

L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO

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Vatican City

Friday, 13 February 2015

Pope Francis at the Extraordinary Consistory on reforming the Roman Curia

Communion and collegiality

They were scheduled to start at 9 am on Thursday, 12 February, but at 8:30 Pope Francis was already in the Synod Hall, waiting to welcome the cardinals whom he is also meeting on Friday, 13 February, to discuss reforming the Roman Curia. The Holy Father greeted each Cardinal individually. Then the 160 cardinals sang the hymn 'Veni creator', invoking the Holy Spirit's assistance in drafting a new Apostolic

Constitution. After mid-morning prayer, Cardinal Angelo Sodano, Dean of the College of Cardinals, greeted the Pope and briefly outlined the previous reforms of the Roman Curia called for by Paul VI and John Paul II, assuring Pope Francis of the Cardinals' complete cooperation in responding to the present challenges. The Pontiff then took the floor and his address was followed by Cardinal Óscar

Rodríguez Maradiaga's report of the work done thus far by the Council of nine Cardinals. Bishop Marcello Semeraro then gave an address, explaining the recommended reforms which include the creation of two new dicasteries: one dedicated to laity, family and life and another to charity, justice and peace. The following is a translation of the Pope's address which was given in Italian.

Dear Brothers,

How good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!" (Ps 133[132]:1).

With the words of the Psalm let us praise the Lord who has invoked us and gives us the grace to welcome 20 new Cardinals to this assembly. To them and to all I address my cordial greeting. Welcome to this communion, which is expressed in collegiality.

Thank you to all those who organized this event, in particular to Cardinal Angelo Sodano, Dean of the College of Cardinals. I thank the Council of nine Cardinals and Cardinal Óscar Andrés Rodríguez Maradiaga, coordinator. I also thank Bishop Marcello Semeraro, Secretary of the Council of nine Cardinals: it is he who today is presenting the synthesis of the work carried out in these last months to develop a new Apostolic Constitution for the reform of the Curia. As we know, this synthesis was prepared on the basis of many recommendations, also on behalf of the heads and officers of the Dicasteries, as well as experts in the matters.



The goal to be reached is always that of fostering greater harmony in the work of the various Dicasteries and Offices, in order to establish more effective cooperation in the absolute transparency which edifies authentic synodality and collegiality.

Reform is not an end in itself, but a means to bear a stronger Christian testimony; to favour a more effective evangelization; to promote a more fruitful ecumenical spirit; to encour-

age a more constructive dialogue with all. The reform, actively sought by most Cardinals in the context of the general Congregations before the Conclave, will still have to further refine the identity of the Roman Curia itself, in other words that of assisting Peter's Successor in the exercise of his supreme pastoral office for the good and the service of the Universal Church and the Particular Churches. It is an exercise with which the unity of faith and

the communion of the People of God are strengthened and the very mission of the Church in the world is advanced.

It is certainly not easy to reach such a goal: it requires time, determination and above all the cooperation of everyone. But to realize this we must first of all entrust ourselves to the Holy Spirit, who is the true guide of the Church, imploring in prayer the gift of authentic discernment.

With this spirit of cooperation our meeting begins. It will be fruitful thanks to the contribution that each of us will be able to express with parhesia, faithfulness to the Magisterium and the knowledge that all of this contributes to the supreme law, or the *salus animarum*. Thank you.

At the Angelus

Day of Prayer against Trafficking



PAGE 5

Visit to the Parish of St Michael the Archangel

What channel is Jesus on?

"On which TV channel does Jesus speak?" Pope Francis asked this of the parishioners of St Michael the Archangel in Rome's Pietralata neighbourhood on Sunday, 8 February. "He speaks to you in the Gospel!", he said, answering his own question. The Pope invited them to "listen to the Word of Jesus in the Gospel" and to let themselves "be healed" by Him. We all know where our wounds are, he said, "May Jesus heal those wounds. But for this I must open my heart, in order that He may come. How do I open my heart? By praying."



PAGE 6

German Jesuit theologian

Cardinal Karl Becker dies

PAGE 4

Anniversary of the Lateran Pacts

11 February

PAGE 4

Expo of Ideas in Milan

The paradox of abundance

PAGE 16

VATICAN BULLETIN

AUDIENCES

Thursday, 5 February

Cardinal George Pell, Prefect of the Secretariat for the Economy

Archbishop Charles Joseph Chaput, OFM Cap. of Philadelphia, United States of America

Archbishop Giambattista Diquattro, titular Archbishop of Giru Mons, Apostolic Nuncio in Bolivia

Members of the Episcopal Conference of Greece, on a visit *ad Limina Apostolorum*:

– Archbishop Sevastianos Rossolatos of Athens and Apostolic Administrator “*sede vacante et ad nutum Sanctae Sedis*” of Rhodes, with: Archbishop emeritus Nikolaos Foskolos

– Archbishop Ioannis Spiteris, OFM Cap., of Corfù, Zante and Cefalonia, and Apostolic Administrator “*ad nutum Sanctae Sedis*” of the Apostolic Vicariate of Thessaloniki

– Bishop Nikolaos Printezis of Naxos, Andros, Tinos and Mykonos; Apostolic Administrator “*sede vacante*” of Chios

– Bishop Petros Stefanou, OFM Cap., of Syros, Milos and Santorini with Bishop emeritus Frangiskos Papamanolis, OFM Cap.

– Bishop Dimitrios Salachas, titular Bishop of Gratianopolis, Apostolic Exarch for Catholics of the Byzantine rite resident in Greece

– Archbishop Neshan Karakéhéyan, titular Archbishop Adana for Armenians, Apostolic Administrator of the Ordinariate for Catholics of the Byzantine rite resident in Greece

H.E. Mr Anote Tong, President of the Republic of Kiribati, with his entourage

Friday, 6 February

H.B. Cardinal Béchara Boutros Raï, OMM, Patriarch of Antioch for Maronites, Lebanon

Audience with the President of the Republic of Kiribati

On Thursday morning, 5 February, Pope Francis received the President of the Republic of Kiribati, H.E. Mr Anote Tong, who subsequently met Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State, and Archbishop Paul R. Gallagher, Secretary for Relations with States.

During the course of their cordial discussion, they paused to discuss the importance of protecting the environment and issues of climate change, which are negatively effecting the country. In this regard, the wish was expressed that the international community will take measures shared and effective in addressing these challenges at the COP21, scheduled for December 2015 in Paris.

Cardinal Angelo Scola, Archbishop of Milan, Italy

Cardinal Juan Luis Cipriani Thorne, Archbishop of Lima, Peru

Bishop Heinz Wilhelm Steckling, OMI, of Ciudad del Este, Paraguay

Saturday, 7 February

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

CHANGES IN EPISCOPATE

The Holy Father appointed Fr Józef Roszyński, SVD, as Bishop of Wewak, Papua New Guinea. Until now he has been a missionary in the said Diocese (6 Feb.)

Bishop-elect Roszyński, 52, was born in Nidzica, Poland. He was ordained a priest on 30 April 1989. He has served in parish ministry in Poland. In 1991 he was sent to Wewak, Papua New Guinea, as a missionary, there he has served in parish ministry and as: member of the provincial council of the SVD Fathers in Papua New Guinea; coordinator of the formation of candidates; superior of the SVDs in Wewak; temporary provincial superior and then superior of the Verbités; member of the commission for the financial management of the community and for the pastoral care of the vacant Diocese of Wewak.

The Holy Father appointed Msgr Denis Chidi Isizoh from the clergy of Onitsha, Nigeria, as Auxiliary of the Archdiocese of Onitsha, assigning him the titular episcopal See of Legia. Until now he has been an Official at the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (6 Feb.).

Bishop-elect Isizoh, 59, was born in Onitsha, Nigeria. He holds a doctorate in philosophy and in Biblical theology. He was ordained a priest on 28 September 1985. He has served in parish ministry and as:

formator at the All Hallows Minor Seminary; chaplain to several institutes and schools; secretary and assistant to Cardinal Francis Arinze.

The Holy Father appointed Msgr Franc Šuštar as Auxiliary of the Archdiocese of Ljubljana, Slovenia, assigning him the titular episcopal See of Ressiania. Until now he has been Rector of the Major Seminary of Ljubljana (7 Feb.).

Bishop-elect Šuštar, 55, was born in Ljubljana, Slovenia. He was ordained a priest on 29 June 1985. He holds a doctorate in theology. He has served in parish ministry. He has served as: a member of the Presbyteral Council; of the College of Consultors; of the Pastoral Council, and of the Commission of Personnel

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

The Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors meets

Making the Church a safe home

The members of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors gathered in Plenary Assembly February 6-8, in Rome.

The members who took part in the Assembly are: Cardinal Seán O'Malley, OFM Cap. (United States), President; Msgr Robert Oliver (United States), Secretary; Fr Luis Manuel Ali Herrera (Colombia); Catherine Bonnet (France); Marie Collins (Ireland); Gabriel Dy-liacco (Philippines); Sheila Hollins (England); Bill Kilgallon (New Zealand); Sr Kayula Lesa, MSC (Zambia); Sr Hermenegild Makoro, CPS (Zimbabwe); Kathleen McCormack (Australia); Claudio Papale (Italy); Peter Saunders (England); Hanna Suchocka (Poland); Krysten Winter-green (United States); Fr Humberto Miguel Yáñez, SJ (Argentina) and Fr Hans Zollner, SJ (Germany).

This year's meeting was the first opportunity for all 17 members of the recently expanded Commission to come together and share their progress in the task entrusted to them by the Holy Father, namely to advise Pope Francis in the safeguarding and protection of minors in the Church.

During the meetings, members presented reports from their Working Groups of experts, developed over the past year. The Commission then completed their recommendations regarding the formal structure of the Commission and agreed upon several proposals to submit to the Holy Father for consideration.

The Working Groups are an integral part of the Commission's working structure. Between Plenary Sessions, these groups bring forward research and projects in areas that are central to the mission of making the Church 'a safe home' for children, adolescents, and vulnerable adults. These include: pastoral care for survivors and their families, education, guidelines in best practice, formation to the

priesthood and religious life, ecclesial and civil norms governing allegations of abuse, and the accountability of people in positions of responsibility within the Church when dealing with allegations of abuse.

The Commission is keenly aware that the issue of accountability is of major importance. In its Assembly, members agreed on an initial proposal to submit to Pope Francis for consideration. Moreover, the Commission is developing processes to ensure accountability for everyone in the Church – clergy, religious, and laity – who work with minors.

Part of ensuring accountability is raising awareness and understanding at all levels of the Church regarding the seriousness and urgency in implementing correct safeguarding procedures. To this end, the Commission also agreed to develop seminars to educate Church leadership in the area of the protection of minors.

Following on from the Holy Father's Letter to Presidents of the Episcopal Conferences and to Superiors of Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, dated February 2, the Commission looks forward to collaborating with churches on a local level in making its expertise available to ensure best practices in guidelines for the protection of minors.

The Commission is also preparing materials for a Day of Prayer for all those who have been harmed by sexual abuse. This will underscore our responsibility to work for spiritual healing and also help raise awareness among the Catholic community about the scourge of the abuse of minors.

Pope Francis writes in his letter to Church leaders “families need to know that the Church is making every effort to protect their children”. Conscious of the gravity of our task to advise the Holy Father in this effort, we ask you to support our work with prayer.



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At the General Audience Pope Francis speaks about children

Like the fingers of a hand

At the General Audience on Wednesday, 11 February, Pope Francis continued his series on the family. "Children are the joy of the family and of society", with these words the Pontiff addressed the faithful gathered in St Peter's Square, emphasizing that a society that considers its children "a worry, a weight, a risk, is a depressed society.... They are not a question of reproductive biology, nor one of the many ways to fulfil oneself, much less a possession of their parents.... No, children are a gift". The following is a translation of the Pope's catechesis, which was given in Italian.



Pablo Picasso, "Mother and child" (1922)

Dear Brother and Sisters,
Good morning,

After reflecting on the figures of the mother and father, in this catechesis on the family I would like to talk about the child, or even better, about children. I shall use a beautiful image from Isaiah. The Prophet writes: "they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far, and your daughters shall be carried in the arms. Then you shall see and be radiant, your heart shall thrill and rejoice" (60:4-5). It is a splendid image, an image of happiness which is fulfilled in the reunion of parents and children, who journey together toward a future of freedom and peace, after a long period of deprivation and separation, when the Hebrew people were far from their homeland.

In essence, there is a close link between the hope of a people and the harmony among generations. We must consider this carefully. There is a close link between the hope of a people and the harmony among generations. The joy of children causes the parents' hearts to beat and reopens the future. Children are the joy of the family and of society. They are not a question of reproductive biology, nor one of the many ways to fulfil oneself, much less a possession of their parents.... No. Children are a gift, they are a gift: understood? Children are a gift. Each one is unique and irreplaceable; and at the same time unmistakably linked to his/her roots. In fact, according to God's plan, being son and daughter means to carry within oneself the memory and hope of a love which was fulfilled in the very kindling of the life of another, original and new, human being. And for parents each child is original, different, diverse. Allow me to share a family memory. I remember what my mother said about us – there were five of us: – "I have five children". When they asked her: "Which one is your favourite", she answered: "I have five children, like five fingers. [He displays his fingers] Should they strike this one, it hurts me; should they strike that one, it hurts me. All five hurt me. All are my children and all are different like the fingers of a hand". And this is how a family is! The children are all different, but all children.

A child is loved because he is one's child: not because he is beautiful, or because he is like this or like

that; no, because he is a child! Not because he thinks as I do, or embodies my dreams. A child is a child: a life generated by us but intended for him, for his good, for the good of the family, of society, of mankind as a whole.

From this also derives the depth of the human experience of being son or daughter, which allows us to discover the most gratuitous dimension of love, which never ceases to astonish us. It is the beauty of being loved first: children are loved before they arrive. So often I find mothers in the square who are expecting a baby and ask me for a blessing ... these babies are loved before coming into the world. And this is free, this is love; they are loved before being born, like the love of God who always loves us first. They are loved before having done anything to deserve it, before knowing how to talk or think, even before coming into the world! Being children is the basic condition for knowing the love of God, which is the ultimate source of this authentic miracle. In the soul

of every child, inasmuch as it is vulnerable, God places the seal of this love, which is at the basis of his/her personal dignity, a dignity which nothing and no one can ever destroy.

Today it seems more difficult for children to imagine their future. Fathers – I touched on this in previous catecheses – have perhaps taken a step backward and children have become more uncertain in taking their steps forward. We can

learn the good relationship between generations from our Heavenly Father, who leaves each of us free but never leaves us on our own. And if we err, He continues to follow us with patience, without abating his love for us. Our Heavenly Father does not take steps back in his love for us, ever! He always goes forward and if He cannot go forward He waits for us, but He never goes backward; He wants his children to be brave and take their steps forward.

The children, for their part, must not be afraid of the task of building a new world: it is right for them to want to improve on what they have received! But this must be done without arrogance, without presumption. One must know how to recognize a child's virtue, and parents always deserve honour.

The fourth Commandment asks children – we are all children! – to honour our father and mother (cf. Ex 20:12). This Commandment comes immediately after those regarding God Himself. Indeed, it contains something sacred, something divine, something which lies at the root of every other type of respect among men. And to the biblical formulation of the fourth Commandment is added: "that your days may be long in the land which the Lord your God gives you". The virtuous bond between generations is the guarantee of the future, and is the guarantee of a truly human history. A society with children who do not honour parents is a society without honour; when one does not honour one's parents one loses one's own honour! It is a society destined to be filled with arid and avid

My mother used to say: "I have five children, like five fingers.... All are my children and all are different like the fingers of a hand". And this is how a family is! The children are all different, but all children"

young people. However, even a society with a paucity of generations, which does not love being surrounded by children, which considers them above all a worry, a weight, a risk, is a depressed society. Let us consider the many societies we know here in Europe: they are depressed societies, because they do not want children, they are not having children, the birth rate does not reach one percent. Why? Let each of us consider and respond. If a family

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

Eighth meeting of the Council of Cardinals

The Council of Cardinals – which Pope Francis established in September 2013 to reform the Roman Curia – has met for the eighth time. The nine Cardinals gathered in Casa Santa Marta from 9-11 February to discuss various issues, including the Consistory of the College of Cardinals, which began on 12 February.

The Cardinals have decided to meet again from 13-15 April. According to the Director of the Holy See Press Office, Fr Federico Lombardi, the Cardinals are working on a new constitution, which will require more time to complete, since they are not merely updating the old version, but writing a new one.

In the Pope's absence on Wednesday morning, due to the General Audience, Cardinal Pell explained to the so-called "C9" the recent work of the Secretariat and the Council for the Economy. The Holy Father attended the afternoon

session, when Cardinal O'Malley spoke about the plenary session of the Commission for the Protection of Minors which concluded on 8 February. That same day the Cardinals continued preparations, which had begun the day before, for the upcoming Consistory of the College of Cardinals.

On Tuesday, 10 February, the Cardinals, in the presence of the Pope, discussed both the Pontifical Council for Culture and the committee reforming Vatican media. Cardinal Ravasi, President of the dicastery for culture, discussed the role and position of the Council within the Curia. Then Msgr Tighe, Secretary of the Pontifical



Council for Social Communications, gave a report on the work of the committee reforming Vatican media.

The Council of Cardinals met previously 1-3 October and 3-5 December 2013, 17-19 February, 28-30 April, 1-4 July, 15-17 September and 9-11 December 2014.

11 February

After the First World War – in which Italy became involved precisely 100 years ago – many things on the Italian Peninsula changed. There were numerous developments from political, legal, social, cultural and moral points of view. There were also developments concerning the Catholic issue, starting with the Roman Question. Indeed as Arturo Carlo Jemolo noted, with his usual shrewdness, in his fundamental history of Church-State relations, already, “after a year of war [...] things had changed”.

At the juridical level the events of the war put the Law of Guarantees to the test – and not with a positive outcome – revealing its insurmountable limitations. At the political level the liberal elites let the government know that Italy's unity as a political community could not disregard the cohesion of the Catholic masses. Once the restrictions of the *non expedit* had faded, Catholics, for their part, had matured in their commitment to the country's political life, going beyond the cultural and social commitment which had imprisoned them during the preceding decades. The construction of the “common house” could not do without their contribution.

There are many reasons for the above-mentioned change. One of them is without a doubt the concrete and effective example of collaboration and solidarity given by the ecclesiastical institution and by Italian Catholics in the tragic years of what Benedict XV had defined the “useless slaughter”. The Holy See's work for refugees and prisoners, desired by the Pope himself; the enormous charitable effort of Catholic associations for the wounded and disabled, and for widows and orphans; the formidable and daily aid for soldiers, were both material and moral, in addition to spiritual, not only given by military chaplains, dozens of whom died on the battle fields, but also by the many priests and religious called to share gruelling daily life in the trenches, serving in the military: These are merely – but not secondary – examples which help in understanding the change in climate mentioned.

It is not by chance that in 1919 during the Paris Peace Conference, the well-known preliminary meetings took place between Archbishop Bonaventura Cerretti and Italian Prime Minister Vittorio Emanuele Orlando. During the course of these meeting concrete openings emerged for surmounting the Roman Question. On that occasion there were significant indications that anticipated what was to happen

10 years later, following the signing of the Lateran Pacts. These indications lay not only in the sphere of the assurances to the Holy See for the exercise of its lofty mission in the world and which would, in 1929, give rise to the Lateran Treaty; but also lay in the different yet at the same time contiguous and supportive sphere of the juridical status of the Church in Italy, which would be resolved a decade later with the Lateran Concordat. Later, in the era of the Constituent Assembly, Orlando himself would also reveal that a prospect for a Concordat had opened.

The anniversary of the agreements stipulated on 11 February 1929 in the Lateran Palace, sparks a memory of the distant origins of a process that aimed to overcome the grievous disagreement between Church and State on Italian territory, the fruits of which would later be gathered by others, rather than by those who had initiated the process. However, what is to be emphasized here is that what gave rise to that process was the tangible, numerous and deep experiences of the Church's solidarity for a country torn to pieces by the conflict. These experiences led to examine notable institutional paradigms of cooperation.

On closer inspection, the long history of the Lateran pacts can also be reinterpreted in its entirety, and in the multifarious aspects that the various epochal transitions brought with them. In this perspective, the truest and most profound meaning of the agreement is revealed: not that of an insane compromise between what belongs to Caesar and what belongs to God; not that of a suspicious *actio finium regundorum* [action at law for the determination of boundaries] between institutions that distrust one another; not that of a quest for reciprocal institutional interests; but rather the meaning of service for the benefit of the human being, in a different capacity and with respect for reciprocal independence and autonomy.

In Art. 1 of the Agreement of Villa Madama of 18 February 1984, which led to the revision of the Lateran Concordat, following the mention of the principle of independence and sovereignty proper to each one, is stated the commitment of the Church and of the State to collaborate “for the promotion of Man and the good of the country”.

Therefore the common thread of solidarity, which had a profound impact on the experience of a century in the Church-State relations, at last emerged in the 1984 Agreement, becoming a legally binding programme for the future.

The German Jesuit taught at the Gregorian for 30 years Cardinal Karl Becker dies

Cardinal Karl Becker died early Tuesday morning, 10 February, at Fatebenefratelli Hospital in Rome. He was 86 years old. On learning of the German Jesuit's passing, Pope Francis wrote a telegram to the Superior General of the Society of Jesus, Fr Adolfo Nicolás Pachón. The following is a translation of the Italian text.

The news of the passing of the venerable Cardinal Karl Josef Becker stirs in my heart an affectionate lament and the desire to express sentiments of profound sympathy to you and to the whole Society of Jesus, recalling with deep gratitude the intense and exemplary service carried out for many years by the late Cardinal in teaching, in the formation of new generations, especially of priests, in theological research, as well as in service to the Holy See. I elevate fervent prayers to the Lord that, through the intercession of the Holy Virgin and of St Ignatius of Loyola, He may give to the deceased Cardinal the eternal reward promised to His faithful disciples and I send to you and to all those who knew him, appreciating his gifts of mind and heart, my heartfelt comforting Apostolic Blessing.

FRANCISCUS PP.

Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State, also sent a telegram of condolences.

Karl Josef Becker was born into a Catholic family in Cologne, Germany on 18 April 1928. His parents were able to prevent their four children from entering the youth associations, obligatory during the country's National Socialism. In fact his father, a high school literature teacher, was tried by authorities twice because of his faith.

After studying classical languages and history, Becker entered the Society of Jesus in 1948; his brother followed three years later. During his formation, he earned a licence in dogmatic theology. On 31 July 1958 he was ordained a priest and subsequently moved to Rome where he studied to earn a doctorate in Sacred Theology in 1963, under the guidance of Fr Juan Alfaro. His thesis was entitled: *Die Rechtfertigungslehre nach Domingo de Soto. Das Denken eines Konzilsteilnehmers vor, in und nach Trient* (“The doctrine of justification according to Domingo de Soto: A participant's thoughts before, during and after the Council of Trent”). After teaching briefly at Sankt Georgen (1963-1969), where he first taught the great treatises of Catholic dogma (*De Eucharistia, De Deo Uno, De Gratia* and *De Inspiratione*), he returned to Rome in 1969 to teach at the Pontifical Gregorian University, where he remained for more than 30 years. In 2003 he became professor emeritus.

As a professor of dogmatic theology, he taught many courses on the sacraments: on confirmation and baptism, on the doctrine of grace, on the relationship between the Magisterium and theology, on the method of theology, on the Creed and on interpreting dogma. He was the editor of the journal *Gregorianum* from 1972-1985, where he published many articles and guided more than 50 doctoral students, especially on theology and dogma, including those on the writings of Isaac of Stella, William of St Thierry, St Bonaventure, St Thomas Aquinas, Cardinal Cayetano, Francisco Suárez, Matthias Joseph Scheeben and Henry de Lubac. Of the professors at the Gregorian, he was among those who encouraged the study of the Council of Trent and Vatican II documents.

He also contributed greatly to understanding Antonio Rosmini and to correctly interpreting *subsistit in*, publishing important articles on the subject including in *L'Osservatore Romano*. He also edited the book *Catholic Engagement with World Religions: A Comprehensive Study* (2010) with Ilaria Morali on the theology of religions, looking especially



at the need for the correct method for Catholics to examine issues inherent to the relationship between Christianity and other religions.

In 1985 he began as consultant to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, of which Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger was the prefect. From 1997-99 he participated in the in the important final two sessions which prepared the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*. From 2009-2011, he also participated in eight sessions of the Joint Commission on the dissent between the Society of St Pius X and the Catholic Church.

In 2003, for his 75th birthday, a Festschrift entitled: *Sentire cum Ecclesia. Homenaje al Padre Karl Josef Becker* 57, was published, in which Joseph Ratzinger contributed the essay, *Eucharistie-Communio-Solidarität* and chaired the book presentation on 14 November 2003 in the main hall of the Jesuit university.

Benedict XVI created him a cardinal at the Consistory on 18 February 2012, assigning him the Deaconry of San Giuliano Martire. Several months after his appointment as cardinal on 30 November 2012, he gave a *lectio magistralis* on the theology of religions for the Faculty of Missiology at the Gregorian.

According to the Rector of the Gregorian, Fr François-Xavier Dumortier, Cardinal Becker truly knew how to touch on several fundamental problems of the thoughts and life of the Church. He was a true servant of the Lord and the Church. The Cardinal's funeral will be celebrated on Monday, 16 February, in St Peter's Basilica.

At the Angelus the Pope prays for enslaved people and recalls the Day of the Sick

The disgraceful scourge of trafficking

Human trafficking is "a disgraceful scourge, unworthy of society". Pope Francis underlined this after praying the Angelus with the faithful in St Peter's Square on Sunday, 8 February. The Union of Superiors General and the International Union of Superiors General of Religious Institutes chose this Sunday as a day of reflection on this vile phenomenon in society today. Before reciting the Marian prayer the Holy Father reflected on the virtue of suffering, recalling also that Wednesday, 11 February, is the World Day of the Sick. The following is a translation of the Pope's words which were given in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Good morning,

Today's Gospel (cf. Mk 1:29-39) presents us Jesus who, after having preached in the Synagogue on the Sabbath, heals many sick people. Preaching and healing: this was Jesus' principle activity in his public ministry. With his preaching he proclaims the Kingdom of God, and with his healing he shows that it is near, that the Kingdom of God is in our midst.

Entering the house of Simon Peter, Jesus sees that his mother-in-law is in bed with a fever; he immediately takes her by the hand, heals her, and raises her. After sunset, since the Sabbath is over the people can go out and bring the sick to Him; He heals a multitude of people afflicted with maladies of every kind: physical, psychological, and spiritual. Having come to earth to proclaim and to realize the salvation of the whole man and of all people, Jesus shows a particular predilection for those who are wounded in body and in spirit: the poor, the sinners, the possessed, the sick, the marginalized. Thus, He reveals Himself as a doctor both of souls and of bodies, the Good Samaritan of man. He is the true Saviour: Jesus saves, Jesus cures, Jesus heals.

The reality of Christ's healing of the sick invites us to reflect on the meaning and virtue of illness. This also reminds us of the World Day of the Sick, which we shall celebrate on Wednesday, 11 February, the liturgical memorial of Our Lady of Lourdes. I bless the initiatives prepared for this Day, in particular the Vigil that will take place in Rome on the evening of 10 February. Let us also remember the President of the Pontifical Council for Health Care Workers (Health Pastoral Care), Archbishop Zygmunt Zimowski, who is very sick in Poland. A prayer for him, for his health, because it was he who organized this Day, and he accompanies us in his suffering on this Day. Let us pray for Archbishop Zimowski.

The salvific work of Christ is not exhausted with his Person and in the span of his earthly life; it continues through the Church, the sacrament of God's love and tenderness for mankind. In sending his disciples on mission, Jesus confers a

double mandate on them: to proclaim the Gospel of salvation and to heal the sick (cf. Mt 10:7-8). Faithful to this teaching, the Church has always considered caring for the sick an integral part of her mission.

"The poor and the suffering you will always have with you", Jesus admonishes (cf. Mt 26:11), and the Church continually finds them along her path, considering those who are sick as a privileged way to encounter Christ, to welcome and serve him. To treat the sick, to welcome them, to serve them, is to serve Christ: the sick are the flesh of Christ.

This also occurs in our own time, when, notwithstanding the many scientific break-throughs, the interior and physical suffering of people raises serious questions about the meaning of illness and pain, and about the reason for death. They are existential questions, to which the pastoral action of the Church must respond with the light of faith, hav-

ing before her eyes the Crucifixion, in which appears the whole of the salvific mystery of God the Father, who out of love for human beings did not spare his own Son (cf. Rm 8:32). Therefore, each one of us is called to bear the light of the Word of God and the power of grace to those who suffer, and to those who assist them – family, doctors, nurses – so that the service to the sick might always be better accomplished with more humanity, with generous dedication, with evangelical love, with tenderness. Mother Church, through our hands, caresses our suffering and treats our wounds, and does so with the tenderness of a mother.

Let us pray to Mary, Health of the Sick, that every person who is sick might experience, thanks to the care of those who are close to them, the power of God's love and the comfort of her maternal tenderness.



After the Angelus, the Holy Father said:

Dear brothers and sisters, today, 8 February, is the Feast of St Josephine Bakhita, a Sudanese nun, who as a child had the traumatic experience of being a victim of human trafficking. The Unions of Superiors and Superiors General of Religious Institutes have organized the *Day of Prayer and Awareness against Human Trafficking*. I encourage those who work helping the men, women and children who are enslaved, exploited, abused as instruments of work or pleasure, who are often tortured and mutilated. It is my hope that government leaders may work decisively to remove the causes of this disgraceful scourge, it is a scourge unworthy of society. May each one of us feel committed to being a voice for our brothers and sisters, who have been humiliated in their dignity. Let us all pray to Our Lady for them and for their family members. [Hail Mary...]

I wish everyone a happy Sunday. Please do not forget to pray for me. Have a good lunch and *arrivederci!*

International Day of Prayer against Trafficking



On Sunday, 8 February, for the first time ever, the International Day of Prayer and Awareness against Human Trafficking was celebrated. The initiative was organized by the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and by International Union of Superiors General. This date was chosen so as to coincide with the feast day of the Sudanese slave St Josephine Bakhita, who, when liberated, became a Canossian Daughter of Charity. She was canonized in 2000 by Pope John Paul II. An image of Bakhita was carried during a procession on 6 February during a prayer vigil in preparation for the Day which was held in the Basilica of Santi Apostoli.

New shower facilities for the poor in St Peter's

In the shadow of the colonnade in St Peter's, construction has concluded on the new shower facilities which are available to Rome's poor. Three showers and a small barber post were built by the workers of the Governorate of Vatican City, during renovations of a section of the bathrooms on the right side of the colonnade. According to the Office of Papal Charities, led by Archbishop Konrad Krajewski, "everything was built with great sobriety and dignity, with the use of modern technology". The showers will be open every day, except for Wednesdays due to the General Audience, and days when celebrations are held in St Peter's Square. On Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays the volunteers of UNITALSI of Rome will manage the services. Thanks to donations from various companies and several private donors, the needy will receive a change of undergarments and a toiletry kit including a towel, soap, toothpaste, razor, shaving cream and deodorant. The barber will be available on Mondays from 9 am to 3 pm. The service will be run by various local volunteer barbers on their day off, in addition to students from the school for hairdressers in Rome.



Homily at the Pietralata Parish of St Michael the Archangel

What channel is Jesus on?

"On which TV channel does Jesus speak? He speaks to you in the Gospel!". On Sunday afternoon, 8 February, Pope Francis visited the parish of St Michael the Archangel in Rome's Pietralata neighbourhood. He invited those present to "listen to the Word of Jesus in the Gospel" and to let themselves "be healed" by Him. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's homily, which was given in Italian.

This is what Jesus' life was like: "he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons" (Mk 1:39). Jesus who preaches and Jesus who heals. The whole day was like this: preaching to the people, teaching the Law, teaching the Gospel. And the people look for Him to listen to Him and also because He heals the sick. "That evening, at sundown, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons... And he healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons" (Mk 1:32, 34). And we are before Jesus in this celebration: Jesus is the One who presides at this celebration. We are priests in the

ies...". Listening to Jesus. Listening to Jesus' preaching. "How can I do this, Father? On which TV channel does Jesus speak?". He speaks to you in the Gospel! And this is an attitude that we still do not have: to go to seek the word of Jesus in the Gospel. To always carry a Gospel with us, a small one, or to have one at our fingertips. Five minutes, ten minutes. When I am travelling or when I have to wait..., I take the Gospel from my pocket, or from my bag and I read something; or at home. And Jesus speaks to me, Jesus preaches to me there. It is the Word of Jesus. And we have to get accustomed to this: to hear the Word of Jesus, to listen to the Word of Jesus in the Gospel. To read a passage, think a bit about what it says, what it is saying to me. If I don't feel it is speaking to me, I move to another. But to have this daily contact with the Gospel, to pray with the Gospel; because this way Jesus preaches to me, He says with the Gospel what He wants to tell me. I know people who always carry it and when they have a little time they open it, and this way they always find the right word for the moment they are living in. This is the first thing I wanted to say to you: let the Lord preach to you. Listen to the Lord.

And Jesus heals: let yourselves be healed by Jesus. We all have wounds, everyone: spiritual wounds, sins, hostility, jealousy; perhaps we don't say hello to someone: "Ah, he did this to me, I won't acknowledge him anymore". But this needs to be healed! "How do I do it?". Pray and ask that Jesus heal it". It's sad in a family when siblings don't speak to each other for a small matter; because the devil takes a small matter and makes a world of it. Then hostilities go on, often times for many years, and that family is destroyed. Parents suffer because their children don't speak to each other, or one son's wife doesn't speak to the other, and thus, with jealousy, envy... The devil sows this. And the only One who casts out demons is Jesus. The only One who heals these matters is Jesus. For this reason I say to each one of you: let yourself be healed by Jesus. Each one knows where his wounds are. Each one of us has them; we don't have only one: two, three, four, 20. Each one knows! May Jesus heal those wounds. But for this I must open my heart, in order that He may come. How do I open my heart? By praying. "But Lord, I can't with those people over there. I hate them. They did this, this and this...". "Heal this wound,



Lord". If we ask Jesus for this grace, He will do it. Let yourself be healed by Jesus. Let Jesus heal you. Let Jesus preach to you and let Him heal you. This way I can even preach to others, to teach the words of Jesus, because I let Him preach to me; and I can also help heal many wounds, the many wounds that there are. But first I have to do it: let Him preach to me and heal me.

When the bishop comes to make a visit to the parishes, we do many things. We can also make a nice proposal, a small one: the proposal to read a passage of the Gospel every day, a short passage, in order to let Jesus preach to me. And the other proposal: to pray that I let myself be healed of the wounds I have. Agreed? Shall we sign? Okay? Let's do it, because this will be good for everyone. Thank you.



name of Jesus, but He is the President, He is the true Priest, who offers the sacrifice to the Father. We could ask ourselves whether we let Jesus preach to us. Each one of us: "Do I let Jesus preach to me, or I know know all? Do I listen to Jesus or do I prefer to listen to something else, perhaps people's gossip, or stor-

Pope Francis to visit Pompeii on 21 March

Pompeii will be the first stop during Pope Francis' Apostolic Visit to Naples, scheduled for 21 March. Archbishop Tommaso Caputo announced this on Monday, 29 January, and the Holy See Press Office has also confirmed this. The Pope will pray in front of the Virgin of the Rosary, venerated with special devotion at the Shrine in Campania. It is a devotion which is "at the root of the strong commitment of the Church of Pompeii for the least and the neediest", underlined Archbishop Caputo, referring to the Pope's presence as "an extraordinary ecclesial event".

Impromptu visit to a shantytown outside Rome

A white coat appears among the hovels

MAURIZIO FONTANA

From the metal door a white overcoat appeared: "It's the Pope! It's the Pope!". A visit you'd never expect. A ray of sunshine in a life of hardship. Before arriving at the parish of St Michael the Archangel in Rome's Pietralata area for a scheduled visit on Sunday afternoon, 8 February, Pope Francis

wanted to stop at the 'Rainbow' camp at Ponte Mammolo, a shantytown on the northeastern outskirts of Rome, near the Aniene River. Accompanied by Don Aristide Sana, St Michael's parish priest, Francis arrived shortly before 4:00 pm at the camp, which is home to displaced and itinerant people, assisted by volunteers of the community of St Egidio. Once the initial shock had dissipated, the Pontiff was literally enveloped in the embrace of the poor. Entire families, emotional and incredulous, appeared from the simple cottages. Children surrounded him. The Pope asked *¿Quién habla castellano?* (Who speaks Castilian?), and a group of Latin Americans responded with a boisterous *¡Todos!* (Everyone!). Francis then stopped to exchange a few words with each one, and to caress the little ones. He then invited everyone to pray the *Our Father* together, and concluded with a blessing. On exiting the camp the Pontiff met a Ukrainian family and again wished affectionately to stop for a few minutes with them. He told them: "I pray every day for peace in your country".

And thus – with the simplicity of a caring gesture attentive to those who have had to leave their homeland and toil to rebuild their future in a foreign country – began Pope Francis' afternoon in Rome. No lofty discourses were necessary. The power of his actions speak louder than any words.



To the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar

Do not surrender to new forms of colonization

Today, there are "new and unscrupulous forms of 'colonization' that threaten the future of the African continent. With these words the Holy Father addressed the representatives of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar, whom he received in audience on Saturday, 7 February, on the occasion of their visit 'ad limina Apostolorum'. The greatest need in Africa is the formation of young and the Church must encourage every initiative to strengthen the family. The following is the English text of the Pope's address.

Dear Brother Bishops,

I am pleased to meet with you, the representatives of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar, and to encourage your work. SECAM was conceived and developed to be at the service of the local churches in Africa. It seeks to provide a common response to the new challenges facing the continent, allowing the Church to speak with one voice and to witness to her vocation as a sign and instrument of salvation, peace, dialogue and reconciliation. To fulfil this mission, it is important that SECAM remain faithful to its identity as a vibrant experience of communion and of service to the poorest of the poor.

To this end, pastors must remain free from worldly and political concerns, that they continually strengthen the bonds of fraternal communion with the Successor of Peter (through cooperation with the Apostolic Nunciatures), and through easy and direct communication with other Church bodies. At the same time, it is necessary to maintain the simple ecclesial experiences available to all, as well as streamlined pastoral structures. Experience teaches that large bureaucratic structures approach problems in the abstract and risk distancing the Church from people. For this reason, it is important to be concrete: that which is concrete is in touch with reality.

Above all, it is the youth who need your witness: young men and women look to us. In Africa, the future is in the hands of the young, who need to be protected from new and unscrupulous forms of "colonization" such as the pursuit of success, riches, and power at all costs, as well as fundamentalism and the distorted use of religion, in addition to new ideologies which destroy the identity of individuals and of families. The most effective way to overcome the temptation to give in to harmful lifestyles is by investing in education. Education will also help to overcome a widespread mentality of injustice and violence, as well as ethnic divisions. The greatest need is for a model of education which teaches the young to think critically and encourages growth in moral values (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, 64). An important component in this educational process is the pastoral care of



students: in Catholic or public schools there is a need to unite academic studies with the explicit proclamation of the Gospel (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, 132-134).

There are various reasons why we are seeing, also in Africa, a trend towards the breakdown of the family. In response, the Church is called to evaluate and encourage every initiative to strengthen the family, which is the real source of all forms of fraternity and the foundation and primary way of peace (cf. John Paul II, *Message for the 27th World Day of Peace, 1 January 1994*). More recently, many priests, men and women religious as well as members of the lay faithful

have admirably taken responsibility for the care of families, with a special concern for the elderly, the sick and the handicapped. Even in the most distant and remote regions, your local Churches have proclaimed the Gospel of Life and, following the example of the Good Samaritan, have come to the help of those most in need. A magnificent witness to charity has been given in response to the recent outbreak of the Ebola virus, which has struck many communities, parishes and hospitals. Many African missionaries have generously given their lives by remaining close to those suffering from this disease. This path must be followed with renewed apostolic zeal! As followers of

Christ, we cannot fail to be concerned for the welfare of the weakest; we must also draw the attention of society and the civil authorities to their plight.

Dear brothers, I express my appreciation for the invaluable contribution made by so many priests, men and women religious and lay faithful to the proclamation of the Gospel and the social advancement of your people. SECAM is also a means of promoting respect for the law, so as to ensure that the ills of corruption and fatalism may be healed, and to encourage the efforts of Christians in society as a whole, always in view of the common good. The great work of evangelization consists in striving to make the Gospel permeate every aspect of our lives so that we, in turn, can bring it to others. For this reason, it must always be borne in mind that evangelization implies conversion, that is, interior renewal. The process of purification, which is inherent in evangelization, means accepting the call of Christ to "repent and believe the Good News" (cf. Mk 1:15). As a result of this conversion to salvation, not only individuals but the entire ecclesial community is transformed, and becomes an ever greater and more vital expression of faith and of charity.

May the light and the strength of the Holy Spirit sustain your pastoral efforts. May the Virgin Mary protect you and intercede for you and for the entire continent of Africa. To each of you, I give my Apostolic Blessing. Please pray for me.

The General Audience

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

with many children is looked upon as a weight, something is wrong! The child's generation must be responsible, as the Encyclical *Humanae Vitae* of Blessed Pope Paul VI also teaches, but having many children cannot automatically be an irresponsible choice. Not to have children is a selfish choice. Life is rejuvenated and acquires energy by multiplying: it is enriched, not impoverished! Children learn to assume responsibility for their family. They mature in sharing its hardship. They grow in the appreciation of its gifts. The happy experience of brotherhood inspires respect and care for parents, to whom our recognition is due. So many of you present here have children and we are all children. Let us do something, let us observe a moment of silence. Each of us think in our heart about our children – if we have any; – think in silence. And let us all think about our parents and thank God for the gift of life. In silence, those who have children think of them, and everyone think of our parents. (Silence). May the Lord bless our parents and bless

your children. May Jesus, the eternal Son, who in the fullness of time became a child, help us find the path of a new radiation of this so great and so simple human experience of being children. In the multiplication of generations there is a mystery of enrichment of the life of all, which comes from God Himself. We must rediscover it, challenging prejudice; and live it, in the faith, in perfect happiness. And I say to you: how beautiful it is when I pass in your midst and I see the dads and moms lift up their children to be blessed; this is an almost divine gesture. Thank you for doing it!

APPEAL

I am anxiously following the distressing news from Lampedusa, where there are more dead among the immigrants due to the cold weather during the crossing of the Mediterranean. I wish to ensure you of my prayers for the victims and once again to encourage solidarity, in order that no one lack the necessary aid.

Finally, I would like to invite you to pray for the Consistory, which

will be held in the coming days. May the Holy Spirit assist the work of the College of Cardinals and enlighten the new Cardinals and their service to the Church.

I greet the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today's Audience, including those from England, Scotland, Ireland and the United States of America. Upon you and your families I cordially invoke joy and peace in the Lord Jesus. God bless you all!

I encourage all to grow in the love of the Lord, wisdom, and in the generous service to neighbours suffering in body and spirit.

I address a special thought to young people, the sick and newlyweds. Today is the memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Lourdes and the World Day of the Sick is being celebrated. Dear young people, offer yourselves to be "eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame"; dear sick people, may you always feel sustained by the prayer of the Church; and you, dear newlyweds, may you love life which is always sacred, even when it is marked by frailty and sickness. Thank you.

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Transformation

ROBERT PETER IMBELLI

In an article that appeared in *L'Osservatore Romano* (8 March 2014), Lucretia Scaraflia wrote, apropos reflection on the role of women (and men!) in the Church: "At the center of the problem is not 'modernization,' but something more profound and important which touches the spiritual nature of the Church". The challenge, then, she continues, is "to sketch the spiritual and theological characteristics of a Christian tradition open to the feminine". The series of articles being published in *L'Osservatore* are small contributions to that goal.

The present article hopes to offer a perspective upon the distinctive "spiritual nature of the Church". It takes its point of departure from a profound insight of St Irenaeus of Lyons that Pope Francis quotes in his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*. Irenaeus says of the Lord Jesus Christ: "omnem novitatem attrahit, semetipsum affertur" — "Christ brought all newness in bringing himself". The Pope then insists: "With his newness Christ is always able to re-



um et spes, in resonant phrases confesses: "The Lord is the goal of human history, the point on which the desires of history and civilization turn, the center of the human race, the joy of all hearts and the fulfillment of all desires" (45).

For Pope Francis, echoing Vatican II, Jesus himself is the joy of the Gospel, the joy Christians seek to share with others. He is the Gospel in person whose "riches and beauty", the Pope declares, "are inexhaustible". In every age the Church is called to explore anew the inexhaustible riches of Christ and to consider the challenges and possibilities of the present in light of the Gospel who is Jesus Christ.

The familiar words of the Apostle Paul reveal one constitutive dimension of the mystery of Christ: "As many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is not male and female: for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:27-28). Not only is Jesus Christ the new Adam, he gives rise, by his life, death, and resurrection to the new community, the Church, which is his very body. All who are baptized into Christ become members of his body and, thereby, enter into the new creation where ethnicity, culture, sexuality are not denied, but transformed and transfigured.

Therefore, key to a deeper Christian theology of the human, of both women and men, is a fuller understanding of the transformation to which Christ calls his disciples. It is the same Apostle Paul who provides an unsurpassed portrait of what transformation in Christ entails. What emerges from Paul's witness and writings is that transformation in Christ requires of men and women a radical reorientation and ongoing conversion (*metanoia*). If the transformative journey is undertaken with fidelity, trust, and patient endurance (*hypomone*), it gives rise to nothing less than a new self, re-created in the image of Christ. Let us recall some of Paul's most striking assertions.

In the same Letter to the Galatians in which Paul stresses believers' oneness in Christ, he says of himself: "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. The life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me"

(Gal 2:20). It is precisely this putting to death of his ego, erected upon desires and commitments that have become idolatrous, that frees him for new life in Christ, which is, inseparably, new life for others, in community.

Paul elaborates on this in the well-known passage in Philippians. After enumerating all the things that he had mistakenly considered reasons for pride and boasting, things that had only served to separate him from others, he now considers them to be obstacles to life. Paul writes of his consuming desire "to know Christ and the power of his resurrection, sharing his sufferings by being conformed to his death that I may attain the resurrection from the dead" (Phil 3:10, 11). And to know Christ truthfully is inseparable from serving those for whom Christ died.

Moreover, configuration to Christ is not only the vocation of Paul, it is the grace and calling of all who are baptized into Christ. So he exhorts the Corinthians: "The love of Christ impels us, once we have come to the conviction that one died for all; therefore all have died. Christ indeed died for all, so that those who love may no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised" (2 Cor 5:14, 15).

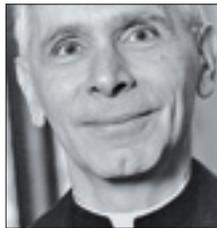
This radical reorientation of the person to Christ and the members of Christ weave spiritual bonds among the baptized that are staggering in their implications. Every true reform in the Church must rediscover ever anew the new reality that the paschal mystery of the Lord brings into being. So Paul instructs us, as he instructed the Corinthians: "In one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit" (1 Cor 12:13). Indeed, "God has so composed the body as to give greater honor to a part that lacks it, so that there may be no discord in the body, but that the members may have the same concern for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together" (1 Cor 12:24-26).

The evangelical challenge of living this vision of communion is as pressing and demanding in the 21st century as it was in the first century! For sin, of course, intrudes. And sin does not only assault God, it always corrodes human

community and communion. Sin rends the body of Christ. Hence the importance of sacramental confession in the Church, as Pope Francis continually teaches both by word and example.

The daily struggle for fidelity and transformation is movingly depicted by St Paul in the fifth chapter of his Letter to the Galatians. The desires of the "flesh" and those of the "spirit" are combatants, and at stake are the very selves we are becoming. It is clear here that "flesh" does not refer only to sexual transgressions, but even more to the hardened heart that spews forth rivalry, jealousy, envy, and hate. The guidance of the Spirit, by contrast, produces a generous harvest of love, joy, and peace — all of which promote and nourish the building up of the body of Christ.

The author



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Summarizing the new life in the Spirit, Paul declares: "The whole law is fulfilled in one saying: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself'. But then, in a *cri du coeur*, he warns the Galatians and us: "if you go on biting and devouring one another, beware that you are not consumed by one another" (Gal 5:14, 15). One hears in these words the depiction of a demonic anti-Eucharist. For just as the true Eucharist unites and nourishes the body of Christ which is the Church; so the dissension of Christians divides and poisons the body.

It may appear that relatively little has been said regarding an approach to valorizing the role of women in the Church and incorporating genuine feminine sensibilities. Certainly other reflections in this series have offered more practical suggestions and approaches. But it has been my contention that precisely to do so at the requisite depth entails recovering the specific newness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and of the Church which is born from the side of the Crucified. Such recovery is all the more urgent in a culture that not only has forgotten its Christian roots, but gives evidence of a frenzied desire to tear out those roots.

Pope Francis, drawing upon his Ignatian heritage, has highlighted time and again the indispensable role of spiritual discernment in the Church. Long before Ignatius Loyola, however, the Apostle Paul insisted on the need for Christians to exercise discernment so as not to accommodate to the values of the world that are antithetical to the Gospel (that "worldly spirituality" that Pope Francis warns against).

Paul wrote to Christians in Rome: "I appeal to you brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your minds that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect" (Rom 12:1, 2).

Thus as we proceed to fashion a more inclusive theology, it is crucial that our criteria for discernment be based on values that are evangelical and not mundane. For, as in the days of Irenaeus so today, Christians confront a recrudescent Gnosticism that, despite its trumpeting of "diversity" and "difference", actually subverts the fundamental distinction between man and woman who together comprise the image of God. This contemporary gnosticism reflects all too faithfully the ideology and imperatives of late capitalist society. Here persons are often reduced to interchangeable functionaries whose sole purpose is the service of Mammon.

The Gnostic vision, in its manifold guises, is one of androgynous fusion, whereas the Christian *novum*



Detail of "The Pontorno Sisters" by Felice Casarati (1937)

Pope Francis on women in society and the Church

Not guests but leaders

It is important to study "criteria and new methods in order that women may not feel like guests, but full participants in the various spheres of society and Church life". Pope Francis said this to members of the Pontifical Council for Culture, whom he received in audience on Saturday, 7 February, in the Consistory Hall at the end of their Plenary Assembly dedicated to the theme "Feminine cultures: equality and difference". The following is a translation of the Holy Father's address, which was delivered in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am pleased to welcome you at the end of your Plenary Assembly, which you devoted to reflection and research on the theme "Feminine cultures: equality and difference". I thank Cardinal Ravasi for his address on behalf of all of you. I would like to express my appreciation in particular to the women present, but also to all those — and I know there are many — who have contributed in many ways to accomplishing this work.

The topic that you chose is very close to my heart, and on many previous occasions I have been able to touch on it and call for it to be examined more deeply. It entails studying criteria and new methods in order that women may not feel like guests, but full participants in the various spheres of society and Church life. The Church is woman, *she* the Church, not *he* the Church. This challenge can no longer be deferred. I say this to Pastors of Christian communities, here representing the Universal Church, but also to lay women and men committed in different ways in culture, in education, in the economy, in politics, in the world of work, in families, in religious institutions.

The order of the themes you planned to develop in the work of these days — work which will certainly continue in the future as well — allows me to indicate an itinerary, to offer you a few guidelines for developing this work throughout the world, in the heart of all cultures, in dialogue with various religious confessions.

The first theme is: *Between equality and difference: finding equilibrium*. A harmonious equilibrium, not simply balanced. This aspect should not be addressed ideologically, because the

"lens" of ideology obstructs a clear vision of reality. The equality and difference of women — like men's — are perceived better from the perspective of *with* [inclusion], of relationships, rather than *against* [exclusion]. For quite some time, at least in western societies, the model of woman's *social subordination* to man has been surpassed; it is, however, an age-old model that has never completely exhausted its negative effect. We have even overcome a second model, that of pure and simple *parity*, applied mechanically, and of absolute *equality*. And thus a new paradigm has emerged, that of *reciprocity*, in equivalence and difference. The relationship man/woman must therefore recognize that both are necessary inasmuch as yes, they possess an identical nature, but each with its own modality. One is necessary for the other, and vice versa, for they truly complete the fullness of the person.

The second theme is: *"generativity" as a symbolic code*. It directs an intense gaze upon all mothers, and broadens the horizon of the transmission and protection of life — not limited to the biological sphere — which can be summarized with four phrases: *desire, bring into the world, care for and let go*.

In this ambit, I note and I encourage the contribution of so many women who work within the family, in the areas of teaching the faith, pastoral work, schooling, but also in social, cultural and economic structures. You women know how to embody the tender face of God, his mercy, which is translated into a willingness to give time rather than to occupy space, to welcome rather than to exclude. In this sense, I like to describe the feminine dimension of the Church as the welcoming womb which regenerates life.

The third theme, the *female body in culture and biology*, reminds us of the beauty and harmony of the body which God gave to woman, but also of the painful wounds inflicted upon her, at times with brutal violence, for simply being woman. A symbol of life, the female body is also, unfortunately, often assaulted and disfigured by those who should take care of her and be life partners.

The many forms of slavery, of prostitution, of mutilation of the female body, require us to set to work to de-

feat these forms of degradation which reduce it to purely an object to be sold on the various markets. I would like to call attention, in this context, to the plight of so many poor women, forced to live in dangerous conditions, exploited, relegated to the margins of society and rendered victims of a throwaway culture.

The fourth theme: *Women and religion: flee or seek to participate in the life of the Church?* Here believers are called upon in a particular way. I am convinced that it is urgent to offer places to women in the life of the Church and to welcome them, bearing in mind the particular and transformed cultural and social sensitivities. Therefore, a more widespread and incisive presence of women in communities is desirable, in order that we may see many women involved in pastoral responsibilities, in the accompaniment of people, families and groups, as well as in theological reflection.

The irreplaceable role of the woman in the family cannot be forgotten. The qualities of delicacy, particular sensitivity and tenderness, which enriches the feminine soul, represent not only a genuine strength for the life of the family, to illuminate a climate of serenity and harmony, but also a reality without which the human vocation would be unattainable.

It is, moreover, a matter of encouraging and fostering the effective presence of women in many areas of the *public sphere*, in the world of work and in places where important decisions are made, and at the same time maintaining their presence and preferential and wholly special attention in and for the family. Women must not be left to carry this weight on their own and to make decisions, but all institutions, including the ecclesial community, are called to guarantee the freedom of choice of women, so they may have the opportunity to assume social and ecclesial responsibilities, in a manner in harmony with family life.

Dear friends, I encourage you to pursue this commitment, which I entrust to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the true and sublime example of woman and mother. And please, I ask you to pray for me, and I bless you from my heart. Thank you.

The Pope to the Pontifical Council for the Laity

In the heart of the city

Opportunity and risk in urban spaces

"It seems that every city, even those that appear to be more prosperous and ordered, have the capacity of generating within themselves a dark 'non-city'". On Saturday, 7 February, the Holy Father received the members of the Pontifical Council for the Laity at the conclusion of their Plenary Assembly, underlining that "in the face of this sad scenario we should always remind ourselves that God has not abandoned the city; He lives in the city". The following is a translation of the Pope's address which was given in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

With joy I welcome the Pontifical Council for the Laity gathered for this Plenary Assembly. I thank the Cardinal President for his words to me.

The time since your last Plenary has been a busy period, full of apostolic initiatives. In them you have adopted the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* as the programmatic text and compass to guide your reflection and your work. The year just begun will mark a very important date: the 50th anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Council. In this regard, I know that



Floriano Bodini, "Our Father" (1957)

you are appropriately preparing to commemorate the publication of the Decree on the Lay Apostolate *Apostolicam Actuositatem*. I encourage this initiative, which looks not only to the past but to the present and the future of the Church.

The theme you have chosen for this Plenary Assembly, *Encountering*

God in the Heart of the City, is in keeping with *Evangelii Gaudium's* call to tackle the "challenges from urban cultures" (nn. 71-75). The phenomenon of urbanization has now assumed a global dimension: more than half of the men and women of the planet live in cities. And the urban context has a strong impact on the mentality, culture, lifestyles, interpersonal relations, and the religiosity of people. In this context, so varied and complex, the Church is no longer the sole "generator of meaning" and Christians are absorbing "the languages, symbols, messages and paradigms which propose new approaches to life, often in contrast with the Gospel" (*ibid.*, n. 73). The cities present great opportunities and great risks: they can be magnificent areas of freedom and human fulfillment, but also of terrible areas of dehumanization and of unhappiness. It seems that every city, even those that appear to be more prosperous and ordered, have the capacity of generating within themselves a dark "non-city". It seems that along with citizens also non-citizens exist: invisible people, lacking means and human warmth; who live in "non-places", living "non-relationships". No one looks at these individuals, pays attention or takes an interest in them. They are not just "anonymous", they are "non-people". And this is terrible.

But in the face of this sad scenario we should always remember that God has not abandoned the city; He lives in the city. The theme your Plenary has chosen to underline is that it is possible to meet God in the heart of the city. This is very beautiful. Yes, God continues to be present even in our cities that are frantic and distracted! And so it is necessary not to be overcome by pessimism and defeatism, but to have a *gaze of faith on our cities*, a contemplative gaze which sees God dwelling in the homes, in the streets and squares (cf. *ibid.* n. 71). And God is never absent from the city because He is never absent from the man's heart! In fact, "God's presence accompanies the sincere efforts of individuals and groups to find encouragement and meaning in their lives" (*ibid.*). The Church wants to be at the service of this sincere quest that is in so many hearts and that opens them to God. The lay faithful, above all, are called to go out without fear to meet the men and women in cities: in daily activities, at work, as single people or as families, together with the parish or in the ecclesial movements they belong to, and break down the wall of anonymity and indifference that often reigns in cities. It is about having the courage to take the first step to approach others, to be apostles of the neighbourhood.

By becoming joyful proclaimers of the Gospel to their fellow citizens, the lay faithful discover that there

are many hearts that the Holy Spirit has already prepared to receive their witness, their closeness and their attention. In the city there is often a more fertile ground for apostolate than many imagine. It is important therefore to attend to the *formation of the laity*: to educate them to have that gaze of faith, full of hope, to know how to see the city through God's eyes, to see the city through God's eyes, to encourage them to live the Gospel, knowing that every life lived in a Christian way always has a strong social impact. At the same time, it is necessary to nourish in them the desire to witness, so that they can give to others with love the gift of faith they have received, accompanying with affection their brothers and sisters who are taking the first steps in the life of faith. In a word: the laity are called to live a humble leadership in the Church and to become a *leaven of Christian life for the whole city*.

Furthermore, it is important that, in this renewed missionary outreach to the city, the lay faithful, in communion with their Pastors, are able to convey the heart of the Gospel,



not its "appendages". Even the then-Archbishop Montini, to the people involved in the great city mission of Milan, spoke of the "search for the essential", and invited people themselves to be "essential", that is, true, genuine, and to live from what truly counts (cf. *Discorsi e scritti milanesi 1954-1963*, Istituto Paolo VI, Brescia-Roma, 1997-1998, p. 1483). In this way alone can the liberating message of the love of God and the salvation that Christ offers be proposed in its strength, beauty and simplicity. One can only move forward in this way, with an attitude of respect for people; this is offering the essence of the Gospel.

I entrust your work and your projects to the maternal protection of the Virgin Mary, a pilgrim together with her Son in proclaiming the Gospel, from village to village, from city to city, and I wholeheartedly impart my Blessing to all of you and your loved ones. And please, do not forget to pray for me. Thank you.

Transformation

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

is that of communion, of distinct persons in relation, each bringing unique talents and gifts. Here, again, Paul teaches compellingly: "as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given us" (Rom 12:4-6).

As we move forward to a more inclusive Church, one that values, more than in the past, the unique gifts of each, lay people and ordained alike must be rooted in that "spirituality of communion" which Saint John Paul II evoked in *Novo Millennio Ineunte*. We do well to engrave these wise words of the John Paul II on our minds and hearts:

Before making practical plans, we need to *promote a spirituality of communion*, making it the guiding principle of education wherever individuals and Christians are formed, wherever ministers of the altar, consecrated persons, and pastoral workers are trained, wherever families and communities are being built up. A spirituality of communion indicates above all the heart's contemplation of the mystery of

the Trinity dwelling in us, and whose light we must also be able to see shining on the face of the brothers and sisters around us. A spirituality of communion also means an ability to think of our brothers and sisters in faith within the profound unity of the Mystical Body, and therefore as "those who are a part of me". This makes us able to share their joys and sufferings, to sense their desires and attend to their needs, to offer them deep and genuine friendship. A spirituality of communion implies also the ability to see what is positive in others, to welcome it and prize it as a gift from God: not only as a gift for the brother or sister who has received it directly, but also as a "gift for me". A spirituality of communion means, finally, to know how to "make room" for our brothers and sisters, bearing "each other's burdens" (Gal 6:2) and resisting the selfish temptations which constantly beset us and provoke competition, careerism, distrust and jealousy. Let us have no illusions: unless we follow this spiritual path, external structures of communion will serve very little purpose. They would become mechanisms without a soul, "masks" of communion rather than its means of expression and growth (n. 43).

The Pontiff to Italian prefects

Authority means service

On Friday morning, 6 February, in the Clementine Hall, the Pope received in audience the prefects of various Italian cities. He reminded them that the "specific exercise of authority" to which they are called is "rooted in obedience" and has "the single noble purpose of service". The following is a translation of the Holy Father's address which was given in Italian.

Mr Minister,
Distinguished Prefects,

I am pleased to welcome all of you, who have the delicate task of manifesting throughout the territory of Italy the authority of the Central Government, particularly with regard to enforcing order and public safety. I thank the Hon. Minister of the Interior for his courteous words to me on your behalf.

Your institution, through its diverse competencies, its long history of experience and widespread presence in the local communities, is an important factor of cohesion – as the Minister rightly mentioned –, coordinating the local administrative bodies as required by the centre. At the same time under appropriate conditions it reports situations of particular difficulty or marginality to the central authorities, giving voice to opinions that would otherwise risk passing unheard.

It is a service which entails tenacious dedication to duty, an in-depth knowledge of the issues, combined with the necessary flexibility to address the countless practical cases that come up, each of which is singular.

In these years characterized by the phenomenon of migration, linked to

the escalation of violent conflicts in the world and their tragic consequences for the people and the economies of so many countries, prefectorial surveillance demands particular sensitivity with regard to immigration. The exercise of this duty entails the need to identify in the daily management of situations, often urgent, the correct application of norms, to guarantee, along with the correct observance of the law and the other provisions in force, scrupulous respect for the fundamental rights of every human being. And here, echoing what the Minister said, I would like to express profound gratitude to you for the efforts which you Prefects make in coordinating the reception of thousands of men, women and children arriving on Italy's shores.

On this subject, as on many others, fruitful cooperation among Prefectures, Dioceses and parishes is of significant help. This cooperation, while respecting the individual competencies, deserves to be strengthened and enhanced. The Church, being a divine and human entity, works within society by

serving people on the basis of Christ's teaching and, wishing to carry out her educational and charitable mission in sincere cooperation with the State institutions for the advancement of man and the good of the country, is pleased to find in the Prefectures one of the areas in which this synergy actually happens for the good of all citizens.

On the other hand, to ensure the full effectiveness of your task of linking, listening and searching for solutions suited to the circumstances, in harmony with other local and central institutions, a specific exercise of authority is essential, one rooted in obedience and has the single noble purpose of service.

Obedience of the law and the criteria of humanity which inform it and loyalty to institutions constitute the indispensable framework in which your service is carried out. This attitude favours the acquisition of that specific *habitus* which renders a person able to assume great responsibilities. The crisis of authority that our society is experiencing in different sectors, public as well as private, with far-reaching con-

sequences, especially with regard to educating the young generations, in fact has among its causes the very lack of this fundamental disposition of obedience, of listening, of patience.

The exercise of authority, moreover, always aims at achieving the common good, finding deepest success and *raison d'être* and its effective success precisely in placing it at the service of those to whom its power is directed, in imitation of the Lord Jesus, who came among us as One who serves (cf. Lk 22:27).

The more the citizens see that the public administration generously tries to respond to their needs and protect their rights, the more disposed they will be to observe its recommendations in an active and orderly spirit of cooperation and respect.

Therefore, you are called to make available your professionalism and your humanity, your knowledge and your prudence, without discouragement or pessimism, knowing, however, that you are not faced with abstract issues, but with the actual faces of men and women with their problems and their hopes, which in these years of uncertainty and economic difficulty are even more urgent. I am certain that your sense of duty and awareness of the importance of your role will help you to address your future tasks in the best way, with dedication and in a spirit of sacrifice.

With these wishes, as I invoke upon you the intercession of your Patron St Ambrose, I ask you to please pray for me and I bless you from my heart. Thank you.



VATICAN BULLETIN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

and as archdean of the Third Archdeaconry.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Elio Greselin, S.C.I., of Lichinga, Mozambique. It was presented in accord with can. 401 § 1 of the Code of Canon Law (8 Feb.).

The Holy Father appointed Fr Atanásio Amisse Canira as Bishop of Lichinga, Mozambique. Until now he has been Vicar General of Nacala and National Director of P.P.O.O.M.M (8 Feb.).

Bishop-elect Canira, 52, was born in Mossoril, Mozambique. He was ordained a priest on 12 December 1993. He was the first priest of the Diocese of Nacala. He holds a licence in moral theology. He has served in parish ministry and as spiritual director of the St Pius X Major Interdiocesan Seminary of Theology in Maputo; vicar general and as episcopal vicar for the family.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Alberto Ricardo da Silva of Dili, East Timor. It was

presented in accord with can. 401 § 2 of the Code of Canon Law (8 Feb.).

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Józef Górzyński as Coadjutor Archbishop of Warmia, Poland. Until now he has been titular Bishop of Leontini and Auxiliary of the Archdiocese of Warsaw (10 Feb.).

Archbishop Górzyński, 55, was born in Żelechów, Poland. He was ordained a priest on 2 June 1985. He was ordained a bishop on 7 December 2013, subsequent to his appointment as Auxiliary Bishop of Warsaw.

CAUSES OF SAINTS

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Luigi Marrucci of Civitavecchia-Tarquini as a Member of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints (7 Feb.).

PONTIFICAL SWISS GUARD

The Holy Father appointed Lt. Colonel Christoph Graf, raising

him to the rank of colonel, as Commandant of the Pontifical Swiss Guard (7 Feb.).

SPECIAL ENVOY

The Holy Father appointed Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, Archbishop emeritus of Westminster, Great Britain, as his Special Envoy to the solemn celebrations in honour of the fourth centenary of the martyrdom of St John Ogilvie, SJ, to be

held in Glasgow on 9-10 March 2015 (7 Feb.).

START OF MISSION

On 10 December 2014, Archbishop Martin Krebs, titular Archbishop of Taborenta, began his mission as Apostolic Nuncio in Palau with the presentation of his Letters of Credence to H.E. Mr Tommy E. Remengesau, Jr, President of the Republic.

Christoph Graf Commandant of the Swiss Guard

Christoph Graf is the 35th Commandant of the Pontifical Swiss Guard Corps. Until now he has served as Vice Commandant and, as such, he was chief of staff of the Guard and liaison officer with other armed forces. He was originally from Pfaffnau in the Canton of Lucern, where he was born on 5 September 1961. He entered his service as a halberdier on 2 March 1987. He has served as an instructor and as sergeant major and has been in charge of planning and organizing the Guard's service. As an official, he led one of the Guard's three sections, before being raised to the rank of Vice Commandant. He is married and has two children.

Morning Mass at the Domus Sanctae Marthae

Thursday, 5 February

I will cure you

The Church's true mission is not to develop an efficient aid mechanism, modelled after an NGO. The profile of an apostle – who in simplicity and poverty proclaims the Gospel with the one true power that comes from God – is recognized instead in the plain words that Jesus recommends to the disciples returning with joy from their mission: “we are unworthy servants”. And thus, at Mass at Santa Marta on Thursday the Pope reaffirmed that the true mission of the Church is “healing the wounds of the heart, opening doors, forgiving all, liberating, and saying that God is good, forgives all, is Father, God is gentle and always waits for us”.

In the passage from the Gospel according to Mark (6:7-13) offered in today's liturgy, the Pontiff began, “we heard that Jesus called his disciples” and sent them “to take the Gospel: it is He who calls”. The Gospel recounts that He called them to Him, sent them and gave them power. In the vocation of the disciples, the Lord gives power: the power to cast out impure spirits, to liberate, to heal. This is the power that Jesus gives”. Indeed, He “does not give the power to manoeuvre or to build large companies”; but “the power, the same power that He had, the power that He received from the Father, he conveys to them”. And He does so with “plain advice: go into the community, but do not take anything for the journey except a staff, no bread, no bag, no money... in poverty!”.

The Gospel, Francis stated, “is so very rich and so powerful that it does not need to create large firms, big companies, in order to be proclaimed”. For the Gospel “should be proclaimed in poverty, and a real pastor is one who goes like Jesus: poor, to proclaim the Gospel, with that power”. And “when the Gospel is safeguarded with this simplicity, with this poverty, one clearly sees that salvation is not a theology of prosperity” but rather “a gift, the same gift that Jesus had received in order to give”.

Francis again proposed “that most beautiful scene in the Synagogue, when Jesus introduces Himself: ‘I was sent to bring salvation, to bring glad tidings to the poor, liberation to the incarcerated, to the blind the gift of sight. Liberation to all those who are oppressed and to proclaim the year of grace, the year of joy’. This”, the Pope said, is precisely “the aim of the Gospel message, without many curious, worldly things”. This is how Jesus conveys it.

And what, the Pope asked, does Jesus “command” the disciples to do, “what is his pastoral plan?”. It is simply to “cure, heal, raise, liberate, cast out demons: this is the simple

plan”. It coincides, Francis pointed out, with “the mission of the Church: the Church which heals, which cures”. Such that, he recalled, “a few times I have spoken of the Church as a field hospital: it's true! How many wounded there are, how many wounded! How many people who need their wounds to be healed!”.

Thus, the Pope continued, “this is the Church's mission: healing the wounds of the heart, opening doors, liberating, and saying that God is good, that God forgives all, that God is Father, that God is gentle, that God always waits for us”.

Referring to the Gospel of Luke (10:17-20), the Pontiff remarked that “the disciples returned with joy” from their mission, because “they didn't believe they would have succeeded”. And “they said to the Lord: ‘Lord, even the demons left!’”. They were “joyful because this power of Jesus, employed with simplicity, with poverty, with love, produced a good result”.

The very phrase that Jesus addressed to the joyful disciples, according to the Gospel, “explains everything”. They recounted: “We did this, and this, and this, and this...”. Thus, after listening to them, Jesus closes his eyes and says: “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven”. The words reveal “the struggle of the Church: it's true, we should get help and create aid organizations, for the Lord gives us gifts for this”; but, the Pope warned, “when we forget this mission, forget about poverty, forget apostolic zeal and put our hope in these means, the Church slowly lapses into an NGO and becomes a fine organization: powerful but not evangelical, because that spirit is lacking, that poverty, that healing power”.

There is more: on their return, Jesus brings the disciples with Him “to rest a little, to have a day in the country, to have sandwiches and soft drinks”. The Lord wants “to spend a little time together to celebrate”. And together they talk about the mission they have just done. But Jesus doesn't tell them: “You're great, eh! Now let's plan things better for the next excursion!”. He limits Himself to recommending: “When you have done all that is commanded you, say, We are unworthy servants” (Lk 17:10).

In these words, Francis remarked, the Lord described the profile of an apostle. Indeed, “what would be the greatest praise for an apostle?”. The answer: “He was a labourer for the Kingdom, he was a worker for the Kingdom”. Indeed, “this is the highest praise, because he goes on Jesus' path of proclamation, he goes to heal, to safeguard, to proclaim these glad tidings and this year of grace. To enable the people to find the Father once again, to make peace in the peoples' hearts”.

The Pope concluded with an invitation to read this Gospel passage, emphasizing “the most important things to Jesus, in proclaiming the Gospel: they are these, these small virtues”. And “then it is He, it is the Holy Spirit who does it all”.

Friday, 6 February

The great one's darkest hour

On Friday during Mass at Santa Marta, Pope Francis spoke about John the Baptist: the man and the way. The way that John indicated was that of Jesus, to which we too are all called at the moment of truth.

The Pope began his reflection speaking about “the great John” who, according to Jesus, was “the greatest man born of woman”. The day's passage from Mark's Gospel (6:14-29) speaks about the imprisonment and martyrdom of John, who was a “man faithful to his mission; a man who suffered many temptations” and “never, ever betrayed his vocation”. He was a faithful man “of great authority, respected by everyone: the great one of that time”.

Then Pope Francis paused to analyze the character of John the Baptist: “What came out of his mouth was just. His heart was just”. He was so great that “Jesus would say that ‘Elijah returned to clean house, to prepare the way’”. And John “was aware that his duty was simply to proclaim: to proclaim the coming of the Messiah. He was aware”, reflecting on what St Augustine said, “that he was only the voice, the Word was another”. And when “he was tempted to ‘steal’ this truth, he remained just: ‘It is not me, He is coming after me: I am the servant; I am the manservant; I am the one who opens the

doors, in order that He may come”.

The Pontiff thus introduced the concept of ‘the way’, because, he recalled: “John is the forerunner: the forerunner not only of the Lord's entry into public life, but of the entire life of the Lord”. The Baptist “goes forth on the Lord's path; bears witness of the Lord not only by indicating – ‘He is the one!’ – but also leading life to the end as the Lord did”. Through his martyrdom, he became the “forerunner of the life and death of Jesus Christ”.

The Pope continued to reflect on these parallel paths along which “the great one” suffers “so many trials and becomes small, so very small until scorned”. John, like Jesus, “abases himself, he knows the way of abasement. John with all that authority, thinking of his life, comparing it with that of Jesus, tells the people who He is, how His life will be: ‘It is fitting that He grow, however I must become small’”. And this, the Pope underscored, is “John's life: to become small before Christ, so that Christ may grow”. It is “the life of the servant who makes room, makes way for the Lord to come”.

John's life “was not easy”. Indeed, “when Jesus began his public life”, he was “close to the Essenes, that is to the observers of the law, but also of prayers, of penance”. Thus, at a certain point, during the period that John was incarcerated, “he suffered the trial of darkness, of his soul's darkest hour”. And that scene, Francis commented, “is moving: the great one, the greatest one sent two disciples to Jesus, to ask Him: ‘John asks you: Are you He who is to come or shall we look for another?’”. Thus, along John's path appeared “the darkness of mistake, the darkness of life burnt out in error. And for him, this was a cross”.

To John's question “Jesus responds with the words of Isaiah”. The Baptist “understands, but his heart remains in darkness”. Nevertheless, John agrees to the requests of the king “who enjoys listening to him, and who enjoys an adulterous life”. John “almost becomes a preacher of the court, of this confused king”. But “he humiliated himself” because he “thought to convert this man”.

In the end, the Pope said, “after this purification, after this continuous descent into annihilation, leading to the annihilation of Jesus, his life ends”. That confused king “is able to make a decision, but not because his heart is converted”; but rather “because wine gives him courage”.

And thus John's life is ended “under the authority of a mediocre, drunken and corrupt king, because of a dancer's whim and because of the vindictive hatred of an adulterous woman”. Thus “the great one meets his end, the greatest man born of woman”, Francis stated. He then shared: “When I read this passage, I am moved”. And he added a thought, useful for the spiritual life of every Christian: “I think about two things: first, I think about our martyrs, today's martyrs, those men,



Having faith does not mean having no difficulties, but having the strength to face them, knowing we are not alone.

(@Pontifex on 6 February)





women, children who are persecuted, hated, driven from their homes, tortured, massacred". And this, he underlined, "is not a thing of the past: this is happening today. Our martyrs meet their end under the authority of corrupt people who hate Jesus Christ". For this reason, "it will do us good to think about our martyrs. Today we think of Paul Miki, but that happened in 1600. Let us think of those of today, of 2015".

The Pontiff continued, indicating that this passage also urges us to reflect on our own life: "I too will meet my end. We all will. No one can 'buy' life. We too, willingly or unwillingly, are travelling the road of life's existential annihilation". And this, he said, impels us "to pray that this annihilation may resemble as much as possible that of Jesus Christ, his annihilation".

Francis' meditation thus came full circle: "John, the great one, who diminishes endlessly into nothingness; the martyrs, who are diminishing today, in our Church today, into nothingness; and we, who are on this road and heading towards the ground, where we will all end up". And thus the Pope's final prayer: "May the Lord illuminate us, enable us to understand this way of John, the forerunner of Jesus; the way of Jesus who teaches us how ours has to be".

Monday, 9 February

Working with God

God is always working through love and it is up to us to respond to Him with responsibility and in the spirit of reconciliation, which gives way to the Holy Spirit. Pope Francis addressed this invitation during Mass on Monday morning in the chapel of Santa Marta.

The Holy Father began his reflection by referring to a passage from Genesis (1:1-19). "Today's Liturgy of the Word leads us to think, to meditate on the works of God: God works". In fact, "Jesus Himself said: 'My Father still works, still acts, still operates; so do I!'" And in this way, the Pope pointed out that "some medieval theologians explained: first God, the Creator, creates the universe, creates the heavens, the earth, the living beings. He creates. The

work of creation". However, "creation is not the end: He continuously supports what He created, works to sustain what He created in order that it continue".

In the Gospel of Mark (6:53-56), the Pope indicated, "we see 'the other creation' of God", namely "that of Jesus who comes to 're-create' what has been ruined by sin". And "we see Jesus among the people". Indeed, Mark writes: "when they got out of the boat, immediately the people recognized him, and ran about the whole neighbourhood and began to bring sick people on their pallets to any place where they heard He was". And those who touched Him were saved". This is the "re-creation", and "the Liturgy expresses the soul of the Church in this, when the beautiful prayer is said: 'O God, that you created the universe so wondrously, but more wondrously you created redemption'". Thus, "this 'second creation' is more wondrous than the first, this second work is more wondrous".

There is then, Francis continued, "another work: the work of persevering in the faith, which Jesus says is done by the Holy Spirit: 'I will send the Paraclete and He will teach you and remind you, He will make you remember what I have said'". It is "the work of the Spirit within us, to keep the word of Jesus alive, to preserve creation, to guarantee that this creation does not die". Thus "the presence there of the Spirit, who keeps the first creation and the second alive".

In other words, "God works. He continues to work and we can ask ourselves how we should respond to this creation of God, which was born from love because He works through love". Thus, "to the 'first creation' we must respond with the responsibility the Lord gives us: 'The earth is yours, foster it; make it grow!'". For this reason, "we too have the responsibility to make the earth flourish, to make creation flourish, to safeguard it and make it flourish according to its laws: we are lords of creation, not masters". And we mustn't "take control of creation, but foster it, faithful to its laws". Indeed, "this is the first response to God's work: work to safeguard creation, to make it fruitful".

From this perspective, the Pope continued, "when we hear people hold meetings to consider how to safeguard creation, we could say:

"No, they are green!". Instead, he suggested: "they aren't green: this is Christian!". And this "is our response to God's 'first creation', it is our responsibility!". In fact, "a Christian who doesn't safeguard creation, who doesn't make it flourish, is a Christian who isn't concerned with God's work, that work born of God's love for us". And "this is the first response to the first creation: safeguard creation, make it flourish".

But, Pope Francis asked, "how do we respond to the 'second creation'?" In this regard, he said that "Paul the Apostle tells us the right word, which is the true response: 'Let yourselves reconcile with God'". This, he explained, is "that open interior attitude for going constantly on the path of inner reconciliation, of community reconciliation, because reconciliation is Christ's work". And Paul also says: "God has reconciled the world in Christ". Thus, "to the 'second creation' we say: 'Yes, we must let ourselves reconcile with the Lord'".

Francis then posed another question: "And to the work that the Holy Spirit does within us, of reminding us of Jesus' word, of explaining to us, of making us understand what Jesus said: how do we respond?". It is again "Paul who tells us" not to grieve "the Holy Spirit who is within you: be attentive, he is your guest; he is within you; he works within you! Do not grieve the Holy Spirit". And this is "in order that we believe in a personal God. God is person: He is the person of Father, the person of Son, the person of the Holy Spirit". After all, "all three are engaged in this re-creation, in this re-creation, in this perseverance in re-creation". Therefore, our response to all three is "to safeguard creation and make it flourish, to let ourselves reconcile with Jesus, with God in Jesus, in Christ, each day, and do not grieve the Holy Spirit, do not push him away: he is the guest in our heart, the One who accompanies us, who makes us grow".

In conclusion, the Pope prayed that "the Lord give us the grace to understand that He is at work; and give us the grace to respond rightly to this work of love".

Tuesday, 10 February

Two identity cards

To know our true identity we cannot be "seated Christians" but must have the "courage to always take up the journey to seek the Lord's face", because we are the "image of God". In the Mass celebrated at Santa Marta on Tuesday morning expounding on the day's First Reading – the creation narrative from the Book of Genesis (1:20 - 2:4) – Pope Francis reflected on a question essential for every person: "Who am I?".

Our "identity card", the Pope said, is found in the fact that mankind was created "in the image, in the likeness of God". But then, he added, "the question we could ask ourselves is: How can I know the image of God? How can I know what He is like in order to know what I'm like? Where can I find the

image of God?". The answer obviously cannot be found "on a computer, nor in an encyclopedia, nor in books", because "God's image is not in any catalogue". There is only one way "to find the image of God, which is my identity" and that is to journey: "If we don't take up the journey, we will never get to know the face of God".

This desire for knowledge is also found in the Old Testament. The Psalmists, Francis pointed out, "say many times: I want to see your face"; and "even Moses says this once to the Lord". But in reality "it isn't easy, because taking up the journey means letting go of many securities, many opinions about what God's image is like, and to seek it". It means, in other words, "to let God and life put us to the test. It means taking a risk, for "only in this way can we manage to know the face of God, the image of God: to take up the journey".

The Pope drew again on the Old Testament to recall that "the People of God did this, the Prophets did this". For instance, "the great Elijah: after he wins and purifies the faith of Israel, he hears the queen's threat and is afraid and doesn't know what to do. He takes up the journey. And at a certain point, he would rather die". But God "calls him, gives him food and drink and says: keep going". This is how Elijah "comes to the mount and there he finds God". His was thus "a long journey, an arduous journey, a difficult journey", but it teaches us that "those who don't take up the journey will never know the image of God, will never find the face of God". It's a lesson for all of us: "seated Christians, calm Christians" – the Pope stated – "will not know the face of God". They have the presumption to say: "God is like this, and like this...". But in reality "they do not know Him".

To journey, instead, we need to have "that restlessness, which God placed in our heart and which carries us onward to seek him". The same thing happened, the Pontiff explained, "to Job who, with his trials, began to think: what kind of God would let this happen to me?". His friends too, "after days of great silence, began to talk, to argue with him". But none of this was helpful: "with these arguments, Job did not know God". Instead, "when he allowed himself to be questioned by the Lord in the trial, he meets God". And from Job we are also able to hear "that word that will help us so much on this journey to find our identity: 'I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees thee'". And this, according to Pope Francis, is the heart of the matter: "the encounter with God" which can happen "only by taking up the journey".

Of course, he continued, "Job took up the journey cursing". He actually "had the courage to curse life and his history: 'Let the day perish wherein I was born...'. In essence, the Pope reflected, "sometimes, on the journey of life, we don't find the meaning of things". The Prophet Jeremiah had the same experience. "After being seduced by the Lord,

Cardinal Pietro Parolin's message at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean

A place of encounter and dialogue

The following is the message of Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State, to the Ninth Plenary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, held in Monaco from 2 to 4 February 2015.

Honourable Senator Francesco Maria Amoroso, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, I have the honour, on behalf of His Holiness Pope Francis, to address the following words to the Ninth Plenary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean. I am pleased to express the gratitude of the Holy See for the kind invitation to participate as an Observer at this meeting, as it has done so on previous occasions. The Holy See, for its part, welcomes the opportunity to give its support to the primary goal of this assembly of Parliamentary representatives from the Mediterranean region, namely, the promotion of political dialogue that is based on principles that are common to all traditions and cultures.

The Mediterranean region in these past few years has faced many challenges, from within and from without. These challenges are not confined within any one national border, indeed they are both transnational and transregional in character. No country can remain unaffected by conditions in other countries and, similarly, the Mediterranean region, affected by crises within, is not immune to the effects of crises in neighbouring regions, such as Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East. This is a reality that all of you already know, however, it is important to restate it to remind ourselves of the important objective of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean and why it was instituted.

Political instability in North Africa, particularly in Libya, and war and terrorism in Iraq and Syria, continue to present huge challenges to the Mediterranean region and we have all too sadly witnessed the immense cost of human suffering, particularly the countless lives lost through war and terrorism. It has also caused others to risk their lives to the merciless and unscrupulous acts of people traffickers and clandestine migration. Since the beginning of his pontificate Pope Francis has raised his concern on numerous occasions regarding this particular scourge. For example, during his recent address to the European Parliament in Strasbourg on 25 November last, in referring to the "boats landing daily on the shores of Europe ... filled with men and women who need acceptance and assistance" he called for "a united response to the question of migration" so that the Mediterranean might not "become a vast cemetery". This united response necessarily involves the co-operation of Countries from both sides of the Mediterranean to address the fundamental causes of migration and thus the Holy Father urged the adoption of "fair, courageous and realistic policies which can

assist the countries of origin in their own social and political development and in their efforts to resolve internal conflicts — the principal cause of this phenomenon" (Pope Francis, *Address to the European Parliament*, Strasbourg, 25 November 2014).

In his recent address to the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See, Pope Francis forcefully returned again to the human tragedy of people obliged to flee their homelands because of war and political strife: "One consequence of the situations of conflict ... is the flight of thousands of persons from their homeland. At times they leave not so much in search of a better future, but any future at all, since remaining at home can mean certain death. How many persons lose their lives during these cruel journeys, the victims of unscrupulous and greedy thugs?" (*Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to the members of the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See*, 12 January 2015).

The war and violence in Syria, a member country of this Assembly, which has also enveloped neighbouring countries, continue to scar the Mediterranean region, not least through the arrival of refugees who are fleeing those conflicts, but also in ways that touch on the values and principles on which the societies which share the Mediterranean region are founded. The year 2014, unfortunately, saw the ugly and evil phenomenon of Islamic extremism and terrorism strike at fundamental human rights: the right to life, religious freedom and freedom of expression. Such ideological fundamentalism knows no borders and makes victims of all, without regard to ethnicity or religious affiliation. The Holy See is particularly concerned for the survival of the Christian minorities in the Middle East,

because they and other religious groups suffer disproportionately the effects of Islamic extremism. As Pope Francis reminds us "a Middle East without Christians would be a marred and mutilated Middle East!" (*ibid.*). At the same time, however, the Holy See recognises that Muslims, too, continue to suffer at the hands of those who justify violence and butchery in the name of God.

It is regrettable that it needs to be said that violence in God's name can never be justified. However, each and every such act needs to be condemned unequivocally and for that reason Pope Francis has expressed his hope that "religious, political and intellectual leaders, especially those of the Muslim community, will condemn all fundamentalist and extremist interpretations of religion which attempt to justify such acts of violence" (*ibid.*).

For millennia the Mediterranean has been the meeting place of cultures and peoples; in earlier times the peoples of the Mediterranean saw themselves as being at the centre of the world. The challenge remains for the Mediterranean to renew itself as a place of encounter, mutual respect and peaceful coexistence. Despite "the defects and deficiencies of the present time" (*ibid.*) a brighter future is always possible through openness to others, dialogue and working for the common good. In this light, let me conclude my remarks with Pope Francis' account of his visit to Albania last September: "I experienced an eloquent sign that the culture of encounter is possible during my visit to Albania, a nation full of young people who represent hope for the future. Despite the painful events of its recent history, the country is marked by the 'peaceful coexistence and collaboration that exists

among followers of different religions', in an atmosphere of respect and mutual trust between Catholics, Orthodox and Muslims. This is an important sign that sincere faith in God makes one open to others, generates dialogue and works far the good, whereas violence is always the product of a falsification of religion, its use as a pretext for ideological schemes whose only goal is power over others" (*ibid.*).

With my sentiments of esteem and respect, I convey to you the best wishes of His Holiness Pope Francis and his hope that the discussions and reflections of this Assembly may contribute to a new culture of encounter among all the peoples of the Mediterranean region.

The Patriarch of Moscow on the persecution of Christians

"The continued persecution of Christians in several countries of the world, especially in the Middle East" is at the centre of the Church's attention. "Using violent measures, killing Christians for their confession of faith in Christ, extremists seek to physically eliminate Christianity itself, to break the existing interreligious balance". Speaking recently to the Bishops' Conference of the Russian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Kirill of Moscow spoke again about the dramatic persecution of Christians, especially in the Near East. "Hundreds of thousands of the faithful have become hostages to the extremely serious situation and have been forced to leave that region. There is a real tragedy taking place before our eyes, a real genocide of the Christian population in the lands from which the Good News spread to the whole world".

The scale of the disaster is yet to be evaluated, according to the Orthodox Primate. It is being passed over in silence by much of the mass media, he said. "The Russian Church", Kirill stated, "has given manifold help to the suffering brothers and sisters. Our calls to defend Christians is voiced at various international events and forums". He also explained that the suffering Christians of the Patriarchate of Antioch have been given all possible material support by the Russian Orthodox Church and public organizations, concluding that "Christians in the Middle East see in our Church today and in Russia a defender of their interests. And we should not forget our duty to do all that is possible to preserve the Christian presence in the Middle East".

Teachers attacked and killed in Myanmar

The army of Myanmar tortured, raped and killed 20-year-old Maran Lu Ra and 21-year-old Tangbau Hkawn Nan Tsin, volunteer Christian teachers who belonged to the Kachin Baptist Convention (KBC). The violence occurred on 19 January in the village of Shabuk-Kaungka, Mungbaw Township, northeastern Myanmar. The two women, who came from the northern State of Kachin where there is an ongoing exodus of thousands fleeing violence, were the target of the attack because of their ethnicity. The soldiers tortured and gang-raped the two Christian teachers before killing them. The girls, according to Francis Khoo Thwe of AsiaNews, had been sent by senior members of the KBC to this remote zone to teach village children. Indeed, in many areas inhabited by ethnic minorities there is a shortage of state teachers and they are replaced by volunteers who, with their tire-

less work, often belong to Christian associations. Hundreds of people gathered in prayer for a final farewell to the two victims. Eyewitnesses reported that the army had threatened the inhabitants, warning them not to spread the news. On condition of anonymity the Kachin Christian sources interviewed by AsiaNews recalled the educational efforts made by Burmese Christian denominations since the 19th century: Christian volunteers "have never refused to go into remote areas among the most marginalized people", even places involved in civil war. "Many sacrificed their lives for the mission", the sources said, "but never before had two teachers been raped and killed". Myanmar is home to more than 135 ethnic groups which have always striven for peaceful coexistence, especially with the Central Government and its ethnic Burmese majority.

To Greek Bishops on their visit 'ad limina Apostolorum'

Resolve the crisis in solidarity

Pope Francis received the members of the Bishops' Conference of Greece on Thursday morning, 5 February, on the occasion of their visit 'ad limina Apostolorum'. The Holy Father, referring to the current grave economic and financial crisis that torments Greece, pointed to the spirit of solidarity, "to which every Christian is called to testify in practice in everyday life, as it constitutes a leaven of hope". The following is a translation of the Pope's address, which was given in Italian.

Dear Brother Bishops,

I greet you all with affection on the occasion of your visit *ad limina*. This, your pilgrimage to the Tombs of the Apostles, is always a special occasion to strengthen the bonds of communion with Peter's Successor and with the entire Episcopal College throughout the world. This unity fosters among you fraternal communion: it is also indispensable for the growth of the Church in Greece, as well as for the progress of the whole of society. This holds even more true in your country which now more than ever has a greater need of dialogue among the various political and cultural components, for the protection and the advancement of the common good. Therefore, do not hesitate to encourage the people entrusted to your episcopal care to bear a courageous witness of fraternity everywhere.

This diakonia of fraternity on the one hand postulates the preservation and reinforcement of the cultural traditions and the Christian roots of Hellenic society, and on the other, asks for openness toward the cultural and spiritual values borne by numerous migrants, in the spirit of sincere welcome toward these brothers and sisters, without distinction of race, language or religious creed. Your Christian communities, by

showing that they are truly united among themselves and at the same time open to encounter and acceptance, especially with regard to the most disadvantaged, are able to make a real contribution to transforming society, in order to render it more consistent with the Gospel ideal. I am pleased to know that you are already committed to this pastoral and charitable action, especially in favour of immigrants, also illegal ones, many of whom are Catholic. I wholeheartedly encourage you to persevere with a renewed impetus to spread the Gospel, especially involving young people in this work: they are the nation's future.

In the face of the ongoing economic and financial crisis, which has stricken your country in a particularly hard way, do not tire of exhorting everyone to have confidence in the future, opposing the so-called culture of pessimism. The spirit of solidarity, to which every Christian is called to testify in practice in everyday life, constitutes a leaven of hope. It is important that you maintain constructive relations with the Authorities in your country, as well as with the various components of society, in order to spread and support an attitude of solidarity, of dialogue and also of cooperation with other European countries.

In the same spirit, I encourage you to continue interpersonal dialogue with our Orthodox brothers, in order to promote the necessary ecumenical journey, which is an essential commitment for a future of peace and spiritual fruitfulness for your entire nation.

To carry out the mission of evangelization and human advancement to which the Church in Greece is called, the presence of a generous and motivated clergy is indispensable. For this reason, I exhort you to increase, with appropriate means, the pastoral care of vocations in order to address the inadequate number of clergy. In this regard, I ask you to convey to the priests of your dioceses, many of whom are elderly, all my affection and my appreciation of their apostolic zeal in spite of the shortage of resources.

A necessary and precious contribution to the proclamation of the Gospel is offered by the Institutes of Consecrated Life, to which I invite you to pay proper attention, so they may continue their mission in your country, despite the many difficulties. I am thinking above all of the educational sphere, to which they are especially committed. With the aim of revitalizing Christian communities, you are called to en-



hance the role of the lay faithful. Their cooperation in the ministry of the Bishops and the clergy is crucial in order to face current challenges and those of the future. This means taking appropriate care of their formation, and increasing the presence of movements and ecclesial associations. When guided well by Pastors, these are appreciated everywhere for their missionary commitment and the Christian joy they spread, always working in harmony with the pastoral guidelines of the Particular Churches and well integrated in the dioceses and parishes.

The weakening of the family, due also to the process of secularization, requires that the Church continue marriage preparation programmes, without forgetting the indispensable work with young people, for their Christian formation. The elderly too, should not be far from your thoughts; many of them today are alone or neglected, because the throwaway culture is unfortunately spreading somewhat everywhere. Do not tire of underlining with your words and actions that the elderly's presence and participation in social life is crucial for a people's comprehensive journey.

Dear Brother Bishops, I would like to express my appreciation to you for the work of evangelization which, notwithstanding many difficulties, you are carrying out in Greece. The legal recognition of the Catholic Church by the competent Authorities is of the greatest importance as it helps you to look to the future with serenity, while persevering today with confident dynamism and with the enthusiasm of those who bear witness to the Lord who died and rose. I encourage you to continue striving with Gospel joy in your mission. I entrust you, the priests, the consecrated people and all the lay faithful of your dioceses to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin and, while I ask you to pray for me and for my ministry, I wholeheartedly impart the Apostolic Blessing to you.

Morning Mass at Santa Marta

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

he felt that curse: 'Why me?'. He wanted to "remain calmly seated" but instead "the Lord wanted to show him His face".

This applies to each of us: "to know our identity, to know the image of God, we must take up the journey"; we must be "restless, not calm". This is precisely what it means "to seek the face of God".

Pope Francis then referred to the passage from Mark's Gospel (7:1-13), in which "Jesus meets people who are afraid to take up the journey" and who create a sort of "caricature of God". But that "is a false identity card" because, the Pontiff explained, "these non-restless ones have calmed the restlessness of their heart: by illustrating God with commandments". But in doing so "they have forgotten God" and see only "the tradition of men". And, "when they have uncertainty, they invent or make up another commandment". Jesus says to the scribes and Pharisees who accumulate commandments: "you are 'thus making void the Word of God through your tradition which you

hand on. And many such things you do". This "is the false identity card, which we might have without taking up the journey," remaining "calm, without restlessness of heart".

In this regard the Pope highlighted a particular "curiosity": in fact the Lord "praises them but reprimands them where it hurts the most. He praises them: 'You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God, in order to keep your tradition'. But then "He reprimands them there, at the most powerful point of the commandments with one's neighbour". In fact, Jesus recalls that Moses said: "Honor your father and your mother; and He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him surely die". He continues: "but you say instead that if a man tells his father or his mother, that what I would give to help you, namely to feed you, to clothe you, to buy you medicine, 'is Corban (that is, given to God) — then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother". In doing so "they wash their hands according to the mildest commandment, the strongest one,

the only one with a promise of blessing". And so, "they are at peace, they are calm, they do not take up the journey". This then, "is the image of God that they have". In reality their journey is "in quotation marks": in other words "a journey which doesn't move, a still journey. They deny their parents, but fulfil the laws of the tradition they have made".

Concluding his reflection, the Bishop of Rome again compared the two Readings to "two identity cards". The first is "the one we all have, because the Lord made us like this"; it is "the one that tells us: take up the journey and you will know your identity, for you are the image of God, you were created in the likeness of God. Take up the journey and look for God". The other, however, reassures us: "No, relax: fulfil all these commandments and this is God. This is the face of God". The Pope then asked the Lord to "give everyone the grace of courage to always take up the journey, to seek the Lord's face, that face which we will see one day, but which we must look for here on Earth".

Francis denounces the waste of food and invokes courageous policies to overcome pollution and protect the environment

The paradox of abundance

There is food for everyone yet not everyone gets to eat

There is food for everyone, but not everyone can eat, while food continues to be wasted and thrown away: this is "the paradox of abundance" which Pope Francis denounced in a video message to

participants in a day of work dedicated to the "Expo of Ideas", which was in Milan on Saturday, 7 February. The following is a translation of the text of the video message, which was delivered in Italian.

Good evening to you all, women and men, who have gathered today to reflect on the theme: *Nourish the Planet, Energy for Life*.

On the occasion of my visit to the FAO [Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations], I recalled that, in addition to "interest in the production, availability and accessibility of foodstuffs, in climate change and in agricultural trade", which are crucial inspirational questions, "the first concern must be the individual person, who lacks daily nourishment, who has given up thinking about life, family and social relationships, and instead fights only for survival" (*Address to the FAO*, 20 November 2014).

Today, indeed, notwithstanding the proliferation of organizations and the various interventions of the international community regarding nutrition, we are experiencing what St Pope John Paul II called "the paradox of abundance". In fact, "there is food for everyone, but not everyone can eat, while waste, excessive consumption and the use of

The Earth asks for respect and "we must return it to our children improved, safeguarded, for they have loaned it to us. The attitude of safeguarding is not the exclusive duty of Christians, it is everyone's"

food for other purposes is visible before our very eyes. This is the paradox! Unfortunately, this 'paradox' persists. There are few subjects about which there are as many fallacies as there are about hunger; few topics are as likely to be manipulated by data, statistics, by national security demands, corruption, or by grim references to the economic crisis" (*ibid.*).

To overcome the temptation of fallacies – that nominalistic way of thinking which continues to go beyond reality but never touches it – to overcome this temptation, I offer you three practical approaches.

1) Move from urgencies to priorities

Direct your gaze and heart not toward the pragmatic reason of its urgency which always appears as a temporary proposal, but toward a decisive approach to resolve the structural causes of poverty. Let us remember that inequality is the root of all social ills (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 202). I would like to repeat to you what I wrote in *Evangelii Gaudium*: say 'no' to an economy of exclusion and inequality. Such an

economy kills. It cannot be that when an elderly homeless person dies of exposure it is not newsworthy, but it is news when the stock market loses two points (cf. *ibid.*, n. 53). This is the result of the laws of competition, the survival of the fittest. Take heed: here we are not facing only the logic of exploitation, but that of waste; indeed, the excluded are not only the excluded or "the 'exploited'" but the outcast, the "leftovers" (*ibid.*, n. 53).

Therefore – if we truly want to resolve the problems and not lose ourselves in fallacies – it is necessary to resolve the root of all ills, which is inequality. To do this there are several essential decisions to take: to renounce the absolute autonomy of the marketplace and of financial speculation and to act primarily on the structural causes of inequality.

2) Be witnesses of charity

"Politics, though often denigrated, remains a lofty vocation and one of the highest forms of charity, inasmuch as it seeks the common good. We need to be convinced that charity 'is the principle not only of micro-relationships (with friends, with family members or within small groups) but also of macro-relationships (social, economic and political ones)" (*ibid.*, n. 205).

Where then, should the starting point be for a healthy economic policy? To what is a sincere politician committed? What are the pillars of someone called to public administration? The answer is specific: the dignity of the human being and the common good. Unfortunately, however, these two pillars, which ought to shape all economic policies, often "seem to be a mere addendum imported from without in order to fill out a political discourse

lacking in perspectives or plans for true and integral development" (*ibid.*, n. 203). Please be courageous and do not be afraid, in shaping economic policy, to be challenged by a greater meaning in life so you may be enabled "truly to serve the common good" and give you the strength to "increase the goods of this world and to make them more accessible to all" (*ibid.*).

3) Be guardians, not masters of the Earth

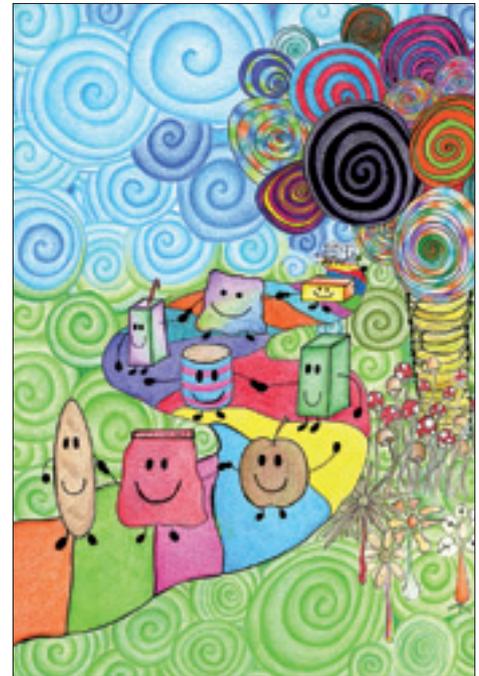
I recall again, as I did previously at the FAO, a phrase I heard from an elderly farmer, many years ago: "God always forgives offences and abuses; God always forgives. Men forgive at times; but the Earth never forgives!" Protect our Sister Earth, our Mother Earth, so that she does not react with destruction" (*Address to the FAO*, 20 November 2014).

With regard to the Earth's goods we are called "not to lose sight of the origin or purpose of these goods, so as to bring about a world of fairness and solidarity" (*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, n. 174). The Earth was entrusted to us in order that it be mother for us, capable of giving to each one what is necessary to live. I once heard something beautiful: the Earth is not an inheritance that we receive from our parents, but a loan that our children give to us, in order that we safeguard it and make it

flourish and return it to them. The Earth is generous and holds back nothing from those who safeguard it. The Earth, which is mother of all, asks for respect and not violence, or worse yet, arrogance from masters. We must return it to our children improved, safeguarded, for they have loaned it to us. The attitude of safeguarding is not the exclusive duty of Christians, it is everyone's. I entrust to you what I said during the Mass for the beginning of my ministry as Bishop of Rome: "Please, I would like to ask all those who have positions of responsibility in economic, political and social life, and all men and women of goodwill: let us be 'protectors' of creation, protectors of God's plan inscribed in nature, protectors of one another and of the environment. Let us not allow omens of destruction and death to accompany the advance of this world! But to be 'protectors', we also have to keep watch over ourselves! [...] We must not be afraid of goodness or even tenderness!". Safeguard the Earth not only with goodwill, but also with tenderness.

Hence, these are the three approaches I offer you in order to overcome the temptations of fallacies, of nominalism, of those who seek to do something but without the concreteness of life. Choose to begin with the priority: the dignity of the person; to be men and women witnesses of charity; to be unafraid to safeguard the Earth which is the mother of all.

I ask you all to pray for me: I need it. And I invoke God's blessing upon you. Thank you.



A drawing by Elena Pinelli used as part of the campaign against food waste

