bishop-elect Traquina Maria, 60, was born Alcobaça, Lisbon. He was ordained a priest on 30 June 1985. He holds a licence in theology. He has served in parish priest and as member of the formators for the Major Seminary in Almada; as religious assistant for scouts in Alcobaça and for the national group of scouting; as canon of the Cathedral of Lisbon; as *vicar forane* of the deanery of Lisbon III; as coordinator of the permanent secretariat of the diocesan presbyteral council; as spiritual director of the Major Seminary of Christ the King of the Patriarchate of Lisbon.

The Holy Father appointed Fr Francisco José Villas-Doas Senra de Faria Coelho from the clergy of the Archdiocese of Évora, as Auxiliary Bishop of Braga, Portugal, assigning him the titular episcopal see of Plestia. Until now he has been parish priest of Nossa Senhora de Fátima, Nossa Senhora de Consolação and São Marcos in Évora (17 Apr.).

Bishop-elect Coelho, 53, was born in Mozambique. He was ordained a priest on 29 June 1986. He holds degrees in philosophy and theology, a licence in ecclesiastical history, and a doctorate in history. He has served as professor at the Institute for Advanced Studies of Theology in Évora; as canon of the cathedral; as spiritual director for courses of Christianity and of the Message of Fatima Movement; as religious assistant and collaborator of *Renascença* Radio.

The Holy Father appointed Fr José Trinidad Fernández Angulo from the clergy of the Archdiocese of Mérida, as Auxiliary Bishop of Caracas, Venezuela, assigning him the titular episcopal see of Cerenza. Until now he has been Rector of the Major Seminary of Santa Rosa de Lima (17 Apr.).

Bishop-elect Fernández Angulo, 49, was born in Mérida, Venezuela. He was ordained a priest on 30 July 1989. He holds a licence in philosophy. He has served as professor at the Minor Seminary in Mérida; as assessor for the Archdiocesan youth and vocation ministry; as director and vice-director of studies at the major seminary. He has served as vice-rector at the San José Seminary;

as vice-rector for philosophy at Major Seminary of Santa Rosa de Lima; as research director, formator and vice-rector at Santa Rosa de Lima University.

CARDINAL TAKES POSSESSION

On 24 April, Cardinal Orlando B. Quevedo, OMI, Archbishop of Catabato, the Philippines, took possession of the Title of Santa Maria "Regina Mundi" a Torre Spaccata.

NECROLOGY

Bishop Francisco Ovidio Vera Intriago, titular Bishop of Autenti and Auxiliary of Portoviejo, Ecuador at age 71 (21 Apr.).

'Pagine Ebraiche' International edition launched

The Italian Jewish newsletter *Pagine Ebraiche* published by the Union of the Communities of Italian Jews is expanding. They are now publishing "Pagine Ebraiche International Edition". *A Taste of the Italian Jewish World*. The new newsletter, along with the website (moked.it/international), intend to offer readers all over the world a look into the life of the Italian Jewish community.

The Holy Father with the Prime Minister of Albania



On Thursday morning, 24 April, Pope Francis received in audience, in the Vatican Apostolic Palace, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania, H.E. Mr Edi Rama, who subsequently met with Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Parolin, accompanied by Archbishop Dominique Mamberti, Secretary for Relations with States.

During the cordial discussions, the Parties remarked upon the good relations between the Holy See and the Republic of Albania, and focused on themes of common interest regarding the relations between the ecclesial and civil communities, including interreligious dialogue and the contribution of the Church to the common good in Albania. Attention then turned to the principal regional issues and Albania's progress towards full integration within the European Union.

Congregation for the Causes of Saints

Promulgation of decrees

On Tuesday, 15 April, Pope Francis received Cardinal Angelo Amato, SDB, Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, in private audience and authorized the Congregation to promulgate the following Decrees:

– a miracle attributed to the intercession of Bl. Ludovico of Casoria (in the world: Archangelo Palmentieri), professed priest of the Order of Friars Minor and Founder of the Congregation of the Franciscan Sisters of St Elizabeth – (known as the "Grey Sisters"); born in Casoria, Italy, on 11 March 1814 and died in Naples on 30 March 1885.

– a miracle attributed to the intercession of the Bl. Amato Ronconi, of the Third Order of St Francis, Founder of the Poor Pilgrims Hospice in the city of Saludecio now

called the Bl. Amato Ronconi Retirement Home/Charitable Work; born in Saludecio, Italy, c. 1226 and died in Rimini c. 1292;

– the heroic virtues of the Servant of God Alano Maria Boismenu de Guynot, of the Congregation of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, titular Archbishop of Claudiopolis, former Vicar Apostolic to Papua; born in Saint-Malo, France, on 27 December 1870, and died in Kubuna, Republic of the Fiji Islands, Oceania, on 5 November 1953;

– the heroic virtues of the Servant of God Wilhelm Janauschek, professed priest of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer; born in Vienna, Austria, on 19 October 1859 and died there 30 June 1926.

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Searching for Jesus

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

not recognize him, she only realizes that it is Jesus when he calls her by name; the disciples of Emmaus, who are depressed and feeling defeated, attain an encounter with Jesus by allowing that mysterious wayfarer to accompany them. Each one on a different path! They were seeking the living among the dead and it was the Lord himself who redirected their course. And what do I do? What route do I take to encounter the living Christ? He will always be close to us to correct our course if we have strayed.

"Why do you seek the living among the dead?" (Lk 24:5). This question enables us to overcome the temptation to look back, to what was yesterday, and it spurs us on to the future. Jesus is not in the sepulchre, he is Risen! He is the Living One, the One who always renews his body, which is the Church, and enables it to walk by drawing it towards Him. "Yesterday" is the tomb of Jesus and the tomb of the Church, the tomb of truth and justice; "today" is the perennial Resurrection to which the Holy Spirit impels us, bestowing on us full freedom.

Today this question is also addressed to us. You, why do seek the living among the dead, you who withdraw into yourself after a failure, and you who no longer have the strength to pray? Why do you seek the living among the dead, you who feel alone, abandoned by friends and perhaps also by God? Why do you seek the living among the dead, you who have lost hope



and you who feel imprisoned by your sins? Why do you seek the living among the dead, you who aspire to beauty, to spiritual perfection, to justice and to peace?

We need to hear ourselves repeat and to remind one other of the angels' admonition! This admonition: "Why do you seek the living among the dead" helps us leave behind our empty sadness and opens us to the horizons of joy and hope. That hope which rolls back the stones from tombs and encourages one to proclaim the Good News, capable of generating new life for others. Let us repeat the Angels' phrase in order to keep it in our hearts and in our memory, and then let everyone respond in silence: "Why do you seek the living among the dead". Let's repeat it! [He repeats it with the crowd]. Behold, brothers and sisters, He is alive, He is with us! Do not go to the many tombs that today promise you something, beauty, and then give you nothing! He is alive! Let us not seek the living among the dead! Thank you.

SPECIAL GROUPS

I greet all the English-speaking pilgrims taking part in today's Audi-

ence, including those from Scotland, Sweden, Finland and the United States. I offer a special greeting to the newly-ordained deacons from the Pontifical Irish College, as well as their families and friends. Upon all of you, and upon your families, I invoke the joy and peace of the Risen Lord. God bless you all!

Yesterday I received a video appeal from the workers of the Lucchini di Piombino, sent to me before the closure of the blast furnace, which truly moved me. It left me feeling sad. Dear workers, dear brothers, a deep sadness was depicted on your faces, and the worry of fathers of families who are only asking for their right to work in order to live with dignity and to be able to protect, feed and educate their own children. Be assured of my closeness and my prayer; do not be discouraged, the Pope is at your side and is praying for you, so that when human hope is extinguished, may divine hope which never disappoints always remain alive. Dear workers, dear brothers, I embrace you fraternally; and I ask all the managers to make every creative and generous effort to rekindle hope in the hearts of our brothers and in the hearts of all those who are unem-

ployed due to waste and the economic crisis. Please, open your eyes and do not fold your arms!

Over the last weeks many messages expressing good wishes for a holy Easter have arrived from all over the world. I wish to reciprocate these best wishes to everyone. From my heart I wish to thank the children, young people, elderly, families, parish and religious communities, associations, movements and various groups that have wished to show me their affection and closeness. I ask everyone to continue to pray for me and for my service to the Church.

Next Sunday at Alba in the Piedmont, Giuseppe Girotto, a priest of the Order of Friars Preachers who was killed *in odium fidei* in the Nazi concentration camp of Dachau, will be proclaimed Blessed. May his heroic Christian witness and his martyrdom arouse in many the desire to adhere ever more closely to Jesus and to the Gospel.

I extend a special thought to *young people, the sick and newlyweds*. May the Easter proclamation continue to make your hearts burn within you, as happened to the disciples of Emmaus: dear *young people*, may you always live the faith with enthusiasm, convinced that only the Lord Jesus allows us to attain full and lasting happiness; dear *sick*, there is no greater comfort and more beautiful consolation in your suffering than knowing that Christ is Risen: and may you, dear *newlyweds*, live your marriage in true adherence to Christ and to the Gospel teachings.

On his birthday Pope Francis' best wishes for Benedict XVI



On Benedict XVI's 87th birthday, Wednesday, 16 April, Pope Francis called his Predecessor on the telephone to wish him a happy birthday. The Director of the Holy See Press Office, Fr Federico Lombardi, announced this, adding that Pope Francis assured the Pope emeritus that he remembered him in prayer at morning Mass that day. Fr Lombardi said that Benedict XVI spent the day in the usual atmosphere of meditation and prayer, without any special celebrations.



"St George" (12th century, Mount Athos, Xenophontos Monastery)

On the Feast of St George

In one of the most popular and widespread collections of the lives of the saints – known as the "Golden Legend" written by the Dominican Jacobus de Voragine, Archbishop of Genoa in the late 1200s – the story of St George is preceded by an interpretation of his name. Building off a passage from St Augustine, the author writes: "blessed George was high in despising low things, and therefore he had verdure in himself, he was temperate by discretion, and therefore he had wine of gladness, and within he was plane of humility, and thereby put he forth wheat of good works". These were traits that Br Jacobus attributed Christ's witness and which are well represented in the unusual iconography of one of the more popular Christian saints, a Byzantine mosaic kept in Mount Athos: George with his gaze fixed on the Lord. This saint's relationship to the Lord was decisively personal and points to what Pope Francis continually calls the faithful to, as he did at the Easter Vigil when speaking of the first encounter with Christ as "first love". With this image *L'Osservatore Romano* wishes the Holy Father all the best on his nameday, speaking on behalf our readers and of the many women and men around the world, without distinction of faith, ethnicity or political leanings, who look with affection and hope to the Roman Pontiff in their prayers and in their thoughts.

The World Council of Churches Witnesses to the Resurrection



By celebrating Easter on the same date this year, Christian churches of the East and West will have an "opportunity for shared testimony to the Resurrection". Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC), wrote this in his Easter message. "It is something that ought to happen every year, for the sake of Christian unity and common witness in the world", said Tveit, inviting the Churches to "press on with greater determination in seeking a way forward to the recognition of a common date for this festival."

The heads of the WCC recalled the consultation in Aleppo, Syria (and the related document) in 1997, which warned that "by celebrating this feast of feasts on different days, the churches give a divided witness to this fundamental aspect of the apostolic faith, compromising their credibility and effectiveness in bringing the Gospel to the world."

In his message Dr Tveit turned his attention to Syria and the Near East, and to the regions of the world which are suffering from devastations of both natural and human

origins. He urged all Churches to pray for "the end of violence in the Central African Republic, Nigeria and elsewhere; for a sustainable peace in South Sudan... and for the discovery of peaceful and nonviolent solutions to the tensions in Ukraine."

The General Secretary then recalled the words of the German Lutheran theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer – who was held at length and then freed in a concentration camp just a few days before the end of World War II: "To live in the light of the Resurrection – that is the meaning of Easter." Words which, he said, "were written in a German jail-cell during the spring of 1944... In a letter to a friend, the young theologian and prisoner of conscience observed that what we need most in our lives is 'the Resurrection of Christ to invigorate and cleanse the world today'". The common prayer of the Churches this Easter, he concluded, that Christians "may become a sign of peace and unity for all peoples struggling for justice and peace".

Easter in Great Britain and in the world The most important date

The following is the text of the British Prime Minister's videomessage for Easter, broadcast on the government's website.

DAVID CAMERON

Easter is the most important date in the Christian calendar, and an incredibly special time for people across Britain and around the world. Last month I was in Jerusalem and Bethlehem and I got to see for myself the places where Jesus was born and died. It was an extraordinary experience to be in those places where so much history began.

Today, 2000 years on, Easter is not just a time for Christians across our country to reflect, but a time for our whole country to reflect on what Christianity brings to Britain. All over the UK, every day, there are countless acts of kindness carried out by those who believe in and follow Christ. The heart of Christianity is to "love thy neighbour" and millions do really live that out. I think of the Alpha courses run in our prisons, which work with offenders to give them a new life inside and outside prison, or the soup kitchens and homeless shelters run by churches.

And we saw that same spirit during the terrible storms that struck Britain earlier this year. From Somerset to Surrey, from Oxford to Devon, churches became refuges, offering shelter and food, congregations raised funds and rallied together, parish priests even canoed through their villages to rescue residents. They proved, yet again, that people's faith motivates them to do good deeds.

That is something this government supports and celebrates, and it's why we have announced more funding for the Near Neighbours programme bringing together even more faiths in even more cities to do social action. And as we celebrate Easter, let's also think of those who are unable to do so, the Christians around the world who are ostracised, abused – even murdered – simply for the faith they follow. Religious freedom is an absolute, fundamental human right.

Britain is committed to protecting and promoting that right, by standing up for Christians and other minorities, at home and abroad. Our hearts go out to them, especially at this special time of year. So as we approach this festival I'd like to wish everyone, Christians and non-Christians, a very happy Easter.

Easter message of the Archbishop of Yangon

Reconciliation for Myanmar

Christians – together with men of good will in Myanmar – are called to be "promoters of reconciliation". Archbishop Charles Maung Bo of Yangon affirmed this in his Easter message, recalling that "in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, and He gave us the ministry of reconciliation. God was in Christ and through Him embraced the whole world". The Prelate especially affirmed how his paschal ministry breaks like a dawn imbued with hope. Even the longest night ends with a sunrise. All human suffering has an end. We celebrated the hope that lives during Easter: life is not an empty illusion, but in Christ is life. This statement, the Archbishop of Yangon says, resonates even stronger in Myanmar, which was "for 50 long years, a crucified nation", nailed "to a cross of suffering, injustice and oppression".

In his message the prelate cited various points which offer hope,

such as the new season of democracy, freedom of expression and of opinion, the opening of civil society, defining them as "signs of the resurrection". In fact, "we hope and pray that it is not an illusory dawn", he said, noting the new nails, which make holes in the nation today: land grabbing, such as: religious hatred fomented by fascist groups; economic neo-liberalism; the continuing conflicts in areas inhabited by ethnic minorities and refugees.

The message of Easter this year – which coincides with the Buddhist feast Thingyan (the festival of water) – expressed the hope that "all may be reborn as brothers and sisters". For the Archbishop encouraging "greater tolerance between religions" is a task which concerns religious leaders who must emphasize that what is "holy and good". Because "unity in diversity" is what enlivens "our destiny".

Bishop of Bossangoa freed

Bishop Nestor-Desiré Nongo-Aziagbia of Bossangoa, who together with three priests of his diocese was abducted by a group of Séléka militia on Wednesday, 16 April, in the north of the Central African Republic, has been freed. Confirmation of his release came on 17 April from the Archbishop of Bangui, Dieudonné Nzapalainga, who had contact with the bishop. "I spoke to him and he told me he is well". The Archbishop also explained how he initially learned of the kidnapping: "Late in the evening on Wednesday, I received a telephone call from the Bishop of Bossangoa, who told me that he had been taken from his home together with three other religious". MISCA forces, the African peacekeeping mission deployed in the country and who are present in the city, made contact with the kidnapers.

Mass 'in coena Domini' at the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem

He who dries the tears

"Evil does not have the last word, because the crucified and resurrected Christ is the victor." Celebrating Holy Thursday Mass in the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre the Patriarch of Jerusalem for Latins Fouad Twal recalled the value of the message of hope that Christ gives to the world – even in the most difficult and dramatic situations.

"Christ's forgiveness is a source of internal and external serenity, and turns us into peacemakers in a world, where unfortunately, divisions, suffering and the dramas of injustice, hatred and violence continue to exist," said the Patriarch, who recalled the example of the washing of feet.

"Confronted with a growing number of our brothers and sisters arriving in the country as refugees in the face of so much conflict and violence and people starving or without shelter", the Patriarch said, "we must reach out to dry so much tears and console so many broken hearts. This is the lesson and the message of Holy Thursday".



The Pope's Mass at Santa Marta

No fear of joy

In his homily at Holy Mass on Thursday, 24 April, Pope Francis reflected on the contrast between what the Apostles felt after the Lord's Resurrection: on the one hand, they were filled with joy at the thought that he had risen; on the other, they were fearful at seeing him among them once again and of entering once more into contact with the mystery.

Drawing on the day's Gospel passage from Luke (24:35-48), the Pope recalled that "on the evening of the Resurrection the disciples were talking about what they had seen": the two disciples from Emmaus spoke about their encounter with Jesus on the road, and how he had also appeared to Peter. "They were all happy because the Lord had risen: they were sure that the Lord had risen". However, as they were speaking, the Gospel says, "Jesus himself stood among them" and greeted them saying: "Peace be with you".

At that moment, the Pope noted, that the completely unexpected happened: something other than peace. In fact, the Gospel describes the Apostles as "startled and frightened". They "didn't know what to do, and supposed that they had seen a spirit". Thus, the Pope continued, Jesus sought most of all to reassure them: "look, I am not a spirit, touch me, look at my wounds!"

"There is a word in this Gospel passage that explains well for us what had happened at that moment", the Pope said. We read in the text: "And while they still disbelieved for joy ...". This is the focal point: the disciples "could not believe because they were afraid of joy". Jesus "leads them to joy: the joy of the Resurrection, the joy of

his presence among them". However, for them this joy posed "a problem for belief: they disbelieved for joy and they were full of amazement".

Essentially, Pope Francis said, the disciples "preferred to think that Jesus was an idea, a spirit, but not a reality". Therefore, "Jesus' whole task was to make them understand that he was real: "Give me something to eat, touch me, it is I! A spirit does not have flesh, does not have a body, it is I!". Furthermore, the Pope continued, "let's remember that this occurred after several of them had seen him during the day: they were sure he was alive. Then we don't know what happened...".

The Gospel passage suggests that "the fear of joy is a Christian illness", the Pope remarked. We too "are afraid of joy" and we tell ourselves that "it is better to think: yes, God exists, but he is out there. Jesus is risen, he is out there!". We tell ourselves: let's keep "a little distance ... we are afraid of Jesus' closeness because this brings us joy".

This attitude also explains why there are so many "funeral Christians" for whom "life seems like a continual funeral". Christians who "prefer sadness and not joy; they move better, not in the light of joy, but in the shadows". Just "like those animals", the Pope said, "that manage to go out at night but don't see anything in the light of day. Like bats! And with a little bit of humour we can say that they are 'bat Christi-



ans' who prefer the shadows to the light of the presence of the Lord".

"We are afraid of joy", the Pope repeated, "and Jesus, by his Resurrection, gives us joy: the joy of being Christians, the joy of following him closely, the joy of taking the road of the beatitudes, the joy of being with him". Instead, "many times we are either startled when this joy comes to meet us, or we are full of fear: either we believe we are seeing a ghost, or we think that Jesus is a way of acting"; indeed, we say "we are Christians and we have to do it

with our problems, with our struggles and with our good works".

Therefore, the Pope reiterated, we need to overcome "the fear of joy"; we need to think of the many times that "we are not joyful because we are afraid". Like the disciples who "were startled and frightened" by the mystery of the Cross. This was the cause of their fear. "In my homeland", Pope Francis said, "there is a saying that goes like this: when someone gets burned by boiling milk, he cries when he sees the cow". The disciples, who were "burned by the drama of the Cross, said: no, let's stop here! He is in heaven, that's excellent, he is risen, but may he not come back again because we can't take handle it".

Pope Francis concluded his meditation asking the Lord that he "may do for us all what he did for the disciples who were afraid of joy: open our minds". Indeed, in the Gospel we read: "He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures". The Pope therefore expressed his hope "that the Lord may open our minds and make us understand that he is a living reality, that he has a body, that he is with us and that he accompanies us, that he has conquered: let us ask the Lord for the grace not to be afraid of joy".



*A simple lifestyle is good for us,
helping us to better share
with those in need.*

(@Pontifex on 24 April)

this way!". Rather, we should ask ourselves: "Do you speak with Jesus? Do you tell him: Jesus, I believe that you are alive, that you are risen, that you are close to me, that you will not abandon me"? This is the "dialogue with Jesus" which is proper to the Christian life and is enlivened by the knowledge that "Jesus is always with us, he is always

Photographs and footage in the Vatican Museums

Two Pope Saints of humility and courage

"Capturing the images of the Popes is an art form that crosses centuries and the media", explained Paola Di Giammaria and Arturo Mari, the curators of the exhibition "The humility and courage that changed history: John XXIII and John Paul II", which opened in the Vatican Museums on Thursday, 24 April. "The photographs on display," they continued, "are situated in the heart of this pantheon. The reportage is not only historical documentation but also point of interest for the history of photography; it demonstrates how, during the second half of the 20th century, its language and philosophy changed from black and white and from analogue to advanced digital technology".

Organized by the Vatican Museums, Vatican Television Centre and the Photo Office of *L'Osservatore Romano*, the exhibition highlights with photographs and video footage the most important moments of both pontificates. It is divided into two sections, both which open with the photo of St Peter's Square filled with the faithful on the day of the Pope's election. The photos of Wojtyła's pontificate were taken by the



John Paul II with Mother Teresa

Photo Office of *L'Osservatore Romano* thanks to the work of Arturo Mari, Paolo Savi and Francesco Sforza. The exhibition will stay open until 19 July.



A multimedia museum opens in Wadowice

On 9 April a new multimedia museum dedicated to John Paul II opened in his hometown of Wadowice, Poland. The inauguration of the museum – entitled "The birth home of the Holy Father John Paul II" – included a Mass celebrated by Cardinal Stanisław Dziwisz. Located in the restored home where the Pope was born, the museum seeks to give visitors a chance to discover the places and atmosphere of the childhood of the future Pope, looking at the roots of his rich and spiritual character. On the occasion of the opening of the museum, the Minister of Grace and Justice of Poland, in collaboration with the museum of criminology, has loaned for three years the gun that Ali Agca used to shoot the Pope with on 13 May 1981 in St Peter's Square.

In his message to the City and the World Pope Francis calls the Church to the joy of the resurrection and asks the Risen Lord for healing and grace throughout the earth

The boldness of peace

On Easter Sunday, 20 April, after celebrating Mass, Pope Francis went to the central Loggia to bless the city and the world. Many faithful gathered in St Peter's Square, with many more following via radio and television, for the traditional *Urbi et Orbi* Blessing. The following is the English text of the Pope's greeting, which was given in Italian.



Dear Brothers and Sisters, a Happy and Holy Easter!

The Church throughout the world echoes the angel's message to the women: "Do not be afraid! I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised... Come, see the place where he lay" (Mt 28:5-6).

This is the culmination of the Gospel, it is the Good News par excellence: Jesus, who was crucified, is risen! This event is the basis of our faith and our hope. If Christ were not raised, Christianity would lose its very meaning: the whole mission of the Church would lose its impulse, for this is the point from which it first set out and continues to set out ever anew. The message which Christians bring to the world is this: Jesus, Love incarnate, died on the cross for our sins, but God the Father raised him and made him the Lord of life and death. In Jesus, love has triumphed over hatred, mercy over sinfulness, goodness over evil, truth over falsehood, life over death.

That is why we tell everyone: "Come and see!" In every human situation, marked by frailty, sin and death, the Good News is no mere matter of words, but a testimony to unconditional and faithful love: it is about leaving ourselves behind and encountering others, being close to those crushed by life's troubles, sharing with the needy, standing at the side of the sick, elderly and the outcast... "Come and see!": Love is more powerful, love gives life, love makes hope blossom in the wilderness.

With this joyful certainty in our hearts, today we turn to you, risen Lord!

Help us to seek you and to find you, to realize that we have a Father and are not orphans; that we can love and adore you.

Help us to overcome the scourge of hunger, aggravated by conflicts and by the immense wastefulness for which we are often responsible.

Enable us to protect the vulnerable, especially children, women and the elderly, who are at times exploited and abandoned.

Enable us to care for our brothers and sisters struck by the Ebola epidemic in Guinea Conakry, Sierra Leone and Liberia, and to care for those suffering from so many other diseases which are also spread through neglect and dire poverty.

Comfort all those who cannot celebrate this Easter with their loved ones because they have been unjustly torn from their affections, like the many persons, priests and laity, who in various parts of the world have been kidnapped.

Comfort those who have left their own lands to migrate to places offering hope for a better future and the possibility of living their lives in dignity and, not infrequently, of freely professing their faith.

We ask you, Lord Jesus, to put an end to all war and every conflict, whether great or small, ancient or recent.

We pray in a particular way for Syria, beloved Syria, that all those suffer-

ing the effects of the conflict can receive needed humanitarian aid and that neither side will again use deadly force, especially against the defenseless civil population, but instead boldly negotiate the peace long awaited and long overdue!

Jesus, Lord of glory, we ask you to comfort the victims of fratricidal acts of violence in Iraq and to sustain the hopes raised by the resumption of ne-

gotiations between Israelis and Palestinians.

We beg for an end to the conflicts in the Central African Republic and a halt to the brutal terrorist attacks in parts of Nigeria and the acts of violence in South Sudan.

We ask that hearts be turned to reconciliation and fraternal concord in Venezuela.

By your resurrection, which this year we celebrate together with the Churches that follow the Julian calendar, we ask you to enlighten and inspire the initiatives that promote peace in Ukraine so that all those involved, with the support of the international community, will make every effort to prevent violence and, in a spirit of unity and dialogue, chart a path for the country's future. On this day, may they be able to proclaim, as brothers and sisters, that Christ is risen, *Χριστός Βοηθεύει*.

Lord, we pray to you for all the peoples of the earth: you who have conquered death, grant us your life, grant us your peace!

Dear brothers and sisters, Happy Easter!



Homily during the Vigil in the Vatican Basilica

Go to Galilee

"Do not be afraid! do not fear": these are words that encourage us to open our hearts to receive the message. The Pope said this in his homily at the Easter Vigil at which he presided on Saturday evening, 19 April, in the Vatican Basilica. During the rite he conferred the Sacraments of Christian initiation upon 30 catechumens. The following is the English text of the Pope's homily, which was given in Italian.

The Gospel of the resurrection of Jesus Christ begins with the journey of the women to the tomb at dawn on the day after the Sabbath. They go to the tomb to honour the body of the Lord, but they find it open and empty. A mighty angel says to them: "Do not be afraid!" (Mt 28:5) and orders them to go and tell the disciples: "He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee" (v. 7). The women quickly depart and on the way Jesus himself meets them and says: "Do not fear; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me" (v. 10). "Do not be afraid", "do not fear": these are words that encourage

us to open our hearts to receive the message.

After the death of the Master, the disciples had scattered; their faith had been utterly shaken, everything seemed over, all their certainties had crumbled and their hopes had died. But now that message of the women, incredible as it was, came to them like a ray of light in the darkness. The news spread: Jesus is risen as he said. And then there was his command to go to Galilee; the women had heard it twice, first from the angel and then from Jesus himself: "Let them go to Galilee; there they will see me". "Do not fear" and "go to Galilee".

Galilee is the place where they were first called, where everything began! To return there, to return to the place where they were originally called, Jesus had walked along the shores of the lake as the fishermen were casting their nets. He had called them, and they left everything and followed him (cf. Mt 4:18-22).

To return to Galilee means to re-read everything on the basis of the cross and

its victory, fearlessly: "do not be afraid". To re-read everything – Jesus' preaching, his miracles, the new community, the excitement and the defections, even the betrayal – to re-read everything starting from the end, which is a new beginning, from this supreme act of love.

For each of us, too, there is a "Galilee" at the origin of our journey with Jesus. "To go to Galilee" means something beautiful, it means rediscovering our baptism as a living fountainhead, drawing new energy from the sources of our faith and our Christian experience. To return to Galilee means above all to return to that blazing light with which God's grace touched me at the start of the journey. From that flame I can light a fire for today and every day, and bring heat and light to my brothers and sisters. That flame ignites a humble joy, a joy which sorrow and distress cannot dim, a good, gentle joy.

In the life of every Christian, after baptism there is also another "Galilee", a more existential "Galilee": the experience of a personal encounter with Jesus Christ who called me to follow him and to share in his mission. In this sense, returning to Galilee means treasuring in my heart the living memory of that call, when Jesus passed my way, gazed at me with mercy and asked me to follow him. To return there means reviving the memory of that moment when his eyes met mine, the moment when he made me realize that he loved me.

Today, tonight, each of us can ask: "What is my Galilee?" I need to remind myself, to go back and remember.



Where is my Galilee? Do I remember it? Have I forgotten it? Seek and you will find it! There the Lord is waiting for you. Have I gone off on roads and paths which made me forget it? Lord, help me: tell me what my Galilee is; for you know that I want to return there to encounter you and to let myself be embraced by your mercy. Do not be afraid, do not fear, return to Galilee!

The Gospel is very clear: we need to go back there, to see Jesus risen, and to become witnesses of his resurrection. This is not to go back in time; it is not a kind of nostalgia. It is returning to our first love, in order to receive the fire which Jesus has kindled in the world and to bring that fire to all people, to the very ends of the earth. Go back to Galilee, without fear!

"Galilee of the Gentiles" (Mt 4:15; Is 8:23)! Horizon of the Risen Lord, horizon of the Church; intense desire of encounter... Let us be on our way!

At the end of Mass

Carry the resurrection with you

At the end of Mass, before the *Urbi et Orbi*, Pope Francis thanked all present, especially the Dutch florists for their contribution to the celebration.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I renew my greeting for a happy Easter to all of you who have gathered in this Square from every part of the world. I extend my Easter greetings to all those connected via social communications. To your families and to your communities carry the happy news that Christ, our peace and our hope, is risen!

Thank you for your presence, for your prayer and for your testimony of faith. A special and grateful thought for the gift of the beautiful flowers which come from the Netherlands. Happy Easter to everyone!



An invitation at the Regina Caeli on Easter Monday

Something to experience together

On Easter Sunday, 21 April, the Holy Father led the faithful gathered in St Peter's Square in the prayer of the Regina Caeli. The following is a translation his reflection, which was given in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

Happy Easter! "Christus anásti! – Aleth-òs anásti!", "Christ is risen! – He is risen indeed!". He is among us, here, in the Square! This week we can continue to exchange Easter greetings, as though it were one single day. It is the great day which the Lord has made.

The dominant sentiment that shines forth from the Gospel accounts of the Resurrection is joy full of wonder, but a great wonder! Joy that comes from within! And in the Liturgy we relive

the state of mind of the disciples over the news which the women had brought: Jesus is Risen! We have seen him!

Let us allow this experience which is inscribed in the Gospel also to be imprinted in our hearts and shine forth from our lives. Let us allow the joyous wonder of Easter Sunday to shine forth in our thoughts, glances, behaviour, gestures and words... If only we were so luminous! But this is not just cosmetic! It comes from within, from a heart immersed in the source of this joy, like that of Mary Magdalene, who wept over the loss of her Lord and could hardly believe her eyes seeing him Risen.

Whoever experiences this becomes a witness of the Resurrection, for in a certain sense he himself has risen, she

herself has risen. He or she is then capable of carrying a "ray" of light of the Risen One into various situations: to those that are happy, making them more beautiful by preserving them from egoism; to those that are painful, bringing serenity and hope.

Over the course of this week it will do us good to take up the Book of the Gospel and read those chapters which speak about Jesus' Resurrection. It will really do us good! To take up the Book, look for the chapter and read it. It will also benefit us this week to think about the joy of Mary, the Mother of Jesus. Just as her pain was intimate enough to pierce her soul, so too her joy was intimate and deep, and the disciples were able



CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

Homily of the Preacher of the Papal Household during the celebration of the Passion of the Lord

The grand old man behind the scenes

RANIERO CANTALAMESSA

In the divine-human history of the Passion of Jesus, there are many minor stories about men and women who entered into the ray of its light or its shadow. The most tragic one is that of Judas Iscariot. It is one of the few events attested with equal emphasis by each of the four Gospels and the rest of the New Testament. The early Christian community reflected a great deal on this incident and we would be remiss to do otherwise. It has much to tell us.

Judas was chosen from the very beginning to be one of the Twelve. In inserting his name in the list of Apostles, the Gospel-writer Luke says, "Judas Iscariot, who became (*egeneto*) a traitor" (Lk 6:16). Judas

At St Peter's

On Friday evening, 18 April, Good Friday, the Pope presided at the celebration of the Lord's Passion in the Vatican Basilica. After the proclamation of the Gospel of John (18:1, 19, 42), the Preacher of the Papal Household gave the homily. Published here is an edited version taken from Fr Cantalamessa's website: translated by Marsha Daigle Williamson.

was thus not born a traitor and was not a traitor at the time Jesus chose him; he became a traitor! We are before one of the darkest dramas of human freedom.

Why did he become a traitor? Not so long ago, when the thesis of a "revolutionary Jesus" was in fashion, people tried to ascribe idealistic motivations to Judas' action. Someone saw in his name "Iscariot" a corruption of *sicariot*, meaning that he belonged to a group of extremist zealots who used a kind of dagger (*sica*) against the Romans; others thought that Judas was disappointed in the way that Jesus was putting forward his idea of "the kingdom of God" and wanted to force his hand to act against the pagans on the political level as well. This is the Judas of the famous musical *Jesus Christ Superstar* and of other recent films and novels – a Judas who resembles another famous traitor to his benefactor, Brutus, who killed Julius Caesar to save the Roman Republic!

These are reconstructions that may be respected if they have some literary or artistic value, but they have no historical basis whatsoever. The Gospels – the only reliable sources that we have about Judas' character – speak of a more down-to-earth motive: money. Judas was entrusted with the group's common purse; on the occasion of Jesus' anointing in Bethany, Judas had protested against the waste of the precious perfumed ointment that Mary poured on Jesus' feet, not because he was interested in the poor but, as John notes, "because he was

a thief, and as he had the money box he used to take what was put into it" (Jn 12:6). His proposal to the chief priests is explicit: "What will you give me if I deliver him to you? And they paid him 30 pieces of silver" (Mt 26:15).

But why are people so surprised at this explanation, finding it too banal? Has it not always been this way throughout history and is it not still this way today? Mammon, money, is not just one idol among many: it is the idol *par excellence*, literally "a molten god" (cf. Ex 34:17). And we know why that is the case. Who is objectively, if not subjectively (that is, in reality and not just in intention), the true enemy, the rival to God in this world? Satan? But no one chooses to serve Satan without a motive. Those who do, do so because they believe they will obtain some kind of power or temporal good from him. Jesus tells us clearly who the other master, the anti-God, is: "No one can serve two masters.... You cannot serve God and mammon" (Mt 6:24). Money is the "visible god" (cf. Shakespeare, *Timon of Athens*, Act IV, sc. 3) in contrast to the true God who is invisible.

Mammon is the anti-God because it creates an alternative spiritual universe; it shifts the purpose of the theological virtues. Faith, hope, and charity are no longer placed in God but in money. A sinister inversion of all values occurs. Scripture says, "All things are possible to him who believes" (Mk 9:23); but the world says: "All things are possible for the one who has money". And on a certain level, all the facts seem to support the latter.

"The love of money", Scripture says, "is the root of all evil" (1 Tim 6:10). It is the Molech we recall from the Bible to whom young boys

and girls were sacrificed (cf. Jer 32:35) or the Aztec god for whom the daily sacrifice of a certain number of human hearts was required. What lies behind the drug enterprise that destroys so many human lives, behind the phenomenon of the mafia, behind political corruption, behind the manufacturing and sale of weapons, and even behind – what a horrible thing to mention – the sale of human organs taken from children? And the financial crisis that the world has gone through and that this country is still going through, is it not in large part due to the "cursed hunger for gold", the *auri sacra fames* (Virgil, *Aeneid*, 3, 56-57), on the part of some people? Judas began by taking money out of the common purse. Doesn't this say something to some administrators of public funds?

Like all idols, money is "false and deceitful": it promises security and, instead, takes it away; it promises freedom and, instead, destroys it. St Francis of Assisi, with unusual severity, describes the end of life of a person who has lived only to increase his "capital". Death draws near, and the priest is summoned. He asks the dying man, "Do you want forgiveness for all your sins?" and he answers, "Yes". The priest then asks: "Are you ready to make right the wrongs you did by restoring things you defrauded others of?" The dying man responds, "I can't". "Why can't you?".... "Because I have already left everything in the hands of my relatives and friends". And so he dies without repentance, and his body is barely cold when his relatives and friends say, "Damn his soul! He could have earned more money to leave us but he didn't" (cf. St Francis, *Letter to the faithful 12, Fonti Francescane*, 205).

How many times these days have we had to think back to that cry from Jesus to the rich man in the parable who had stored up endless riches and thought he was secure for the rest of his life: "Fool! This night your soul is required of you; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?" (Lk 12:20).

The betrayal of Judas continues throughout history, and the one betrayed is always Jesus. Judas sold the head, while his imitators sell his body, because the poor are members of the body of Christ, whether they know it or not. "As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me" (Mt 25:40). However, Judas' betrayal does not continue only in the high-profile kinds of cases that I have mentioned. It would be comfortable for us to think so, but that is not the case. The homily that Fr Primo Mazzolari gave on Holy Thursday 1958 about "our Brother Judas" is still famous. "Let me", he said to the few parishioners before him, "think about the Judas who is within me for a moment, about the Judas who perhaps is also within you".

One can betray Jesus for other kinds of compensation than 30 pieces of silver. The minister of God who is unfaithful to his state in life, or instead of feeding the sheep entrusted to him feeds himself, betrays Jesus. Whoever betrays their conscience betrays Jesus. Even I can betray him at this very moment – and it makes me tremble – if while preaching about Judas I am more concerned about the audience's approval than about participating in the immense sorrow of the Savior. There was a mitigating circumstance in Judas' case that I do not have. He did not know who Jesus was and considered him to be only "a righteous man"; he did not know, as we do, that he was the Son of God.

As Easter approaches every year, I have wished to listen to Bach's *Passion According to St Matthew* again. It includes a detail that makes me flinch every time. At the announcement of Judas' betrayal, all the Apostles ask Jesus, "Is it I, Lord?" Before having us hear Christ's answer, the composer – erasing the distance between the event and its commemoration – inserts a chorale that begins this way: "It is I; I am the traitor! I need to make amends for my sins". "*Ich bin's, ich sollte büßen*". Like all the chorales in this musical piece, it expresses the sentiments of the people who are listening. It is also an invitation for us to make a confession of our sin.

The Gospel describes Judas' horrendous end: "When Judas, his betrayer, saw that he was condemned, he repented and brought back the 30 pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders, saying, 'I have sinned in betraying innocent blood'. They said, 'What is that to us? See to it yourself'. And throwing down the pieces of silver, he departed; and he went and hanged himself" (Mt 27:3-5). But let us not pass a hasty judgment here. Jesus never aban-



William Blake, "Judas betrays him" (1803-1805)

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

The Pope's words at the end of the Via Crucis on Good Friday at the Colosseum

Comes the dawn after a long night

Pope Francis led the Via Crucis in the late evening of Good Friday, 18 April, at the Colosseum in Rome. Archbishop Giancarlo Maria Bregantini, CSS, of Campobasso-Boiano, Italy, composed the meditations accompanying this year's Way of the Cross (see last week's edition). The cross was carried by people of all ages and backgrounds. In keeping with tradition, Pope Francis followed the rite from the Palatine Hill while he prayed. At the end, the Pope gave a short reflection in Italian, the following of which is a translation.

God placed on Jesus' Cross all the weight of our sins, all the injustices perpetrated by every Cain against his brother, all the bitterness of the betrayal by Judas and by Peter, all the vanity of tyrants, all the arrogance of false friends. It was a heavy Cross, like night experienced by abandoned people, heavy like the death of loved ones, heavy because it carries all the ugliness of evil. However, the Cross is also glorious like the dawn after a long night, for it represents all the love of God, which is greater than our iniquities and our betrayals. In the Cross we see the monstrosity of man, when he allows evil to guide him; but we also see the immensity of the mercy of God, who does not treat us according to our sins but according to his mercy.

Before the Cross of Jesus, we apprehend in a way that we can almost touch with our hands how much we are eternally loved; before the Cross

we feel that we are "children" and not "things" or "objects", as St Gregory of Nazianzus says, addressing Christ with this prayer: "Were it not for You, O my Christ, I would feel like a finite creature. I was born

and I feel myself dissolve. I eat, I sleep, I rest and I walk, I fall ill and I recover. Longings and torments without number assail me, I enjoy the sun and how the earth bears fruit. Then, I die and my flesh turns to dust just like that of animals, who have not sinned. But what have I more than them? Nothing, if not God. Were it not for you, O Christ mine, I would feel myself a lost creature. O, Our Jesus, guide us from the Cross to the resurrection and teach us that evil shall not have the last word, but love, mercy and

forgiveness. O Christ, help us to exclaim again: "Yesterday I was crucified with Christ; today I am glorified with Him. Yesterday I died with Him, today I live with Him. Yesterday I was buried with Him, today I am raised with Him".

Finally, all together, let us remember the sick, let us remember all those who have been abandoned under the weight of the Cross, that they may find in the trial of the Cross the strength of hope, of hope, in the resurrection and love of God.



Preacher of the Papal Household on Good Friday

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

doned Judas, and no one knows, after he hung himself from a tree with a rope around his neck, where he ended up: in Satan's hands or in God's hands. Who can say what transpired in his soul during those final moments? "Friend" was the last word that Jesus addressed to him, and he could not have forgotten it, just as he could not have forgotten Jesus' gaze.

It is true that in speaking to the Father about his disciples Jesus had said about Judas, "None of them is lost but the son of perdition" (Jn 17:12). But here, as in so many other instances, he is speaking from the perspective of time and not of eternity. The enormity of this betrayal is enough by itself alone, without needing to consider a failure that is eternal, to explain the other terrifying statement said about Judas: "It would have been better for that man if he had not been born" (Mk 14:21). The eternal destiny of a human being is an inviolable secret kept by God. The Church assures us that a man or a woman who is proclaimed a saint is experiencing eternal blessedness, but she does not herself know for certain that any particular person is in hell.

Here is what the story of our brother Judas should move us to do: to surrender ourselves to the One who freely forgives, to throw ourselves likewise into the outstretched arms of the Crucified One. The most important thing in the story of Judas is not his betrayal but Jesus' reaction to it. He knew well

what was growing in his disciple's heart, but he does not expose it; he wants to give Judas the opportunity right up until the last minute to turn back, and is almost shielding him. He knows why Judas came to the garden of olives, but he does not refuse his cold kiss and even calls him "friend" (cf. Mt 26:50). He sought out Peter after his denial to give him forgiveness, so who knows how he might have sought out Judas at some point on his way to Calvary!

So what will we do? Who will we follow, Judas or Peter? Peter had remorse for what he did, but Judas was also remorseful to the point of crying out, "I have betrayed innocent blood!" and he gave back the 30 pieces of silver. Where is the difference then? Only in one thing: Peter had confidence in the mercy of Christ, and Judas did not! Judas' greatest sin was not in having betrayed Christ but in having doubted his mercy.

If we have imitated Judas in his betrayal, some of us more and some less, let us not imitate him in his lack of confidence in forgiveness.

Confession allows us to experience about ourselves what the Church says of Adam's sin on Easter night in the *Exultet*: "O happy fault that earned so great, so glorious a Redeemer!" Jesus knows how to take all our sins, once we have repented, and make them "happy faults", faults that would no longer be remembered if it were not for the experience of mercy and divine tenderness that they occasioned.

I have a wish for myself and for all of you, Venerable Fathers, brothers and sisters: on Easter morning, may we awaken and let the words of a great convert in modern times, Paul Claudel, resonate in our hearts: "My God, I have been revived, and I am with You again!"

I was sleeping, stretched out like a dead man in the night. You said, "Let there be light!" and I awoke the way a cry is shouted out...!

My Father, You who have given me life before the Dawn, I place myself in Your Presence.

My heart is free and my mouth is cleansed; my body and spirit are fasting. I have been absolved of all my sins, which I confessed one by one.

The wedding ring is on my finger and my face is washed. I am like an innocent being in the grace that You have bestowed on me" (*Prière pour le dimanche matin*, in *Œuvres poétiques*, Gallimard, Paris, 1967, p. 377).

This is what Christ's Passover can do for us.

Something to experience together

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

to draw from it. Having passed through the experience of the death and Resurrection of her Son, seen in faith as the supreme expression of God's love, Mary's heart became a font of peace, consolation, hope and mercy. All of the prerogatives of our Mother derive from this, from her participation Jesus' Paschal Mystery. From Friday until Sunday morning she did not lose hope: we contemplated the sorrowful Mother but, at the same time, the Mother full of hope. She, who is the Mother of all of the disciples, the Mother of the Church, is the Mother of hope.

Let us ask her, the silent witness of the death and Resurrection of Jesus, to introduce us into Paschal joy. We will do so by reciting the *Regina Caeli*, which at

Easter time replaces the prayer of the Angelus.

After the Regina Caeli, the Pope said:

I extend a cordial greeting to all of you dear pilgrims who have come from Italy and from various countries to take part in this meeting of prayer.

Remember this week to take up the Gospel, to find the chapter which speaks of the Resurrection and read, each day, a passage from those chapters. It will do us good during this week of Jesus' Resurrection.

I offer each of you my best wishes for a joyful, serene Easter Monday of the Angel, which prolongs the joy of Christ's Resurrection.

A blessed and holy Easter to everyone! Have a good lunch and goodbye!

JEAN VANIER

Does the Gospel of St John invite us – in and through our weakness – to become friends of Jesus; to dwell in him and him in us? I believe it does.

I must confess that I am in no way an exegete. I am a man of experience and have grown to love deeply the Gospel of St John as a way of life or spirituality for me. It has helped me understand my own call to live (and dwell) with people with severe disabilities and multiple forms of weaknesses, who have so often been humiliated, put aside or seen as having no value. Their cry, their hope flowing from these weaknesses as they come to L'Arche is for a meeting, an authentic relationship, an encounter where they can experience, as they live with assistants, that they are loved as they are, and seen as important. When they experience this authentic relationship, what is most beautiful in them – their personhood, is awoken and they are transformed.

L'Arche is truly a school of love. This love passes through the body, the flesh of the person with severe disabilities, through a touch of tenderness. The love also passes through the bodies, the flesh of the assistants who receive and give this love and who in their turn are transformed as they enter into a friendship with them.

In L'Arche we all learn little by little not to be governed by fear, prejudices and compulsions and the need to win and to be a success; but to live a quality of relationships where each person is honored – and especially the weakest – and appreciated as she or he is. To live and dwell with people who are weak and to become their friend is a road on which we are learning to honor our own weaknesses and needs, and to discover a presence of God not in our power but in our littleness and humility.

Why am I so attracted to this Gospel? It is because John reveals in a special way the call of Jesus to his disciples to dwell in his love and to become his friend. The word *dwell* (*mènein*) is a key word which leads us into the heart of this Gospel. We are called to live in communion with Jesus, to be one with him. This road to communion with Jesus is revealed through different meetings as encounters where Jesus humbly offers his love. This Gospel reveals a spirituality or a "way" which we want to live in L'Arche as we learn to meet and live with people with disabilities.

In his book *Christian Wisdom* David Ford says that wisdom is the meeting of the cry of God and the cry of the poor. The cry of the poor? Yes in L'Arche we can understand it, we live it, we hear it, we try to respond to it. It is the cry to be loved and to be seen as important.

But the cry of God? God so loved the world that he sent his beloved Son into the world to transform everybody from humiliation, from death and from the anguish of loneliness to communion with Him. John wrote this Gospel that we may



Ford Madox Brown,
"Christ washing Peter's feet"
(1852-1856, detail)

Those last turbulent days for Jesus Christ

I hear the cry of his voice

The Gospel of John reveals the way to live

believe that Jesus is the Messiah and the Son of God and that believing in his name, we may have life (Jn 20). Yes, that we may have life! The cry of God is his immense love, his desire to reveal to each person that they are loved and at the same time to do this respecting their freedom. He came to give life. This life – which is the very life of God – transforms us as we trust him, receive him into our weaknesses and become his friend and accept him as the Word of God who became flesh, with all the weaknesses which that implies. This cry of God is revealed in this Gospel in a special way during the feast of the Tabernacles (Jn 7) when Jesus stood up and cried out "let him who thirst come to me to drink". The thirst of Jesus is that we thirst for him.

This road to communion, to friendship, to oneness with Jesus begins in the Prologue as we read how the Word, the *logos* who is God and is in communion with God becomes flesh in Mary; he came to meet us and to offer us his friendship. In chapter 1 Jesus meets two disciples who leave John the Baptist and start following him. "What are you looking for?" he asks them. "Where do you dwell?" they answer. "Come and see". This Gospel is going to lead us little by little to where Jesus dwells. He dwells in the Father and desires to dwell in each one of us as an intimate friend.

After this meeting Jesus brings them to a wonderful wedding party. Weddings are about living a oneness, a unique friendship between a man and a woman – dwelling one in the other. Isn't the kingdom of God like a wedding feast to where the poor and the lame come running (Mt 22). Are we not all called to the wedding feast of the lamb? (Rev 21)

After the wedding feast we are led to the temple. (Jn 3) Here Jesus reveals to us that he is the New Temple – the dwelling place of God – prophesied by many of the prophets. This dwelling place is not then a huge and magnificent edifice like the one in Jerusalem, which took 46 years to be built; it is his body, a fragile body, it is a heart which can be hurt and broken. It is a person who wants to live a relationship, a meeting of love with every person

and dwell in them. From this New Temple revealed by the prophet Ezechiel will flow an astonishing amount of water that will give life.

Jesus did not come just to do wonderful miracles that would amaze people. He came to do signs. The sign is certainly a big deed but it is essentially to bring people to trust him as having been sent by God to reveal a new way to God. This way is to become his friend and through him and in him to know the Father. The apostles, of course, are excited by all these miracles, and especially the multiplication of the bread. People are beginning to believe Jesus is the Messiah and they, the apostles, are going to be in his government! They are beginning to feel important. When Jesus starts announcing the real meaning of these signs – that he has come, not just to do big things but, to dwell humbly in each person and for them to dwell in him through eating his flesh and drinking his blood – people who had seen Jesus as "great" become confused and upset. "These words are too hard", they say and they begin no longer to walk with him. When they start leaving Jesus, the apostles must also have been deeply hurt and upset. "What is going on? Why does he talk like that?" Jesus, seeing in their faces confusion and anxiety, looks at them and says, "Will you also leave me?"

When I hear these words I seem to hear tears in his voice. Jesus is in anguish when he sees his secret of love being in some way rejected. It is clear that the twelve do not fully understand his words and his offer of friendship: they accept them, but maybe reluctantly. They are more attached to Jesus "winning" and everybody believing in him as the victorious Messiah rather than in the mystery of love he wants to reveal. One must admit that there is a real passage of faith to be made from belief in a powerful Jesus who maybe will answer our prayers to a belief in becoming his intimate friend. To become one with him implies a real transformation of our hearts, a new way of living. It is a passage similar to what some assistants live in L'Arche: from doing good to people with disabilities to becoming their

friend and being transformed by them.

Is Jesus a strong victorious and wonderful king or a humble lover seeking to be united deeply with his friends? Chapter 11 is rather an amazing chapter. It certainly is a prelude to the condemnation and death of Jesus but it also reveals a place, a home, where Jesus likes to come and dwell with friends. For the first time in this Gospel we hear of Jesus loving people: Martha, Mary and Lazarus. And Lazarus is named by the two sisters as "the one Jesus loves". We have seen Jesus calling people to follow him, here we see someone calling Jesus!

Who is Lazarus? There are many indications in this chapter which seems to show that Lazarus had a severe handicap: it is the house of Martha. (cf. Luke) Why is it not the house of Lazarus? Why is Lazarus living with two unmarried sisters? Maybe Jesus would come to be with – to dwell with Lazarus in all his weaknesses, to be present to him. It is interesting to note in Luke that Jesus ascended into heaven from Bethany. Was this house like a little L'Arche?

In the next chapter we see a tension between the twelve and with Mary who seems to live a special friendship with Jesus. These men (maybe not just Judas as John affirms) were upset by Mary wasting an expensive ointment on the feet of Jesus which could have been sold and the money given to the poor. They criticize her. Maybe they were really upset by the special love of Jesus for her. She seems to understand Jesus and to dwell in him and him in her. She realizes he is going to his death, precisely because he had answered her tears by resurrecting her brother from the dead. Jesus defends Mary and her loving gesture with strong words, "leave her alone she kept this ointment for my burial." In the Gospel of Matthew he says even more strongly, "she has done a good work for me. In truth I tell you wherever the good news is proclaimed to the whole world, what she has done for me will be told in her memory." We see here something of the anger that Jesus had towards the twelve when they stopped children coming to him. (Matthew) Mary understands the broken heart of Jesus and his inner agony.

The next morning he goes to Jerusalem and towards his death, the ointment still on his feet. The disciples, however, see him going to greater recognition and power. They are proud to be with him as he is proclaimed by a huge crowd "Son of David, King of Israel". Jesus knew however that he was going not to the place of earthly power but to one of humiliation and of littleness. The love of Mary was surely consoling for him.

A few days later these men, who are so filled with the sense of the greatness of Jesus, and maybe of their own importance are completely dumbfounded, shattered and lost when during a special and sacred

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11



Holy Thursday lunch with priests

On Holy Thursday, April 17, the Pope was hosted for lunch at the home of Archbishop Angelo Becciu, Substitute of the Secretary of State. There he spent over an hour and a half with priests from Rome who had just celebrated the Chrism Mass in St Peter's Basilica. This marked the second time Pope Francis dined with Roman priests on Holy Thursday.

Pope Francis celebrates the Last Supper with the Don Gnocchi Foundation

Servants of the legacy

"We must be servants to one another". The Pope reminded the faithful of this at the Mass *in coena Domini* on Holy Thursday, 17 April, at the *Santa Maria della Provvidenza* centre, run by the Don Gnocchi foundation in Rome. During the celebration, which was attended by guests and their families, staff and volunteers, the Pontiff washed the feet of twelve disabled people: eight men and four women between the ages of 16 and 86; nine Italians and three foreigners, one of whom is Muslim.

Pope Francis explained the meaning of the act in a brief, off-the-cuff homily. "It is a farewell gesture," he said. "It is like the legacy which he leaves to us. He is God and he made himself a servant, our servant. And this is the legacy: you, too, must be servants to one another. And he took this path out of love: you, too, must love one another and become servants in love".

"This is the legacy which Jesus leaves to us", the Pope repeated. "He performs this act of the washing of the feet, which is a symbolic act: slaves, the servants at banquets, did this for people who came to the midday meal, to dinner, because at the time the roads were made of dirt, and when they entered a house they needed to have their feet washed. And Jesus performs an act, a work, a service of a slave,

a servant. And he leaves this as a legacy to us".

"We must be servants to one another", he reiterated. Therefore, today when she commemorates the Last Supper, when Jesus instituted the Eucharist, the Church also ceremonially performs this act of the Washing of the feet, which reminds us that we are to be servants to one another".

Pope Francis concluded: "Now I will perform this act, but let us all, in our hearts, think of others and think of the love that Jesus tells us we ought to have for others. And let us also think about how we might better serve other people, for this is what Jesus wants of us".



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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

supper Jesus takes off his clothes and kneels before each one to wash their feet. "No it is not possible. Never, never will you wash my feet", cries out the leader of the group surely speaking in the name of them all. But maybe not for all of them. Maybe the one who wrote this Gospel senses what is happening. This is not just a humble Jesus who takes the place of a slave and acts like a slave. This is a loving Jesus who wants to reveal to each one of these men, through a gentle touch of his hands, through his body, that he loves them, that he has chosen them to become his friends and that he will always, always be with them. He wants not only to be their master but to be in communion with each one as a friend. The humility of Jesus is a humility of love, a love which reveals to each of them that they are important and loved. That is why John put in the prologue to this chapter "having loved his own he loved them to an extreme." Maybe John lives this gesture as a deep moment of communion. It is after this moment of communion that he calls himself "the disciple Jesus loved."

The washing of the feet is a turning point for the disciples. Up until now they were caught up in the idea that Jesus would win and do something extraordinary and be recognized by all as the Messiah. Now they are confronted by the littleness of Jesus. They cannot understand Jesus. They are shocked.

Peter, for the moment, cannot understand the value of weakness, vulnerability and humility as a road to love and to a communion of hearts and a road to God as we have learnt in L'Arche. Peter wants to be strong, he wants to control things himself. He wants to be at the service of the Messiah and do great things with him. John seems to have understood the mystery of love revealed during the washing of the feet. Peter seems to be aware of this special relationship between Jesus and John, that is why when Jesus says "one of you will betray me", he asks John, "ask him who it is".

A little later Peter, when he is asked if he is one of the disciples of Jesus, cries out "I am not". He cannot accept to be the disciple of a man who appears as one who has lost the struggle and is in weakness. Peter is closed up in his certitudes of power. He cannot move into an attitude of trust in Jesus. We see here the conflict between power and weakness in this Gospel, which is leading us to a deeper understanding that to love Jesus is to welcome him as a friend who dwells in us with all our weaknesses. Individual power leads to loneliness. Weakness can be a horrible pain – the pain of loneliness – unless it becomes a way towards friendship and communion.

In speaking about weakness at the heart of the mystery revealed by John I would like to say a word about Mary who stood by the cross. Where was Mary standing? In certain Flemish paintings we see Mary standing a little way off, "Mater dolorosa" in the arms of John. In

L'Arche over the last 50 years we have had quite a bit of experience of accompany dying people. We know it is important, I would say imperative, to accompany them with tenderness as they approach death – holding their hands, being deeply and really present to them. The danger of some people who accompany sick people, (and I have seen it in myself), is to want to do things for them, because we feel uncomfortable just being present to them in their suffering and pain. Yet, it is this presence of love which is essential.

Wasn't Mary as close as possible to Jesus, close to his body, which was in total pain and weakness, looking into his eyes, revealing to him her love, her faith, her trust and her total abandonment to the Father. When so many had abandoned him, when so many were humiliating him, mocking him and laughing at him, she was there present, deeply present to him in all his weakness, through her body. She was one with him in a new and deeper way. I cannot but imagine that Jesus through his eyes was saying to her "thank you". The first and last meetings of Jesus' with Mary were in littleness. They were meetings of love and of communion.

It is in the chapters that follow the washing of the feet of his disciples that Jesus clearly tells them the fundamental meaning of the incarnation which we cannot understand or live without the gift of the Paraclet; the Spirit of the Father. Jesus wishes to live in each one of them "Dwell in my love" (15:9). He will be in them and live in them and act in them (15:4). They are called to

wash the feet of others humbly, as He washed their feet. If he dwells in them and them in Him, they will bear much fruit and give glory to the Father (15:8). In some mysterious way in L'Arche we are learning that it is our life together, the love we have one for another, that becomes a sign for our world. In this way we can bear fruit and give glory to the Father. This life is one of celebration revealed in John (Jn 17) and of joy. The final celebration will be Jesus and Father living in all of us and all of us living in the Heart of the Trinity.

I would like to note finally that Jesus calls the second person of the Trinity not only "Spirit" but Paraclet from two Greek words *para-kaleo*. This verb in Isaiah, (*Septuagint* text) as in other places in the first testament, is translated "to console". The Paraclet is the consoler like a mother. (Is 66) In Matthew (5:4) He(he) is the "consoler of the afflicted", those caught up in pain, weaknesses and loneliness. Jesus through John is revealing to us how the Father wants to send to all of us with our weaknesses, our loneliness and our poverty, the Paraclet.

In our societies there are more and more people who, because of age, handicaps, poverty and other reasons are terribly lonely. It is important that they may discover that the Father sent them Jesus to bring them from loneliness into his friendship – to live in communion – in oneness with him. The Father sent the Son to dwell in us so that we can dwell in him.