

# L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO

WEEKLY EDITION  IN ENGLISH*Unicuique suum Non praevalerunt*

Forty-eighth year, number 10 (2386)

Vatican City

Friday, 6 March 2015

At the General Audience Pope Francis speaks of the importance of grandparents and their difficult situation today

## We are the elderly

*"Attention to the elderly is what makes the difference in a civilization": the catechesis on Wednesday, 4 March, at the General Audience in St Peter's Square was dedicated to the elderly. Pope Francis chose to focus this week on the problems in today's throw-away culture that threatens the dignity of our grandparents, aunts and uncles. The following is a translation of the Pope's catechesis which was delivered in Italian.*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,  
Good Morning,

Today's catechesis and next Wednesday's will be dedicated to the elderly, who in the family are the *grandparents, aunts and uncles*. Today we will reflect on the current problematic condition of the elderly, and next time, that is, next Wednesday, on a more positive note, on the vocation pertaining to this stage of life.

Thanks to the progress of medicine life-spans have increased: but society has not "expanded" to life! The number of elderly has multiplied, but our societies are not organized well enough to make room for them, with proper respect and practical consideration for their frailty and their dignity. While we are young, we are led to ignore old age, as if it were a disease to keep away from; then when we become old, especially if we are poor, if we are sick and alone, we experience the shortcomings of a society programmed for efficiency, which consequently ignores its elderly. And the elderly are a wealth not to be ignored.

Benedict XVI, visiting a home for the elderly, used clear and prophetic

At the Angelus  
Happiness  
after the Cross



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Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller, "The request of the child" (1860)

words, saying in this way: "The quality of a society, I mean of a civilization, is also judged by how it treats elderly people and by the place it gives them in community life" (12 November 2012). It's true, attention to the elderly makes the difference in a civilization. Is there attention to the elderly in a civilization? Is there room for the elderly? This civilization will move forward if it knows how to respect wisdom, the wisdom of the elderly. In a civilization in which there is no room for the elderly or where they are thrown away because they create problems, this society carries with it the virus of death.

In the West, scientists present the current century as *the aging century*: children are diminishing, the elderly are increasing. This imbalance challenges us, indeed, it is a great challenge for contemporary society. Yet a culture of profit insists on casting off the old like a "weight". Not only do they not produce – this culture thinks – but they are a burden: in short, what is the outcome of thinking like this? They are thrown away. It's brutal to see how the elderly are thrown away, it is a brutal thing, it is a sin! No one dares to say it openly, but it's done! There is something vile in this *adherence to*

*the throw-away culture*. But we are accustomed to throwing people away. We want to remove our growing fear of weakness and vulnerability; but by doing so we increase in the elderly the anxiety of being poorly tolerated and neglected.

During my ministry in Buenos Aires I was in direct contact with this reality and its problems: "The

elderly are abandoned, and not only in material instability. They are abandoned out of a selfish incapacity to accept their limitations that reflect our own limitations, because of the numerous difficulties that must be overcome in order to survive in a society that does not allow them to participate, to have their say, or be referents in the consumer model of 'only the young can be useful and enjoy'. These elderly persons throughout society ought to be a reservoir of wisdom for our people. The elderly are the reservoir of wisdom for our people! How easily the conscience falls dormant when there is no love!" (*Solo l'amore ci può salvare*, Vatican City, 2013, p. 83).

And it happens like that. I remember, when I was visiting a retirement home, I spoke with each person and I frequently heard this: "How are you? And your children? Well, well. How many do you have? Many. And do they come to visit you? Oh sure, yes, always, yes, they come. When was the last time they came?" I remember an elderly woman who said to me: "Mmm, for Christmas". It was August! Eight months without being visited by her

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Italian cooperatives must commit to an economy of honesty

### When one plus one makes three

"Christianity has marvellous strength". Using the words of Leo XIII, the Pope called the Confederation of Italian Cooperatives to action, asking them to strive for globalized solidarity. Francis met with the 6,000 members in the Paul VI Hall on Saturday, 28 February.

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North African Bishop's *ad limina*

### The antidote to violence

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Cardinal-Archbishop of Addis Ababa

### Living in peace

Cardinal-Archbishop of Yangon

### A rainbow nation

NICOLA GORI ON PAGE 4

L'Osservatore Romano's collaborators in India

### To our readers in Australia

We are happy to announce that as of 1 March, the Carmel International Publishing House (CIPH) in Kerala, India, assumed responsibility for the printing and distribution of our edition in Australia and other islands in Oceania. CIPH began its collaboration with *L'Osservatore Romano* in 2002 by publishing the English Edition in India. In 2008, they began translating the English Edition into Malayalam, constituting the first non-latin script edition of *L'Osservatore Romano*.

For more information or to subscribe, contact CIPH: [loroccania@car-melpublications.com](mailto:loroccania@car-melpublications.com); and visit their website: [www.carmelpublications.com](http://www.carmelpublications.com).

Josephine Quintavalle and reproductive ethics in the UK

### Feminism can only be pro-life

LAURA GOTTI TEDESCHI ON PAGE 6/7

# VATICAN BULLETIN

## AUDIENCE

*Saturday, 28 February*

Cardinal Crescenzo Sepe, Archbishop of Naples, Italy

*Monday, 2 March*

Members of the Regional Bishops' Conference of North Africa (CERNA), on a visit *ad Limina Apostolorum*:

– Archbishop Ghaleb Moussa Abdalla Bader of Alger, Algeria

– Archbishop Vincent Landel, SCI, of Rabat, Morocco

– Archbishop Santiago Agrelo Martínez, OFM, of Tanger, Morocco

– Archbishop Ilario Antoniazzi of Tunis, Tunisia

– Bishop Claude Rault, M.Afr, of Laghouat, Algeria

– Bishop Paul Desfarges, SJ, of Constantine, Algeria

– Bishop Jean-Paul Vesco, OP, of Oran, Algeria

## Pope Francis' visit to Pompeii and Naples

Pope Francis will be travelling to Naples and Pompeii on 21 March for a pastoral visit. The visit will be divided into three main moments: a stop at the foot of Our Lady of the Rosary, one with the people of Scampia and another with the inmates of the Poggioreale Prison. The schedule was announced in the Holy See Press Office on Tuesday, 3 March.

As was previously announced, the visit will begin at the Shrine of Pompeii where the Pontiff will arrive by helicopter on Saturday morning, 21 March. There he will pray in front of the venerated image of Mary. Then he will travel by helicopter to Naples, where he will deliver six addresses: the first at the sports field in Scampia, one during a meeting with the people and various social categories of the neighbourhood. Mass at 11 am at the central square, Piazza del Plebiscito, will be followed by lunch with inmates from the Poggioreale District Prison. In the afternoon the Pope will go to the city's cathedral where he will venerate the remains of St Gennaro and will meet the clergy, religious and permanent deacons of the Archdiocese. The day will conclude with a meeting with the sick in the Basilica of Gesù Nuovo and then with the youth on the Caracciolo seafont. Then the Pope will return to the Vatican.

– Bishop Sylvester Carmel Magro, OFM, titular Bishop of Saldæ, Apostolic Vicar of Benghazi, Libya

– Bishop Giovanni Innocenzo Martinelli, OFM, titular Bishop of Tabuda, Apostolic Vicar of Tripoli, Libya

– Fr Mario León Dorado, OMI, Apostolic Prefect of Western Sahara Bishop Janusz Urbańczyk, Holy See's Permanent Observer to the International Governmental Organizations in Vienna

Ms Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO, with her entourage

H.E. Mr Nechirvan Barzani, Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government in Iraq

## CHANGES IN EPISCOPATE

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Charles Jude Scicluna as Archbishop of Malta. Until now he has been titular Bishop of San Leone and Apostolic Administrator of the Archdiocese of Malta (27 Feb.).

Archbishop Scicluna, 55, was born in Toronto, Canada. He was ordained a priest on 11 July 1986. He was ordained a bishop on 24 November 2012, subsequent to his appointment as titular Bishop of San Leone and Auxiliary of Malta.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Nunzio Galantino of Cassano all'Jonio, Italy. He is currently the Secretary General of the Italian Episcopal Conference (28 Feb.).

The Holy Father appointed Fr Francesco Savino from the clergy of the Archdiocese of Bari-Bitonto, Italy, as Bishop of Cassano all'Jonio, Italy. Until now he has been parish priest-rector of the Santi Medici Shrine-Parish in Bitonto, Italy (28 Feb.).

Bishop-elect Savino, 60, was born in Bitonto, Italy. He holds a licence in theology. He was ordained a priest on 24 August 1978. He has

served as: vicar of San Silvestro-Crocifisso parish; member of the College of Consultors; member of the diocesan presbyteral council and the Ministry of Health Commission for palliative care. He founded the "Fondazione Opera Santi Medici Cosma e Damiano Bitonto" ONLUS.

The Holy Father appointed Msgr Marek Marczak as Auxiliary of Łódź, Poland, assigning him the titular episcopal See of Lentini. Until now he has been rector of the Major Seminary in Łódź (28 Feb.).

Bishop-elect Marczak, 46, was born in Piotrków Trybunalski, Poland. He was ordained a priest on 11 June 1994. He holds a doctorate in dogmatic theology. He has served in parish ministry and as: lecturer at the Major Seminary in Łódź; president of the Commission for the Laity; visitor for the Catechesis; collaborator of the pastoral care of university professors.

The Holy Father appointed Fr Fidencio López Plaza from the clergy of Querétaro, as Bishop of San Andrés Tuxtla, Mexico. Until now he has been parish priest and episcopal vicar for pastoral ministry (2 Mar.).

Bishop-elect López Plaza, 64, was born in Capullín, Mexico. He has a specialization in pastoral ministry and catechesis. He has served in parish ministry and as: diocesan coordinator for evangelization and catechesis; professor at the Conciliar Seminary in Querétaro; head of the deanery in Guanajuato and member of the Presbyteral Council and of the College of Consultors; team coordinator for the permanent continental mission in Mexico; and member of the permanent Council of the Bishops' Conference.

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Robert Walter McElroy as Bishop of San Diego, USA. Until now he has been titular Bishop of Gemellae in Byzacena and Auxiliary of San Francisco, USA (3 Mar.).

Bishop McElroy, 61, was born in San Francisco, California, USA. He was ordained a priest on 12 April 1980. He was ordained a bishop on 7 September 2010, subsequent to his appointment as titular Bishop of Gemellae in Byzacena and Auxiliary of San Francisco.

## START OF MISSION

On 11 December 2014, Archbishop Santo Gangemi, titular Archbishop of Umbratico, began his mission as Apostolic Nuncio in Mali with the presentation of his Letters of Credence to H.E. Mr Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, President of the Republic.

## NECROLOGY

Bishop André Vallée, PME, Bishop emeritus of Hearst, Canada, at age 84 (28 Feb.).

## Director-General of UNESCO in audience



On Monday morning, 2 March, Pope Francis received Ms Irina Bokova, Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), who was accompanied by Mr Hao Ping, President of the 37th of the General Conference of UNESCO, and by Mr Mohamed Sameh Amr, President of the Executive Committee.

In the Cathedral of Bogotá

## José de Jesús Pimiento Rodríguez created cardinal



Ninety-six-year-old José de Jesús Pimiento Rodríguez, Archbishop emeritus of Manizales, was created a cardinal in Colombia on Saturday, 28 February. The ceremony – which has never before been held in Colombia – took place in the Cathedral of Bogotá and was presided by Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Ettore Balestrero. Cardinal Rubén Salazar Gómez, Archbishop of Bogotá, imposed the biretta on and consigned the ring to the new cardinal. A few weeks ago, Pope Francis created 19 cardinals at the Consistory in St Peter's Basilica on Saturday, 14 February. The Archbishop emeritus was unable to come to Rome due to his age.

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# General Audience

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

children, abandoned for eight months! This is called mortal sin, understand? Once as a child, a grandmother told us the story of an old grandfather who got dirty while eating because he couldn't easily bring the spoonful of soup to his mouth. And his son, that is, the father of the family, had decided to move him from the dinner table and set up a little table in the kitchen to eat alone, so he couldn't be seen. In this way he wouldn't make a bad impression when friends came over to lunch or dinner. A few days later, he came home and found his youngest child playing with some wood and a hammer and nails, he was making something there, he said: "What are you making? - I'm making a table, papa. - A table, why? - To have one for when you grow old, so that you can eat there". Children are more aware than we are!

In the tradition of the Church there is a *wealth of wisdom* that has always supported a culture of *closeness to the elderly*, a disposition of warm and supportive companionship in this final phase of life. This tradition is rooted in Sacred Scripture, as these passages from the Book of Sirach attest: "Do not disregard the discourse of the aged, for they themselves learned from their fathers; because from them you will gain understanding and learn how to give an answer in time of need" (Sir 8:9).

The Church cannot and does not want to conform to a mentality of impatience, and much less of indifference and contempt, towards old age. We must reawaken the *collective sense of gratitude*, of appreciation, of hospitality, which makes the elder feel like a living part of his community.

Our elders are men and women, fathers and mothers, who came before us on our own road, in our own house, in our daily battle for a worthy life. They are men and women from whom we have received so much. The elder is not an alien. We are that elder: in the near or far future, but inevitably, even if we don't think it. And if we don't learn how to treat the elder better, that is how we will be treated.

We old people are all a little fragile. Some, however, are *particularly weak*, many are alone, and stricken by illness. Some depend on the indispensable care and attention of others. Are we going to take a step back? Abandon them to their fate? A society without *proximity*, where *gratuity* and affection *without compensation* - between strangers as well - is disappearing, is a perverse society. The Church, faithful to the Word of God, cannot tolerate such degeneration. A Christian community in which proximity and gratuity are no longer considered indispensable is a society which would lose her soul. Where there is no honour for elders, there is no future for the young.

## SPECIAL GREETINGS

I greet the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today's Audience, including those from Great Britain, Austria, Denmark, Sweden, Japan, Korea 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!

Dear friends, may our time, marked by many shadows, be ever illuminated by the sun of hope, which is Christ. He promised to always be with us and manifests his presence in many ways. It is our task to proclaim and witness to his love which accompanies us in every situation. Hence, never tire of entrusting yourselves to Christ and spreading his Gospel in every environment.

I greet *young people*, the *sick* and *newlyweds*. Dear *young people*, may this Lenten journey be an occasion for authentic conversion so that your faith in Christ might fully mature. Dear *sick people*, by participating lovingly in the very suffering of the Son of God incarnate, may you henceforth share in the joy of his Resurrection. And may you, dear *newlyweds*, find in the covenant that Christ, at the cost of his blood, made with his Church, find the foundation of your marital bond.

Fr Theodore Hesburgh dies

# An influential leader

Even though he had more honorary degrees than anyone else in history and, as *The New York Times* opined, he was "for decades considered the most influential priest in America", he preferred to be called simply Fr Ted. Fr Theodore M. Hesburgh, CSC, passed away in South Bend, Indiana, on Thursday night, 26 February. He was 97 years old.

Fr Hesburgh was President of the University of Notre Dame for 35 years (from 1952 to 1987) and held numerous presidential appointments, also serving as a member of the Civil Rights Commission from 1957 to 1969. In 1967, he led the university movement which called for autonomy and academic freedom from any authority, both secular and clerical. He was also a key figure in protesting the treatment of Vietnam draft evaders. A peaceful protester, he pledged to stay within the limits of the law, taking a tough stance on antiwar protests.

In 1968, Pope Paul VI appointed Fr Hesburgh head of the Vatican representatives attending the 20th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Tehran, and in 1974 named him a member of the Holy See's UN delegation.

From 1977 to 1982 Fr Hesburgh headed the Rockefeller Foundation, and President Jimmy Carter appointed him chairman of the of the Select Commission on Immigration and Refugee Policy. In 1983, Pope John



Fr Ted singing 'We Shall Overcome' with Martin Luther King Jr at a civil rights rally in 1964

Paul II appointed him to the Pontifical Council for Culture. He was one of the founders of the People for the American Way, and from 1990-96 took part in the Knight Commission which promotes athletic programmes at colleges and universities. He also helped make Paul VI's dream for an ecumenical institute for theological research and pastoral studies a reality. When the Tantor Ecumenical Institute opened in the Holy Land Fr Ted led the International Ecumenical Advisory Board.

News agencies in recent days have been commemorating the important and influential role Fr Hesburgh played, both in American politics and in the Catholic Church, through the second half of the 20th century.

Cardinal Winning Lecture at the University of Glasgow

## Rediscovering the mother tongue of Europe

For almost 600 years the University of Glasgow (Scotland), founded by the Papal Bull of Nicholas V, has proclaimed to all who visit it the motto "Via, Veritas, Vita". Although it is now a secular university, the original motto remains visible across the campus. The motto was recently translated into practical ideas when academics, school leaders, university students and young people gathered on 14 February to hear Archbishop Rino Fisichella, President of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization, give this year's Cardinal Winning Lecture.

Cardinal Thomas Winning, Archbishop of Glasgow from 1974 - 2001, was a strong supporter of Catholic education. This annual lecture, which takes place during the national Catholic Education week in Scotland, marks Cardinal Winning's robust contribution to Catholic Education. The lecture was organized by the St Andrew's Foundation for Catholic Teacher Education of the University of Glasgow.

During the lecture, Archbishop Fisichella discussed the many challenges facing the Catholic Church in a society driven by the search for novelty. He pointed out that New Evangelization is an opportunity for all the baptized to carry out what should be their primary mission: the proclamation of faith in Jesus Christ. Setting his key themes within the context of the traditional Chris-



tian countries of Europe, the Archbishop quoted Goethe's observation that Christianity is the 'mother tongue' of Europe. As the Christian faith of Europe seems to fade away, how can the Church re-engage with her children?

Archbishop Fisichella made special mention of two areas. First, critical thinking on what 'New Evangelization' means cannot remain isolated within universities. It is necessary for the Church to transform this way of thinking into a firm culture of humanism - a culture which can meet the hopes and expectations of all people. In this way, the Church acts at the service of humanity.

A second issue is the Christian response to the phenomenon of the 'new media'. Few people today can live apart from the influence of the various forms of communication clustered under the heading 'new media'. Yet, it is not enough, argued the Archbishop, simply to use them as tools in the mission of evangelization. What is needed is a radical thinking on how the Church can evangelize a culture which has been shaped by the new media and, thus, transmit a culture rich in humanism to a culture where technology reigns supreme? So what is the meaning of faith to the 'digital' person? Christianity has always been the communication of an event and an experience: how can we render faith intelligible to one whose needs are met, it seems, online?

After the lecture, Bishop John Keenan of Paisley, chaired a question and answer session which proved to be an engaging conclusion to the morning. Archbishop Fisichella spoke passionately of the need to tell people about Jesus, to encounter them in the street and to raise our eyes away from the touchscreen of new media to meet the eyes of those who pass by. Only in this way will we evangelize culture and turn the motto "Via, Veritas, Vita" into a way of life for those living in the 21st century. (*Leonardo Franchi*)

A conversation with Cardinal Souraphiel, Archbishop of Addis Ababa

## Christians and Muslims living in peace

NICOLA GORI

Today Ethiopia is a model of peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims, who for centuries have lived next to each other, working together to fight poverty and fundamentalism which leads to tension and conflict. The newly-created cardinal, Archbishop Berhaneceus Demerew Souraphiel of Addis Ababa, spoke to our newspaper about this reality.

*Is your appointment an encouraging sign for the country's Catholic minority?*

I felt humbled by Pope Francis' appointment to become a cardinal of Our Holy Mother Catholic Church. Pope Francis works for the inclusion of everyone in the Church. I am grateful to him for remembering and including the Catholic Church in Ethiopia. It is great encouragement for Catholics in Ethiopia.

*Is the Church able to take a leading role in interreligious dialogue?*

The Catholic Church in Ethiopia, even if numerically a minority, is very much appreciated by the Ethiopian Tewahedo Orthodox Church, by all Christian denominations, and by Muslims. We serve all without any discrimination: in our schools, health institutions, and social centers. This fact helps the Catholic Church to be a bridge in its various roles of mediations and interreligious dialogue because of the trust it has in the Ethiopian society. The Catholic Church was a pioneer in the establishment of the Inter-religious Council of Ethiopia.

*What can Catholics do to stop the violence of religious fundamentalism?*

Ethiopia has a good tradition of peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims. Christianity was introduced in Ethiopia during the Apostolic Age and became a state

religion when St Athanasius ordained St Frumentius, the first Bishop of Ethiopia. Islam was introduced during its birth in Mecca, where the first Muslims were persecuted, and when they came to Christian Ethiopia as refugees and were welcomed. Since then, with the exception of a few conflicts, Christians and Muslims have lived peacefully together. Even though fundamentalists have tried to cause divisions and conflicts among the Christians and Muslims, the peoples of Ethiopia have not accepted them nor followed them. This does not mean that fundamentalists are not trying to stop or have stopped their acts of causing tensions and conflicts.

The role of Catholics is to remind society of the fruits of peaceful co-existence, especially when Ethiopia is now fighting poverty, our common enemy, and developing the country by laying down basic infrastructures.



St Frumentius, first Bishop of Ethiopia

*How can the Church help fight poverty?*

We are still trying every day to be evangelizers, to bring the Gospel values to our society, especially the poor and marginalized. Our institutions: schools, health centers, social centers, development programs, food security strategies, working with others in environmental protection schemes, clean water provisions, etc., are based in our Christian values and serving all, especially the poor, without discrimination.

With Cardinal Charles Maung Bo, Archbishop of Yangon, Myanmar

## A rainbow nation

NICOLA GORI

A Church of the poor and for the poor which defends the dignity of those facing injustice. This is the reality of the Catholic community in Myanmar, as described by Cardinal Charles Maung Bo, Archbishop of Yangon, who was created a cardinal in the Consistory on 14 February.

*You are the first bishop of Myanmar to become a cardinal. What does this mean for you?*

I personally feel that this move springs from Pope Francis' life and mission. He has been writing about "the peripheries" and this radical interpretation of the Church's life and mission animates all his decisions. As the press has pointed out, the Holy Father chose the cardinals with this preference in mind. It is certainly an honour for the people of Myanmar. For five decades we were under a suffocating dictatorship with crippling discrimination against Christians. The Church's survival and growth is a miracle to many. So this honour is actually a call to service to our country's men and women. It is also a tribute to my brother bishops whose patience and wisdom allowed the Church to survive. By bestowing this honour, the Holy Father has called us to greater service to the Church and the nation in this critical time in our history.

*Christians are a minority in the country. What do you do to promote dialogue with other religions?*

We have a three-fold approach to dialogue: dialogue with the poor, dialogue with cultures and dialogue with religions. Our dialogue with the poor is extensive. We are a poor Church, we live among them,

we educate them, we empower them through various social programs. In many areas, the Church is the only one present among the poor in the remote areas. Our dialogue with cultures is very important. We are a rainbow nation: we have seven major tribes with 135 sub-tribes. We are a colourful Church. This element brings both blessings and challenges. The Church needs to be inculturated and also to forge a common identity. We have strong ethnic ecclesial communities. Common gatherings like the 500th anniversary are a source of interaction. Annual National Youth conferences, religious gatherings are arranged. Buddhists are in the majority in our country. We are constantly in contact with like-minded monks, through a group called Religions for Peace. Regular meetings are held and the youth come together. National and international meetings are also regularly held. We continue to raise our voice against violence, against attacks against Muslims by fundamentalist groups.

*The vast majority of people are impoverished. How is the Church close to these people?*

Sixty percent of our people are very poor. Absolute poverty is around 40 per cent. Many people are either internally displaced or have relocated to other countries, some through modern forms of slavery. Our nation was not always like this. In the 50s and early 60s Burma was one of the richest countries in Southeast Asia. There are still an abundance of natural and human resources. Our great leaders who took power in the 60s were experts in working out the miracle of making a rich country



The logo from the fifth century of the Catholic Church in Myanmar

into one of the poorest countries in the world. Poverty in Myanmar is a man-made disaster. What is lacking is not charity but justice. So the Church needs to raise its voice, together with like-minded groups to bring in economic justice, stressed by so many Popes and international human rights instruments. The Church needs to play a major role in advocacy and we have taken up two major issues: land rights and the right to education. Regarding the poor, our Caritas networks in 16 dioceses are working hard. We are also major supporters helping internally displaced people. But in Myanmar, poverty is an injustice inflicted on our people and we cannot rest until justice is done for the poor.

*What can Catholics do to help build the nation?*

We have contributed a lot to nation building. The Church has reached out to the remotest corners, educating ethnic communities. Now they are well educated and confident communities, providing teachers, priests, nuns and development workers. Our contribution to

*Do the Oriental Catholic Churches play an important role in ecumenism?*

The Oriental Catholic Church in Ethiopia is trying to become a bridge for ecumenism by giving due respect to the Ethiopian Tewahedo Orthodox Church. We are in close contact with the Patriarchate and the Orthodox Bishops and clergy. Above all, there is a strong ecumenism of life with the ordinary Orthodox Christians with whom our Catholics live as good neighbours, sharing their daily experiences of joy and sorrow. The Catholic Church in Ethiopia does not proselytize where the Orthodox Church is traditionally present, but works by attraction especially in areas of the first evangelization in the country.

*As a Lazzarist, what contribution do you think consecrated men and women can offer to the development of society and progress in Ethiopia?*

The Catholic Church in Ethiopia is very grateful to pioneer missionaries in Ethiopia who, in the beginning were Lazarists and Capuchins. They have worked in difficult and very challenging circumstances to spread the Gospel.

At present both Ethiopian religious men and women, together with some expatriate religious men and women, are working very hard for the integral human development and human formation of the people they serve, with special emphasis in fighting poverty, illiteracy, and disease. They work in defence of human dignity and human life, from conception to natural death. They teach that God created men and women as equals. No one is created inferior. Ethiopian society has great respect for religious men and women because of the great monastic tradition in the country. They listen to them when they stand for the respect of women and children and when they protect them from violence, trafficking, and abuse.

To prelates of North Africa on their 'ad limina' visit the Pope recalls that diversity should be accepted as a treasure

# The antidote to violence

And he praises the courage and fidelity of the bishops, priests, consecrated and laity in Libya

*"The most effective antidote to every form of violence is education in the discovery and acceptance of difference". This was the Pope's recommendation to the Bishops of the Episcopal Conference of North Africa (CERNA), whom he received in audience on Monday morning, 2 March, on the occasion of their visit 'ad limina Apostolorum'. The following is a translation of the Pope's speech, which was signed in French.*

Dear Brothers in the Episcopate,

It is with joy that I welcome you in these days of your *ad limina* visit. I hope that your pilgrimage to the Tombs of the Apostles reaffirms your faith and strengthens your hope in order to continue the ministry entrusted to you in each of your countries. I thank Archbishop Vincent Landel of Rabat, President of your Conference, who expressed on behalf of all of you, sentiments of communion with the Successor of Peter. Through you, I join the faithful of your dioceses of North Africa. Bring them the Pope's affection and the assurance that he remains close to them and encourages them in the generous witness they render to the Gospel of the peace and love of Jesus. My cordial greeting also goes to all inhabitants of your countries, especially to those who are suffering.

For several years, your region has been undergoing significant developments, which have provided hope in realizing certain aspirations for greater liberty and dignity and the for fostering of greater freedom of conscience. But some of these developments have led to outbursts of violence. I would like to particularly commend the courage, devotion and perseverance of the Bishops in Libya, as well as the priests, consecrated and laity who remain in the country despite the many dangers. They are the authentic witnesses of the Gospel. I deeply thank them, and I encourage you all to continue in your efforts to contribute to peace and reconciliation throughout your region.

Your Episcopal Conference, which regularly convenes the pastors of Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya, is a forum of important exchange and dialogue, but it must also be an instrument for communion, allowing a deepening of brotherly and trusting relations among you. Your pilgrimage to Rome is a propitious occasion to renew your shared commitment to serving the mission of the Church in each of your countries. You realize this mission with your priests, your direct collaborators. Originating from numerous countries, they sometimes have difficulty adapting to situations which are so new for them. It is therefore particularly necessary that you be close to each one of them and attentive to their continuing formation so that they can live out their ministry fully and peacefully. To each of them I convey my

warmest greetings and I assure my prayers to all.

Men and women religious also play a special role in the life and mission of your Churches. I am grateful to them for their witness of fraternal life and their most generous commitment to serving their brothers and sisters. In this *Year of Consecrated Life*, I invite them to renew their awareness of the importance of contemplation in their lives and thereby let the beauty and the holiness of their vocation shine.

At the heart of your mission and at the source of your hope are first and foremost the personal encounter with Jesus Christ and the certainty that He is at work in the world where you have been sent in his name. The evangelical vitality of your dioceses depends therefore on the quality of the spiritual and sacramental life in each one. The history of your region has been marked by many holy figures, from Cyprian and Augustine, the spiritual heritage of the whole Church, to Blessed Charles de Foucauld, the centenary of whose death we will celebrate next year; and closer to us, by those men and women religious who gave everything to God and to their brothers and sisters with the sacrifice of their lives. It is up to you to develop this spiritual heritage, first of all among your faithful, but also by opening it to all. I am also delighted



Miniature of the martyrdom of St Cyprian

to know that in recent years, it has been possible to restore several Christian shrines in Algeria. By welcoming everyone as they are, with benevolence and without proselytism, your communities manifest the desire to be a Church with open doors, one which ever "goes forth" (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium* nn. 46-47).

In the midst of the difficult situations at times facing your region, your ministry as shepherds experiences a number of joys. Like this,



the welcoming of new disciples who join you, having discovered God's love manifested in Jesus, is a beautiful sign given by the Lord. By sharing with their compatriots the concern for building a more fraternal and open society, they show they are all children of the same Father. I greet them in a special way and I assure them of my affection, with the wish that they may take up their place in the lives of your dioceses.

Universality is also a characteristic of your Churches, whose faithful come from many nations to shape very lively communities. I invite them to show the joy of the Gospel on their faces, the joy of meeting Christ who gives them life. This is also an opportunity for you to marvel at the work of God, which is disseminated among all peoples and in all cultures. I would like to offer my encouragement to the many young students from Sub-Saharan Africa, who form an important part of your communities. By remaining firm in the faith, they will be able to establish bonds of friendship, trust and respect with everyone, and thereby contribute to the building of a more fraternal world.

Interreligious dialogue is an important part of the life of your Churches. Here, too, the creativity of charity is able to find countless ways of bringing the newness of the Gospel into cultures and into the most diverse corners of society (cf. *Apostolic Letter to all consecrated people on the occasion of the Year of Consecrated Life*, 21 November 2014). You know how much mutual ignorance can be a source of so many misunderstandings and at times even clashes. Yet, as Benedict XVI wrote in the *Apostolic Exhortation Africae Munus*, "If all of us who believe in God desire to promote reconciliation, justice and peace, we must work together to banish every form of discrimination, intolerance and religious fundamentalism" (n. 94). The most effective antidote to every form of violence is education in the discovery and acceptance of

difference as a treasure and a fertile ground. Moreover, it is essential that the priests, religious and laity of your dioceses be trained in this field. And in that regard, I am pleased to note that the *Pontifical Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies* (PISAI), which is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, was born in your region, in Tunisia. Support and use this much-needed institution in order to be immersed in the language and culture which will allow a dialogue to expand in truth and in love between Christians and Muslims. Dialogue is something you even experience day by day with Christians of different confessions. May the Ecumenical Institute, *Al Mowajfaqa*, founded in Morocco to promote ecumenical and interreligious dialogue in its own context, also contribute to greater mutual understanding!

As a Church of encounter and dialogue, you also want to be at the service of all without distinction. With often humble means, you demonstrate the charity of Christ and Church among the poor, the sick, the elderly, women in need and prisoners. I sincerely thank you for the part you play in coming to the aid of the countless immigrants originating from Africa who seek a place of passage or of welcome in your countries. By recognizing their human dignity and striving to reawaken consciences to so much human tragedy, you reveal the love that God bears for every one of them.

Dear Brother in the Episcopate, I would lastly like to assure you of the entire Church's support in your mission. You are "at the peripheries", with the particular service of manifesting Christ's presence to his Church in this region. Your testimony of life in simplicity and poverty is a prominent sign for the whole Church. Be assured that the Successor of Peter accompanies you on your arduous journey and encourages you to always be men of hope.

I entrust you to the protection of Our Lady of Africa, who watches over the whole continent, and the intercession of St Augustine, Blessed Charles de Foucauld and to all the saints of Africa. With all my heart I impart my Apostolic Blessing to you and to all the faithful in your dioceses.



Detail of the "Presentation at the Temple", Giovanni Bellini (1466)

## Procreation

A body born from another body: this is what the word "procreation" means. It is women who procreate, when they give birth to another human being. For centuries novels, poetry, science and technology have examined, reflected, studied and plumbed the depths of this fundamental moment of human life that remains mysterious and – at the same time – visible and tangible, universal yet simultaneously intimate and personal. It is common to procreate, but for numerous reasons it is still not easy, for it can bring death and illness to many women and newborns throughout the world. Josephine Quintavalle, who founded CORE (Comment on Reproductive Ethics), wonders why science and technology that could even help procreation actually persecute it. Yet, in spite of all, in spite of the old and persistent dangers of backwardness and those, more ambiguous but equally serious, of modern times, procreation has kept its mystery and power even in the most difficult and tragic situations. Silvana Pérez tells the story of Aria, a Yazidi teenager persecuted, deprived of everything and raped by Islamic State militants. After realizing that she was pregnant, she ends her tale by affirming: "but I'm moving forward. In a few months I shall have to give this child a name. I shall never be able to return to Mosul. I shall never ever be able to wipe away my shame. I am dead but the light of life is within me". The light to which Aria refers and which dwains in the relationship between mother and child, does not remain entangled in the relationship between bodies – also important – but is successfully transmitted outside them too. Motherhood can become spiritual. The motherhood of women religious is just as profound. And it is the greatest example of how faith can exalt and broaden a sentiment to the point of making it universal, permeating the lives of all those who deeply accept its value. (Ritanna Armeni)

## The story of a young woman from chains in Mosul to the refugee camp in Dohuk Sixteen and six months pregnant

SILVANA PÉREZ

"Desperate screams and sobs could be heard coming from the streets nearby. We were frightened, we didn't know what to do. Many people ran to seek refuge and were hit by a volley of machine gunfire, others sought shelter in the small school gymnasium. We knelt in silence, whispering words of faith".

"The jihadists burst in and a deafening barrage rose above the people's screams: a few metres from me, my father was shot dead. All the others were thrown out of the school and gathered in the courtyard. Only one poor woman was unable to get out because her legs were paralyzed. She was to keep my father company, desperately thrashing about in vain, her arms in the air, asking for clemency, nailed to her seat".

For 16-year-old Aria, who belonged to the Iraqi Yazidi community, the real nightmare began on the day her village was attacked by men of Islamic State. She saw her father and brother killed and since then has had no news of her mother or her two sisters. She is now in a refugee camp in Dohuk, she is six months pregnant and recounts her nightmare consisting of torture, rape and degradation.

"It was 9 June – she recounts on Skype, filling the computer screen with her thin face and large blue eyes – when Mosul, our city, was hit. During the attack the militia killed dozens of people. We women were the most frightened, we knew what would happen to us if they caught us. We had no time to flee. The men of the Islamic State gathered the prisoners together, dividing them by sex and age. The first group consisted of young boys, another of girls, and a third of older men and women. From the latter the jihadists took all they had: money, gold and cell phones. Then they left them there. As for us, they loaded us on to lorries, after having shot all the young men in the first group, including my brother".

Aria, together with a group of about 25 girls, was taken to Baaj, a town west of Mosul, and locked into an old three-story building. "Here they divided us again. I was left with the group of the youngest, and I believe, the prettiest. Our prison guards told us that after our conversion to Islam, we were destined to marry a glorious fighter. The other girls were condemned to become sex slaves of the militants. One of them hanged herself in despair and yet another attempted to do so but the jihadists stopped her and beat her until she bled", Aria said, explaining that

after this episode no other girl attempted to end her life.

"For almost to days we were locked up practically in the dark. We slept on the ground and ate only once a day. The jihadists of the Islamic State", she recounted, "asked us several times to convert to Islam, threatening that if we didn't they would kill all the members of our family. Some gave in to their blackmail in order to save their father, husband or brother.

The United Nations have in fact calculated that after the fall of Mosul 1,500 women and children suffered violence. Forms of sexual violence were committed on a vast scale: against the victims were women, girls and boys. The crimes perpetrated ranged from rape to forced marriages and sexual slavery. The Caliphate's militants are supporters of total female submission and impose it on the young women they kidnap and brutalize in the fighting zones. They even resort to blasphemous misinterpretation in order to give rape a theological justification (with the ploy of "temporary marriage" in war zones).

In particular women who belong to religious minorities, such as the Yazidi or Assyrian Christians, are kidnapped from their villages, locked in prisons and given an unbearable choice. Those

LAURA GOTTI TEDESCHI

The idea to found CORE (Comment on Reproductive Ethics) came to Josephine Quintavalle when the Human Fertilization and Embryology Authority, the national authority in the United Kingdom which makes ethical evaluations of proposals concerning fertilization, held a national consultation on removing gametes from live female donors, corpses or foetuses in order to cure infertility or for scientific research. So CORE started distributing cards with the statement: "No, I do not authorize you to use my gametes". Scandalized by the fact that it was possible only to even think of such a proposal, and distressed by the harm the abortion law was causing to British women, Quintavalle decided to devote herself to the battle of defending human life and to the fight against the exploitation of the female body and human embryos which reproductive techniques entail. She also worked for 20 years as a volunteer for Life, an organization which provides counselling to more than 7,000 women who are experiencing a crisis pregnancy. Although the Abortion Act of 1967 had come into force, in the UK abortion can be performed virtually on request until the 24th week. Moreover 98 per cent of women abort for personal reasons, not clearly specified as a "risk to physical and mental health".

How do you assess the results of the European "One of Us" campaign that has attracted 1.8 million supporters in 20 countries?

It is absolutely marvellous that so many signatures have been gathered in defence of embryos and of the inviolability of human life. Italy in particular is to be complimented for stimulating and generating this reaction throughout Europe, and for managing to collect such a large number of supporters. In addition to the immediate goal of prohibiting Europe from funding research which destroys human embryos, this initiative has been extraordinary in gathering together so many pro-life groups across Europe, creating a very powerful network of people that aims to defend human life.

Among these 20 countries, the UK had one of the lowest numbers of signatures gathered: 28,000 in comparison with the more than 670,000 collected in Italy. Why do you think that is?

We really worked hard to convince our pro-life colleagues that it was necessary to support this campaign. There is a very strong pro-life movement in the UK but we are an island in more senses than one: we don't feel very European in the political arena and we haven't succeeded in making people understand the importance of this campaign.

What is the situation in the field of bioethics?

The UK was the first country in the world to approve legislation on in vitro fertilization and on the numerous controversial ethical issues that emerge from artificial reproduction. British laws have always been sadly progressive and liberal: it is really difficult to find cases in which liberal proposals in the bioethical field have been prohibited.

Can you give us a few examples of laws that should have been prohibited?

At the outset human cloning was considered an excessive step and was accordingly forbidden, but today there is great enthusiasm about the possibility of creating embryos with the genetic material of three or four different adults. This procedure, however, involves techniques similar to those of cloning. Hence the initial prohibition has evidently been bypassed. Just think that in the UK today embryos for research purposes may be created from human spermatozoa and cow egg cells.

You describe yourself as a pro-life feminist, yet most people believe that feminists themselves are the greatest champions of women's rights to abort.

If feminism is based on the defence of women's rights, then a feminist cannot be anything but pro-life: abortion is a true exploitation of the female body and it should therefore be fought against. CORE has created an international network of people and groups in different countries, particularly in Europe, the United States and Australia. The result has been the creation



Pablo Picasso, "Blue nude" (1903)

who decide to convert to Islam are sold as brides to combatants of the Islamic State, for a price that varies between 25 and 150 dollars. Female prisoners who refuse to convert are raped daily and condemned to a slow and agonizing death. Her gaze lost in emptiness, Aria told us how after 10 interminable days she was sold for 35 dollars to Hassan, a young jihadist from Syria who took her to the house where he lived with other militants.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

A conversation with Josephine Quintavalle of the think tank Comment on Reproductive Ethics

# Feminism cannot be anything but pro-life



Detail of Windor Codex (1509) by Leonardo da Vinci

of coalitions with groups of women who – even though they do not completely share our principles in defence of human life – recognize and denounce with us the exploitation of women and of their bodies in assisted reproduction, the collection of egg cells from (presumed) female donors and the recourse to using surrogate mothers.

CORE is a sort of ethical lens that aims to create awareness of the reality of assisted reproduction, such as in vitro fertilization and embryo transfer (IVFET). What is the unspoken truth about IVFET?

That it is permeated by a eugenic logic. More egg cells are fertilized through IVFET than those that would be fertilized naturally: several of the embryos that are subsequently produced are immediately rejected for not being sufficiently "suitable". From among those that remain, the best are implanted immediately, whereas the others are frozen for future use. Those

abortion; Hungary has inserted in its Constitution the defence of the human embryo; and in Spain numbers are slowly changing, thanks to a very active and dynamic pro-life movement.

And in the UK?

Here, unfortunately, there is very little to celebrate. Besides the most liberal application of IVFET imaginable, with the colossal destruction of human life from its very earliest stages, voluntary terminations of pregnancy are in no way diminishing. Abortion is permitted until the 24th week and, in certain circumstances even until the last week of pregnancy. In 2012, out of a total of 160 post-24th week

abortions, 28 took place after the eighth month of gestation.

In an interview with "The Observer" in 2005, you said you wanted to "wake up this nation's conscience" concerning abortion laws. Has the nation woken up?

No, unfortunately not. Indeed today the situation is even more urgent. The UK has fallen completely into the grip of utilitarianism while it is discussing euthanasia, abortion and the genetic manipulation of human embryos. And there's no real academic debate on bioethics. This is surprising when one thinks that the average European citizen looks to us as a model of democracy and virtue.

Perhaps this limitation is due to the fact that pro-life movements in the UK seem to be composed solely of Catholics, who are at times a little too "outspoken"?

There are various pro-life movements in the country and it's true that many

of them have a religious basis, especially Catholics and Evangelical Christians, which tend to raise their voices a little too high. Their voices in the discussion are important, but it's necessary to fight harder also from a political and academic level. In any case the pro-life instinct that exists in every human being has gained momentum in recent years. For example, there has been an increase in the number of young people without specific religious affiliations who are opposed to the pro-choice policy.

What are the main bioethical battles you are facing in the UK today?

There are two important battles. One against the proposal to minimize the doctor's role in evaluating the motivations driving women to abort. The second is against the proposal to create embryos from three "parents". This will be a really tough battle for us because the problem is camouflaged with a language so highly scientific that it is incomprehensible to ordinary people. We must therefore translate the reality of what is proposed in such a way that our supporters can understand that once again a scientific innovation is in actual fact an attack on the human embryo.

Belgium recently legalized child euthanasia. The British Government is putting less money into healthcare for the elderly and sick. Where are we headed?

The fight against euthanasia is another of our many battles. Fortunately there is a strong coalition of pro-life groups in England, united under the slogan "Care not Killing" and headed by Dr Peter Saunders who directs the Christian Medical Fellowship. The shadow of euthanasia is expanding throughout Europe. We must truly wake up.



selected for implantation are often subjected to a further genetic diagnosis that entails the removal of cells when the embryo has reached the stage of eight cells. Furthermore this intervention might damage the embryo.

Remaining on the topic of the defence of life, how do you see the situation in Europe today?

The general perception is that the pro-abortion lobbies in the world are gradually losing ground. Just look at the United States: half of the States have passed restrictive legislation on

Born in New Zealand 74 years ago, Josephine Quintavalle grew up surrounded by relatives who were priests and women religious. After earning a degree in English at Birkbeck College, London, she worked in the British Pro-Life Movement and on the international scene for about 40 years. In 1994 she founded CORE (Comment on Reproductive Ethics), an international think tank that deals with the numerous problems that have ensued from the practice of in vitro fertilization.



The Pope calls Italian cooperatives to commit to an economy of honesty

# When one plus one makes three

A great leap forward in solidarity

*In the Paul VI Hall on Saturday morning, 28 February, Pope Francis received in audience 6,000 members of the Confederation of Italian Cooperatives. The following is a translation of the address, which he delivered in Italian.*

Brothers and Sisters,  
Good morning,

This last one [referring to the choir] was the most melodic “cooperative”! My compliments!

I appreciate this encounter with you and with the organization you represent, that of cooperation. Cooperatives challenge everything, even mathematics, because in a cooperative one plus one makes three! And in a cooperative, a failure is half a failure. This is the beauty of cooperatives!

You are first of all the living memory of a great treasure of the Church in Italy. Indeed, we know that at the origins of the Italian cooperative movement are many farming and credit cooperatives which, by the 19th century, had been wisely established and promoted by priests and pastors. To this day, in various Italian dioceses, cooperation is still employed as an effective remedy to the problem of unemployment and to the various forms of social disadvantage. It is routine today, I do not say normal, customary... but too often one sees: “Are you looking for work? Come, come to this company”. Eleven hours, 10 hours of work, 600 Euros. “Do you like it? No? Go home”. What is to be done in a world that functions like this? Because there is a line, a file of people looking for work: if you do not like it, the next one will. It is hunger, hunger makes us accept

what they give us, working under the table.... To give an example, I could ask about domestic service: how many men and women who work in domestic service have a retirement pension?

All this is very well known. The Church has always recognized, appreciated and encouraged cooperatives. We read it in the Magisterium documents. We remember the appeal launched in 1891 by Pope Leo XIII in *Rerum Novarum*: “*All proprietors and not all proletarian*”. And there are certainly the well-known pages of the Encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*, in which Benedict XVI expresses his opinion in favour of credit unions and consumer cooperatives (cf. nn. 65-66), highlighting the importance of the economy of communion and of non-profit sector (cf. n. 41), in order to affirm that the god-of-profit is by no means a divinity but only a compass and measuring stick for the appraisal of entrepreneurial activity. Pope Benedict also explained that our world needs an economy of giving (cf. nn. 34-39), meaning an economy capable of giving life to busi-



nesses inspired by the principle of solidarity and capable of “creating sociality”. In order to accomplish this, as Leo XIII exclaimed, in blessing the beginnings of the Italian Catholic cooperative movement: *Christianity has marvellous strength* (cf. Encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, n. 15); this exclamation, therefore, resounds through you.

These and many other affirmations of recognition and encouragement addressed to co-operators on behalf of the Church are valid and timely. I also think of the extraordinary social teachings of Blessed Paul VI. We are able to confirm and consolidate these statements. Thus it is not necessary to repeat or restate them in full.

Today, I would like our dialogue to look not only at the past but above all to be directed *forward*: to *new perspectives*, to *new responsibilities*, to *new forms of initiatives of cooperative enterprises*. It is a true mission which asks us for creative imagination in order to find forms, methods, attitudes and instruments, to combat the “throw-away culture”, that we

the courage to move outside of them, charged with experience and good methods, to carry cooperation to the new frontiers of change, to the existential peripheries where hope needs to emerge and where, unfortunately, the current socio-political system instead seems fatally destined to suffocate hope, to steal hope, increasing risks and threats.

This great leap forward which we propose the cooperatives take, will give you the confirmation that all that you have already done is not only positive and vital, but *also continues to be prophetic*. For this reason you must continue to invent – this is the word: invent – new forms of cooperation, because the maxim, “when a tree has new branches, the roots are deep and the trunk is strong”, also applies to cooperatives.

Here, today, you represent valuable experience in many sectors: from agricultural development to the promotion of building new homes for the homeless, from social cooperatives to credit unions, here broadly represented, from fishing to industry, to business, to communities, to consumption, to distribution and many other types of service. I am well aware that this list is incomplete, but it is rather useful in order to understand how precious the cooperative method is, which must go forward, creative. It has revealed itself in the face of many challenges. And it still will! However, all appreciation and all encouragement instead risks being generic. I want to offer you *some practical encouragement* instead.

*The first is this*: cooperatives must continue to be *the motor that lifts and develops the weakest part of your local community and of civil society*. Sentiment is not capable of this. Thus it is necessary to give first priority to the foundation of new cooperative enterprises, along with the further development of those in existence, especially in order to create new employment opportunities, which are lacking today.

My thoughts go first and foremost to *young people*, because we know that the dramatically high unemployment among the young – let us consider, in several European countries, 40, 50 percent – destroys hope in them. But let us also consider the many *women* who have the need and the will to enter the world of work. Let us not overlook the *adults* who are often prematurely out of work. “What are you?” – “I’m an engineer” – “Ah, how nice, how nice. How old are you?” – “49” – “You aren’t needed, go on”. This happens every day. In addition to new businesses, let us also look at the companies that are in difficulty, those for whose elderly owners it is more convenient to let the business die, which can instead be revived with the initiatives that you call “workers buy-outs”, in my language “*empresas recuperadas*”, saved companies. And, as

are living in today, the “throw-away culture” cultivated by the powers which uphold the economic and financial policies of the globalized world, at the centre of which is the god of money.

Today globalizing solidarity – this must be globalized, solidarity! – means thinking about the spiraling increase of unemployed people, of the unending tears of the poor, of the need to resume development that is both a true, integral progress of the person who certainly needs income, but not only income! Let us think of health needs, which traditional welfare systems no longer manage to satisfy; of the urgent need of solidarity, placing once again the dignity of the human being at the centre of the economy, as you have said. As Pope Leo XIII would still say today: *Christianity has marvellous strength* to globalize solidarity!

Therefore, do not stop to look only at what you have been able to achieve. Continue to refine, to strengthen and to update the good and solid businesses that you have already built. However, also have

## Sixteen and six months pregnant

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

“He wanted to force me to marry him, but he could not do so prior to my conversion. He said that a true believer does not marry an infidel. For him, my Yazidi faith made me a sinner. I refused and so he began to beat and rape me; ever more often, ever more harshly. One day he told me that he would wait another week and then have me taken to the other women, those who serve all the militants enabling them to vent their desires. I was desperate, I could only think of dying. “I paid 35 dollars, do you understand? You’re useless, you’re no good to me”, he said. One night the area was heavily attacked. The men all left and I suddenly found myself on my own. I went outside and started running in the dark. I ran toward the sound of mortar fire. I did not know what I would find but I thought that

nothing could be worse. I ran and I cried. I ran and I prayed, ever more insistently without ever looking back. I don’t quite know how, but I arrived in the part of the city controlled by the Kurds. A group of female guerrillas took care of me for a couple of days and then helped me cross the Turkish border. From there I made it to this refugee camp.

After a few months I found out I was pregnant. I wept bitterly. I thought once again I would end my life. Despite my escape, despite my freedom, I felt profoundly defeated. I thought of my father. I know that I died in that cursed prison in the hands of the militants; but I’m moving forward. In a few months, I shall have to give this child a name. I shall never be able to return to Mosul. I shall never ever be able to wipe away my shame. I am dead, but the light of life is within me”.



I said to their representatives, I am a fan of *empresas recuperadas*!

A second point of encouragement – not in order of importance – is to become active as leaders in creating new welfare solutions, particularly in the field of healthcare, a delicate field where so many poor people do not find adequate responses to their needs. I know what you have been doing for years with heart and with passion, in the peripheries of the cities and of our society, for families, children, the elderly, the sick and people disadvantaged and in difficulty for various reasons, bring heart and aid into their homes. *Charity is a gift! It is not a simple gesture to calm the heart, it is a gift!* When I do charity, I give myself! If I am not capable of giving myself, that is not charity. It is a gift without which one cannot enter the home of one who suffers. In the language of the social doctrine of the Church this means building on *subsidiarity* with strength and consistency: it means joining forces! How beautiful it would be if, starting in Rome, an effective network of assistance and solidarity could be created among the cooperatives, for parishes and hospitals, I am thinking of “Bambin Gesù” in particular. And the people, starting from the most needy, would be placed at the centre of all this solidary movement: the people at the centre, the neediest at the centre. This is the mission we are proposing to ourselves! It is your task to invent practical solutions, to make this network function in the actual situations of your local communities, starting from your history, with your wealth of knowledge in order to carry out this endeavour and at the same time *not to forget that the person is at the centre of it all*.

You have done so much, and there is still so much to do! Let us forge ahead!

The third point of encouragement is in regard to the economy, its relationship to social justice, to the dignity and value of people. It is well known that a certain liberalism believes it is necessary to first produce wealth, no matter how, to then promote some policy of redistribution by the State. First fill your glass and then give to

others. Others think it is the entity itself that should lavish the crumbs of accumulated wealth, thereby absolving itself of so-called “social responsibility”. One risks being deceived by doing good while, unfortunately, continuing to only market, without going outside of that fatal circuit of the selfishness of people and of companies which have the god of money at the centre.

Instead we know that establishing a new quality of economy will enable people to grow to their full potential. For example: a member of the cooperative must not be only a supplier, a worker, a well-treated user; he must always be a protagonist, he must grow, through the cooperative, grow personally, socially and professionally, in responsibility, in actualizing hope, in working together. I am not saying that one’s income need not increase, but that is not enough: *it is important that the business managed by the cooperative truly grow in a cooperative way, that is by involving everyone*. One plus one makes three! This is the logic.

In Latin etymology, “*cooperari*” means to operate together, to cooperate, and therefore to work, help, contribute to achieve an end. *Never be satisfied with the word “cooperative” without having knowledge of the true substance and spirit of cooperation*.

The fourth suggestion is this: if we look around us it never happens that the economy is renewed in a society that is aging than than growing. The cooperative movement can play an important role in *sustaining, facilitating and also encouraging the life of families*. Realizing conciliation, or better perhaps, *harmonization between work and family*, is a task you have already begun and which you must increasingly achieve.

Doing this also means helping women fully develop themselves within their vocation and bring their own talents to fruition. Women free to be leaders, both in business and in the family! I know well that cooperatives already offer so many services and so many organizational formulae, akin to national health services, to meet the needs of everyone, of children and the elderly in particular, from day-care centres to home care. *This is our way to manage the common goods, those goods that must not be the property of only the few and must not seek speculative purposes*.

The fifth point of encouragement *perhaps surprise you!* It takes money to do all these things! Cooperatives in general are not established by large capitalists, but rather it is often said that they are structurally under-capitalized. Instead, the Pope tells you: *you must invest, and you must invest well!* In Italy of course, but not only, it is difficult to obtain public funds to compensate for a shortage of resources. This is the solution I propose to you: *bring good means together with determination in order to accomplish good works*. Collaborate more among cooperative banks and businesses; organize resources to enable families to live with dignity and serenity; pay fair wages to workers, investing above all in initiatives that are truly necessary.

It is not easy to speak about money. It was said by Basil of Caesarea, a Church Father of the

fourth century, and then taken up by St Francis of Assisi, that “*money is the devil’s dung!*” Now the Pope also repeats it: “*Money is the devil’s dung!*” When money becomes an idol, it commands the choices of man. And then it destroys man and condemns him. It renders him a servant. Money at the service of life

*Doing this also means helping women fully develop themselves within their vocation and bring their own talents to fruition. Women free to be leaders, both in business and in the family!*

can be managed in a just way by a cooperative, if however, it is an authentic, true cooperative, *where capital is not in command over men but men over capital*.

For this reason I tell you that you are doing well – and I also tell you to always do more of it – to counter and combat the false cooperatives, those which prostitute the very name of cooperatives, namely of a truly good organization, in order to deceive people with aims of profits contrary to those of true and authentic cooperation. Do well, I tell you, because, in the field you operate in, to take on an honourable façade but to instead pursue dishonourable and immoral aims, often directed at exploiting labour, or at manipulating the market, and even at scandalous and corrupt trafficking, is a shameful and extremely serious lie that is absolutely unacceptable. Fight against this! How do you fight? With words alone? With ideas? You fight with fair and true

*The fifth point of encouragement may perhaps surprise you! It takes money to do all these things ... the Pope tells you: you must invest, and you must invest well!*

cooperation, the kind which always prevails.

The cooperative economy, if it is authentic, if it wants to play a powerful social function, if it wants to be a protagonist of the future of a nation and of each local community, must pursue transparent and clear aims. *The economy of honesty must be fostered!* A healing economy in the insidious sea of the global economy. A true economy supported by people who have only the *common good* in their heart and mind.

Cooperatives have a strong international tradition. In this too you have been true pioneers. Your international associations were formed well in advance of those which other businesses created in much later times. Now there is the new, great globalization, which is reducing some inequalities but creating many others. The cooperative movement, therefore, cannot remain unrelated to economic and social globalization whose effects reach every country and even into our homes.

But do cooperatives participate in globalization like other businesses? Is there an *original way* which allows cooperatives to face the new chal-

lenges of the global market? How can cooperatives participate in the development of cooperation safeguarding the principles of solidarity and justice? I say this to you in order to say it to all the world’s cooperatives: *cooperatives cannot stay locked up at home, but neither can they leave home as if they are not cooperatives*.

This is the twofold principle: they cannot stay locked up at home but neither can they leave home as if they are not cooperatives. No, we cannot consider a cooperative as double-sided. We must have courage and imagination to build the right road to integrate, in the world, development, justice and peace.

Last, do not allow *the cooperative movement’s cooperation with your parishes and your dioceses* to live only in your memory. The forms of cooperation need to be different from the original forms, but the journey must always be the same! Where there are old and new existential peripheries, where people are underprivileged, where people are alone and discarded, where people are disrespected, extend a hand to them! Cooperate together, in accordance with each one’s vocational identity, holding hands!

I know you have been collaborating for several years with other cooperative-type associations – even though not tied to our history and our traditions – to create an Alliance of Italian cooperatives and partners. For now it is an evolving Alliance, but you hope to arrive at a single Association, an ever expanding Alliance between partners and cooperatives. The Italian cooperative movement has a long tradition compared to that of international cooperatives in the world. The cooperative mission in Italy from its very beginnings has been strongly tied to the identities, values and social powers present in the country. Please, respect this identity! However, often the choices which separate and divide have long been stronger than the choices which instead bring together and unite everyone’s efforts. Now you believe you are able to give priority instead to what unites you. And precisely around what unites you, which is the deepest, most authentic, most vital part of the Italian cooperatives, you wish to build your new associative form.

You do well to plan like this, and like this you are taking a step forward! Of course, there are Catholic cooperatives and non-Catholic cooperatives. But is faith saved if we remain closed? I ask: is faith saved if we remain closed? Remaining only among ourselves? Experience your Alliance as Christians, as a fearless response to your faith and to your identity! Faith and identity are the foundation. Go forth, therefore, and walk together with all people of good will! This is also a Christian call, a Christian call to all. Christian values are not only for us, they are for sharing! For sharing with others, with those who do not think as we do but who want the same things that we want. Go forth, have courage! Onward, be creators, “poets”!

# Morning Mass at the Domus Sanctae Marthae

Monday, 2 March

Shame and mercy

Feeling shame and blaming oneself, instead of assigning fault to others, judging and condemning them. This is the first step on the path of Christian life which leads us to ask the Lord for the gift of mercy. The Pope suggested this examination of conscience at Mass in the chapel of Casa Santa Marta on Monday morning.

Francis began his reflection from the day's First Reading from the Book of Daniel (9:4-10). He explained that the People of God "ask for forgiveness, but not a forgiveness with words: this request for forgiveness is for a forgiveness that comes from the heart because the people feel they are sinners". The people "do not feel they are sinners in theory – because all of us can say 'we are all sinners', it's true, it's the truth: everyone here! – but before the Lord they tell of the bad things they have done and the good things they have not done". Indeed, the



Giorgio De Chirico, "The Prodigal Son" (1922)

Scripture reads: "We have sinned, been wicked and done evil; we have rebelled and departed from your commandments and your laws. We have not obeyed your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes, our fathers, and all the people of the land".

## A rainbow nation

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

education was curtailed by a near-sighted policy of nationalization which denied quality education to the people of Myanmar. The Church has the capacity to work in education, health and human development, and the government must treat the Church as a partner in nation building. We have offered our services. The government of Myanmar needs the Church. We work in areas where not even the government goes. For true peace and development the Church's role is vital and CBCM (the Bishops' Conference) has decided to play that role.

*What role can religious play in promoting human development during this Year of Consecrated Life?*

There are more than 2500 religious in this country. Women religious have done great work in remote communities. Their accompaniment of the poor is one of the reasons for robust nature of these communities. But as the country opens up, women religious need more resources, greater education and empowerment. Their commitment is commendable but they need competence. We also foresee greater role in the sector: education and Health, as teachers and health workers.

*How can the Church be missionary as Pope Francis insists?*

Francis insists on a Church that looks forward. In the *Joy of the Gospel* he says that the Church is not a museum of mummies and he explains the need to get out of the tomb. Despite the five-decade challenge, the Church in Myanmar has never failed in her missionary duty. From 200,000 Catholics we have grown to 800,000. But we

also follow the advice of the Pope in accompanying the poor. Ours is a Church of the poor and for the poor. This social mission is vibrant in our dioceses. Pastorally most of the dioceses have diocesan plans, and are developing pastoral and social plans. We are also empowering our catechists – an army of nearly 3,000 men and women – to be socio-pastoral workers. Our work among the migrants and internally displaced persons has already taken Christ to them. Now we are involved in the work of "the Evangelized becoming the Evangelizers" that is empowering our laity to reach out to remote areas.

In substance, Francis noted, in the words of the people there is a "description of all the evil they have done". Thus, "the People of God, in this moment, blame themselves". They do not criticize "those who persecute us", or their enemies. Instead they look at themselves and say: "I blame myself before you, Lord, and I am ashamed". Such clear words also appear in the passage from Daniel: "O Lord, we are shamefaced".

The Pope indicated that this passage "makes us reflect on a Christian virtue, indeed more than one virtue". In fact "the capacity to blame oneself, self-blame" is "the first step to walking as a Christian". However, "we are all masters, we are all experts" when it comes to "justifying ourselves". We use expressions such as: "It wasn't me; no, it isn't my fault; yes, but not very much.... That's not how things are...".

In short, Francis said, "we all have an alibi" to justify "our shortcomings, our sins". What's more, he added, we so often respond with an "I don't know!" face, or with an "I didn't do it, it must have been someone else!" face. In other words, we are always ready to "play innocent". The Pope warned, however, that like this, "we don't go forward in the Christian life".

Thus, he reiterated, the capacity for self-blame is "the first step". Surely it is good to do so in confession with a priest. However, Francis asked, "before and after confession, in your life, in your prayer, are you able to blame yourself? Or is it easier to blame others?".

This experience, the Bishop of Rome pointed out, gives rise to something a bit odd but which, in the end, gives us peace and health. Indeed, "when we begin to look at what we are capable of, we feel bad, we feel disgust", and we ask ourselves: "Am I capable of doing this?". For example, "when I find envy in my heart and I know this envy is capable of speaking ill of another and morally killing him", I

have to ask myself: "Am I capable of it? Yes, I am capable!". This is precisely "how this knowledge begins, this wisdom to blame oneself".

Therefore, Francis said, "if we do not learn this first step of life, we will never make progress on the path of Christian life, of spiritual life". This is because "the first step" is "blaming oneself", even if unsaid and kept between "my conscience and me".

To illustrate, the Pope gave a practical example. When we pass by a prison, he said, we might think that the inmates "deserve it". But, he asked: "do you know that were it not for the grace of God, you would be there? Have you thought that you too are capable of doing the things that they did, even worse?". This "is to blame ourselves, not to hide from ourselves the roots of sin that are in us, the many things we are capable of doing, even if they aren't visible".

This attitude, Francis continued, "leads us to feel shame before God, and this is a virtue: shame before God". In order to feel ashamed, we must say: "Look, Lord, I am disgusted with myself, but You are great: to me belongs shame, to you – and I ask for it – mercy". Just as the Scripture says: "O Lord, we are shamefaced, for having sinned against you". We can also say, "because we are capable of sinning and of doing so many bad things: 'But yours, O Lord, our God, are compassion and forgiveness! Shame is mine, and mercy and forgiveness are yours'. It is a "dialogue with the Lord" that will "do us good during this Lenten season: self-blame".

"Let us ask for mercy", the Pope said then, referring to the day's Gospel Reading from Luke (6:36-38). Jesus "is clear: be merciful as your Father is merciful". After all, Francis explained, "when one learns to blame himself he is merciful with others". And he is able to say: "Who am I to judge him, if I am capable of doing worse things?". This is an important phrase: "Who am I to judge another?". This is understood in the light of Jesus' words: "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful", and with his call "not to judge". Instead, the Pontiff recognized, "how we like to judge others, to speak ill of them!". Yet the Lord is clear: "Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven". It is certainly not an easy road, which "begins with blaming oneself, it begins from that shame before God and from asking forgiveness from Him: ask forgiveness". Precisely "from that first step we arrive at what the Lord asks us: to be merciful, to judge no one, to condemn no one, to be generous with others".

From this perspective, the Pope prayed that "the Lord, in this Lenten season, give us the grace to learn to blame ourselves, each in his solitude", asking ourselves: "Am I capable of doing this? Am I capable of doing this, with this attitude? With this feeling that I have inside, am I capable of doing worse things?". He also invited this prayer: "Have compassion for me, Lord, help me to feel shame and give me mercy, so that I may be merciful with others".

A monument to the victims of the 2008 attack

## The martyrs of Orissa

The Christians of the village of Tiangia (Orissa) have built the first monument honouring the seven martyrs, victims of the anti-Christian pogrom of Kandhamal in 2008. Archbishop John Barwa of Cuttack-Bhubaneswar blessed the commemorative plaque in the presence of many priests and hundreds of faithful. "These seven martyrs", said the Archbishop, "are pillars of testimony for the people of Kandhamal and beyond. We thank God for giving us such men, who sacrificed their precious lives for the love of Jesus. Rather than give up their faith, they clung to Christ with passion. For us, they are a source of inspiration and hope".

The seven martyrs, all from Tiangia, are: Fr Bernard Dugal, Trinath Dugal, Bikram Nayak, Parikhit Nayak, Darasantha Pradhan, Dibyasing Dugal and Dinabandhu Pradhan. They were killed following the murder of the Hindu leader Saraswati Laxanananda on 23 August 2008 by a Maoist group. From the beginning, the Maoist group admitted to the murder, however the Hindu radicals blamed Christians, who – along with bishops, priests and nuns – were criticized by the guru for their social work with tribals and outcasts of proselytising.



International conference at the Pontifical Gregorian University on the challenges posed to evangelization



## The road to listening

RICHARD ROUSE

Listening, discerning, welcoming and serving, these are the four verbs weaving together the working sessions of the International Conference “Renewing the Church in a Secular Age: Holistic Dialogue and Kenotic Vision” held at the Pontifical Gregorian University under the High Patronage of the Pontifical Council for Culture as a key milestone in a project of *The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy*, 4-5 March 2015. With keynote addresses by Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi which focused on the “Word was made flesh” – theme of the Holy See’s Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2015 – and the kenosis (Philippians 2:5-11) and by Charles Taylor who spoke on authenticity, the organisers foresee a series of conversations outlining these characteristic verbs of the Church today.

Taylor, winner of the Templeton Prize in 2007, is best known for his tome *A Secular Age* now required reading for academics worldwide. Distinguishing between secularity (positive affirmation of the secular sphere), secularism (ideology desiring to remove religion from public life) and secularisation (historical process which once foresaw the decline of religion) following Taylor allows those interested in the New Evangelization – that is all of us – to read better the signs of the times and establish stronger bonds with our contemporaries; trying to make an alliance with men and women in their cultural contexts, the accusation is often raised that the post-conciliar church either imitated the secular or closed ranks in a conservative reaction following defensive identity processes. Instead, a third way, an approach balanced on the basis of the recognition of the complexities of the current historical situation, allows for multiple processes and different and various strategies, drawing on rich theological resources, in an engaging effective dialogue, such as will take place in the Courtyard of the Gentiles on “The Piazza and the Temple” (American Study Center, 6 March) analysing the coexistence of spiritual and secular needs, with Giuliano Amato, Charles Taylor, José Casanova, Alessandro Ferrara, Giacomo Marramao and François Bousquet.

Modernisation does not lead to religious decline, but to a pluralisation of the how we believe. A study of modernity teaches not so much about the separation of religion from the public square, or changes in ecclesial practice, but the emergence of a preference for subjective choice and per-

sonal, spiritual options. It is in light of this latter category, certainly in the West, that members of the *Council for Research in Values and Philosophy*, an organization founded and presided by George McLean, OMI, that in the past had the support and contributions of men of culture such as Paul Ricoeur and Hans-Georg Gadamer and today is helped by thinkers such as Charles Taylor, José Casanova, Tomáš Halík and other intellectuals coming from different continents, have identified four disjunctions whereby the People of God, they affirm, has suffered: between seekers and dwellers; personal, not just individual, responsibility playing against the aurora of a hierarchical call for obedience; praxis and ethics as historicised issues rather than universals; and finally a sphere of spiritual pluralities against certain rigid Christologies. To break out from the constrictions of the Western viewpoint, the scholars are now launching a series of research projects looking at the different secularisations taking place in Africa, Asia and Latin America. If the processes of diverse secularisations are the necessary starting points for our quests for self-understanding, growth and holiness, then it is necessary to turn to the support of the social sciences who give us that historicity: we are who we are, as much as who we would be and who we were.

The working sessions at the Pontifical Gregorian University, organized by members of its School of Philosophy, are put into a dialogical frame and will count on input from thinkers such as José Casanova, Hans Joas, Tomáš Halík, William Desmond, Adela Cortina, Juan Carlos Scannone and Louis Caruana just to name a few. The focus was on how we listen and to whom we listen, and how we understand the human person in midst of the ongoing scientific, digital and communicational revolutions. There was discernment on a biblical basis, particularly the beatitudes, and a stance of welcoming shaped into an embracing of both the enjoyable and the harsh realities of existential peripheries, using narrative, imagination and literature in an act of kenotic service. Concluding the conference Taylor delivered a keynote developing the theme of “Authenticity: The Life of the Church in a Secular Age” indicating pastoral ramifications for the People of God. Criticised as disjunctions in earlier times, these are rapidly becoming conjunctions, trademarks of the holistic Church in the era of Pope Francis; but further overcoming, renewing the Church, will require a stance of authenticity.

## Theology of the suffering servant

GEORGE FRANCIS MCLEAN

The general phenomenon of progressive secularization over the last 400 years must be seen in the light of: first, the broad human processes of the Reformation reacting against hierarchy, and the corresponding affirmation of individual authenticity and equality; second, the Enlightenment’s disjunction of human reason from the unitive influences of wisdom and faith; and third, democracy and human freedom in the evaluation and guidance of human action. All these came together after World War II upon the development of the pervasive personal communication system which bypassed the parish church as the dominant context for the formation of one’s personal outlook. Hence, it became especially common for young persons to set out on life with the attitude of seekers embarking on the exciting, if at times threatening, adventure of constructing their own life in their own terms. More threatening to their effort than the danger of occasional mistakes, they consider to be the imposition of a predetermined pattern of life or culture which one is destined to follow.

The first set of disjunctions/conjunctions begins then with the seekers in contrast to those focused on dwelling within the Church and its traditions. The enigmas of existence emphasized by contemporary theory and culture and the many and developing challenges to be faced in life generate in the seeker a sense of the inadequacy of universal laws. This leads increasingly to a search to build life with the individualistic coordinates of modernity.

Here the seekers can be seen less as having left the people of God, than as struggling to live the deep inspiration of the Spirit in facing their multiple responsibilities in the Church and the world, internal and external. The cost of their search for authenticity can be very high as it takes them beyond the following of authorities and the cultural attitudes of neighbors and confreres. Their need is not for a Church as an ideal institution, but one that is no longer enchanted and in many ways is a fallible, human and humane way of living the gospel values. This is a community marked not by power and control, but by acceptance and encouragement of those who look to it in the midst of the needs they experience in their search. Here Christ on the Cross is the kenotic model for the Church in

manifesting an endless willingness to suffer in order to serve.

Yet these same challenges lead others “as dwellers” to seek the constant guidance available in a Church tradition and the desire to have this articulated as amply as possible. This places Church leadership uncomfortably between two – and more – groups with quite different needs and expectations.

In terms of interior self-consciousness this is in effect the formation of one’s very identity as described in Charles Taylor’s *Sources of the Self*. Here the truly challenging task is to relate the ecclesial and the secular in ways that are mutually complementary and enriching. For example, can the role of the Church be not an alternative to that of the secular state but, as John Rawls and Jürgen



Ford Madox Brown, “Jesus Washing Peter’s Feet” (c. 1852-1856)

gen Habermas have come to see, a helpful enablement of the human democratic endeavor. Indeed one can go still further with Jürgen Habermas and Robert Bellah to recognize the presence of proto-religious modes of ritual and myth in the very origins of humanness itself, e.g., in the emergence of the ability to be conscious of and to express the unitive relation to others that founds and constitutes humane social life and behavior.

An alternate path sees living one’s Catholic identity no longer as being part of an institution that is superior and opposed to the efforts of the people to build their nation from the ground up, but rather in the supportive terms of leaven and narrative. This entails a theology of Church in the kenotic terms of suffering servant. Thus it might be regretted that the nation has become more of a law enforcing than a political entity built on the will of the people, and similarly that the Church has come to be more of a moral than a spiritual institution. Together they leave “a world without forgiveness and without project”.

At the Angelus the Pope speaks of the end of the Lenten journey

# Happiness comes after the Cross

And he calls for peace in Syria and Iraq, and an end to tension in Venezuela

*At the Angelus in St Peter's Square on Sunday, 1 March, the Pope spoke about the Gospel account of the Transfiguration and pointed to the aim of the Lenten journey of conversion which is, he said, "participation in Christ's glory". Jesus' path "always leads us to happiness". The following is a translation of the Pope's reflection, which was given in Italian.*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,  
Good morning.

Last Sunday the Liturgy presented Jesus tempted by Satan in the desert, but victorious over temptation. In the light of this Gospel, we are again made aware of our condition as sinners, but also of the victory over evil for those who undertake the journey of conversion and, like Jesus, want to do the Father's will. In this second Sunday of Lent, the Church points out to us the end of this journey of conversion, namely participation in the glory of Christ, which shines on the face of the obedient Servant, who died and rose for us.

The Gospel page recounts the event of the Transfiguration, which takes place at the height of Jesus' public ministry. He is on his way to Jerusalem, where the prophecies of the "Servant of God" and his redemptive sacrifice are to be fulfilled. The crowds did not understand this: presented with a Messiah who contrasted with their earthly expectations, they abandoned Him. They thought the Messiah would be the liberator from Roman domination, the emancipator of the homeland, and they do not like Jesus' perspective and so they leave Him. Neither do the Apostles understand the words with which Jesus proclaims the outcome of his mission in the glorious passion, they do not understand! Jesus thus chooses to give to Peter, James and John a foretaste of his glory, which He will have after the Resurrection, in order to confirm them in faith and encourage them to follow Him on the trying path, on the Way of the Cross. Thus, on a high mountain, immersed in prayer, He is transfigured before them: his face and his entire person irradiate a blinding light. The three disciples are frightened, as a cloud envelops them and the Father's voice sounds from above, as at the Baptism on the Jordan: "This is my beloved Son; listen to him" (Mk 9:7). Jesus is the Son-made-Servant, sent into the world to save us all through the Cross, fulfilling the plan of salvation. His full adherence to God's will renders his *humanity transparent to the glory of God, who is love.*

Jesus thus reveals Himself as the perfect icon of the Father, the radiance of his glory. He is the fulfillment of revelation; that is why beside Him appear transfigured, Moses and Elijah appear; they represent the Law and the Prophets, so as to signify that everything finishes and begins in Jesus, in his passion and in his glory.



Roberto Alabiso "Transfiguration" (2012)

Their instructions for the disciples and for us is this: "Listen to Him!". Listen to Jesus. He is the Saviour: follow Him. To listen to Christ, in fact, entails *taking up the logic of his Pascal Mystery*, setting out on the journey with Him to make of oneself a gift of love to others, in docile obedience to the will of God, with an attitude of detachment from worldly things and of interior freedom. One must, in other words, be willing to "lose one's very life" (cf. Mk 8:35), by giving it up so that all men might be saved; thus, we will meet in eternal happiness. The path to Jesus always leads us to happiness, don't forget it! Jesus' way always leads us to happiness. There

will always be a cross, trials in the middle, but at the end we are always led to happiness. Jesus does not deceive us, He promised us happiness and will give it to us if we follow His ways.

With Peter, James and John we too climb the Mount of the Transfiguration today and stop in contemplation of the face of Jesus to retrieve the message and translate it into our lives; for we too can be transfigured by Love. In reality, love is capable of transfiguring everything. Love transfigures all! Do you believe this? May the Virgin Mary, whom we now invoke with the prayer of the Angelus, sustain us on this journey.

At the conclusion of the Spiritual Exercises

## A piece of Elijah's mantle

The meditations on Friday morning, 27 February, in Ariccia were the last of the Spiritual Exercises in which the Pontiff and members of the Roman Curia participated. Meditations were led by Carmelite, Fr Bruno Secondin in the chapel of the House of Divin Maestro belonging to the Pauline Fathers. At the end of his reflection, Pope Francis thanked the preacher. "On behalf of everyone, myself included," the Pope said, "I would like to thank the Father, for his work with us in the exercises. It isn't easy to lead priests in [spiritual] exercises! We are all a little complicated, but you managed to do some sowing. May the Lord make these seeds that you gave us grow. And I also hope, and I wish

for us all that we may leave here with a little piece of Elijah's mantle, in our hands and in our hearts. Thank you, Father".

The last stop of the itinerary of reflection and prayer proposed by Fr Secondin was centered on the biblical narrative in the Second Book of Kings (2:1-14) which describes Elijah's final farewell to his disciples and to Elisha, his ascent in the chariot of fire and the start of the mission of Elisha, who disrobes himself and puts on the mantle of his master and, on the River Jordan, he is recognized as the true heir of the

*At the end of the Marian prayer, the Pope launched an appeal for peace in Syria and Iraq, and called for an end to social tension in Venezuela.*

Dear brothers and sisters, dramatic news of violence, kidnapping and harassment aimed at Christians and other groups continues to arrive from Syria and Iraq. I want to assure those suffering in these situations that we will not forget them, we are close to them and we are praying that a stop be put to this intolerable violence of which they are victims. Together with members of the Roman Curia last Friday I offered the last Mass of the Spiritual Exercises for this intention. At the same time I ask all, according to their capacities, to work to alleviate the suffering of those being tried, often only because of the faith they profess. Let us pray for these our brothers and sisters who are suffering for the faith in Syria and Iraq... Let us pray in silence....

I would also like to call to mind Venezuela, which is again undergoing moments of acute tension. I pray for the victims and, in particular, for the boy killed a few days ago in San Cristóbal. I exhort everyone to reject violence and to respect the dignity of every person and the sacredness of human life and I encourage them to take up the common path for the good of the Country, opening again space for encounter and sincere and constructive dialogue. I entrust that beloved nation to the motherly intercession of Our Lady of Coromoto.

I address a cordial greeting to all of you – families, parish groups, associations – pilgrims from Rome, from Italy and from different countries.

I wish a good Sunday to all. Don't forget, please, to pray for me. Have a good lunch and goodbye!



prophet. It is an intense story, filled with tenderness, in which the characteristic hardness of Elijah melts a little. The Prophet in some way learns – and we too should learn, Fr Secondin suggested "to offer embraces of hope and tenderness" – from his disciple who is affectionate and patient.