

# L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO

WEEKLY EDITION  IN ENGLISH

*Unicuique suum Non praevalent*

Forty-eighth year, number 2 (2378)

Vatican City

Friday, 9 January 2015

Francis's sorrow for victims of the terrorist attack in Paris

## Abominable violence



Vigils are being held outside French embassies around the world (Mexico City, 8 January, Reuters)

On Thursday, 8 January, Pope Francis celebrated Mass for victims of Wednesday's terrorist attack in Paris, which he strongly condemned. Twelve people were killed when two masked gunmen opened fire in the offices of the satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo*.

In a telegram sent to Cardinal André Vingt-Trois, Archbishop of Paris, the Cardinal Secretary of State conveyed the Holy Father's deepest sympathies to those injured and said that the Pontiff is united in prayer with the bereaved.

*The Catholic Church's commitment to the Ebola emergency response*

What must be done

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World Day of the Sick

## Eyes to the blind, feet to the lame



In a message for the 23rd World Day of the Sick, which will be celebrated on 11 February, the Pontiff offered encouragement to those suffering from illness and to those who care for them.

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At the Angelus the Pope names the new cardinals

## Witnesses in the world

At the Angelus on Sunday, 4 January, the Holy Father announced the names of 20 Cardinals who will be created in the Consistory of 14 February. Of those named 15 are of an age eligible to vote in a conclave, bringing the body of electors to a total of 123. The new electors come from 14 countries: five from Europe, three from Asia, three from Latin America, two from Africa and two from Oceania.



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At the General Audience the Pope continues series on the family

## A hymn to mothers

*At Wednesday's General Audience, 7 January, in the Paul VI Hall, the Holy Father stressed the central role of mothers in society, calling them the "strongest antidote to the spread of self-centred individualism". The following is a translation of the Pope's catechesis, which was given in Italian.*

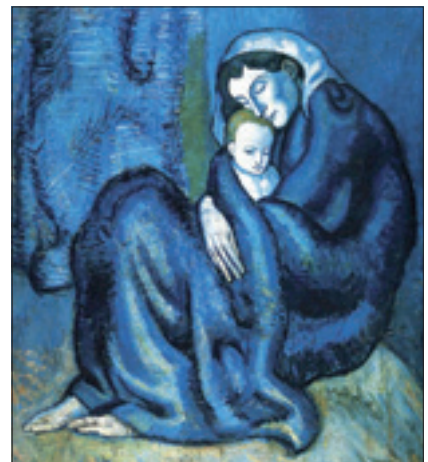
Dear Brothers and Sisters, good morning. Today we continue with catecheses on the Church and we will reflect on Mother Church. The Church is mother. Our Holy Mother Church.

In these days the Church's liturgy sets before our eyes the icon of the Virgin Mary, Mother of God. The first day of the year is the Feast of the Mother of God, followed by the Epiphany, commemorating the visit of the Magi. The Evangelist Matthew writes: "going into the house

they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him" (Mt 2:11). It is the Mother who, after giving birth to him, presents the Son to the world. She gives us Jesus, she shows us Jesus, she lets us see Jesus.

Let us continue with the catecheses on the family, and in the family there is *the mother*. Every human person owes his or her life to a mother, and almost always owes much of what follows in life, both human and spiritual formation, to her. Yet, despite being highly lauded from a symbolic point of view — many poems, many beautiful things said poetically of her — the mother is rarely listened to or helped in daily life, rarely considered central to society in her role. Rather, often the readiness of mothers to make sacrifices for their children is taken advantage of so as to "save" on social spending.

It also happens that in Christian communities the mother is not always held in the right regard, she is barely heard. Yet the centre of the life of the Church is the Mother of Jesus. Perhaps mothers, ready to



Pablo Picasso, "Mother and child" (1902)

sacrifice so much for their children and often for others as well, ought to be listened to more. We should understand more about their daily struggle to be efficient at work and attentive and affectionate in the family; we should better grasp what they aspire to in order to express the best and most authentic fruits of their emancipation. A mother with her children always has problems, always work. I remember there were

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Solemnity of the Epiphany

## The star and the journey



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# A hymn to mothers

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five of us children at home, and while one was doing one thing, the other wanted to do another, and our poor mama went back and forth from one's side to another, but she was happy. She gave us so much.

Mothers are the strongest antidote to the spread of self-centred individualism. "Individual" means "what cannot be divided". Mothers, instead, "divide" themselves, from the moment they bear a child to give him to the world and help him grow. It is they, mothers, who most hate war, which kills their children. Many times I have thought of those mothers who receive the letter: "I inform you that your son has fallen in defense of his homeland...". The poor women! How a mother suffers! It is they who testify to the beauty of life. Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero said that mothers experience a "martyrdom of motherhood". In the homily for the funeral of a priest assassinated by death squads, he said, recalling the Second Vatican Council: "We must be ready

to die for our faith, even if the Lord does not grant us this honour.... Giving one's life does not only mean being killed; giving one's life, having the spirit of a martyr, it is in giving in duty, in silence, in prayer, in honest fulfillment of his duty; in that silence of daily life; giving one's life little by little. Yes, like it is given by a mother, who without fear and with the simplicity of the martyrdom of motherhood, conceives a child in her womb, gives birth to him, nurses him, helps them grow and cares for them with affection. She gives her life. That's martyrdom". End quote. Yes, being a mother doesn't only mean bringing a child to the world, but it is also a life choice. What does a mother choose, what is the life choice of a mother? The life choice of a mother is the choice to give life. And this is great, this is beautiful.

A society without mothers would be a dehumanized society, for mothers are always, even in the worst moments, witnessess of tenderness, dedication and moral strength. Mothers often pass on the deepest sense of religious practice: in a human being's life, the value of faith is inscribed in the first prayers, the first acts of devotion that a child learns. It is a message that believing mothers are able to pass on without much explanation: these come later, but the seed of faith is those early precious moments. Without mothers, not only would there be no new faithful, but the faith would lose a good part of

its simple and profound warmth. And the Church is mother, with all of this, she is our mother! We are not orphans, we have a mother! Our Lady, mother Church, is our mom. We are not orphans, we are children of the Church, we are children of Our Lady, and we are children of our mothers.

Dearest mothers, thank you, thank you for what you are in your family and for what you give to the Church and the world. And to you, beloved Church, thank you, thank you for being mother. And to you,



Mary, Mother of God, thank you for letting us see Jesus. And thank you for all the mammas present here: let us salute them with a round of applause!

## SPECIAL GREETINGS

I greet the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today's Audience, including the various groups from Ireland, Finland, Indonesia, Australia and the United States of America. In the joy of this Christmas season, I invoke upon you and your families grace and peace in the Lord Jesus, Son of God and Son of Mary, our Mother. God bless you all!

Dear faithful, in this Christmas season, looking to Mary, Mother of God, I would like to address all mothers. Dearest moms, thank you, thank you for what you are in the family and for what you give to the Church and the world. May the blessing of God be with you always. Praised be Jesus Christ.

First of all, I would like to thank the people from the circus who have come here. Here's a thought: "Let's go to the circus, we'll have a little fun...". Yes, that's true, the circus is a spectacle and we have a good time there. We also see men and women perform unusual feats, who have great balance: yes, this is true, we've seen it. There they are, let's all greet them! But they also teach us something more. People who perform in the circus create beauty, they are creators of beauty.

And this is good for the soul. How much we need beauty! It's true, our life is very practical, we make things, we keep working, it has to be done: making, the language of hands, making. But our life is also thinking, reasoning. And this is important because we are animals who think; we don't think like animals! We are animals who think. Thinking, the language of the mind, is important. We are also people who love, who have the capacity to love: the language of the heart. There is the language of the mind, thinking; the language of the heart, loving; the language of hands, making. And these three languages all join together to create the harmony of the person. And that's where beauty is; and these people who performed this spectacle today are creators of harmony, creators of beauty, who teach the best way to beauty. God is certainly truth, God is certainly good, God certainly knows how to make things, he created the world. But above all, God is beautiful! The beauty of God. So often we forget about beauty! Mankind thinks, feels, makes, but is in such need today of beauty. Let's not forget this and thank these people: skilled performers, skilled at balance, skilled showpeople, but most of all skilled at creating beauty. Thank you all so much.

I extend cordial wishes of hope and peace for the new year to all Italian-speaking pilgrims present at this first General Audience of 2015. I greet the Merciful Sisters and the Ursuline Sisters of the Holy Family, here for their respective General Chapters, and I exhort them to pass down, through the witness of their life, the joy of faithful correspondence to the divine call. I greet you, members of Liana Orfei's Golden Circus; and I encourage you to be not only bringers of smiles and messengers of solidarity among peoples and nations, but most of all creators of beauty, we need it!

I address a special thought to the *young people*, the *sick* and the *newlyweds*. I call the *newlyweds* courageous because today it takes courage to get married! They are good. After the Solemnity of the Epiphany, let us, too, continue to look to the star that the Magi followed. Dear *young people*, may you be enthusiastic witnesses to the light of Christ for your peers; dear *sick people*, may you draw courage from this light in your pain; and you, dear *newlyweds*, may you be signs of the luminous presence of God with your faithful love.

# VATICAN BULLETIN

## AUDIENCES

Thursday, 8 January

Cardinal Zenon Grocholewski, Prefect of the Congregation for Catholic Education (for Seminaries and Institutes of Study)

Cardinal Raymond Leo Burke, Patron of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta

Cardinal André Vingt-Trois, Archbishop of Paris, France

Bishop Santiago Olivera of Cruz del Eje, Argentina

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

H.E. Mir Takhsin-beg (Tahseen Saeed Ali), Leader of the Yazidi of the Whole World, Georgia, and his entourage

## CHANGES IN EPISCOPATE

The Holy Father appointed Fr Marcelino Antonio Maralit from the clergy of the Archdiocese of Lipa, as Bishop of Boac, The Philippines. Until now he has been parish priest of Santa Cruz in Alititag, Batangas (31 Dec. 2014).

Bishop-elect Maralit, 45, was born in Manila. He studied philosophy and holds a licence in sacred theology and in Church history. He was ordained a priest on 13 March 1995. He has served in parish ministry and as: professor at St Francis de Sales Major Seminary; director of the Diocesan Commission for vocations; vice-rector, professor, educator and dean of studies at St Francis Theological Seminary, then rector of the same seminary and as a member of the presbyteral council.

The Holy Father appointed Bishop José Antônio Peruzzo as Archbishop of Curitiba, Brazil. Until now he has been the Bishop of Palmas - Francisco Beltrão (7 Jan.).


Archbishop Peruzzo, 54, was born in Cascavel, Brazil. He was ordained a priest on 22 December 1985. He was ordained a bishop on 23 November 2005, subsequent to his appointment as Bishop of Palmas - Francisco Beltrão.

The Holy Father appointed Fr Leomar Antônio Brustolin from the clergy of the Diocese of Caxias do Sul, as Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Porto Alegre, Brazil, assigning him the titular episcopal see of Tigava. Until now he has been parish priest of the Santa Teresa d'Avila Cathedral (7 Jan.).

Bishop-elect Brustolin, 47, was born in Caxias do Sul, Brazil. He

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Mass at Santa Marta dedicated to the victims of the attack in Paris

## May the Lord change the hearts of the cruel

On Thursday, 8 January, Pope Francis celebrated the morning Mass at Santa Marta in suffrage for victims of Wednesday's cruel terrorist attack in Paris. He stated this at the start of the rite, manifesting all his sorrow for this vile and ferocious act, expressing special closeness to the family members of those who were killed or injured. He prayed that the hearts of the attackers may be changed. "The attack in Paris yesterday", he stated, "makes us think of so much cruelty, human cruelty; of so much terrorism, both of isolated acts of terrorism and state-sponsored terrorism. The cruelty that man is capable of! Let us pray at this Mass for the victims of this cruelty. So many! And let us also ask for the cruel ones, that the Lord may change their hearts".

In these days, the Pope noted in his homily, "the key word in the liturgy is 'manifestation': the Son of God manifests Himself in the Feast of the Epiphany, to the Gentiles; in Baptism, when the Holy Spirit descends upon Him; in the wedding at Cana, when he performs the miracle of changing water into wine".

Indeed, "these are the three signs that the liturgy brings in these days in order to speak to us about the manifestation of God: God makes Himself known". But "the question is this: how can we know God?" And with this, Francis referred to the day's First Reading (1 Jn 4:7-10), specifically, "the theme that the Apostle John takes up in the First Reading: knowledge of God". Thus, "what does it mean to know God? How can one know God?"

To these questions, the Pope answered, "a first reply would be: one can know God through reason". But really, "can I know God through reason? Somewhat, yes". Indeed, "through my intellect, reasoning, looking at worldly things, one can begin to understand that there is a God and the existence of God can be understood in some of God's personality traits". However, the Pope stated, "this is insufficient for knowing God", in so far as "God is known totally in the encounter with Him, and reason alone does not suffice for the encounter, something more is needed: reason helps you to reach a certain point, then He accompanies you onward".

In his letter, "John clearly states what God is: God is love". For this reason, "only on the path of love



He Q, "The Adoration of the Magi"

can you know God". Of course, the Pope added, "reasonable love, accompanied by reason, but love". Perhaps one could ask at this point "how can I love whom I don't know?". The answer is clear: "Love those whom you have near". In fact, "this is the doctrine of two commandments: the most important one is to love God, for He is love". The second "is to love your neighbour, but to get to the first, we have to climb the steps of the second". In a word, Pope Francis explained, "through love of our neighbour, we come to know God, who is love" and "only by loving reasonably, but by loving, we can reach this love".

Francis then repeated the words that John wrote: "Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God". But, the Pontiff recalled "you cannot love if God doesn't give the love, doesn't generate this love for you" because "he who loves knows God". On the contrary, St John writes, "he who does not love does not know God; for God is love". The Pope pointed out that this is not "soap opera love", but rather "sound, strong love", an "eternal love that manifests itself - these days the word is 'manifest' - in his Son who has come to save us". It is, therefore, a "concrete love, a love of works and not of words". It is here, then, that "it takes a lifetime to know God: a journey, a journey of love, of knowledge, of love for our neighbour, of love for those who hate us, of love for all".

Pope Francis then indicated that Jesus himself "gave us the example of love". And, indeed, "in this is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us first and sent his Son to be the victim of expiation for our sins". This is why "we are able

to contemplate the love of God in the person of Jesus". And "by doing what Jesus taught us about love for our neighbour, we reach - step by step - the love of God, knowledge of God who is love".

The Pope pointed out that the Apostle John, in his letter, "goes a little ahead" when he states that "in this is love" and "not that we loved God, but that He loved us first: God precedes us in love". In fact, Francis noted, "when I meet God in prayer, I feel that God loved me before I began to seek Him". Yes, "He is always first. He waits for us, He calls us". And "when we arrive, He is there!".

In this regard, the Pope referred to another passage from Scripture (Jer 1:11-12), and said: "How beautiful were God's words to Jeremiah: 'Jeremiah, what do you see?' - 'a rod of almond, Lord' - 'You have seen well, for I am watching over my word to perform it'". Francis explained that "the flower of the almond tree is the first to blossom in spring, the first". This signifies that "the Lord is there, watching over", and He is always "the first, like the almond tree, He loves us first". And we, too, the Pope assured us, "will always have this surprise: when we draw near to God through works of charity, through prayer, in Communion, in the Word of God, we find that He is there, first, waiting for us, this is how He loves us". And just "like the flower of the almond tree, He is the first". Truly, Francis remarked, "that verse from Jeremiah tells us so much".

A similar proposal can be gleaned from the episode presented in

today's Reading from the Gospel according to Mark (6:34-44), which first says that "Jesus had compassion on the crowd of people, it is the love of Jesus: He saw a large crowd, like sheep without a shepherd, confused". But today as well, Francis recalled, there are "so many confused people in our cities, in our countries: so many people".

When "Jesus saw these confused people He was moved: He began to teach them the doctrine, the matters of God and the people heard Him, listened to Him very closely because the Lord was good at speaking, He spoke to the heart".

Then, Mark recounts in his Gospel that, realizing that those 5,000 people hadn't eaten, Jesus asks his disciples to see to it. Thus, Christ "is first to go meet with the people". Perhaps on their part, "the disciples got somewhat upset, felt annoyed, and their response was harsh: 'shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give it to them to eat?'. Thus, "God's love was first; the disciples hadn't understood". But God's love is really like this: "He is always waiting for us,



#PrayersForParis

(@Pontifex on 8 January)

He always surprises us". It is "the Father, our Father who loves us so much, who is always ready to forgive us, always. And not once, but 70 times seven. Always!". Indeed, "like a Father full of love". Therefore, "in order to know this God who is love, we must climb the steps of love for our neighbour, by works of charity, by the acts of mercy that our Lord has taught us".

Francis concluded by praying "that the Lord, in these days in which the Church makes us ponder the manifestation of God, grant us the grace to know Him on the path of love".

## In solidarity with the Yazidi people

On Thursday morning, 8 January, the Holy Father received a delegation from the World Community of Yazidi, led by the leader of Yazidi of the Whole World, Mir Takhshin-beg, and their supreme spiritual Head, the "Baba Sheikh", Sheikh Khato, both resident in Iraqi Kurdistan. The group also included three representatives of the Yazidi of North Iraq, Georgia and the diaspora in Germany.

The Yazidi along with Christians and other minorities have been suffering violence, persecution and displacement by the Islamic State in recent months. During the meeting in the Pope's private library, the delegation thanked the Pope - referred to by one of the delegates as "father of the poor" - for his support for the Yazidi in this time of persecution and suffering. They informed the Pope that some five



thousand Yazidi women have been reduced to slavery by the ISIS. Pope Francis assured the delegates of his spiritual closeness and his support in these challenging times.

There are about 1.5 million Yazidi throughout the world, half a million of whom are in Iraq; others are in Turkey, Georgia, Armenia, and in diaspora in many other countries.

## The Holy Father's condolences for priest assassinated in Mexico

The Holy Father expressed his deep sadness at the news of the death of Fr Gregorio López Gorostieta, the priest abducted and assassinated recently in Mexico. His condolences were sent in a message to Bishop Maximino Martínez Miranda of Ciudad Altamirano, signed by Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State, and published on Monday, 29 December 2014. The Pope called the priest, "a victim of unjustifiable violence" and assured the "clergy, religious communities and faithful of that beloved diocese" of his prayers for the priest. He also underlined his "firm condemnation of all attacks on life and on the dignity of people". Francis also urged "the priests and the other missionaries of the diocese to continue their ecclesial mission with ardour despite the difficulties, imitating the example of Jesus, the Good Shepherd". Finally the Holy Father expressed his closeness to the family members of Fr López Gorostieta.

On New Year's Eve the Pope presides at First Vespers for the Solemnity of Mary, Most Holy Mother of God

## Moral rebirth for a more solidary Rome

*Pope Francis launched a call to conversion and an exhortation to a moral rebirth for the City of Rome. This took place in the Vatican Basilica on Wednesday evening, 31 December 2014, on the occasion of First Vespers of the Solemnity of Mary, Most Holy Mother of God, the singing of the Te Deum and the adoration and Eucharistic benediction. Many of the city's residents were present in the Basilica, including lay people, men and women religious serving in the Eternal City, and representatives of the civil administration, under the leadership of Mayor Marino. At the end of the liturgy, the Pope paid*

*homage to the statue of St Peter inside the Basilica. At the conclusion the Pontiff went to pray at the Nativity scene on display in St Peter's Square. He was welcomed by Cardinal Bertello, President of the Governorate of Vatican City State; by Bishop Vêrgez Alzaga, General Secretary; and by Don García de la Serrana Villalobos, Director of Technical Services. As the Pontifical Swiss Guard band played, the Pope spent several minutes at the Nativity scene before greeting the faithful who awaited him behind the barricades. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's homily, which he gave in Italian.*



Today the Word of God introduces us in a special way, to the meaning of time, to understand that time is not a reality extrinsic to God, simply because He chose to reveal Himself and to save us in history. The meaning of time, temporality, is the atmosphere of God's epiphany, namely, of the manifestation of God's mystery and of his concrete love. In fact, time is God's messenger, as St Peter Faber said. Today's liturgy reminds us of the phrase of the Apostle John: Children, it is the last hour (1 Jn 2:18), and that of St Paul who speaks of "when the time had fully come" (Gal 4:4). Therefore, the present day manifests to us how time was – so to speak – "touched" by Christ, the Son of God and of Mary, and received from Him new and surprising meanings: it became the "salvific time", namely, the definitive time of salvation and grace.

And all this induces us to think of the end of the journey of life, the end of our journey. There was a beginning and there will be an end, "a time to be born, and a time to die" (Eccles 3:2). With this truth, so simple and fundamental and so neglected and forgotten, Holy Mother Church teaches us to end the year and also our day with an examination of conscience, through which we review what has happened; we thank the Lord for every good we have received and have been able to do and, at the same time, we think again of our failings and our sins – to give thanks and to ask for forgiveness.

It is what we also do today at the end of the year. We praise the Lord with the *Te Deum* hymn and at the same time we ask Him for forgiveness. The attitude of thanksgiving disposes us to humility, to recognize and receive the Lord's gifts.

In the Reading of these First Vespers, the Apostle Paul recapitulates the fundamental motive for our rendering thanks to God: He has made us his children, He has adopted us as his children. This unmerited gift fills us with a gratitude brimming with astonishment! Someone might say: "But are we not already his children, by the very fact of being men?" We certainly are, because God is the Father of every person who comes into the world. But without forgetting that we were distanced from Him because of original sin, which separated us from our Father: our filial relationship was profoundly wounded. Therefore, God sent his Son to deliver us at

the cost of His blood. And if there is a deliverance, it is because there is slavery. We were children, but we became slaves, following the voice of the Evil One. No one else delivers us from that effective slavery except Jesus, who assumed our flesh from the Virgin Mary and died on the Cross to free us from the slavery of sin and to restore us to our forfeit filial condition.

Today's liturgy also reminds us that in the beginning (before time) was the Word and the Word was made man and because of this, St Irenaeus affirms: "This is why the Word became man, and the Son of God became the Son of man: so that man, by entering into communion with the Word and thus receiving divine sonship, might become a son of God" (*Adversus Haereses*, 3, 19, 1: *PG* 7/1, 939; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 460).

Contemporaneously, the very gift for which we give thanks is also a reason for an examination of conscience, for a revision of our personal and communal life, to ask ourselves: what is our lifestyle? Do we live as children or as slaves? Do we live as people baptized in Christ, anointed by the Spirit, delivered and free? Or do we live according to the corrupt, worldly logic, doing what the devil makes us believe is in our interests? In our existential journey there is always a tendency to resist liberation; we are afraid of freedom and,

paradoxically and somewhat unwittingly, we prefer slavery. Freedom frightens us because it causes us to confront time and to face our responsibility to live it well. Instead, slavery reduces time to a "moment" and thus we feel more secure, that is, it makes us live moments disconnected from their past and from our future. In other words, slavery impedes us from truly and fully living the present, because it empties it of the past and closes it to the future, to eternity. Slavery makes us believe that we cannot dream, fly, hope.

A few days ago a great Italian artist said that it was easier for the Lord to take the Israelites out of Egypt than to take Egypt out of the heart of the Israelites. "Yes". They were "physically" freed from slavery, but during the wandering in the desert, with the various difficulties and the hunger, they began to feel nostalgia for Egypt and they remembered when they "ate the

onions, and the garlic" (cf. Num 11:5); they forgot, however, that they ate them at the table of slavery. Nostalgia for slavery is nestled in our heart, because it is seemingly more reassuring than freedom, which is far more risky. How we like being captivated by lots of fireworks, beautiful at first glance but which in reality last but a few seconds! This is the reign, this is the charm of the moment!

For us Christians, the quality of our actions, of our life, of our presence in the city, of our service to the common good, of our participation in public and ecclesial institutions, also depends upon this examination of conscience.

For this reason, and being the Bishop of Rome, I would like to reflect on our life in Rome, which is a great gift, because it means living in the Eternal City; for a Christian, especially, it means being part of the

*"A great and daily attitude of Christian freedom is necessary in order to have the courage to proclaim, in our city, that it is necessary to protect the poor, and not to protect ourselves from the poor, that we must serve the weak and not take advantage of them!"*

Church founded on the testimony and the martyrdom of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul. Therefore, we also thank the Lord for this. At the same time, however, it is a great responsibility. And Jesus said: "Every one to whom much is given, of him will much be required" (Lk 12:48). Thus, let us ask ourselves: in this city, in this Ecclesial Community, are we free or are we slaves, are we salt and light? Are we leaven? Or are we listless, insipid, hostile, disheartened, insignificant and weary?

Undoubtedly the discovery of grave corruption, which has recently emerged, require a serious and conscious conversion of hearts for a spiritual and moral rebirth, as well as for a renewed commitment to build a more just and solidary city, where the poor, the weak and the marginalized are at the centre of our concerns and daily actions. A great and daily attitude of Christian free-

dom is necessary in order to have the courage to proclaim, in our city, that it is necessary to protect the poor, and not to protect ourselves from the poor, that we must serve the weak and not take advantage of them!

The teaching of a simple Roman deacon can help us. When St Lawrence was asked to bring and display the treasures of the Church, he simply brought a few poor people. In a city, when the poor and the weak are cared for, aided and helped to play their part in society, they reveal themselves to be the treasure of the Church and a treasure in the society. Instead, when a society ignores the poor, persecutes them, criminalizes them, and constrains them "to react as a mafia", that society becomes impoverished to the point of misery, it loses its freedom and prefers "the garlic and the onions" of slavery, of slavery to its selfishness, of slavery to its pusillanimity; that society ceases to be Christian.

Dear brothers and sisters, to conclude the year is to reaffirm that a "last hour" exists and that the "fullness of time" exists. In concluding this year, in giving thanks and in asking for forgiveness, it will be good for us to ask for the grace to be able to walk in freedom, to thus be able to repair all the harm done and to protect ourselves against the nostalgia of slavery, to protect ourselves from feeling "nostalgia" for slavery.

May the Holy Virgin, the Holy Mother of God, who was at the very heart of the Temple of God, when the Word – who was in the beginning – made Himself one with us in time; may She who gave the Saviour to the world, help us to receive Him with an open heart, in order that we may truly be and live freely, as children of God.

After the Angelus the Pope names 20 new Cardinals who will be created at the Consistory on 14 February

# Witnesses in the world

Emphasizing the urgent need for building peace in countries, families and communities

*"There is no future without peace!". At the Angelus on Sunday, 4 January, in St Peter's Square, Pope Francis returned to the theme for the World Day of Peace and underlined the "urgent necessity" of building peace, not only between peoples, but also in families and communities. Indeed, he said, "we speak a lot about peace, but we often turn to war or choose the complicity of silence, or do nothing concrete to build peace". The following is a translation of the Pope's address, which was delivered in Italian.*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,  
Good morning!

The new year has given us a nice Sunday! A beautiful day!

St John says in the Gospel that we read today: "In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.... The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world" (1:4-5, 9). Men speak much of light, but they often prefer the deceptive tranquility of darkness. We speak a lot about peace, but we often turn to war or choose the complicity of silence, or do nothing concrete to build peace. In fact St John says that "He came to his own home, and his own people received him not" (Jn 1:11); for "this is the judgment, that the light - Jesus - has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed" (Jn 3:19-20). This is what St John says in the Gospel. The heart of man may reject the light and prefer the shadows, because light lays bare his evil deeds. Those who do evil hate light. Those who do evil hate peace.

A few days ago, we began the new year in the name of the Mother of God, by celebrating the World Day of Peace, with the theme: "No longer slaves, but brothers and sisters". My hope is that man's exploitation of man may be overcome. This kind of exploitation is a social plague which demeans interpersonal relationships and impedes a life of communion based on respect, justice and charity. Every man and every people hungers and thirsts for peace; building peace is therefore an urgent necessity!

Peace is not simply the absence of war, but a general condition in which the human person is in harmony with him/herself, in harmony with nature and in harmony with others. This is peace. Nevertheless, silencing weapons and extinguishing the hotbeds of war is an inevitable condition to begin a journey that leads to peace in its various aspects. I think of the wars that still cause bloodshed in too many regions of the planet, of the tensions in families and in communities - but in many families, in many communities, in parishes too, there is war! -



as well as heated disputes in our cities and towns between groups of different ethnic, cultural and religious extraction. We must convince ourselves, despite every appearance to the contrary, that harmony is always possible, on every level and in every situation. There is no future without proposals and plans for peace! There is no future without peace!

In the Old Testament, God made a promise. The Prophet Isaiah said: "they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn the art of war any more" (cf. Is 2:4). This is beautiful! Peace is proclaimed, as a special gift of God, in the birth of the Redeemer: "on earth peace among men whom God loves" (cf. Lk 2:14). This gift needs to be ceaselessly implored in prayer. Let us recall, here in the Square, that sign: "Prayer is at the root of peace". This gift must be implored and must be welcomed with commitment every day, in whatever situation we are in. At the dawn of this new year, we are all called to rekindle in our heart an impulse of hope, which must be translated into concrete works of peace. "Are you in disaccord with this person? Make peace!"; "At home? Make peace!"; "In your community? Make peace!"; "At your place of work? Make peace!". Work for peace, for reconciliation and fraternity. Each of us must perform gestures of fraternity toward our neighbour, especially toward those who are tried by family tensions or various types of conflict. These small gestures are of so much value: they can be seeds which give hope, they can open paths and perspectives of peace.

Let us now invoke Mary, Queen of Peace. During her life on earth, she met many difficulties, related to the daily toils of life. But she never lost peace of heart, the fruit of faithful abandonment to God's mercy. Let us ask Mary, our gentle Mother, to show the entire world the sure way of love and peace.

*After the Angelus, the Holy Father said:*

Dear brothers and sisters, I address a cordial greeting to all of you, dear pilgrims from Italy and from other countries who are participating in this prayer gathering.

I express the hope to each one that this second Sunday after Christmas may be spent in peace and serenity, and that the joy of Jesus' birth continue.

As previously announced, on 14 February I will have the joy of holding a Consistory, during which I shall create 15 new Cardinals who come from 13 nations and from every continent and manifest the unbreakable bond between the Church of Rome and the Particular Churches present in the world.

On Sunday, 15 February, I shall preside at a solemn concelebration with the new Cardinals, while on 12 and 13 February, I will hold a Consistory with all the Cardinals in order to reflect on the proposed reform of the Roman Curia.

The new Cardinals' names are:

- 1 - Archbishop Dominique Mamberti, titular Archbishop of Sagona, Prefect of the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura
- 2 - Patriarch Manuel José Márcario do Nascimento Clemente of Lisbon, Portugal
- 3 - Archbishop Berhaneyesus Demerew Souraphiel, CM, of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
- 4 - Archbishop John Atcherley Dew of Wellington, New Zealand
- 5 - Archbishop Edoardo Menichelli, Archbishop of Ancona-Osimo, Italy
- 6 - Archbishop Pierre Nguyễn Văn Nhơn of Hanoi, Vietnam
- 7 - Archbishop Alberto Suárez Inda of Morelia, Mexico
- 8 - Archbishop Charles Maung Bo, SDB, Archbishop of Yangon, Myanmar
- 9 - Archbishop Francis Xavier Kriengsak Kovithavanij of Bangkok, Thailand

10 - Archbishop Francesco Montenegro of Agrigento, Italy

11 - Archbishop Daniel Fernando Sturla Berhouet, SDB, of Montevideo, Uruguay

12 - Archbishop Ricardo Blázquez Pérez of Valladolid, Spain

13 - Bishop José Luis Lacunza Maestrojuán, OAR, of David, Panama

14 - Bishop Arlindo Gomes Furtado of Santiago de Cabo Verde, Archipelago of Cape Verde

15 - Bishop Soane Patita Paini Mafi of Tonga, Islands of Tonga

Additionally, to the Members of the College of Cardinals, I will add five Archbishops and Bishops emeritus who have distinguished themselves through their pastoral charity in service to the Holy See and the Church. They represent many Bishops who, with the same pastoral solicitude, have borne witness to the love of Christ and to the People of God in the Particular Churches, in the Roman Curia, and in the Diplomatic Service of the Holy See. They are:

- 1 - Archbishop emeritus José de Jesús Pimiento Rodríguez of Manizales, Colombia
- 2 - Archbishop Luigi De Magistris, titular Archbishop of Nova, Pro-Major Penitentiary emeritus
- 3 - Archbishop Karl-Josef Rauber, titular Archbishop of Iubaltiana, Apostolic Nuncio
- 4 - Archbishop emeritus Luis Héctor Villalba of Tucumán, Argentina
- 5 - Bishop emeritus Júlio Duarte Langá of Xai-Xai, Mozambique

Let us pray for the new Cardinals, that, renewing their love of Christ, they may be witnesses of his Gospel in the City of Rome and in the world and with their pastoral experience they may more intensely support me in my apostolic service.

Happy Sunday to everyone! It is a beautiful day for visiting the museums. Please Do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch. *Ar-rivederci!*

On the Solemnity of the Epiphany the Pope speaks about the Magis' search

# The star and the journey

*Pope Francis invited the faithful to ask the Lord to live the "same journey of conversion experienced by the wise men" in order to find the courage "to be liberated from our illusions, our presumptions, our 'lights'" on Tuesday morning, 6 January, the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord in St Peter's Basilica. During the rite the traditional announcement was made of the date of Easter, 5 April, and other liturgical solemnities linked to the Resurrection of Christ. The following is the English text of the Holy Father's homily at mass which was given in Italian.*

That child, born in Bethlehem of the Virgin Mary, came not only for the people of Israel, represented by the shepherds of Bethlehem, but also for all humanity, represented today by the wise men from the East. It is on the Magi and their journey in search of the Messiah that the Church today invites us to meditate and pray.

These wise men from the East were the first in that great procession of which the prophet Isaiah spoke in today's first reading (cf. 60:1-6): a procession which from that time on has continued uninterrupted; in every age it hears the message of the star and finds the Child who reveals the tenderness of God. New persons are always being enlightened by that star, they find the way and come into his presence.

According to tradition, the wise men were sages, watchers of the constellations, observers of the heavens, in a cultural and religious context which saw the stars as having significance and power over human affairs. The wise men represent men and woman who seek God in the world's religions and philosophies: an unending quest. Men and women who seek God.

The wise men point out to us the path of our journey through life. They sought the true Light. As a liturgical hymn of Epiphany which speaks of their experience puts it: "*Lumen requirunt lumine*", by following a light, they sought the light, "*Lumen requirunt lumine*". They set out in search of God. Having seen the sign of the star, they grasped its message and set off on a long journey.

It is the Holy Spirit who called them and prompted them to set out; during their journey they were also to have a personal encounter with the true God.

Along the way, the wise men encountered many difficulties. Once they reached Jerusalem, they went to the palace of the king, for they thought it obvious that the new king would be born in the royal palace. There they lost sight of the star. How often sight of the star is lost! And, having lost sight of the star, they met with a temptation, placed there by the devil: it was the deception of Herod. King Herod was interested in the child, not to worship him but to eliminate him. Herod is the powerful man who sees others only as rivals. Deep down, he also considers God a rival, indeed the most dangerous rival of all. In the palace the wise men experience a moment of obscurity, of desolation, which they manage to overcome thanks to the

prompting of the Holy Spirit, who speaks through the prophecies of sacred Scripture. These indicate that the Messiah is to be born in Bethlehem, the city of David.

At that point they resume their journey, and once more they see the star; the evangelist says that they "rejoiced exceedingly" (Mt 2:10). Coming to

Bethlehem, they found "the child with Mary his mother" (Mt 2:11). After that of Jerusalem, this was their second great temptation: to reject this smallness. But instead, "they fell down and worshipped him", offering him their precious symbolic gifts. Again, it is the grace of the Holy Spirit which assists them. That grace, which through the star had called them and led them

along the way, now lets them enter into the mystery. The star which led them on the journey allows them to enter into the mystery. Led by the Spirit, they come to realize that God's criteria are quite different from those of men, that God does not manifest himself in the power of this world, but speaks to us in the humbleness of his love. God's love is great. God's love is powerful. But the love of God is humble, yes, very humble. The wise men are thus models of conversion to the true faith, since they believed more in the goodness of God than in the apparent splendour of power.

And so we can ask ourselves: what is the mystery in which God is hidden? Where can I find him? All around us we see wars, the exploitation of children, torture, trafficking in arms, trafficking in persons... In all these realities, in these, the least of our brothers and sisters who are enduring these difficult situations, there is Jesus (cf. Mt 25:40-43). The crib points us to a different path from the one cherished by the thinking of this world: it is the path of God's self-abasement, that humility of God's love by which he abases himself, he completely lowers

himself, his glory concealed in the manger of Bethlehem, on the cross upon Calvary, in each of our suffering brothers and sisters.

The wise men entered into the mystery: this was their conversion. And our own? Let us ask the Lord to let us undergo that same journey of conversion experienced by the wise men. Let us ask him to protect us and to set us free from the temptations which hide the star. To let us always feel the troubling question: "Where is the star?" whenever – amid the deceptions of this world – we lose sight of it. To let us know ever anew God's mystery, and not to be scandalized by the "sign", that sign spoken of by the angels, which points to "a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger" (Lk 2:12), and to have the humility to ask the Mother, our Mother, to show him to us. To find the courage to be liberated from our illusions, our presumptions, our "lights", and to seek this courage in the humility of faith and in this way to encounter the Light, Lumen, like the holy wise men. May we enter into the mystery. So may it be. Amen.



The Angelus in St Peter's Square

## A voyage of the spirit

*On Thursday, 6 January, the Solemnity of the Epiphany, after celebrating Holy Mass, the Pope addressed the faithful gathered in St Peter's Square before leading them in the Angelus. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's reflection which was given in Italian.*

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning! Happy Feast Day!

On Christmas Eve we meditated on the hastening of several shepherds of the people of Israel to the grotto of Bethlehem; today, the Solemnity of the Epiphany, we remember the arrival of the Magi, who came from the Orient to adore the newborn King of the Jews and Universal Saviour and to offer Him symbolic gifts. With their act of adoration, the Magi bear witness that Jesus has come to earth to save not one people alone but all peoples. Therefore, on today's feast our gaze broadens to the horizons of the whole world in order to celebrate the "manifestation" of the Lord to all peoples, which is the manifestation of the love and universal salvation of God. He does not reserve his love to the privileged few, but offers it to all.

As the Creator and Father is of all people, so the Savior wants to be for all people. That is why we are called to always nourish great faith and hope for every person and his or her salvation: even those who seem far from the Lord are followed – or better yet "chased" – by his passionate love, by his faithful and also humble love. For God's love is humble, very humble!

The Gospel account of the Magi describes their journey from the East

as a journey of the spirit, as a journey toward the encounter with Christ. They are attentive to signs that indicate his presence; they are tireless in facing the trials of the search; they are courageous in deducing the implications for life that derive from encounter with the Lord. This is life: Christian life is a journey, but being attentive, tireless and courageous. A Christian journey like this. Journey attentively, tirelessly, courageously. The experience of the Magi evokes the journey of every man and woman towards Christ. As for the Magi, so for us, to seek God means to journey – and as I said: attentive, tireless and courageous – focused on the sky and discerning in the visible sign of the star the invisible God who speaks to our hearts. The star that is able to lead every man to Jesus is the Word of God, the Word that is in the Bible, in the Gospels. The Word of God is the light that guides our journey, nourishes our faith and regenerates it. It is the Word of God that continually renews our hearts and our communities. Therefore, let us not forget to read it and meditate upon it every day, so that it may become for each like a flame that we bear inside us to illuminate our steps, as well as those of others who journey beside us, who are perhaps struggling to find the path to Christ. Always with the Word of God! The Word of God carried in your hand: a little Gospel in your pocket, purse, always to be read. Do not forget this: always with me, the Word of God!

On this day of Epiphany, our thoughts turn also to our brothers and sisters of the Christian East, Catholics

and Orthodox, many of whom are celebrating the Birth of the Lord tomorrow. May our warmest wishes reach them.

I would like to recall, then, that today we celebrate *Children's Mission Day*. It is the feast dedicated to children who joyfully live the gift of faith and pray for the light of Jesus to reach all the children of the world. I encourage teachers to cultivate the missionary spirit in the little ones. May they not be closed but open children and young people. May they see a great horizon, may their hearts move toward this horizon, in order that witnesses of God's tenderness and heralds of the Gospel might arise among them. Now let us turn to the Virgin Mary and invoke her protection on

the Universal Church, in order that the Gospel of Christ, the light of nations, the light of all peoples, might be spread through the entire world. And may she make us increasingly embrace the journey; may she make us journey and be attentive, untiring and courageous on that path.

After the Angelus:

Dear brothers and sisters, I greet you all, Romans and pilgrims, renewing my wish for peace and every good in the Lord.

I greet the faithful of Aachen (Germany), from Killebeg (Ireland), and students from Northfield, Minnesota (USA); confirmations of Romano di Lombardia and their parents; faithful of Biassono, Verona, Arzignano,

Acerra and of several Dioceses in Puglia; and young people of the Opera Don Orione.

Remember well: life is a journey, always a journey, in search of God. Journey attentively, tirelessly and courageously. And something is missing, one thing is missing: attentively, tirelessly and courageously... and what is missing? Journey with light! What is this light? The Gospel, the Word of God. Always with the Gospel: in your pocket, in your purse, in order to read it, always with us. Journey attentively, tirelessly, courageously and with the light of the Word of God.

"To all I wish a happy Feast. Do not forget to pray for me and have a good lunch. *Arrivederci!*"



"The Adoration of the Magi" (Basilica of Sant'Apollinare nuovo, Ravenna)

Secretary of State at the North American College on 6 January

## An instrument for joy

Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin brought the Pope's greeting to those present at the inauguration of the new wing at the Pontifical North American College, which was held on Tuesday morning, 6 January. In underlining how the Pope "is conscious of the bonds between this house of priestly formation, the Pontifical North American College, and the Successor of Peter", the Cardinal brought to light how this link is "made present in a special way in this new extension to the College: by the inclusion of a stone from the Holy Door of St Peter's Basilica within the building".



Addressing those present, the Secretary of State reflected on how for those that live, pray and work there "will thus be reminded of that bond with the Prince of the Apostles, called to witness to the resurrection and tend to Christ's flock". The Cardinal then asked to pray in a special way for the Pope and for "those who are called to assist him in his ministry as Pastor of the Universal Church".

The Cardinal also recalled the meaning of the Epiphany underlining how the Magi found in Jesus "the Light to which the star has pointed them" and thus "the true goal of their lives has been reached". They "discovered the One who is goodness and truth and beauty" and they returned "to their country changed forever, travelling 'by another way' so that the wicked plans of Herod might be foiled, and in order to share the Saviour's light with all their meet".

In light of the experience of the Magi, the Cardinal recalled that all Christians are called to examine their conscience in the face of the Christ Child. "Having found the Saviour who can save us from the darkness of our own sin, are we walking by his light?", he asked. We therefore risk forgetting that "the riches of the earth and the sea are his; the most precious things we own and make are his: our gold and our frankincense, and even the myth

of our sadness is an offering to Christ our Light".

Cardinal Parolin then concluded, "Dear friends in the faith, many young men have discerned, with the Church's motherly guidance and wisdom, the radical call to share in the priesthood of Jesus: to serve God as presbyters in his Church. You know well the long process of preparation in order to become a priest". To this end, he added, this College, as "with every seminary in the world; is seeking to form and prepare men's hearts and souls to serve in Christ's Church". The new building responds to this call, the Cardinal said, thanks to the generosity of the benefactors, "in order to facilitate further the development of men's hearts on their journey into priesthood".

Present at the ceremony were Cardinal Pell, President of the Secretariat for the Economy; Cardinal Wuerl, Archbishop of Washington; Cardinal Harvey, Archbishop of the Basilica of St Paul's Outside-the-Walls; Cardinal O'Brien, Grand Master of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem; and Cardinal Cacciavillan, former Apostolic Nuncio in the United States; Archbishop Myers of Newark; Bishop Vann of Orange in California; Bishop Murphy of Rockville Center; Msgr James Francis Checchio, Rector of the College; and the benefactors Mr and Mrs Mulva.



Lighting system of the Christ the Redeemer statue inaugurated by the Pope

# The open arms of Rio de Janeiro

*Pope Francis sent a video message to the Brazilian people on the occasion of the 450th anniversary of the founding of Rio de Janeiro, the nation's second-largest city. The message was projected on the maxi screens along Copacabana Beach shortly before midnight on 31 December 2014. The Pope also inaugurated the new lighting system of the Christ the Redeemer statue atop Corcovado mountain. The following is a translation of the the Pope's video message, which was recorded in Portuguese.*

Dear Brazilian people,

It is with great joy that I am addressing you, on the New Year's Eve that will signal the start of commemorations of the 450 years of the foundation of the city of São Sebastião do Rio de Janeiro, to greet, on such a happy occasion, the beloved Carioca people, who welcomed me with open arms on the occasion of the 2013 World Youth Day, and to inaugurate the new lighting system of the statue of Christ, as Blessed Pope Paul VI did 50 years ago, symbolizing the light that the Lord wants to turn on in our lives.

Four hundred fifty years are already a venerable history; the history of a brave and joyful people

who have never let difficulties discourage them, according to the example of their Patron Saint, the Roman martyr, St Sebastian, who even after being pierced by arrows and set to die, did not cease to bear witness to Christ for his contemporaries; the history of a city which, from its very birth has been marked by faith. Dear Carioca people: "Trust in [God], and he will help you; make your ways straight, and hope in him. You who fear the Lord, wait for his mercy" (Sir 2:6-7)!

Today, if we could place ourselves in the perspective of Christ the Redeemer, who from atop Corcovado dominates the geography of the city, what would catch our eyes? First, undoubtedly, the natural beauty that justifies its nickname, "the Marvelous City"; but is is undeniable that, from high upon the Corcovado, we would also perceive the contradictions which mar this beauty. On the one hand, the contrast generated by great social inequalities: opulence and poverty, injustice, violence.... On the other, we have those that we could call invisible cities, groups or human territories with special cultural characteristics. At times it seems that different cities exist, whose coexistence is not always



easy in a multicultural and complex reality. But, in view of this image, we must not lose hope! God lives in the city! Jesus, the Redeemer, does not ignore the needs and sufferings of those who are here on earth! His open arms call us to overcome these divisions and to build a united city with solidarity, justice and peace.

What would be the path to follow? We cannot stand "with our arms crossed", but instead we must open our arms, like Christ the Redeemer. Thus, the path begins with constructive dialogue. In fact, "between selfish indifference and violent protest there is always another possible option: that of dialogue. Dialogue between generations, dialogue within the people, because we are all that people" (*Address to Brazilian leaders*, 27 July 2013). In this sense, one must recognize that, independent of one's educational level or wealth, all people have something to contribute to the building of a fair and fraternal civil-

ization. In a practical way, I believe that everyone can learn a lot from the example of generosity and solidarity of the simplest people; that generous wisdom of knowing "to add more water to the beans", which our world needs so much.

Dear friends, I am certain that the marvelous city has much to offer to Brazil and to the world. Therefore, in switching on the lights of Corcovado, I make my own the words spoken by Blessed Pope Paul VI on 1 January 1965: that "this light, illuminating the city of Rio de Janeiro, may spread throughout Brazil" (Paul VI, *Insegnamenti*, III).

Thus, placing these vows at the feet of *Nossa Senhora Aparecida* and thanking Cardinal Orani Tempesta for the opportunity to address this message to you, I congratulate all the Carioca and Brazilian people on this "anniversary feast", and ask you to please pray for me. Wishing everyone a happy 2015 and to each one I convey my Apostolic Blessing.

## Archbishop Giuseppe Pittau dies

Archbishop Giuseppe Pittau, former Secretary of the Congregation for Catholic Education, died on 26 December in Tokyo, Japan. The Jesuit priest was 86 years old.

He was born on 20 October 1928 in Villacidro, Italy. He entered the Society of Jesus in 1945, earned a degree in philosophy in Barcelona in 1952, and he was sent to Japan, where he worked for 29 years, during which he also studied at Harvard for a Ph.D. in political science. He was ordained a priest on 18 March 1959, after earning a degree in theology at Sophia University of Tokyo, where he served as the first foreign rector from 1968-1981. It was at this time that he also served as Jesuit provincial. In 1981 he was appointed coadjutor to Fr Paolo Dezza, Pontifical Del-

egate for the Society of Jesus. In 1983, when Fr Dezza was created a cardinal, Fr Pittau became general counsellor and assistant for Italy and eastern Asia and delegate for *La Civiltà Cattolica*. From 1992-1998 he was the rector of the Pontifical Gregorian University, as well as chancellor of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences and of Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences.

On 11 July 1998 Pope John Paul II appointed him Secretary of the Congregation for Catholic Education, assigning him the titular see of Castro di Sardegna. On 26 September 1998 he received his episcopal ordination with the dignity of archbishop. He returned to Japan on 25 November 2003 to work in parish pastoral ministry.

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holds a licence in systematic theology and a doctorate in theology. He was ordained a priest on 20 December 1992. He has served in parish ministry and as: professor of theology at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul, in Porto Alegre, coordinator of the licence course in theology at the said university, director of the theology course for laypeople, and director of the Centre of Theology of Caxias do Sul.

### NECROLOGY

Bishop Georges Lagrange, Bishop emeritus of Gap, France, at age 85 (11 Dec. 2014).

Bishop Anthony Edward Pevco, titular Bishop of Mercia and Auxiliary Bishop emeritus of Cleveland, USA, at age 89 (14 Dec. 2014).

Bishop emeritus Stephen Hector Y. Doueiri of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn for Maronites, USA, at age 87 (17 Dec. 2014).

Bishop emeritus Claude Frikart, CIM, titular Bishop of Summula, Auxiliary Bishop emeritus of Paris, at age 92 (18 Dec. 2014).

Bishop emeritus Géry Leuliet of Amiens, France, at age 104 (1 Jan. 2015).

Archbishop emeritus Paulinus Costa of Dhaka, Bangladesh, at age 78 (3 Jan.).

Bishop emeritus Natalino Pescarolo of Cuneo and of Fossano, Italy, at age 85 (4 Jan.).

Bishop Bernard Joseph McLaughlin, titular Bishop of Mottola, Auxiliary emeritus of Buffalo, USA, at age 102 (5 Jan.).

Bishop Joseph Djida, OMI, of Ngaoundéré, Cameroon, at age 69 (6 Jan.).

Pontiff's telegram to the Superior General of the Jesuits

## Living for the Gospel

*Upon learning of the news of Archbishop Pittau's death, Pope Francis sent his condolences in a telegram on Saturday, 27 December 2014, to the Superior General of the Society of Jesus, Fr Adolfo Nicolás Pachón. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's telegram which was written in Italian.*

Most Reverend Father,

Having learned of the death of His Excellency Archbishop Giuseppe Pittau, I would like to express my sincere condolences to you, our confreres and to those who mourn the death of the exemplary minister of God who lived for the cause of the Gospel. In remembering his generous apostolic mission in Japan, where his earthly life ended, I give thanks to the Lord for the service he rendered to the Apostolic

See as Secretary of the Congregation for Catholic Education and for his commitment as Rector of the Sophia University of Tokyo and as Rector Magnificent of the Gregorian University of Rome, as well as his dedication to the Society of Jesus, I entrust his elect soul to the maternal intercession of the Virgin Mary and into the light of the Resurrection of Christ. I bestow the consoling Apostolic Blessing.

FRANCISCUS P.P.

Expanding the Catholic Church's commitment to the Ebola emergency response

# What must be done

## INTRODUCTION

Ebola is an unprecedented epidemic causing untold suffering and death among the people in Coastal West Africa. Accompanying this grave epidemic has been great fear experienced by the people infected and those loved ones affected by this illness, and by the general population.

In Coastal West Africa, cases of Ebola occurred in December 2013, but this situation was not recognized as an outbreak until several months later. As of November 2014, approximately 15,000 infections have been registered, with 5,000 persons having died of the disease. Previously, during the past 35 years since Ebola was first identified, only 2,500 people had been infected with this virus. Global leaders, respective governments, public health experts, society-at-large, and the Church all are struggling to respond appropriately to both the scale and rapid advance of this epidemic.

Although the statistics released by the World Health Organization indicate some decreases in the rate of new infections in Liberia, there also have been increases in new infections in some parts of Sierra Leone. This indicates that the disease spread changes very rapidly. It is important to note, however, that the impact of Ebola will continue to cause grave challenges to the most affected area long into the future and, therefore, the need for international solidarity and support remains acute.

## THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN RESPONSE TO THIS CRISIS

The Church is present in local communities; she does not come and go; people turn to the Lord in time of fear and need. The Church is a visible witness to the presence of Jesus Christ at all times but particularly at times of adversity.

Through the centuries, the Church has worked to strengthen local communities so that people of all backgrounds could enjoy the dignity that God has instilled in each and every person and so that they might have life and have it to the full. In this regard, the Church is a trusted institution.

The Church is grateful for the efforts of the international community, especially as governments, and society-at-large mobilize much-needed resources to offer in solidarity with those in the heavily-affected countries. These efforts have facilitated, for example, diagnostic tools, specialized Ebola treatment units for those already sick with the disease, research for effective medicine and for a vaccine to prevent future outbreaks of this epidemic.

## HEALTH RESPONSE

The Church has been providing health care for decades in this region and is an essential part of the overall health care infrastructure. The health care system has been overwhelmed by this epidemic and

already had been facing grave challenges as a result of years of armed conflict, social unrest, and abject poverty.

Since health care workers are particularly vulnerable to infection with Ebola in the course of providing care for patients, we have seen the tragic impact of this epidemic within such institutions of the Church. The hospitals of the Brothers of St John of God, for example, have experienced transmission of the virus in the course of providing care for patients and the deaths of physicians, nurses, and other professionals among whom were clergy, men and women religious and lay staff. In addition, other Catholic health care facilities were forced to close or severely limit needed care within the communities where they serve.

While governments, inter-governmental agencies, and international aid agencies are specifically supporting Ebola treatment in the affected countries, the Church's health facilities are addressing the health care needs of the general population. In order to do this, there is a need to strengthen the health care clinics, centres and hospitals of the Catholic Church. The needs include: Personal Protection Equipment (PPE), essential medicines, training, staff, and

## Entire families and communities devastated

The Holy See wishes to express its appreciation to the local Catholic Church in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone for its timely response to the Ebola crisis. In order to strengthen these efforts, and as a practical response to the emergency, the Holy See is making a financial contribution. The funds will support Church-sponsored structures with a view to increasing the assistance they offer via healthcare institutions, community initiatives and pastoral care of patients and healthcare professionals.

The Holy See encourages other donors, whether private or public, to add to these funds as a sign of solidarity with our brothers and sisters who are suffering gravely in the areas affected by the disease. The monies contributed by the Holy See will be used to purchase much-needed protective supplies, to assist with the transport of patients, and to pay for the renovation of buildings, among other things. A portion of the Holy See's contribution will be directed towards residents in targeted communities so as to develop and enhance strategies needed to stop the spread of Ebola. Funds are also earmarked for the support of afflicted families and orphaned children. As part of a pastoral response, the Holy See will contribute to the care of people in affected



other means of financial and technical support. These efforts will contribute to the overall strength of these health care programmes long into the future, even after the present outbreak has been eliminated.

## PASTORAL RESPONSE

The Church has unique capacity and mandate to attend to the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of those who are sick and suffering. Some in the Church are called to serve as "doctors of the body" but others receive the call to serve as "doctors of the soul". "Brotherly sharing with the sick opens us to the true beauty of human life, including its fragility, helping us to recognize the dignity and the value of every human being, in whatever condition

he or she may find himself, from conception to death." This sharing includes prayer and spiritual counselling and administration of the sacraments. While public health regulations may prevent the minister from direct touch of Ebola patients, we should not avoid contact with such persons and must offer our spiritual closeness in ways that will bring them and their family members comfort and hope.

Both pastoral ministers and laity can contribute greatly to the prevention of stigma and discrimination in families, neighbourhoods, and in local faith communities. Those who are ill, especially those found to be infected with Ebola, their family members and other loved ones, their caregivers, as well as those who have recovered, can easily become victims of rejection, blame, and abandonment. It is the responsibility of priests and other pastoral caregivers to challenge such behaviour and to recall the basic religious teachings in this regard. In response to the challenge of Ebola, it is the role of the Church to preserve and foster hope in the midst of fear and abandonment.

## COMMUNITY RESPONSE

As Pope Benedict XVI said in his encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*: "Following the example given in the parable of the Good Samaritan, Christian charity is first of all the simple response to immediate needs and specific situations: feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, caring for and healing the sick...". He further affirmed: "The Church's charitable organizations ought to do everything in their power to provide the resources and above all the personnel needed for this work."<sup>2</sup>

The Church is already present in most parts of the world, even before emergencies strike; it works through its Episcopal Conferences, dioceses, parishes, *Caritas*, religious congregations of Sisters, Priests, and Brothers, as well as with organizations and movements of the Catholic laity to bring comfort, solace, and a wide range of health and social services to populations facing large-scale emergencies and to accompany them with longer-term development.

The local Church in the region, accompanied by solidarity efforts from the Church Universal, already has been engaged to the full extent of its capacity. It has contributed to services provided in Catholic health facilities, advocated for greater support from national and local govern-



areas by training and supporting clergy, men and women religious as well as lay pastoral workers, ensuring that they are better equipped to attend to the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of the sick and the suffering. The Holy See will focus on parishes, because so much of the Church's work takes place at the level of the parish, and it is an important grassroots institution in fighting the Ebola-related stigma now emerging as a serious problem, particularly for survivors.

The enhanced commitment of the Catholic Church in combating the spread of Ebola is expressed in a document entitled, "Expanding the Catholic Church's Commitment to the Ebola Emergency Response". This document outlines, for the first time, a pastoral response to a relatively new disease that has devastated individuals, entire families and even communities, particularly in the West African countries of Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia.



# Responding to the Ebola crisis

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

ments and from the international community, initiated community education and volunteer programmes, provided material and pastoral assistance to those in need, accompanied families and neighbours as they mourn those who have died, and helped to reintegrate those who have recovered from the disease. The Church's work at community level is centred in the parish, for "the parish is the presence of the Church in a given territory, an environment for hearing God's word, for growth in the Christian life, for dialogue, proclamation, charitable outreach, worship and celebration."<sup>3</sup>

With specific regard to the situation of Ebola, community outreach, much of it centred in the local parishes, is a most important means to provide education to prevent the further spread of the virus. Such education reaches down to the household level to help people understand that key changes in behaviour are necessary in order to avoid contact with body fluids of sick relatives and even the bodies of those who already have died. In many places, these prevention measures have been responsible for changing the course of the epidemic.

Another key aspect of the parish contribution to the Ebola response is the fact that this is seen as a trusted institution in local communities, as a place where direct, honest, and credible information is transmitted to parishioners. Catholic schools provide education and support to families and communities throughout the many dioceses of Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea. "The Catholic school has continued to share responsibility for the social and cultural development of the different communities and peoples to which it belongs, participating in their joys and hopes, their sufferings and difficulties, their efforts to achieve genuine human and communitarian progress."<sup>4</sup> In the countries of Liberia and Sierra Leone, schools have been closed for many months. Reopening the schools is a high priority for communities most affected by the epidemic. Such decisions should be made in consultation with the appropriate government ministries with due attention to public health considerations. Before Catholic schools can be reopened, adequate training and support will be necessary for teachers and other staff members.

## THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH COMMITS TO AN ENHANCED RESPONSE TO EBOLA

The Catholic Church's engagement in response to the health crisis caused by Ebola has been significant. The actions of the local churches have been immediate and tireless, as described above. Local resources, in terms of financial investment, goods and human services, as well as volunteer response were immediate and continue without interruption.

The solidarity of the Universal Church with our sisters and brothers in the highly affected and neigh-

bouring countries has been demonstrated by such efforts as mentioned below and by many others: *Caritas Internationalis* has coordinated Emergency Appeals in: *Caritas Guinea* - 2 phases; *Caritas Sierra Leone* - 2nd phase in preparation; *Caritas Liberia*. These appeals are focused mainly on social education and mobilization through parish and local community structures but also include training of clergy and other pastoral workers. In addition, some *Caritas* member organizations, including Catholic Relief Services of the USA are supporting Catholic health programmes in the most affected countries. Preparedness training and strategic planning have been undertaken by *Caritas* organizations in the following countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, Chad, Togo, Senegal. Religious congregations and their affiliated lay organizations, as well as Catholic lay movements have raised funds and sent volunteers to address the needs of health structures sponsored by them as well such special needs as orphan care and community mobilization and education. Other Catholic Church-inspired organizations, including *Misereor* (Germany), *Medical Mission Institute* (Germany), and *Misio Austria* are seeking governmental and non-governmental funding to address the needs of Church-organized health structures in the most affected and neighbouring countries.

Sensitive to the increasing demands resulting from the Ebola epidemic, the Catholic Church, in conformity with its mission of service, commits to promote and implement an enhanced response to this urgent health crisis. This will require increased financial and human resources. In keeping with the principles of solidarity and subsidiarity, assistance will be provided to the local churches and their institutions so that this aid can effectively reach those who are most in need.

While affirming the efforts already being demonstrated through a wide range of Church-inspired activities and encouraging additional initiatives along these lines, the Holy See would like to offer its own commitments and recommendations for an enhanced response to Ebola.

## FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO STRENGTHEN THE FOLLOWING<sup>5</sup>

Church-related health structures – This funding will support, *inter alia*, the following to enhance health care, as well as prevention of transmission of Ebola among staff and other patients: protective supplies, medications, building changes, personnel, transport vehicles for patients.

Community Response – This funding will be used to: train parishioners and residents of local communities on the behavioural changes necessary to stop the spread of Ebola; provide food and hygiene kits at household level; support families who are under observation for possible infection with Ebola to access adequate nutrition and other essential needs; support orphans and other children and families with spe-

cial needs; support the re-opening of Catholic schools.

Pastoral Response – This funding will be used to: train and support clergy, Religious, lay pastoral workers, and catechists so that they in turn can train parishioners and local community residents; develop training materials.

## VOLUNTEER MEDICAL, PSYCHOSOCIAL AND OTHER TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The Holy See recognizes the urgent need for clergy, religious, and laity from around the world to accompany the local church in its response to this crisis by offering their time and expertise in the affected countries and in their home countries as well.

## FORMATION OF CATHOLIC NETWORKS OF SOLIDARITY FOR THE EBOLA EMERGENCY

The activities undertaken to date have yielded positive lessons and have identified ongoing challenges in our response to Ebola. Thus Church-related organizations can benefit enormously to share effective responses and to discern solutions for difficulties encountered. This type of "networking" is most important at the local level in the countries most affected and in the region as a whole. Such sharing also could benefit national Episcopal Conferences and regional Episcopal Councils as they share policies and reflections on

confronting this epidemic. At the global level, we encourage interactive discussions and planning among the Superiors General of the Religious Congregations, the international Catholic-inspired Organizations and Lay Movements in order to assure the best use of resources and expertise as we respond to the changing needs and dynamic nature of this epidemic.<sup>6</sup>

Rome, 27 November 2014

<sup>1</sup> Pope Francis, Address to a Congress of Oncological Surgeons, 11 April 2014

<sup>2</sup> Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, n. 31a, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2005

<sup>3</sup> Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 28

<sup>4</sup> Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School at the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, Vatican City, 1997, n. 5

<sup>5</sup> This funding will be administered by *Caritas Internationalis* but will be available, on a Project request basis to national and diocesan Structures as well as to Religious Congregations and other Church-inspired organizations and movements.

<sup>6</sup> At global level, *Caritas Internationalis* has been requested to facilitate this networking. At national level, the Episcopal Conferences could facilitate this exchange, and at diocesan level, the Bishop could provide for such facilitation.

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Pope Francis to Bishops of Switzerland on their 'ad limina' visit

## The Church is not just another NGO

As Pope Francis received the Bishops of Switzerland in audience on Monday, 1 December, 2014, he indicated how the Church in their country can "more clearly be herself, the Body of Christ and the People of God, and not just a fine organization, another NGO". The following is a translation of the text consigned in French and German by the Pontiff.

Dear Brothers in the Episcopate, Reverend Father Abbots,

I greet you with joy while you are making in these days your visit *ad limina Apostolorum*, a pilgrimage that I hope will be fraternal, enriching and fruitful for each one of you and for the Church in Switzerland. I thank you, Bishop Markus Büchel, for the words you addressed to me on behalf of everyone!

Switzerland is known as a country of peace, of cultural and confessional coexistence. It is the seat of important international institutions for peace, work, science and ecumenism. Although many inhabitants maintain a distance from the Church, the majority recognize the positive role Catholics and Protestants play in the social sphere: their charitable commitment brings a reflection of the Father's tenderness to the poor and the excluded. Your country has a long Christian tradition. Next year you will celebrate the Great Jubilee



of the Abbey of St Maurice. It is an impressive testimony of 1,500 years of uninterrupted religious life, an exceptional fact in all of Europe. Dear Brothers, you have the great and beautiful responsibility of keeping the faith alive in your land. Without a living faith in the Risen Christ, the beautiful churches and monasteries would gradually become museums; all the laudable works and institutions would lose their spirit, leaving only empty places and abandoned people. The mission entrusted to you is to tend the flock, walking, according to circumstances, in front, in the middle or behind. The People of God cannot subsist without its Shepherds, Bishops and Priests; the Lord gave the Church the gift of apostolic succession "as a service to the unity of faith and its integral transmission" (*Lumen Fidei*, n. 49).

It is a precious gift, with the collegiality which derives from it, if we know how to make it effective, to enhance it in order to support one another, to live by it and to lead those to whom the Lord sends us toward the encounter with the One who is "the way, and the truth, and the life" (cf. Jn 14:6). This way these people, especially the young generations, will be able to more easily find reasons to believe and to hope.

I encourage you to sustain your formation programme for seminarians, on whom the future of the Church depends. She needs priests who, in addition to a sound familiarity with Tradition and the Magisterium, let themselves be met by Christ and, brought into conformity with Him, lead men in his footsteps (cf. Jn 1:40-42). To do this they will learn to remain ever more in his presence, receiving his Word, being nourished by the Eucharist, witnessing to the salvific value of the sacrament of reconciliation, and seeking their "Father's house" (cf. Lk 2:49). In fraternal life they will find an effective support to face the temptation to withdraw into themselves or of a virtual life, as well as a permanent antidote to a sometimes acute loneliness. I invite you to also watch over your priests and to dedicate time to them, especially if they have distanced themselves and forgotten the meaning of episcopal paternity,

or think they have no need of it. A humble, true and fraternal dialogue often gives a fresh start.

You have developed the necessary cooperation between priests and lay people. The mission of the laity in the Church is, indeed, of considerable importance, for the laity contributes to the life of the parishes and Christian communities, both in the professional field and as volunteers. It is important to acknowledge and support their commitment, while maintaining the clear distinction between the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial priesthood. On this point, I encourage you to continue the formation of the baptized, with regard to the truths of faith and to their meaning for liturgical, parish, family and social life and to choose formation staff with care. In this way you

will enable lay people to truly integrate themselves into the Church, to take the place that awaits them there and to render fruitful the baptismal grace received, in order journey together towards holiness for the good of all.

The mission received from the Lord, also invites us to go to meet those with whom we come into contact, even if they differ from us in their culture, their religious confession or their belief. If we believe in the free and generous action of the Spirit, we are able to understand one another well and work together to serve society better, and to contribute to peace in a decisive way.

Ecumenism is a contribution not only to the unity of the Church, but also to the unity of the human family (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 245). It fosters fruitful, peaceful and fraternal coexistence. In prayer and in the common proclamation of the Lord Jesus, however, we must be careful to allow the faithful of each Christian confession to live its faith in a manner that is unequivocal and free of confusion, and without erasing the differences at the expense of truth. On the contrary, if, out of courtesy, we should hide our Eucharistic faith, we would not give sufficient importance either to our valuable legacy nor to our interlocutors. Likewise, the teaching of religion in schools must bear in mind the particularities of each confession.

I encourage you to voice clearly in unison society's problems, at a time in which different people – even within the Church – are tempted to renounce the realism of the social aspect of the Gospel (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 88). The Gospel has its own original strength to make proposals. It is up to us to present it in its entirety, to render it accessible without clouding its beauty or weakening its attractiveness, in order to reach the people facing the difficulties of everyday life, who are searching for the meaning of their life or who have fallen away from the Church. Disillusioned or abandoned to themselves, they let themselves be tempted by arguments that deliberately deny the transcendent dimension of man, of life and of human relationships, particularly in the face of suffering and death. The testimony of Christians and parish communities can truly enlighten their path and support their aspiration for happiness. In this way the Church in Switzerland can more clearly be herself, the Body of Christ and the People of God, and not just a fine organization, another NGO.

Furthermore, it is important that relationships between the Church and the Cantons be pursued calmly. Their wealth lies in their special col-



laboration, as well as in the presence of Gospel values in the life of society and in civic choices. However, the specific nature of these relationships has called for reflection, which started several years ago, to preserve the diversity of functions of the civic entities and of the structures of the Catholic Church. The *Vademecum*, which is currently being put into practice, is another step on the path of clarification and peace. Although the modalities of application vary from one diocese to another, working together will help you to cooperate better with the cantonal institutions. When the Church avoids depending on institutions which, through economic means, may impose a lifestyle by no means consistent with Christ, who made Himself poor, the Church makes the Gospel more visible in her own structures.

Dear Brothers, the Church originates from Pentecost. At Pentecost, the Apostles went out and began to speak all languages, thus being able to manifest to all, by the power of the Holy Spirit, their living faith in the Risen Christ. The Redeemer invites us ever anew to preach the Gospel to all. The God News must be proclaimed. It must not bow to the imaginations of men. We often grow tired of answering, without noticing that our interlocutors are not seeking answers. One must proclaim, go forward, ask questions with the ever valid apostolic vision: "This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses" (Acts 2:32).

I assure you of my prayers for you, for your priests and for your diocesan faithful. I hope that you cultivate God's field with zeal and patience, preserving the passion of truth, and I encourage you to all go forth together. Entrusting the future of the evangelization of your country to the Virgin Mary and to the intercession of St Nicholas of Flüe, St Maurice and his companions, I wholeheartedly impart the Apostolic Blessing; and please, I ask you fraternally not to forget to pray for me.

Pope Francis' message for the 23rd World Day of the Sick

## Eyes to the blind and feet to the lame

"Eyes to the blind" and "feet to the lame", taken from the Book of Job (29:15), is the image Pope Francis used to describe the mission of those who live alongside the sick, "taking care of others, being responsible for others". In a message for the 23rd World Day of the Sick, which will be celebrated on 11

February, the Pontiff spoke of "the wisdom of the heart" as "a way of seeing things infused by the Holy Spirit in the minds and the hearts of those who are sensitive to the sufferings of their brothers and sisters and who can see in them the image of God". The following is the English text of the message.



*Sapientia Cordis.*

"I was eyes to the blind,  
and feet to the lame"  
(Job 29:15)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

On this, the 23rd World Day of the Sick, begun by Saint John Paul II, I turn to all of you who are burdened by illness and are united in various ways to the flesh of the suffering Christ, as well as to you, professionals and volunteers in the field of health care.

This year's theme invites us to reflect on a phrase from the Book of Job: "I was eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame" (Job 29:15). I would like to consider this phrase from the perspective of "*sapientia cordis*" – the wisdom of the heart.

1. This "wisdom" is not theoretical, abstract knowledge, the product of reasoning. Rather, it is, as St James describes it in his Letter, "pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, without uncertainty or insincerity" (3:17). It is a *way of seeing things infused by the Holy Spirit* in the minds and the hearts of those who are sensitive to the sufferings of their brothers and sisters and who can see in them the image of God. So let us take up the prayer of the Psalmist: "Teach us to number our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom" (Ps 90:12). This "*sapientia cordis*", which is a gift of God, is a compendium of the fruits of the World Day of the Sick.

2. *Wisdom of the heart means serving our brothers and sisters.* Job's words: "I was eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame", point to the service which this just man, who enjoyed a certain authority and a position of importance amongst the elders of his city, offered to those in need. His moral grandeur found expression in the help he gave to the poor who sought his help and in his care for orphans and widows (Job 29:12-13).

Today too, how many Christians show, not by their words but by lives rooted in a genuine faith, that they are "eyes to the blind" and "feet to the lame"! They are close to

the sick in need of constant care and help in washing, dressing and eating. This service, especially when it is protracted, can become tiring and burdensome. It is relatively easy to help someone for a few days but it is difficult to look after a person for months or even years, in some cases when he or she is no longer capable of expressing gratitude. And yet, what a great path of sanctification this is! In those difficult moments we can rely in a special way on the closeness of the Lord, and we become a special means of support for the Church's mission.

3. *Wisdom of the heart means being with our brothers and sisters.* Time spent with the sick is holy time. It is a way of praising God who conforms us to the image of his Son, who "came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mt 20:28). Jesus himself said: "I am among you as one who serves" (Lk 22:27).

With lively faith let us ask the Holy Spirit to grant us the grace to appreciate the value of our often unspoken willingness to spend time with these sisters and brothers who, thanks to our closeness and affection, feel more loved and comforted. How great a lie, on the other hand, lurks behind certain phrases which so insist on the importance of "quality of life" that they make people think that lives affected by grave illness are not worth living!

4. *Wisdom of the heart means going forth from ourselves towards our brothers and sisters.* Occasionally our world forgets the special value of time spent at the bedside of the sick, since we are in such a rush; caught up as we are in a frenzy of doing, of producing, we forget about giving ourselves freely, taking care of others, being responsible for others. Behind this attitude there is often a lukewarm faith which has forgotten

the Lord's words: "You did it unto me" (Mt 25:40).

For this reason, I would like once again to stress "the absolute priority of 'going forth from ourselves toward our brothers and sisters' as one of the two great commandments which ground every moral norm and as the clearest sign for discerning spiritual growth in response to God's completely free gift" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 179). The missionary nature of the Church is the wellspring of an "effective charity and a compassion which understands, assists and promotes" (*ibid*).

5. *Wisdom of the heart means showing solidarity with our brothers and sisters while not judging them.* Charity takes time. Time to care for the sick and time to visit them. Time to be at their side like Job's friends: "And they sat with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his suffering was very great" (Job 2:13). Yet Job's friends harboured a judgement against him: they thought that Job's misfortune was a punishment from God for his sins. True charity is a sharing which does not judge, which does not demand the conversion of others; it is free of that false humility which, deep down, seeks praise and is self-satisfied about whatever good it does.

Job's experience of suffering finds its genuine response only in the cross of Jesus, the supreme act of God's solidarity with us, completely free and abounding in mercy. This



Ernst Barlach, "The Blind and the Lame" (1919)

response of love to the drama of human pain, especially innocent suffering, remains for ever impressed on the body of the risen Christ; his glorious wounds are a scandal for faith but also the proof of faith (cf. *Homily for the Canonization of John XXIII and John Paul II*, 27 April 2014).

Even when illness, loneliness and inability make it hard for us to reach out to others, the experience of suffering can become a privileged means of transmitting grace and a source for gaining and growing in *sapientia cordis*. We come to understand how Job, at the end of his experience, could say to God: "I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you" (42:5). People immersed in the mystery of suffering and pain, when they accept these in faith, can themselves become living witnesses of a faith capable of embracing suffering, even without being able to understand its full meaning.

6. I entrust this World Day of the Sick to the maternal protection of Mary, who conceived and gave birth to Wisdom incarnate: Jesus Christ, our Lord.

O Mary, Seat of Wisdom, intercede as our Mother for all the sick and for those who care for them! Grant that, through our service of our suffering neighbours, and through the experience of suffering itself, we may receive and cultivate true wisdom of heart!

With this prayer for all of you, I impart my Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, 3 December 2014  
Memorial of St Francis Xavier



James Tissot, "He Heals the Lame" (1886)

Franciscans