

L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO

WEEKLY EDITION  IN ENGLISH*Unicuique suum Non praevalent*

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Friday, 1 May 2015

Pope Francis speaks about the beauty of Christian marriage at the General Audience

At the wedding feast

God's "masterpiece" is the family. And at a wedding feast, Jesus "begins his own miracles with this masterpiece: a man and a woman". The Pope recalled this at the General Audience on Wednesday, 29 April, in St Peter's Square, reflecting on the beauty of Christian marriage and inviting the faithful to reflect on the motives which today push many young people not to marry. The following is a translation of the Pope's catechesis, which was given in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Good morning,

Our reflection on God's original plan for man and woman as a couple, after having considered the two narratives of the Book of Genesis, now turns directly to Jesus.

At the beginning of his Gospel, John the Evangelist narrates the episode of the wedding at Cana, at which the Virgin Mary and Jesus were present with his first disciples (cf. Jn 2:1-11). Jesus not only participated at that wedding, but "saved the feast" with the miracle of wine! Thus, the first of His prodigious signs, with which He reveals his glory, He performed in the context of a wedding, and it was an act of great sympathy for that nascent family, entreated by Mary's motherly care. This reminds us of the Book of Genesis, when God completes his



Gerard David, "The Marriage at Cana" (c. 1500 The Louvre)

work of creation and makes his masterpiece; the masterpiece is man and woman. And here at a marriage, at a wedding feast, Jesus begins his own miracles with this masterpiece: a man and a woman. Thus Jesus

teaches us that the masterpiece of society is the family: a man and a woman who love each other! This is the masterpiece!

Since the time of the wedding at Cana, many things have changed,

but that "sign" of Christ contains an ever valid message. Today it seems difficult to speak of marriage as a feast which is renewed in time, in the various seasons of the couple's lifetime. It is a fact that progressively fewer people are getting married; this is a fact: young people don't want to get married. In many countries the number of separations is instead increasing while the number of children decreases. The difficulty of staying together – both as a couple and as a family – leads to bonds being broken with ever increasing frequency and swiftness, and the children themselves are the first to suffer the consequences. Let us consider that the first victims, the most important victims, the victims who suffer the most in a separation are the children.

Should you feel from childhood that marriage is a "temporary" bond, unconsciously it will be so for you.

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The Holy Father expresses fraternal solidarity and support to the stricken population

Nepal continues to search for survivors

More than 4,800 people have been confirmed dead and one million left homeless after the horrible earthquake that struck Nepal on Saturday, 25 April. The country is on its knees as the search for possible survivors continues amid the rubble. Nepal's Prime Minister Sushil Koirala declared on Tuesday that the number of victims could increase to as high as 10,000. Koirala appealed to the international community to provide tents, medicine and health care assistance for the treatment and rehabilitation of the injured.

There is no electricity, telephone connections are intermittent, and food and water are becoming scarce. On Sunday, after reciting the Regina Caeli at midday, Pope Francis called for "the support of fraternal solidarity", while assuring his "closeness to the populations hit by a severe earthquake in Nepal and in bordering countries". I pray, the Pope said, "for the victims, for the wounded and for all those who are suffering because of this catastrophe". He asked the faithful to join him in asking "Our Lady to be near them". On Saturday, in a telegram signed by Secretary of State, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, sent to the Apostolic Vicar in Nepal, Bishop Paul Simick, the Pope was said to be "deeply saddened" by the event. The Pontiff, the telegram reads, "expresses his solidarity with all affected by this disaster and assures



those who grieve for deceased family members of his closeness in prayer". Pope Francis, the message continues, "offers encouragement to the civil authorities and emergency personnel as they continue their rescue efforts and assistance to those touched by this tragedy". The government of Nepal declared a state of

emergency and is coordinating rescue operations.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is seeking to understand what remains of Nepal's rich historical and artistic heritage. Irina Bokova, Director-General of the organization, indicated being "shocked by its devastating impact on the unique cultural heritage in the country, in particular extensive and irreversible damage at the World Heritage site of Kathmandu Valley".

On the international level, the United States announced on Tuesday that they would send \$10 million in aid to the country. China sent a team of 62 people to assist the devastated regions and has offered 20 million yuan (\$3.3 million) in humanitarian aid, including tents, blankets and generators. Also on Tuesday, the Pontifical Council *Cor Unum* distributed \$100,000 as an immediate initial aid contribution to assist the Nepalese people as they face the current crisis.

Women in society and the Church

The Marian dimension

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Good Shepherd Sunday

The risk
in choosing



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To Bishops of Namibia and Lesotho

The tall tree of faith

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To Bishops of Gabon

No ethnic discrimination

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VATICAN BULLETIN

AUDIENCES

Friday, 24 April

Cardinal Gerhard Ludwig Müller, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith

Members of the Bishops' Conference of Namibia and Lesotho, on a visit *ad Limina Apostolorum*:

– Archbishop Liborius Ndumbukuti Nashenda, OMI, of Windhoek, Namibia

– Archbishop Gerard Tlali Leroholi, OMI, of Maseru, Lesotho

– Bishop Philipp Pöllitzer, OMI, of Keetmanshoop, Namibia

– Bishop Augustinus Tumaole Bane, OMI, of Leribe, Lesotho

– Bishop John Joale Tlhomola of Mohale's Hoek, Lesotho

– Bishop Joseph Mopeli Sephamola, OMI, of Qacha's Nek, Lesotho

– Bishop Joseph Shipandeni Shikongo, OMI, titular Bishop of Capra, Vicar Apostolic of Rundu, Namibia

H.E. Mr Miloš Zeman, President of the Czech Republic, with his wife and entourage

Ms Ana Maria Freire

Saturday, 25 April

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

Archbishop Giuseppe Pinto, titular Archbishop of Anglona, Apostolic Nuncio in the Philippines

Msgr Fernando Chica Arellano, Permanent Representative to the United Nations Agencies for Food and Agriculture (FAO, IFAD, WFP)

Bishop António Augusto dos Santos Marto of Leiria-Fátima, Portugal

H.E. Mr Guillermo León Escobar Herrán, Ambassador of Colombia, for the presentation of his Letters of Credence

Monday, 27 April

Archbishop Bruno Musarò, titular Archbishop of Abari, Apostolic Nuncio in the Arab Republic of Egypt; Delegate of the Holy See to the League of Arab States

Archbishop Giorgio Lingua, titular Archbishop of Tuscania, Apostolic Nuncio in Cuba

Members of the Bishops' Conference of Benin on a visit *ad Limina Apostolorum*:

– Archbishop Antoine Ganyé of Cotonou

– Archbishop Pascal N'Koué of Parakou

– Bishop Eugène Cyrille Houndékou of Abomey

– Bishop François Gnonhossou, SMA, of Dassa-Zoumé

– Bishop Victor Agbanou of Lokossa

– Bishop Paul Kouassivi Vieira of Djougou

– Bishop Clet Feliho of Kandi

– Bishop Antoine Sabi Bio of Natitingou

– Bishop Martin Adjou

Maumouni of N'Dali

– Fr Jean-Benoît Gnambode, Diocesan Administrator of Porto Novo

H.M. Queen Silvia of Sweden, with her entourage

Prof. Riccardo Di Segni, Chief Rabbi of Rome

Tuesday, 28 April

H.E. Mr Rafael Correa Delgado, President of the Republic of Ecuador, with his entourage

CHANGES IN EPISCOPATE

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Eduardo Pinheiro da Silva, SDB, as Bishop of Jaboticabal, Brazil. Until now he has been titular Bishop of Gisipa and Auxiliary of Campo Grande, Brazil (22 Apr.).

Bishop Pinheiro da Silva, 56, was born in Lins, Brazil. He made his perpetual vows for the Salesian Society of Don Bosco on 13 January 1985 and was ordained a priest on 19 January 1991. He was ordained a bishop on 6 May 2005, subsequent to his appointment as titular Bishop of Gisipa and Auxiliary of Campo Grande, Brazil.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop David Eugene Fehlhauer of Victoria in Texas, USA. It was presented in accord with can. 401 § 1 of the Code of Canon Law (23 Apr.).

The Holy Father appointed Fr Brendan Cahill, from the clergy of Galveston-Houston, as Bishop of Victoria in Texas, USA. Until now he has been vicar for the clergy of the said Archdiocese (23 Apr.).

Bishop-elect Cahill, 51, was born in Coral Gables, USA. He holds a doctorate in dogmatic theology. He was ordained a priest on 19 May 1990. He has served in parish ministry and as: rector of St Mary's seminary; Archdiocesan director of the Secretariat for Clergy Formation and Chaplaincy Services; head of the Priests Personnel Board, and member of the presbyteral council.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Lawrence E. Brandt of Greensburg, USA. It was presented in accord with can. 401 § 1 of the Code of Canon Law (24 Apr.).

The Holy Father appointed Fr Edward C. Malesic, from the clergy of Harrisburg, USA, as Bishop of Greensburg, USA. Until now he has been judicial vicar and parish priest of the Holy Infant Parish in York Haven (24 Apr.).

Bishop-elect Malesic, 54, was born in Harrisburg, USA. He holds a licentiate in canon law. He was ordained a priest on 30 May 1987. He has served in parish ministry and as: chaplain of York College and of Millersville University; auditor; defender of the bond and canonical consultant of the ecclesiastical tribunal and adjunct judicial vicar.

The Holy Father appointed Msgr Josef Graf, from the clergy of Regensburg, Germany, as Auxiliary of Regensburg, assigning him the titular episcopal See of Inis Cathaig.

The new ambassador of Colombia presents his credentials

H.E. Mr *León Escobar Herrán* was born on 17 January 1944 and is married. He holds a degree in sociology, a doctorate in philosophy, letters and pedagogy, and a master's in education, philosophy and theology. He has served as: professor of the faculty of education, philosophy, theology, sociology and law at the Pontifical Bolivarian University of Medellín (1969-74); academic director at the University of St Bonaventura in Bogotá (1980-81); director general of the Ministry of Education (1982-84); president of the superior council of the District University of Bogotá (1988-90); member of the Holy See mission to the Comisión económica para América Latina y el Caribe (1998); assessor of the Bishops' Conference of Colombia (since 2007); member of the Theological Commission of the Latin American Episcopal Conference (1997-2011); consulor of the Pontifical Council for the Family (1998-2005); ambassador to the Holy See (1998-2007); consulor of the Pontifical Council for the Laity (2008-14); professor of political sociology at the Pontifical Gregorian University, Roma (since 2013).



On Saturday morning, 25 April, Pope Francis received H.E. Mr Guillermo León Escobar Herrán, Ambassador of Colombia, for the presentation of Letters by which he is accredited to the Holy See.

Audience with the President of the Czech Republic

On Friday morning, 24 April, Pope Francis received in the Apostolic Palace the President of the Czech Republic, Miloš Zeman, who subsequently met Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher, Secretary for Relations with States.

During the cordial meeting, held on the 25th anniversary of the restoration of diplomatic relations between the Holy See and the then-Czech and Slovak Federative Republic, mutual willingness to strengthen the good bilateral relations was confirmed, along with the hope of concluding negotiations with a view to stipulating a bilateral agreement. The desire to develop further cooperation between Church and State in areas of mutual interest especially in the fields of culture, education and social welfare, for the benefit of the entire nation, was expressed.

Attention then turned to the current international context and special attention was given to the situation of Christians and other minorities in the Middle East.



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cd.english@ossrom.va
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GIOVANNI MARIA VIAN

Editor-in-Chief
Giuseppe Fiorentino
Assistant Editor
Mary M. Nolan
Editor
Editorial office
via del Pellegrino, 00120 Vatican City
telephone +390669899300, fax +390669898675

TIPOGRAFIA VATICANA EDITRICE

L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO
don Sergio Pellini s.n.b.
Director General
Photo Service
photo@ossrom.va www.photo.va
Advertising Agency
Il Sole 24 Ore S.p.A.
System Comunicazione Pubblicitaria
Via Monte Rosa 91, 20149 Milano
segreteria@redazione.ossrom.va

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At the wedding feast

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In fact, many young people are led to reject the very plan of an irrevocable bond and of a lasting family. I believe that we must reflect very seriously on why so many young people "don't feel like" getting married. There is a culture of the provisional ... everything is provisional, it seems there is nothing definitive.

This matter of young people not wanting to marry is one of the emerging concerns of today: why aren't young people getting married? Why



is it that they frequently prefer cohabitation and "limited responsibility"? Why is that many – even among the baptized – have little trust in marriage and in the family? If we want young people to be able to find the right road to follow, it is important to try to understand this. Why do they have no trust in the family?

The difficulties are not only economic, although these are truly serious. Many believe that the changes that have occurred in these last decades were put in motion by the emancipation of women. But even this argument is invalid, it's false, it isn't true! It is a form of male chauvinism, which always seeks to dominate women. We give the bad impression that Adam gave, when God asked him: "Why did you eat the fruit of the tree?", and he said: "The woman gave it to me". It's the woman's fault. The poor woman! We must defend women! In fact, nearly all men and women would want stable emotional security, a solid marriage and a happy family. The family tops all the indices of well-being among young people; but, fearing mistakes, many do not want to even consider it; even being Christians, they do not consider the sacrament of matrimony, the single and unrepeatable sign of the covenant, which becomes a testimony of faith. Perhaps this very fear of failure is the greatest obstacle to receiving the Word of Christ, which promises his grace to the conjugal union and to the family.

The most persuasive testimony of the blessing of Christian marriage is the good life of Christian spouses and of the family. There is no better way to speak of the beauty of the sacrament! A marriage consecrated by God safeguards that bond between man and woman that God

has blessed from the very creation of the world; and it is the source of peace and goodness for the entire lifetime of the marriage and family. For example, in the first ages of Christianity, this great dignity of the bond between man and woman overcame an abuse then held normal, namely the husbands' right to repudiate their wives, even for reasons based on pretext or to humiliate. The Gospel of the family, the Gospel which proclaims this very Sacrament overcame this culture of customary repudiation.

The Christian seed at the root of equality between spouses must bear new fruit today. The witness of the social dignity of marriage shall become persuasive precisely in this way, the way of a testimony which attracts, the way of reciprocity between them, of complementarity between them.

For this reason, as Christians, we must become more demanding in this regard. For example: firmly support the right to equal pay for equal work; why is it taken for granted that women should earn less than men? No! They have the same rights. This disparity is an absolute disgrace! At the same time, recognize women's motherhood and men's fatherhood as an always precious treasure, for the good of their children above all. Likewise, the virtue of the hospitality of Christian families today takes on a crucial importance, especially in situations of poverty, degradation, and domest-

ic violence.

Dear brothers and sisters, do not be afraid to invite Jesus to your wedding feast, to invite Him to our home, that He may be with us and safeguard the family. And we mustn't be afraid to also invite his Mother Mary! When Christians marry "in the Lord", they are transformed into an effective sign of God's love. Christians do not marry for themselves alone: they marry in the Lord for the good of the entire community, society as a whole.

I will also speak about this beautiful vocation of Christian matrimony in the next catechesis.

SPECIAL GREETINGS

I offer an affectionate greeting to all the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors present at today's Audience, including those from England, Ireland, Sweden, Africa, Australia, Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Canada and the United States. May your pilgrimage to the Eternal City confirm you in love for our Lord and his Church. May God bless you all!

I offer a cordial welcome to Italian-speaking pilgrims. I greet the priests from Milan, the seminarians from Messina and Catania, and the students of the Vatican School of Library Science, in particular *Anita*



Carla Grasso "The Wedding at Cana" (1981)

and the *Centro Italiano Femminile della Sardegna*. May the visit to the Tombs of the Apostles foster in everyone sincere solidarity toward our brothers and sisters and the re-discovery of Christian joy.

I direct a special thought to *young people*, the *sick* and to *newlyweds*. Today we are celebrating the Feast of St Catherine of Siena, Patron of Italy and of Europe. Let us greet our Patron with a round of applause! May her life enable you, dear *young people*, to comprehend the meaning of a life lived for God; may her unshakable faith help you, dear *sick people*, to trust in the Lord in moments of discomfort; and may her strength before the powerful indicate to you, dear *newlyweds*, the values that truly matter in family life.

Spokeswoman for the USCCB Sr Mary Ann Walsh dies

The calm after the storm

GIULIA GALEOTTI

It was a memorable afternoon in March when – after climbing the Janiculum Hill – we entered apartment n. 4 at the North American College. Waiting for us was one of the most dynamic, determined and calmest women with whom we had ever conversed. It was 2013 and it was raining in Rome. While the cardinals were in the Sistine Chapel voting for Benedict XVI's successor, we finally met Sr Mary Ann Walsh, who was at the time spokeswoman for the U.S. Bishops' Conference. Sr Mary Ann died on Tuesday, 28 April, at the age of 67, after a long battle with cancer. She had been staying at a hospice located next to the convent of the Northeast Community of the Order of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas in Albany, New York, which she had entered at the age of 17.

Journalism was important to her from the start: "I have loved journalism since my childhood". "As a child", she said, "my heroine was Helen Thomas, a famous American reporter. I've always loved to write, and, as has happened to so many, I was very active in the school newspaper. My teacher continuously hammered two points into our heads: clarity and accuracy. She taught us a valuable lesson – and not only for those in the world of communications but for life in general. When I entered the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas – there were those who worked in healthcare and in school, as well as with the poor – I thought my career as a journalist was over. But... after all, working in the media and with the media was an apostolate for education!"

After working at *The Evangelist*, the newspaper of the Diocese of Albany, and then at Catholic News Service, beginning in 1983 as a correspondent in Rome and then as media director in Washington, Sr Walsh was the first woman to serve as director of media relations for the U.S. Bishops' Conference. Everything changed when she was chosen as media relations coordinator for World Youth Day 1993 in Denver. When they hired her, they said: "You like the Pope, you like young people, you like the media, you are just perfect for this role!". Thus Sr Mary Ann began working with the U.S. bishops at the media relations office, eventually becoming its director.

The author of several books, she also wrote for other publications including *The Huffington Post*, *The Washington Post*, *USA Today*, *America* magazine, *U.S. Catholic* and *Catholic Digest*, earning numerous prizes in journalism, including the prestigious 'St Francis de Sales Award', which is the Catholic Press Association's highest honor.

"I like working with the media", she said, despite the fact that she served as spokeswoman during some of the hardest moments in the life of the local Catholic Church, including the sex abuse scandal. "I love the challenge of the encounter. I love the world of journalism, when it voices a serious search for the truth".

She often said that she started as a journalist because she liked helping people. And so she did, leaving behind a treasure for the Church in her country. It was thanks to Sr Walsh that the world learned the other face of the Catholic Church in the U.S. – a smiling, friendly and proud face, one which was ready to open up and dialogue after a storm of scandals.

Joint statement from the seminar at the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences on safeguarding the planet

The new faces of slavery

On Tuesday, 28 April, the Pontifical Academy of Sciences – in collaboration with the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, Sustainable Development Solutions Network and Religions for Peace – hosted a workshop on climate change at the Vatican, entitled “Protect the Earth, Dignify Humanity: The Moral Dimensions of Climate Change and Sustainable Humanity”. The workshop was part of a summit on climate change at the Vatican which drew together religious leaders, academics, and political figures, including United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon. As planned, the workshop concluded with a joint statement “on the moral and religious imperative of dealing with climate change”.

We the undersigned have assembled at the Pontifical Academies of Sciences and Social Sciences to address the challenges of human-induced climate change, extreme poverty, and social marginalization, including human trafficking, in the context of sustainable development. We join together from many faiths and walks of life, reflecting humanity's shared yearning for peace, happiness, prosperity, justice, and environmental sustainability. We have considered the overwhelming scientific evidence regarding human-induced climate change, the loss of biodiversity, and the vulnerabilities of the poor to economic, social, and environmental shocks.

In the face of the emergencies of human-induced climate change, social exclusion, and extreme poverty, we join together to declare that: Human-induced climate change is a scientific reality, and its decisive mitigation is a moral and religious imperative for humanity;

In this core moral space, the world's religions play a very vital role. These traditions all affirm the inherent dignity of every individual linked to the common good of all humanity. They affirm the beauty, wonder, and inherent goodness of

the natural world, and appreciate that it is a precious gift entrusted to our common care, making it our moral duty to respect rather than ravage the garden that is our home;

The poor and excluded face dire threats from climate disruptions, including the increased frequency of droughts, extreme storms, heat waves, and rising sea levels;

The world has within its technological grasp, financial means, and know-how the means to mitigate climate change while also ending extreme poverty, through the application of sustainable development solutions including the adoption of low-carbon energy systems supported by information and communications technologies;

The financing of sustainable development, including climate mitigation, should be bolstered through new incentives for the transition towards low-carbon energy, and through the relentless pursuit of peace, which also will enable the shift of public financing from military spending to urgent investments for sustainable development;

The world should take note that the climate summit in Paris later this year (COP21) may be the last effective opportunity to negotiate arrange-



ments that keep human-induced warming below 2°C, and aim to stay well below 2°C for safety, yet the current trajectory may well reach a devastating 4°C or higher;

Political leaders of all UN member states have a special responsibility to agree at COP21 to a bold climate agreement that confines global warming to a limit safe for humanity, while protecting the poor and the vulnerable from ongoing climate change that gravely endangers their lives. The high-income countries should help to finance the costs of climate-change mitigation in low-income countries as the high-income countries have promised to do;

Climate-change mitigation will require a rapid world transformation to a world powered by renewable and other low-carbon energy and the sustainable management of ecosystems. These transformations should be carried out in the context of globally agreed Sustainable Development Goals, consistent with

ending extreme poverty; ensuring universal access for healthcare, quality education, safe water, and sustainable energy; and cooperating to end human trafficking and all forms of modern slavery;

All sectors and stakeholders must do their part, a pledge that we fully commit to in our individual capacities.

Canonized by Karekin II

The martyrs of the Metz Yeghém



It will perhaps be remembered as the largest canonization in history. On 23 April, on the eve of the official commemorations of the centenary of Metz Yeghém, “The Great Evil”, which beset the Armenian people in 1915, the Armenian Apostolic Church canonized the vast multitude of victims – estimated at approximately one and a half million Christians – of the immeasurable persecution perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire. The canonization ceremony held in Etchmiadzin, near the Armenian capital of Yerevan, was celebrated by H.H. Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholics of All Armenians. The ceremony was held in front of a building which dates back to the fourth century and is considered to be the oldest Christian Cathedral in the world. Representing Pope Francis at the rite, at which many Armenians of the diaspora were also present, was Cardinal Kurt Koch, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

VATICAN BULLETIN

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Until now he has been spiritual director of the Regensburg Major Seminary (24 Apr.).

Bishop-elect Graf, 57, was born in Riedenburg, Germany. He was ordained a priest on 10 October 1983. He holds a doctorate in theology. He has served in parish ministry.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Archbishop Michael Jarboe Sheehan of Santa Fe, USA. It was presented in accord with can. 401 § 1 of the Code of Canon Law (27 Apr.).

The Holy Father appointed Bishop John Charles Wester as Archbishop of Santa Fe, USA. Until now he has been Bishop of Salt Lake City, USA (27 Apr.).

Archbishop-elect Wester, 64, was born in San Francisco, USA. He was ordained a priest on 15 May 1976. He was ordained a bishop on 18 September 1998, subsequent to his appointment as titular Bishop of Lamiggiga and Auxiliary of San Francisco.

The Holy Father appointed Fr Edward Mapunda as Bishop of

Singida, Tanzania. Until now he has been treasurer and head of the health department of the said Diocese (28 Apr.).

Bishop-elect Mapunda, 50, was born in Mango, Tanzania. He holds a Master's in education. He was ordained a priest on 23 November 1997. He has served as formator and then rector of the Singida Minor Seminary.

RELATIONS WITH STATES

The Holy Father appointed Msgr Piergiorgio Bertoldi as Apostolic Nuncio in Burkina Faso and in Niger, at the same time raising him to the dignity of archbishop and assigning him the titular episcopal See of Spello. Until now he has been a Nunciature Counsellor (24 Apr.).

Archbishop-elect Bertoldi, 51 was born in Varese, Italy. He was ordained a priest on 11 June 1988. He holds a doctorate in canon law. He entered the diplomatic service of the Holy See on 1 July 1995. He has served at the Holy See diplomatic missions in Uganda, Republic of the Congo, Colombia, former

Jugoslavia, Romania, Iran and Brazil.

ROMAN CURIA

The Holy Father appointed Cardinal Dominique Mamberti, Prefect of the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura, as President of the Commission for Advocates (28 Apr.).

START OF MISSION

On 12 March 2015, Archbishop Eugene Martin Nugent, titular Archbishop of Domnach Sechnaill, began his mission as Apostolic Nuncio in Haiti with the presentation of his Letters of Credence to H.E. Mr Michel Joseph Martelly, President of the Republic.

NECROLOGY

Archbishop Raymond O. Roussin, SM, Archbishop emeritus of Vancouver, Canada, at age 75 (24 Apr.).

Bishop Thomas Joseph Connolly, Bishop emeritus of Baker, USA, at age 92 (24 Apr.).

Video message recorded for Caritas of Rome

The homeless take the stage

"An occasion for dialogue and meaningful exchange" with the people of the city about love and solidarity. Pope Francis thus emphasized the meaning of the play, "Se non fosse per te" [If it weren't for you], brought to the stage on Tuesday evening, 28 April, at the Brancaccio Theatre in Rome by homeless who are guests of the Caritas centres. In a video message to the actors, the Pontiff recalls that "Poverty is the great lesson that Jesus gave us" and invites the Church of Rome to be "an attentive and caring mother to the weak". The following is a translation of the Pope's words which were delivered in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Good evening,

Someone informed me that this evening in the prestigious Brancaccio Theatre you, who are guests of the Caritas centres of our Church of Rome, will be actors in a play entitled: "Se non fosse per te", which recounts the real and difficult experiences of abandonment and marginalization, which you yourselves have experienced. This theatrical initiative speaks of your love for sons and daughters, for parents, for life, for God.

I am happy to be among you in this way, to delight in your courage, to tell you not to lose trust and hope. God loves us, He loves everyone!

I consider the means by which you will be speaking to the city an occasion for dialogue and meaningful exchange. I am certain that on stage – revealing your hidden capacities, coached by experienced professionals who were able to help you actors draw out your talent and potential – you and those in the audience will be amazed at the treasures being offered. Who would think that a homeless person would have so much to teach us? Who would think that he or she could be a saint?

However, this evening you will make the stage a place from which to pass on valuable lessons on love,

on the needs of others, on solidarity, on how to find the love of the Father in difficulties.

Poverty is the great lesson that Jesus gave us when He went down into the waters of the Jordan to be baptized by John the Baptist. He didn't do so out of a need for penitence, for conversion; He did so to put himself in the midst of the people, the people in need of forgiveness, in the midst of us sinners, and to take upon himself the burden of our sins. This is the way that He chose to console us, to save us, to free us from our misery. What gives us true freedom, true salvation and true happiness is His compassionate, tender and sharing love. The Good Samaritan who gathers us, beaten by robbers.

St Gregory of Nyssa, a great theologian of antiquity, wrote: "Consider carefully the poor in the Gospel, and you will discover wherein lies their dignity: they take on the face of the Lord. In his mercy He has given them his face". And St Augustine said: "On earth Christ is indigent in the person of his poor. Thus one should fear the heavenly Christ and recognize Him on earth: on earth He is poor, in heaven He is rich. In his humanity He ascended into heaven as a rich man, but He

still remains among us in the poor man who suffers".

I too would like to make these words my own. You are not a burden for us. You are the treasure without which our attempts to discover the Lord's face are in vain.

Several days after my election, I received a letter offering congratulations and prayer from you. I remember immediately responding to you, telling you that I carry you in my heart and that I am at your service. I confirm those words. On that occasion I asked you to pray for me. I renew that request. I truly need it.



I also thank all those who work at our Caritas. I feel they are like my hands, the hands of the Bishop, in touching the Body of Christ. I also thank the many volunteers, from parishes in Rome and from other parts of Italy. In so doing, they discover a world that is calling for attention and solidarity: men and women seeking affection, relationships, dignity, and together to whom we all can experience charity by learning to welcome, listen and to give of ourselves.

How I would like this city, scattered in every age with people

permeated with the love of God – to think of St Lawrence (the poor were his jewels), St Pammachius (a Roman senator, a convert, completely dedicated to the service of the least), St Fabiola (the first to build a home for the poor in Porto Romano), St Philip Neri, Bl. Angelo Paoli, St Joseph Labre (a wayfarer), and Don Luigi Di Liegro (founder of our Caritas in Rome) – I was saying, how I would like Rome to be able to shine of "pietas" for the suffering, of welcome for those who flee from war and death, of availability, of smiles and magnanimity for those who have lost hope.

How I would like the Church of Rome to be ever more an attentive and caring mother to the weak. We all have weaknesses, all of us have them, each of us has our own. How I would like, when a poor person enters the church, that prayerful parish communities would kneel in veneration in the same manner as when the Lord enters! How I would like this, that we touch the flesh of Christ present in the

poor of this city!

With your offering, this evening's theatre product, I am certain, you will be helping these sentiments to grow. Thank you!

Pending the opportunity to meet you in person, just as recently took place in the Sistine Chapel, I convey my paternal blessing.

May the Lord help us to recognize his face in the poor! May the Virgin Mary accompany us on this journey! And I ask all of you, please: do not forget to pray for me! Thank you!

The crisis of secularization in the eyes of Ian McEwan

The lives of others

LUCETTA SCARAFFIA

The crisis of secularization, which often takes the form of solitude and the loss of the meaning of life, is now being discovered and told in literature. In certain cases these stories are not just simply told, they cry out. Two French authors, Michel Houellebecq and Emmanuel Carrère, garnered much success in their latest book on two failed instances of returning to the Catholic faith. Then there is English author Ian McEwan whose beautiful novel, *The Children Act* (2014), literally cries out in anguish.

It is a classic case, an issue of bioethics and the law, which is beginning to occur with increasing frequency and which forces one to choose between science and religion. It is the story of Adam – a teenager just shy of becoming a legal adult – who is dying of leukaemia. A transfusion could save his life and allow his treatment to continue, but his

parents refuse for religious reasons. Called to decide Adam's fate is a successful high court judge, who is so passionate about her work that she forgoes motherhood and neglects her marriage.

The boy's story unfolds as her marriage takes a downturn and gaping void suddenly opens in the quiet life of this wealthy and prominent woman. It also coincides with the judge's work in family law, where she sees an ever-increasing number of couples applying for divorce.

Standing beside this failure is Adam's problematic but close-knit and loving family, which rediscovered the meaning of life and marriage after becoming Jehovah's Witnesses. Saving the life of this young boy at all costs means for him and his relatives, calling into doubt their powerful convictions about life.

It is not about superstition or circumvention by the elder Jehovah's Witnesses, but about the faithfulness of those who have responded to a

deepfelt need. The judge understands this perfectly and thus it is clear to her that scientific reasoning is not a strong enough basis for a verdict that would invalidate those beliefs. For this reason, she decides to meet the boy personally in the hospital. There, through music and poetry, she discovers a deep connection with Adam, who is a poet and aspiring musician. It is the music and verses they sing together which reveal to the boy his desire to live and to her the reason for which she must compel him to undergo the transfusion.

After his recovery, Adam begins to feel restless and seeks answers from the judge who, having saved him, feels entirely responsible for his life. Although she is fascinated by the young boy himself she runs away from this responsibility, as the situation forces her to face the fact that she denied motherhood. She feels as if she cannot answer such a demanding and profound question.



Edward Hopper, "Chair Car" (1965, detail)

The novel is dense with profound morality. On the one hand, the author highlights the burden of those who make important bioethical decisions regarding the lives of others. On the other hand, McEwan reveals the dramatic situation of a society which only knows how to destroy faith, but one which does not have the answers to the real questions posed by human existence.

Women in society and the Church

Understanding the Marian dimension

MARGARET HARPER MCCARTHY*

The great Swiss theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar once wrote: "The Catholic Church is perhaps humanity's last bulwark of genuine appreciation of the difference between the sexes. In the dogma of the Trinity, the Persons must be equal in dignity in order to safeguard the distinction that makes the triune God subsistent love; in a similar way the Church stresses the equal dignity of man and woman, so that the extreme oppositeness of their functions may guarantee the spiritual and physical fruitfulness of human nature. Every encroachment of one sex into the role of the other narrows the range and dynamics of humanly possible love, even when this range transcends the sphere of sexuality, birth and death and achieves the level of the virginal relationship between Christ and his Church" (*New Elucidations*).

Pope Francis writes: "the feminine genius is needed in all expressions in the life of society," emphasizing their contribution "both in the Church and in social structures" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 103). This assertion by our Holy Father coupled with his call that women actively become a "more incisive presence" and "carry their profile forward" has provoked many questions regarding what this might look like, concretely speaking.

The first step in understanding the relationship between women and society must be to value and privilege the work specific to a woman – the work tied to her conceiving, bearing, nursing, and raising children. Having and raising a family affect women differently than men and require, on the part of the woman, time – and not just "quality time," but quantity time. It was for this reason Cardinal Ratzinger, then head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, wrote in his letter to the bishops, *On the Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and in the World* (2004): "It cannot be forgotten that the interrelationship between... family and work... has for women characteristics different from those in the case of men. The harmonization of the organization of work and laws governing work with the demands stemming from the mission of women within the family is a challenge. The question is not only legal, economic, and organizational; it is above all a question of mentality, culture, and respect. Indeed, a just valuing of the work of women within the family is required. In this way, women who freely desire will be able to devote the totality of their time to the work of the household without being stigmatized by society or penalized financially, while those who wish also to engage in other work may be able to do with an appropriate work schedule and not have to choose between relinquishing their family life or enduring continual stress, with negative consequences for one's own equilibrium and the harmony of the family" (*On The Collaboration of Men and Women*, 13).

Next, it is vital to recognize that women are already in society

through their specific work of giving life a home. Indeed women generate society, since the family, as the social doctrine of the Church insists, is society's "first and vital cell". Valuing the feminine genius for society first requires the recovery of the vitality of the home, much of which has been lost due to many modern economic and urban trends. In this light, the truest test of whether we have successfully "brought women into society" should not be how visible or statistically represented she is in the "work place" (i.e., in board rooms, public offices, etc.), but rather how well these places are transformed and domesticated thanks to her specific relation to it.

The role of the woman in society, however, is not reduced to the question of whether or not a woman stays in the home. Ultimately, the relationship that the feminine genius has to society is to "humanize structures" (*Letter to Women*, 2), to make them more home-like. Edith Stein said that "the participation of women in the most diverse professional disciplines could be a blessing for the entire society, private or public, precisely if the specifically feminine ethos would be preserved" ("Ethos of Women's Professions" in *The Collected Works of Edith Stein* vol. 2, [Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 1996], p. 50-51). Indeed, according to Stein, women would provide "a blessed counter-balance precisely here where everyone is in danger of becoming mechanized and losing his humanity" (*ibid.* p. 50). It is this kind of a presence that is needed in public places. We should repeat that this need is not met by a mere statistical presence of women. It is a sad fact that many of today's "public women" perpetuate the un-homelike character of the world through their actions directed specifically against the family and its home.

In order to understand what a "more incisive female presence in the Church" might be, we must first recognize and value the Church in its feminine reality, in what has been called the "Marian dimension," as Hans Urs von Balthasar called it. The "Marian dimension" of the laity or "common priesthood" is that secular dimension which makes the Church grow by making it "present and operative in those places and circumstances where only through them [the laity] can it become the salt of the earth" (*Lumen Gentium*, 33; *Mulieris Dignitatem*, 27). It is the Marian dimension that makes the Church, and thus the world, 'home-like' in a new way, by helping the world "to be" and to grow according to its deepest calling.

Naturally, the Marian dimension does not exist without the Petrine dimension, which "embodies Christ who comes to the Church to make her fruitful," and thus "guarantees the constant flow of life from [Christ] to her" (*Theo-Drama* III, 354). But this Petrine function emerges from within the Marian dimension and is in service of it. On this point, Balthasar insisted on the priority of the Marian dimension which was not only chronological (beginning as it did with the Annunciation) but also ontological, since Mary was given to the Apostles (at the Cross) as their Mother.

From the perspective of this "spousal" understanding of the Church, we note that being a member of the Marian dimension of the Church one is already in the Church and a full participant thereof. Thus, in speaking about the presence of women or any layperson for that matter in the Church, we have to resist certain tendencies towards clericalism, which gives them ecclesial busy work so as to feel "more involved," as if they were not already.

Clericalist tendencies curtail the openness of the Church to the world and the fruitfulness it can bear in it the very thing the Petrine dimension exists to serve. The presence of women/laity in the Church, then, is first secured by their "staying in their place," in the Marian dimension at the heart of the world.

That said, there is a place for laity to be called "in different ways to more immediate cooperation in the apostolate of the hierarchy, like those men and women who helped the apostle Paul in the Gospel, laboring much in the Lord" [cf. Phil. 4:3; Rom. 16:3ff] (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 33; *Mulieris Dignitatem*, 27). And insofar as the laity is consulted in an official capacity by the hierarchical church, there is nothing truly novel in consulting women. However, if we consider the participation of lay women as such, we may be able to put our finger on what essential purpose such involvement might have beyond "including everyone".

Analogous to the role of women in society, a more immediate cooperation of women as women in the apostolate of the hierarchy "where important decisions are made" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 103) could be a humanizing force correcting tendencies towards bureaucratic clericalism and careerism. While the Church's conception of authority has nothing to do with "power," as commonly understood, there is often a temptation to identify sacramental power with power in general, or power as domination (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 104). In view of this, a feminine presence would help to remind 'Peter' of what can easily be forgotten. In seeing the feminine church, 'Peter' is reminded of that to which he owes himself and that which he serves; and he is reminded that his "decisions" are all made within a prior "decision," the fiat of Mary, as Newman said. "Bringing forward" the profile of women would undoubtedly exclude any suggestion that women are gradually moving toward those offices which are specifically and exclusively male (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 104) as that would eliminate their presence as women and expand the very clericalism it is meant to correct.

Ultimately, in order to authentically address what it looks like for women to "carry their profile forward," we must always begin by affirming the "difference between the sexes" as the only "guarantee of the spiritual and physical fruitfulness of human nature." Any consideration of the question must take seriously both the pressures of the dominant culture as well as the woman as such, as a being apt for motherhood who makes a home for the human being in the deepest sense. Internal to this understanding of the feminine genius, we see that it is already both societal and ecclesial, and that the value of the woman "stepping forward" in a more public way is to make the world and the Church more home-like not less so.

*Assistant Professor at the John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family in Washington, D.C.

Cardinal Turkson at a conference on faith perspectives

We need female leaders

Women have a decisive role in building bridges in conflicts and in indiscriminately alleviating suffering, in teaching those at war to say no to violence; and in fostering peace. Cardinal Peter Kodwo Appiah Turkson, President of the Pontifical Council of Justice and Peace, said this in his address to the conference, "Women's Leadership in Conflict Resolution: Faith Perspectives". The meeting, held on 14 April at the Pontifical University of St Thomas Aquinas, was organized by the U.S. Embassy to the Holy See, the Russell Berrie Foundation and the John Paul II Center for Interreligious Dialogue.

At the conference the Cardinal affirmed that the role of women is crucial to sustainable peace, especially in emerging countries. Women are called to the great challenge of establishing relations between enemies in times of war and promoting the reconstruction of society in places of conflict. The cardinal then underlined how these abilities are derived from the fact that "in God's plan they have been created to welcome new life and to be the creative echo of love that gives all." Women, he added, must work every day to mediate peace within their families and at their places of work.



To Bishops of Namibia and Lesotho on their visit 'ad Limina Apostolorum'

The tall tree of faith

The Pope's concern for the AIDS epidemic and for broken families

"From the deserts of Namibia to the high peaks of Lesotho, the tall tree of faith grew" thanks to the sacrifice of many missionaries, who were sustained equally by generations of indigenous coworkers. Pope Francis spoke about this to the bishops of the two countries whom he received in audience on Friday morning, 24 April, on the occasion of their visit 'ad Limina Apostolorum'. The following is the English text of the Pope's consigned address.

Dear Brother Bishops,

I greet you, the pastors of Lesotho and Namibia, in the grace and peace of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, on your visit to pray at the threshold of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul. By this visit you express your desire to deepen the bonds of communion with the Successor of Peter and the See of Rome. I thank Archbishop Lerotoli and Archbishop Nashenda for their kind words offered on your behalf and in the name of all entrusted to your care.

You have come to Rome from the cities, towns and villages of Lesotho and Namibia, lands known for their flourishing Christian faith. The Holy Spirit planted the seeds of faith through the labours and sacrifices of many missionaries, who were sustained equally by generations of indigenous coworkers in the vineyards of the Lord. Your lands often presented great challenges, both environmental and social, but your Christian forebears persevered so that green shoots should spring up "like grass amid waters, like willows by flowing streams" (Is 44:4). From the deserts of Namibia to the high peaks of Lesotho, the tall tree of faith grew, giving God's protection and shelter to many souls, nourished as it is by the waters of grace.

Your countries are rightly known for their churches and chapels, parishes, mission stations and outstations, which draw many to a community life centered on prayer and work. Renowned too are your numerous schools at every level, your clinics and hospitals, built with love

and faithfulness from the materials of Namibia's soil and Lesotho's mountains. I encourage you to continue supporting and nurturing these great blessings, even when resources are sparse, for the Lord promises that he will not fail to bless us: "I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon your descendants, and my blessing on your offspring" (Is 44:3).

I know that your communities face many challenges daily, and I am sure that this weighs heavily on your hearts. Strengthen them in love to overcome selfishness in private or public life; be generous in bringing them the tenderness of Christ where threats to human life occur, from the womb to old age – and I think particularly of those suffering with HIV and AIDS. In all of this, "for their formation in Christian virtues and their growth in holiness" (*Africae Munus*, 109) the faithful entrusted to your care will look to you and your priest coworkers. By your devotion to them, in turn, you will "not only win them to the cause of Christ but also make them protagonists of a renewed African society" (*ibid.*).

I think too of Christian families fragmented due to employment far away from home, or because of separation or divorce. I urge you to continue offering them help and guidance. Be of fresh resolve in preparing couples for Christian matrimony, and in constantly sustaining families by offering generously the Church's Sacraments – ensuring in a particular way that the Sacrament of mercy is widely available. I thank you for your efforts in promoting healthy family life in the face of distorted views that emerge in contemporary society. May we all help to form families who can be purveyors of peace in the world; for "the family is the best setting for learning and applying the culture of forgiveness, peace and reconciliation" (*ibid.*, 43).

From healthy families will come numerous priestly vocations, families where men have learned "to love inasmuch as they [have been] un-



conditionally loved... [having learned] respect... justice... the role of authority expressed by parents [and] loving concern for the members who are weaker" (*ibid.*, 42-43). The children of such families will more readily be open to a life of unconditional service to the family of the Church.

In a time of an apparent decrease in vocations to the priesthood and to religious life, it is important to speak openly about the fulfilling and joyful experience of offering one's life to Christ. For when your Christian communities are built up by your own continued example of "living in truth and joy your priestly commitments, celibacy in chastity and detachment from material possessions" (*ibid.*, 111), then vocations to the priesthood and the consecrated life will most certainly abound. Continue, too, the demanding work of guiding, with personal and paternal care, every vocation properly discerned as well as all your priests already ordained, so that with the nourishment of ongoing formation these coworkers in the Lord's fields may be nurtured and sustained throughout their priestly lives. I ask you to convey to them my spiritual closeness and prayerful support.

Careful spiritual attention in developing pastoral plans needs to be offered to the poorest in your societies (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, 33); I have found that "whenever our in-

terior life becomes caught up in its own interests and concerns, then there will be no more place for the poor" (*ibid.*, 2). I ask you to be particularly mindful of those most in need in your Churches, entrusting all your initiatives to God's care, for he is "able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that you may always have enough of everything and may provide in abundance for every good work" (2 Cor 9:8). In living this way, you will help all the faithful discover the greatest richness: the love of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

I give thanks, with you, to Almighty God for the continued witness and service of so many communities of religious brothers and sisters who are vital to the praying heart of the Church, along with the many committed sodalities and other lay associations in the Church in Lesotho and Namibia. For just as we have relied on them in building up the Church, both materially and spiritually, so now their role becomes ever more indispensable.

I urge you, finally, to persevere as men of deep and constant prayer, in the way of Blessed Joseph Gerard, who listened to the promptings of the Holy Spirit in all matters. Prayer precedes and leads to authentic evangelization. As you know from experience, when the Church summons all Christians to constantly take up anew the task of evangelizing the world, "she is simply pointing to the source of authentic personal fulfilment" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 10); that is, she is showing us the path to our deepest happiness.

Dear Brothers, on returning home may you be like the tree planted by streams of water, yielding fruit in due season, whose leaves do not wither; may you prosper in all that you do (cf. Ps 1). May your visit here lead you to bring Christ's healing mercy ever more abundantly to all for whom you have care.

Commending you and the faithful whom you serve in Lesotho and Namibia to the loving intercession of Mary, Mother of the Church, who rekindles our hearts in service of her Son, I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing as a pledge of peace and joy in the Risen Lord. To him be glory for ever and ever.



Quiver Tree Forest near Keetmanshoop, Namibia



On Good Shepherd Sunday the Pope ordains nineteen men to the priesthood

The risk in choosing

Priests are in the confessional to forgive not condemn

"Imitate the Father who never tires of forgiving", Pope Francis said to the 19 men he ordained on Sunday, 26 April, in St Peter's Basilica. Delivering the prescribed homily from the "Rite of Ordination for Priests", the Pope added a few comments of his own regarding the ministry of Reconciliation: "I ask you never to tire of being merciful. You are in the confessional to forgive, not to condemn!". He also passed to give the newly ordained priests a piece of advice: "may your homilies touch the heart of the people, because they come from your heart", he said. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's address, which was delivered in Italian.

Beloved Brothers, These our sons have been called to the dignity of the Priesthood. It will do us good to reflect a little on the ministry to which they will be elevated in the Church. As you well know, the Lord Jesus is the one and only Great High Priest of the New Testament; but in him, God has made his entire holy people a royal priesthood. All of us! Nevertheless, among his disciples, the Lord Jesus wills to choose certain ones to carry out a priestly office publicly in the Church, in his name and on behalf of mankind, in order that they may continue his personal mission as Teacher, Priest and Shepherd.

As, indeed, for this reason He was sent by the Father, He thus, in his turn, sent into the world first the Apostles, then the Bishops and their successors, to whom he ultimately gave the presbyters as collaborators. Joined with them in the priestly ministry, they are called to the service of the People of God.

They have reflected upon this vocation of theirs, and now come to receive the holy orders of the presbytery. And the bishop takes a risk – he risks! – in choosing them, as the Father risked for each one of us.

Indeed, in being configured to Christ the eternal High Priest, and joined to the priesthood of their Bishop, they will be consecrated as true priests of the New Testament, to preach the Gospel, to shepherd God's people, to preside at worship, and especially to celebrate the Lord's Sacrifice.

For your part, you who are about to be raised to the Order of the Priesthood, consider that in exercising the ministry of sacred doctrine you will

share in the mission of Christ, the one Teacher. Impart to everyone the Word of God which you have received with joy. Diligently read and meditate on the Word of the Lord, that you may believe what you read, teach what you have learned in faith, and practice what you teach.

May this be the nourishment of the People of God; may your homilies not be boring, may your homilies touch the heart of the people because they come from your heart, because what you're telling them is what you carry in your heart. It is in this way that the Word of



for it is united to the sacrifice of Christ, which, through your hands, in the name of the whole of the Church, is offered up in a bloodless way on the altar in the celebration of the Holy Mysteries.

When you celebrate the Mass, understand, therefore, what you do. Do not do it in haste! Imitate what you celebrate – it is not an artificial rite, an artificial ritual – so that, participating in the Mystery of the Lord's death and Resurrection, you may bear the death of Christ in your members and walk with Him in the newness of life.

Through Baptism you gather new faithful into the People of God. Baptism should never be refused to a person who asks for it! Through the Sacrament of Penance you forgive sins in the name of Christ and the Church. And I, in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord and of his Spouse, the Holy Church, ask you all to never tire of being merciful. You are in the confessional to forgive, not to condemn! Imitate the Father who never tires of forgiving. With Chrism oil you will comfort the sick; in celebrating the sacred rites and raising up the prayer of praise and supplication at various hours of the day, you will become the voice of the People of God and of all humanity.

Remembering that you have been chosen from among men and constituted on their behalf to attend to the things of God, exercise the priestly ministry of Christ with joy and genuine love, with the sole intention of pleasing God and not yourselves. It is unseemly when a priest lives for his own pleasure and "struts like a peacock!"

Finally, participating in the mission of Christ, Head and Shepherd, in filial communion with your Bishop, seek to bring

the faithful together into one single family – may you be ministers of unity in the Church, in the family – so that you may lead it to God the Father through Christ in the Holy Spirit. Always keep before your eyes the example of the Good Shepherd who came not to be served but to serve, not to rest in his own comforts but to go forth, and who came to find and save those who were lost.

God is passed on and thus your teaching will be a joy and support to Christ's faithful; the fragrance of your lives will be your testimony, because examples edify, whereas words without examples are empty, mere ideas that never reach the heart and even do harm: they do no good! May you continue the sanctifying work of Christ. Through your ministry, the spiritual sacrifice of the faithful is made perfect

From four continents

One by one, 19 men said "here I am" when they were called by name at the Rite of Ordination on Sunday morning, placing their lives at the service of the Church. "When you were a child God began his work in you and he brings it to fruition", Pope Francis said, clasping each of them by the hand and thereby officially welcoming them as candidates to the presbyteral order. After the opening procession, he blessed them one by one with incense when they came to the Altar of the Confession. Before Mass, the Pope met with each of them in the chapel of the Pietà to share a few moments of preparation and prayer. The new priests – ordained on Good Shepherd Sunday and the 6th World Day of Prayer for Vocations – hail from four continents. The youngest of the group was 27-year-old Sony George Kappalumackal of the Syro-Malabar Rite in the Diocese of Thamarassery, located in the State of Kerala, India. Also representing Asia was Michael Junsoo Byeon of South Korea, who entered the seminary in 2005 and has served in pastoral ministry in his homeland. Michael will serve as a priest of the Diocese of Rome. He studied at the diocesan missionary Redemptoris Mater College.

Eight of the new priests are from Rome: Elia Antonio Del Prete, Diego Lofino, Giacomo Salza, Davide Maria Tisato, Fabrizio Vittoria – who at the age of 33 was the oldest of the group – and Filippo Zughetti. There were also two South Americans who studied at the Redemptoris Mater: Alonso Ojeda Agudelo of Colombia – who began his vocation in Japan, where he stayed for six years before coming to Rome – and Leonel Alejandro Torres Lara of Chile. Among the other men who will serve in the Pope's diocese are three who studied at the Pontifical Roman Seminary: Paolo D'Argenio and Michele Ferretti both from Rome, and Giovanni Lo Giudice from Messina, who came to Rome to study sociology but then entered the seminary after being captivated by his aunt and uncle's parish priest in Rome. Milton Mauro Vera Roa of Chile also studied in Rome at the Seminary of Madonna del Divino Amore.

Four priests of the Congregation of the Family of Disciples came from far away to serve in Italy: Michelin Avisoa and Jean Norbert Randriantanelison of Madagascar, and Adolfo Sergio Izaguirre Leocadio and Crisanto Crispin Montalvo Jimenez of Peru. Lastly there was a young Conventual Minor, Stjepan Brčina, who is originally from Drienča in the Archdiocese of Sarajevo. Among those present at Mass were many cardinals and bishops, 300 priests, including the newly ordained priests' superiors and parish priests, as well as their friends and families.

At the end of Mass, Francis again greeted the 19 men – now priests – embracing each one.

Francis remembers his beloved predecessor at the Regina Caeli

That strong and holy voice

Prayers for earthquake victims in Nepal

After celebrating Mass in the Vatican Basilica, Pope Francis appeared at the window of the study of the Apostolic Palace to recite the Regina Caeli with the faithful present in St Peter's Square. He took the opportunity to invite everyone to rediscover in the figure of Jesus: "the Good Shepherd" and God's "paternal solicitude for each one of us". The following is a translation of the reflection, which was given in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning,

This day, the Fourth Sunday of Easter, called "Good Shepherd Sunday", invites us each year to rediscover, with ever new astonishment, how Jesus defined himself, reading it again in the light of his passion, death and resurrection. "The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep" (Jn 10:11); these words are wholly fulfilled when Christ, freely obeying the will of the Father, is immolated on the Cross. The significance that He is "the Good Shepherd" thus becomes completely clear: He gives life. He offered his life in sacrifice for us: all for you, for you, for you, for me, for everyone! And for this reason He is the Good Shepherd!

Christ is the true shepherd, who fulfills the loftiest model of love for the flock: He freely lays down his own life, no one takes it from Him (cf. v. 18), but He gives it for the sheep (v. 17). In open opposition to false shepherds, Jesus presents himself as the one true shepherd of the people. A bad

pastor thinks of himself and exploits the sheep; a good shepherd thinks of the sheep and gives himself. Unlike the mercenary, Christ the pastor is a careful guide who participates in the life of his flock, does not seek other interests, has no ambition other than guiding, feeding and protecting his sheep. All of this



at the highest price, that of sacrificing his own life.

In the figure of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, we contemplate the Providence of God, his paternal solicitude for each one of us. He does not leave us on our own! The result of this contem-

To the John Paul II Foundation

The key is solidarity

Solidarity was a key word of John Paul II's Pontificate. Members of the his namesake foundation were received in audience in the Clementine Hall on Saturday, 25 April, two days before the first anniversary of the Polish Pope's canonization. Francis challenged them to keep his predecessor's "spiritual legacy" alive. The following is a translation of Pope Francis' address, which was delivered in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I welcome you, members and friends of the John Paul II Foundation. I thank Cardinal Rylko for introducing our meeting and I thank everyone for the commitment you make in carrying out the initiatives of the Foundation and safeguarding its spirit. Also, heartfelt thanks for this painting of the Merciful Jesus.

The canonization of Pope John Paul II has given new impetus to your work, at the service of the Church and of evangelization. It has made him, if possible, even more universal, as is universal the worship which the People of God now render him. You offer a valuable contribution so that

the spiritual legacy of this holy Pontiff may continue to make fruitful the great field of the Church and to sustain her journey in history.

I thank you in particular for the educational initiatives that you carry out for the young people. Indeed, John Paul II always had great love for young people and special pastoral care for them. You are instrumental in ensuring that his charisma and his fatherhood continue to bear fruit.

You also offer to priests and lay people precious opportunities to enrich their formation, in order to be more prepared to accompany the communities with regard to the cultural and pastoral challenges of our time. For this purpose you are also able to draw from the rich magisterium of social doctrine which John Paul II left us, and which shows itself more current than ever. Suffice it to think of one of the key words of his magisterium, which is "solidarity". A word which one may have expected to wane, but which in reality today preserves all of its prophetic power.

For this reason it is important that, first in the "network" of the Founda-

tion of Jesus the true and good Shepherd, is the exclamation of poignant astonishment that we find in the Second Reading of the day's Liturgy: "See what love the Father has given us..." (1 Jn 3:1). It is truly a surprising and mysterious love, for by giving us Jesus as the Shepherd who gives his life for us, the Father has given us all of the greatest and most precious that He could give us. It is the purest and most sublime love, for it is not motivated by necessity, is not conditioned on accounting, is not attracted by a self-interested desire for exchange. Before this love of God, we feel immense joy and we open ourselves to recognizing how much we have freely received.

But it is not enough to contemplate and give thanks. It is also necessary to follow the Good Shepherd. In particular, those whose mission is to be a guide in the Church – priests, bishops, popes – are called to take on not the mentality of manager but that of servant, in imitation of Jesus who, in emptying himself, saved us with his mercy. Also called to this way of pastoral life, that of a good shepherd, are the new priests of the Diocese of Rome, whom I had the joy of ordaining this morning in St Peter's Basilica.

Two of them are here to thank you for your prayers and to greet you ... [two newly ordained priests appear at the windows beside the Holy Father].

May Mary Most Holy obtain for me, for the bishops and for the priests of



the entire world, the grace to serve the holy People of God through joyful preaching of the Gospel, heartfelt celebration of the Sacraments, and patient and gentle pastoral guidance.

After reciting the Regina Caeli, the Holy Father said:

Dear brothers and sisters, I would like to assure my closeness to the populations hit by a severe earthquake in Nepal and in bordering countries. I am praying for the victims, for the wounded and for all those who are suffering because of this disaster. May they have the support of fraternal solidarity. Let us pray that Our Lady be near them. "Hail Mary..."

Today, in Canada, being proclaimed Blessed is Maria Elisa Turgeon, Foundress of the Sisters of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary in San Germano: an exemplary woman religious, devoted to prayer, to teaching in the small centres of her diocese, and to works of charity. Let us give thanks to the Lord for this woman, a model of life consecrated to God and of the generous commitment to the service of neighbours.

I warmly greet all the pilgrims from Rome, from Italy and from many countries, in particular the many who have come from Poland for the occasion of the first anniversary of the canonization of John Paul II. Beloved, may his call, "Open wide the doors for Christ!" – which he said with that strong and holy voice he had – always resound in your hearts. May the Lord bless you and your families, and may Our Lady protect you.

I wish a happy Sunday to all. Please, do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch! Arrivederci!



On Monday morning, 20 April, Pope Francis called upon the Bishops of Gabon to "remain immune to the insidious danger of tribal and ethnic considerations or discrimination which are the very denial of the Gospel". The Pope received the prelates in audience on the occasion of their Visit 'ad Limina Apostolorum'. The following is a translation of the address which the Pontiff consigned to them in French.

Dear Brothers in the Episcopate,

I am pleased to welcome you on the occasion of your Visit *ad Limina Apostolorum*. On pilgrimage to the Tombs of the Apostles Peter and Paul, you have come to draw from their martyrdom – rooted in faithfulness to Christ who died and rose again – new energy to continue your mission with ever greater ardour as Pastors and to strengthen your bonds of communion with the Holy See, thus reinforcing collegiality among you and with the Bishops of the entire world.

In his address on your behalf, Bishop Mathieu Madega Lebouakehan, President of your Bishops' Conference, recalled several important aspects in the life of the Church in Gabon. I sincerely thank him, and I also thank each of you for your sentiments of faithful adherence to the Successor of Peter and for your pastoral zeal. In this Jubilee Year commemorating various important events in the life of the Church in Gabon, in particular the 170th anniversary of her foundation, through you I would like to greet and encourage the priests, men and women religious, and other agents of pastoral care who work with you, as well as the faithful lay people of your dioceses, whom I join in prayer and in the act of thanksgiving.

Dear Brothers in the Episcopate, the brave missionaries who proclaimed the Gospel in your land, in heroic conditions, as well as the first Christians of Gabon who received the Good News of salvation with generous hearts and witnessed to it often amid much adversity, were the pioneers of your local Church. Their memory, their zeal and their Gospel witness must never stop inspiring you in your pastoral work and constitute for the entire Church in Gabon the source of a renewed commitment to proclaim the Gospel, as a message of peace, joy and salvation, which frees man from the forces of evil in order to lead him toward the Kingdom of God.

The fulfillment of the ministry entrusted to you in each of your dioceses requires that authentic brotherhood be lived within your Episcopal Conference: "that they may all be one... so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (Jn 17:21). This need for unity and communion was bequeathed to us by Jesus himself, as a necessary condition for his Word to be heard and welcomed and therefore for the growth of the Church. Fraternal cooperation should ensure a better response to the needs as well as to the challenges to the Church besides keeping vigil in a spirit of collegiality over the common good of the whole



Visit 'ad limina' of the Bishops of Gabon

No ethnic discrimination

of society. In view of this, you have recently inaugurated a day of prayer for your country. The Church witnesses and thereby shares in the concerns of all the people of Gabon; "there is no question, then, of the Christian message inhibiting men from building up an ever more just and fraternal world: on the contrary it is an incentive to do these very things" (cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 34). Moreover, the *Centre d'études pour la doctrine sociale et le dialogue interreligieux* inaugurated in Libreville in 2011, demonstrates your interest in evangelizing the customs and sociopolitical realities of your country.

Dear Brothers in the Episcopate, the unity of the presbyterate around its Bishop must be exemplary so as to allow the faithful to feel that the Church represents the family of God. It must be shown by a genuine concern to remain immune to the insidious danger of tribal and ethnic considerations or discrimination which are the very denial of the Gospel. This spirit of communion is expressed in a particular way through the fraternal care that you pay to the life and the mission of your priests, in constant dialogue, however without hesitating to sanction the situations that so require, in fairness and in charity. I would like to emphasize here how important the life of prayer is for the priest, for it is in Christ that priestly life is unified. Thus, the priest will be fully available to God and to his brothers, and he will generously fulfil the office of passing on the Word and celebrating the sacraments fittingly. A sound permanent formation will be instrumental in enhancing apostolic dynamism in order to meet men and women in their culture and in their language. For this reason particular attention must be paid to the preparation of homilies and catecheses. "The homily is the touchstone for judging a pastor's closeness and ability to communicate to his people" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 135).

Candidates to the priesthood rightly deserve a prominent place in your pastor's heart: these young men whose enthusiasm at times is over-

cast by doubt, wish to consecrate their life to the Lord in the priesthood. They need to feel their Bishop's solicitude and encouragement, synonymous with practical guidance in the indispensable and complex process of the discernment of vocations. This discernment and the formation of seminarians must be rooted first and foremost in the Gospel, and then "in the true cultural values of their country, in a sense of honesty, responsibility and integrity" (*Ecclesia in Africa*, n. 95).

Since the very foundation of the Church in Gabon, men and women religious have demonstrated extraordinary apostolic zeal at the service of the Gospel, and they also have the right to privileged attention filled with warmth on your part. In this Year of Consecrated Life, I now

The "spirit of communion is expressed in a particular way through the fraternal care that you pay to the life and the mission of your priests, in constant dialogue"

repeat to you personally the invitation I addressed in this sense to all my brothers in the Episcopate: "May this Year be an opportunity to accept consecrated life, readily and joyfully, as a spiritual capital which contributes to the good of the whole body of Christ (...), and not simply that of the individual religious families" (*Apostolic Letter to All Consecrated People on the Occasion of the Year of Consecrated Life*, 21 November 2014, n. 5). This acceptance is manifest through constructive dialogue and constant cooperation on all levels with them, as well as spiritual closeness and the fostering of various charisms in your dioceses.

I also encourage you to continue to seek to awaken in the laity the sense of their Christian vocation, exhorting them to develop their charisms in order to place them at the service of the Church and of society. The Church is entirely missionary by nature. It must be recognized that an important contribution to the vitality of your Churches derives from

the zeal of the many faithful lay people who dedicate themselves on various levels to the life of the community. Every Christian community, each Christian, is therefore called to have the courage to approach the men and women who are in need of the light of the Gospel in their area of life. For this reason, human and Christian formation is an important instrument so as to further the work of evangelization and of the peoples' development, moreover taking care to always "go forth" to the peripheries of society (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 20). One must also take care to present to the young people the true face of Christ, their friend and their guide, so they may find in Him a sure anchor in order to withstand ideologies, sects, as well as the illusions of false modernity and the mirage of material riches.

In this respect, the prestige enjoyed by Catholic educational institutions in your country must be maintained, thanks to a formation increasingly inspired by the spirit of the Gospel. *The Agreement between the Holy See and the Gabonese Republic on the Catholic Teaching Statute of 2001* offers the local Church valuable support in this regard. "It has to promote the good of every man and of the whole man" (cf. *Populorum Progressio*, n. 14), with a preferential option for the poorest. I therefore encourage you to boldly raise your voice to defend the human person, as well as the sacredness of human life. In this period of preparation for the Synod of Bishops on the Family, I invite you to pray and to call for prayer for its success, for a better service to all families.

Dear Brothers in the Episcopate, at the end of this meeting, I should like to assure you of my prayer, entrusting myself once again to your prayers and to those of your diocesan communities. With my warm encouragement which I extend in particular to the priests, men and women religious, catechists and to all your co-workers, for the intercession of Our Lady of Gabon, I impart to you the Apostolic Blessing, imploring an abundance of divine graces upon you and upon the entire Church in your country.

Concerns on the horizon

Reciprocal autonomy and joint responsibility. These essential characteristics sum up the meeting between the President of the Italian Republic and the Pontiff. Just over two months after his election, Sergio Mattarella made a State Visit to the Vatican. The excellent relations between Italy and the Holy See have already been expressed – the Pope immediately observed – and strengthened, thanks to the personal relationships which have developed over time between Italian Heads of State and Pontiffs. This was also demonstrated by recent years in the mutual esteem and cordial friendship between Giorgio Napolitano and Benedict XVI.

Likewise, President Mattarella's visit to the Vatican was also very congenial. His personal history is rooted in the most significant tradition of Italian Catholics engaged in politics, a fundamental dimension for society. Indeed, Paul VI defined politics as a demanding manner of "living the Christian commitment to the service of others". The President, who was visibly moved at times, was accompanied by his daughter and five grandchildren, as if to show the importance of family, the irreplaceable role of which both the Pontiff and President Mattarella referenced to in their respective addresses.

Discussion covered a range of topics of mutual concern to Italy and the Holy See, in the national and international context. Issues included unemployment as a result of the economic crisis, and moved from the drama of migration marked by the tragic loss of life, to conflicts in which religion is often cynically and repugantly manipulated, as well as the urgent need to attend the deteriorating environment. Thus Pope Francis referred to that "mutual orientation toward effective cooperation, on the basis of shared values and in view of the common good" in the respectful distinction of the respective roles and competencies of the State and the Church.

Indeed, reciprocal autonomy "does not diminish but exalts joint responsibility for the actual human being and for the spiritual and material needs of the community", which – the Pope emphasized – "we all have to share the task of serving with humility and dedication". In a pluralistic context, there must be a rejection of the violent use of religion and at the same time respect for "the important role" which an "authentic religious spirit" can play in the building up of society. This is demonstrated by the contribution of the Christian Tradition to the history of Italy, to which the Cardinal Secretary of State also referred in his address.

The words of President Mattarella made meaningful reference to the Pope's indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy. At the heart of the Gospel lies this concept, which is common to many religious traditions and is perceived even by those without religious affiliation, demonstrating that it truly is possible for men and women of different backgrounds to travel a common path.

G.M.V.

Pope Francis to Italian President Sergio Mattarella

Joint responsibility

The Holy Father received H.E. Mr Sergio Mattarella, President of the Italian Republic, on a State Visit to the Vatican on Saturday morning, 18 April. The Italian Head of State was accompanied by a group of 13 people, including his daughter Laura. In the Library, after a private meeting, the Pontiff delivered a discourse in Italian, the translation of which follows.

Mr President,

I am grateful to you for your visit, which you are making only two months after being elected by the Representatives of the Italian People to the State's highest office. This act demonstrates the excellent relations which exist between the Holy See and Italy, and it is in continuity with the visits made by your immediate predecessor and with a now long tradition which, since the Conciliar period in particular, has seen more frequent occasions for meetings between the supreme Civil Authorities of Italy and those of the Universal Church.

The Lateran Pacts, recognized by the Republican Constitutional Charter, and the Agreement on the Revision of the above documents have offered a solid framework within which relations between Italy and the Holy See have peacefully developed and been strengthened, guaranteeing each its respective sovereignty and independence, and at the same time mutual orientation for effective cooperation, on the basis of shared values and in view of the common good.

It is indeed fundamental that, in the distinction of roles and competencies and in the full respect of reciprocal functions, there always be felt the necessity for renewed cooperation, directed at joining forces for the good of all citizens, who have the right to this concordance, from which they derive innumerable benefits.

The Church offers to all the beauty of the Gospel and its message of salvation, and needs, in order to carry out her spiritual mission, conditions of peace and tran-

quility, which the public powers alone can foster.

On the other hand, these latter, with whom the responsibility primarily rests for providing the conditions for equitable and sustainable development, in order for civil society to wield all of its potential, find valid and helpful support for their action in the Church's commitment and loyal cooperation.

Reciprocal autonomy in fact does not diminish but exalts joint responsibility for the actual human being and for the spiritual and material needs of the community, which we all have the task of serving with humility and dedication.

It follows that a healthy pluralism will not be closed to the specific contribution offered by the various ideal and religious elements which compose society, provided, of course, that they respect the fundamental principles which govern civil life and that they neither exploit nor distort their convictions in the interests of violence or subjugation. In other words, the orderly development of a pluralistic civil society presupposes that it does not seek to limit the authentic religious spirit in the intimacy of the conscience alone, but also recognizes its important role in building up society, legitimizing the valuable contribution it is able to offer.

Italy's history clearly shows how great Christianity's contribution has been to its culture and to the character of its people, as the Christian faith has permeated the country's art, architecture and customs. The faith has been transformed into works and these into institutions, to actually give a face to a particular history, and shaping nearly all aspects of life, beginning with the family, the first and indispensable bulwark of solidarity and the school of values. The family must be supported in carrying out its irreplaceable social function as the fundamental locus of a person's growth.

Mr President, among the different requisites for the development of every collective body, work is

characterized by its ties with the very dignity of the person, with the opportunity to build a dignified and free existence. In a special way, the shortage of development for young people is becoming a cry of anguish which challenges the public powers, the intermediate organizations, private entrepreneurs and the ecclesial community to make every effort to remedy the situation, by giving the proper priority to resolving this problem. Indeed, the opportunity to work contains the very possibility of dignity and future.

For the orderly growth of society it is essential that the young generations, through employment, have the opportunity to plan their future with peace of mind, freeing them from the precariousness and risk of giving in to deceptive and dangerous temptations. All those who hold positions of special responsibility thus have the primary task of addressing this problem with courage, creativity and generosity.

Another sphere which today requires particular attention from everyone is care for the environment. In seeking to alleviate the growing imbalances and pollution, which at times cause veritable environmental disasters, there is a need to be fully aware of the effects of our actions on creation, which are closely linked to the manner in which mankind considers and treats itself (cf. Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate*, n. 51).

Within the next few days the universal exhibition will open in Milan, with the theme: "Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life". The Expo event will be an important occasion for the exhibition of the newest technologies necessary to guarantee healthy, safe and adequate food for all peoples, while respecting the environment. May it also be instrumental in deepening reflection on the cause of environmental degradation, so as to provide the competent authorities with a framework of indispensable know – how and experience to take effective decisions and to preserve the health of the planet which God entrusted to the care of the human race.

Lastly I should like to express my gratitude for Italy's generous commitment to welcoming the numerous immigrants who, risking their lives, ask to be received. It is obvious that the proportions of the phenomenon require much broader involvement. We must not tire of requesting a more extensive commitment at the European and international levels.

Mr President, in formulating my most cordial wish for the fulfillment of your lofty office, I hope that Italy, in enhancing its noble traditions and culture, largely inspired by the Christian faith, may advance and prosper in harmony, offering its valuable contribution to peace and justice in the world.

May God protect Italy and each one of its inhabitants.



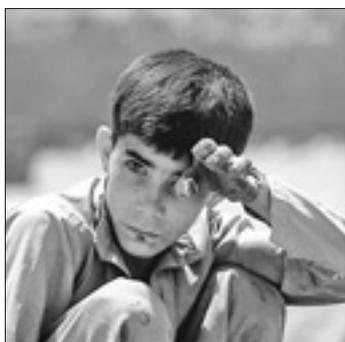
In an address to the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences the Pope denounces the scandal of human trafficking

Hidden slavery

Human trafficking, forced labour, prostitution, organ trade: these are the modern forms of slavery which the world tries to hide because they are "politically incorrect". Pope Francis denounced these forms during an audience with those who attended the plenary session of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences on Saturday morning, 18 April, in the Consistory Hall. The following is a translation of the address which the Pontiff delivered in Italian after a greeting by the Academy's president, Margaret Archer.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I welcome you, members of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences and those attending this plenary session dedicated to human trafficking. I am grateful for the kind words of the President, Ms Margaret Archer. I cordially greet and assure



you that I greatly appreciate how much this Academy is doing to increase awareness of the new forms of slavery and to eradicate the trafficking of human beings, with the single intent to serve mankind, especially marginalized and excluded people.

As Christians, you feel challenged by the Lord Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and also by the 'protocol' by which we shall be judged at the end of our lives, according to the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 25. "Blessed are the poor, blessed are those who mourn, blessed are the meek, blessed are the pure in heart, blessed are the merciful, blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for they shall inherit the earth, they shall be called sons of God, they shall see God" (cf. Mt 5:3-10). Those who are "blessed by the Father" – his sons and daughters who shall see Him – are those

who concern themselves with the least and who love the smallest among their brothers: "as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me" says the Lord (cf. Mt 25:40). And today, among these most needy brothers and sisters are those who suffer from the tragedy of modern forms of slavery, from forced labour, slave labour, prostitution, organ trafficking, drugs.

At a moment in history when slavery was widespread and socially acceptable, unfortunately – and scandalously – even in the Christian world, for it was a large business, St Peter Claver, who was inspired by these words of the Lord, thus consecrated himself as the "servant of slaves". Many other saints, such as, for example, St John of Matha, fought against slavery, following Paul's mandate: "no longer as a slave but as a brother or sister in Christ" (cf. Philem 16).

We know that the historical abolition of slavery as a social structure is the direct result of the message of freedom brought into the world by Christ with his fullness of grace, truth and love, with his programme of the Beatitudes. The progressive awareness of this message in the course of history is the work of the Spirit of Christ and of his gifts,

shared with so many of his saints and men and women of good will, who do not identify with a religious faith, but are committed to improving the human condition.

Unfortunately, in a global economic system dominated by profit, new forms of slavery have developed, worse and more inhuman in a certain way, than those of the past. Thus even more today, following the Lord's message of redemption, we are called to denounce and fight against them. First of all, we must raise awareness of this new evil which, in the world at large, wants to be hidden since it is scandalous and "politically incorrect". No one likes to acknowledge that in one's own city, even in one's own neighbourhood, in one's region or nation there are new forms of slavery, while we know that these plagues almost all countries. We must then denounce the seriousness of this terrible scourge. Previously Pope Benedict XVI, without mincing words, condemned every violation of the equality of dignity among human beings (cf. *Address to the New Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to the Holy See*, 7 November 2011). For my part, I have declared many times that these new forms of slavery – human trafficking, forced labour, prostitution, organ trade – are extremely serious crimes, "an open wound on the body of contemporary society" (*Address to Participants in the Second International Conference on Combating Human Trafficking*, 10 April 2014). All of society is called to grow in this awareness, especially with regard to national and international legislation, in order to be able to ensure that traffickers be brought to justice and their unjust earnings redirected for the rehabilitation of victims.

We must seek the most suitable modalities to punish those who become complicit in this inhuman trade. We are called to improve the means of redress and the social inclusion of victims, also to update the regulations regarding the right to asylum. Civil authorities must be increasingly aware of the seriousness of this tragedy, which constitutes a regression of humanity. And so often – so many times! – these new forms of slavery are protected by the institutions which should be protecting the population from these crimes.

Dear friends, I encourage you to persevere in this work, by which you are helping to make the world more conscious of this challenge. The light of the Gospel is the guide for anyone who places him/herself at the service of a civilization of love, where the Beatitudes have a social resonance, where there is true inclusion of the least. It is important to build the earthly city in the light of the Beatitudes, and thereby journey toward Heaven in the company of the smallest and the least.

I bless you all, I bless your work and your initiatives. I thank you so much for what you do. I accompany you with my prayers, and you too, please do not forget to pray for me. Thank you.

Message to Buddhists for the feast of Vesakh

Together for the sake of freedom

On 20 April, for the feast of Vesakh, the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue published a message entitled "Buddhists and Christians: Together to Counter Modern Slavery". The message was signed by the Council's President and Secretary.

Dear Buddhist Friends,

1. The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue is pleased once again to extend to all of you our best wishes as you celebrate Vesakh. The joyful commemoration of three significant events in the life of Gautama Buddha – his birth, enlightenment and death – provides an occasion to think of the unfortunate and all who suffer, and to rededicate ourselves to bringing them comfort and happiness through acts of love and compassion.

2. We write to you this year inspired by His Holiness Pope Francis' "Message for the 2015 World Day of Peace", entitled *No Longer Slaves, but Brothers and Sisters*. His Holiness observes that, historically, the institution of slavery was once generally accepted and resulted in the "rejection of others, their mistreatment, violations of their dignity and fundamental rights, and institutionalized inequality" (n. 2). Accordingly, "a slave could be bought and sold, given away or acquired, as if he or she were a commercial product" (n. 3). The Holy Father further notes that, even though slavery has been formally abolished throughout the world, there are still "millions of people today – children, women and men of all ages – [who] are deprived of freedom and who are forced to live in conditions akin to slavery" (n. 3).

3. Pope Francis gives examples of modern day slavery: men, women and child labourers; migrants who undergo physical, emotional and sexual abuse while working in shameful working conditions; persons forced into prostitution, many of whom are minors, as well as male and female sex slaves; those kidnapped by terrorists and forced to be combatants, and those who are tortured, mutilated or killed. Human hearts deformed by corruption and ignorance are, according to

the Holy Father, the cause of these terrible evils against humanity. When hearts are corrupted, human beings no longer see others as "beings of equal dignity, as brothers or sisters sharing a common humanity, but rather as objects" (n. 4).

4. Dear friends, we share the conviction that modern slavery and human trafficking are grave crimes, open wounds on the body of contemporary society. In one section of the "Eightfold Path" – namely "Right Livelihood" – the Buddha declares that trading in live beings, including slaves and prostitutes, is one of five occupations that are not to be engaged in (*AN* 5:177). He instructs that possessions are to be acquired peacefully, honestly and by legal means, without coercion, violence or deceit, and by means that do not cause harm or suffering (cf. *AN* 4:47; 5:41; 8:54). In this way, Buddhism promotes respect for the life and freedom of each person.

5. As Buddhists and Christians committed to respect for human life, we must cooperate together to end this social plague. Pope Francis invites us to overcome indifference and ignorance with the assurance of "offering assistance to victims, in working for their psychological and educational rehabilitation, and in efforts to reintegrate them into the society where they live or from which they come" (n. 5).

6. We pray that your celebration of Vesakh, which includes making special efforts to bring happiness to those less fortunate in our midst, may be a time of deepened consideration of the various ways in which we can work together so that there will be *No Longer Slaves, but Brothers and Sisters* living in fraternity, loving kindness and compassion for all.

With renewed cordial greetings, we wish all of you a Happy Feast of Vesakh.

Cardinal JEAN-LOUIS TAURAN
President

Fr MIGUEL ÁNGEL AYUSO GUIXOT, MCCJ
Secretary

Morning Mass at the Domus Sanctae Marthae

Friday, 24 April

To each his own encounter

Each man and woman has a personal encounter with the Lord. A true and actual encounter that can radically change one's life. The secret lies not only in being aware of it, but also in never forgetting it, so as to preserve its freshness and beauty. Pope Francis shared these thoughts during Mass at Santa Marta on Friday morning, along with some homework and practical advice: pray for the grace to remember, and then read the Gospel once again, in order to recognize oneself in the many encounters of Jesus.

The First Reading (Acts 9:1-20), Francis began, recounts "the narrative of Saul – Paul", of his being "certain of his doctrine, even zealous". But "this zeal led him to persecute this new Way that was born there, namely Christians". Thus Saul "asked for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, for the authorization to put Christians in chains". And "he did this with the zeal of God".

Then, the Pope explained, "we all know what happens next". He has "that vision, and falls from the horse". At that point, Francis recalled, "the Lord speaks to him: 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?' – 'Who are you, Lord?' – 'I am Jesus'". This is "Paul's encounter with Jesus". Until that moment Paul "believed that everything the Christians were saying were stories". But "here he encounters Him and will never forget this encounter: it changes his life and makes him grow in love for this Lord whom at first he persecuted but now loves". This encounter, the Pope added, leads Paul "to proclaim to the world the name of Jesus as an instrument of salvation". Thus, this is how "Paul's encounter with Jesus" happened and what it meant.

"In the Bible", Francis said, "there are many other encounters", and "in the Gospel" as well. They are "all different" and thus, truly, "each one has his own encounter with Jesus". Let us think about "the first disciples who followed Jesus and stayed with Him throughout the night – John and Andrew, the first meeting – and they were happy about this". Indeed, "Andrew went to his brother Peter – then called Simon – and said: 'We have found the Messiah!'". This was followed by "Peter's encounter with Jesus", when Jesus said to him: "you are Simon the son of John? You shall be called Cephas, (which means rock)".

There really are many such "encounters", Francis reiterated. There is, for example, "that of Nathaniel, the sceptic". Straight away, "with only a few words, Jesus bowls him over". Indeed, the intellectual admits: "You are the Messiah!". Then there is "the encounter of the Samaritan woman who, at a certain point, feels herself in difficulty and tries to be a theologian: 'This mountain, the other...'. Jesus responds to her: 'Your husband, your truth'. The woman, 'in her own sin, encounters Jesus and goes to proclaim



Dina Bellotti, "The conversion of St Paul" (1977)

him to those in the city: 'he told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?'".

Francis also referred to "the encounter of one of the 10 healed lepers, who returned to express his gratitude". Another, "the encounter of that woman" who, sick for 12 years, "thought: 'if I only touch his garment, I shall be made well', and she encounters Jesus". And finally, also "the encounter of the possessed man from whom Jesus casts out many demons, which enter the swine". The man then "wants to follow Him and Jesus says to him: 'No, no, stay at home, but tell everyone what has happened to you'".

Thus, the Pontiff summarized, "we can find so many encounters in the Bible, because the Lord looks for us to have an encounter with us" and "each of us has his own encounter with Jesus". Perhaps, the Pope pointed out, "we forget it, we lose the memory", and we have to ask ourselves: "when did I encounter Jesus, or when did Jesus encounter me?". Surely, Francis said, Jesus "encountered you on the day of Baptism: that is true, you were a child". And with Baptism, he added, "He justified you and made you part of his people".

We all, the Pope stated, "have had some encounter with Him in our life", a true encounter, when "I felt that Jesus was looking at me". This experience is not only "for the holy". And "if we do not remember it, it will be beautiful to think back and ask the Lord to remind us, because He remembers. He recalls the encounter". In this regard Francis referred to the Book of Jeremiah, which reads: "I remember the devotion of your youth, your love as a bride". Thus, it speaks of "that enthusiastic initial encounter, that new encounter: He never forgets, but we forget the encounter with Jesus".

Francis offered a "nice homework assignment", asking them to recall "when I truly felt the Lord near me", to think about "when I felt I

needed to change my life or to be better or to forgive a person", and "when I heard the Lord asking me something" and, thus, "when I encountered the Lord".

Our faith is, in fact, "an encounter with Jesus", and this is precisely "the foundation of faith: I encountered Jesus like Saul", as offered in the passage from the day's Reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

Therefore, Francis continued, if one says to himself, "I don't remember" my encounter with the Lord, then it is important to ask for this grace: "Lord, when did I consciously find you? When did you tell me something that changed my life or invited me to take that step forward in life?". And, the Pope recommended "this is a fine prayer, do it every day". Then, when "you remember, rejoice in that recollection, which is a remembrance of love".

Francis also proposed another assignment, which "would be to take up the Gospels" and read again the many accounts there are in order "to see how Jesus encounters the people, how He chooses the apostles". And realize, perhaps, that some encounters "resemble mine", for "each one has her own" encounter.

Thus, the Pope offered two practical and concrete suggestions "that will do us good". First of all "pray and ask for the grace of memory". And then ask yourself: "When, Lord, was that encounter, that love I had at first?". In order "not to feel that rebuke that the Lord gives in Revelation: 'I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first'".

The Pope's second suggestion was to "take up the Gospel and see Je-

sus' many encounters with so many different people". It is obvious, he explained, that "the Lord wants to encounter us, He wants a face-to-face relationship with us". For certain, "in our life there was a strong encounter that led us to change our life somewhat and to be better".

The Eucharistic celebration, the Pontiff concluded, is indeed "another encounter with Jesus in order to carry out what we have heard" in the Gospel (Jn 6:52-59): "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him". Yes, to so abide "in the Lord, let us now go toward this daily encounter".

Tuesday, 28 April

Open to surprises

Ask the Lord for "the grace to not be afraid when the Spirit, with confidence, tells me to take a step forward". Also ask for "apostolic courage to live life and not to make a museum of memories of our Christian life". With this twofold advice Pope Francis concluded his homily for the Mass at Santa Marta on Tuesday morning.

The Pontiff focused in particular on the First Reading of the day, taken from the Acts of the Apostles (11:19-26), which tells that "after the first times of joy, after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, there were beautiful moments in the Church, but also many problems". One of these is seen in the fact that a few were preaching "the Gospel to Greeks, to pagans, to those who weren't Israelites". In fact, Francis explained, "this was so curious, it seemed a new doctrine". After all, he noted, there had already been the episode in which Peter was rebuked after going to Cornelius' house: "You went there, you entered a pa-



*Every Christian community
must be a welcoming home
for those searching for God,
for those searching for a brother or sister
to listen to them*

(@Pontifex at 28 April)

gan house! You have become unclean!".

Here something similar was happening: "after the persecution, after the martyrdom of Stephen", the disciples scattered and only the Apostles remained in Jerusalem. Some of the disciples went to "Antioch and were preaching in the synagogues to Jews". But "others, who came from Cyprus and Cyrene, spoke to the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number that believed turned to the Lord".

Thus, when "news of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem", it created apprehension". At this

Bishop of Gozo at the interfaith funeral service for twenty-four migrants who died in the Mediterranean

Who is my neighbour?

An interfaith funeral service was held on 23 April in which 24 of the hundreds of migrants who died in the last week's tragedy were laid to rest. The service, held just outside of the morgue of the Mater Dei Hospital in Malta's capital Valetta, was led by Bishop Mario Grech of Gozo alongside local imam Mohammed El Sadi. The following is the bishop's reflection.



We are in the presence of 24 unidentified dead human bodies but we know that many more, hundreds, lay in the great graveyard that the *Mare Nostrum* has become. We know not their names, their lives, – we just know that they were escaping from a desperate situation trying to find freedom and a better life.

We call them *the Unidentified*. Yet we mourn them, we weep their loss, we want to give them our last respects. Why? Because deep inside, irrespective of our creed, culture, nationality, race, we know that they are our fellow human beings.

“Who is my neighbour?” – In the Gospel we heard the lawyer asking Jesus to provide him an interpretation of the commandment of love. He, the lawyer, knew the law. Yet he feels uneasy with Christ's answer because what he got was not his expected academic discourse but a *down-to-earth, concrete answer*.

Facing this dramatic situation we may as the lawyer resort to *reading out* the law as to who is responsible of what, and who should take care of the great influx of migrants arriving on our shores. Surely, we are facing a complex situation and it is

neither my competence nor the moment to propose solutions. We pray God to enlighten those who face such an arduous task.

Yet, in the light of this parable, we are reminded that the *way of the law* is not enough to tackle humanitarian emergencies. We can continue to *read out* the laws as the lawyer, but that is not enough. The *way of the law*, the *way of justice*, should open itself to the *way of love*. In every sphere of interpersonal relationships justice must, so to speak, be ‘corrected’ to a considerable extent by that love which, as St Paul proclaims, ‘is patient and kind’ or, in other words, possesses the characteristics of that merciful love which is so much of the essence of the Gospel and Christianity” (Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Dives in*

Misericordia [1980], nn. 12, 14). *Charity goes beyond justice*, because to love is to give, to offer what is “mine” to the other. Charity transcends the economy of exchange.

Justice based on a *give-and-take* logic cannot alone govern human relationships. It cannot solve this crisis. We may, I for first, adopt the style of the “priest” and the “Levite” of the Gospel who limit themselves to see these poor persons and *pass by on the other side*. Missing this epochal moment by choosing not to stop and

hear the cry of our brothers and sisters desperately seeking refuge, the situation will then deflate into what Pope Francis calls the *globalisation of indifference*. Sometimes we just stop, shed some tears, and then continue on our way. We may be within positive law. But in the way of love we would be guilty of omission.

“But a Samaritan ... came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him.” Love, *merciful love*, brings the *unidentified* victim out of anonymity – he becomes the *brother, the concern* of the person who is a neighbour to him. Mercy that walks that extra mile not only changes the

persons who are cared for but also *those who approach them with love*.

If we are transformed by merciful love, the present situation changes: from those who *succumb* the influx of migrants we *become neighbours* to the people who come to our shores. Merciful love impels us to not just *wait* for this dramatic situation to unfold further, but to *act, reaching out* towards the roots that are causing this exodus. Merciful love does not simply *pass by*, but *faces* this challenge with the eyes of the Good Samaritan who does not only feel sorry but *helps out* by also unconditionally putting his wealth at the service of the needy party. Merciful love is capable of looking at every person, even at the declared enemy – as the Jews were in the eyes of the Samaritans – as *someone in need*. Being moved with compassion involves being attuned to others who are in distress regardless of whatever cause and regardless of who they are. For St John Chrysostom, compassionate attentiveness “is most especially characteristic of the saints. No glory, no honour, nor anything else is more precious to them than their neighbour's welfare”.

As a shipwrecked man called Paul brought to these islands the news of a Love that redeems the world, so too these “shipwrecked” brothers and sisters who lie silent in our presence are messengers to Maltese, European and Western citizens alike of the need to journey the path of merciful Love, to *become neighbours*

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Morning Mass at the Domus Sanctae Martae

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point the Apostles dispatched “a sort of ‘canonical visit’, saying to Barnabas: ‘Go, pay a visit there and then we'll see what is to be done’. However, “when Barnabas came and saw the grace of God, he was glad, and he brought back tranquillity and peace to Jerusalem”. For the Pope, this narrative from the Acts of the Apostles speaks once again of “newness”, which bursts “into that mentality” according to which Jesus came only “to save his people, the people chosen by the Father”. This mentality was still unable to grasp the idea “that other peoples were to take part” in the divine plan of salvation.

“But it was there in the prophecies”, the Pontiff indicated, referring to the Book of Isaiah. Yet they “didn't understand. They didn't understand that God is the God of newness: ‘I make all things new’. They didn't understand “that the Holy Spirit came precisely for this reason, to renew us and He constantly works to renew us”. Instead, the Pope observed, “this caused fear. In the history of the Church we can see from then until today how much fear arose from the surprises of the Holy Spirit”. Some might object, “But Father, there is newness and

there is newness! Some newness can be seen as God's, others cannot”. Francis responded to them with Peter's words to his brothers in Jerusalem, when they rebuked him for entering Cornelius' house: “When I saw that they were given what we had received, who was I to deny baptism?”.

The same idea is present in the passage from the day's Reading regarding Barnabas, who is described as “a good man” and “full of the Holy Spirit”. This highlights that “in both there is the Holy Spirit, who lets the truth be seen”, something which we cannot do “on our own”. We can't see it “with our intelligence”, the Pope said, explaining: “We can study all of salvation history, we can study all of theology, but without the Spirit we cannot understand. It is precisely the Spirit who lets us understand the truth or – to use Jesus' words – it is the Holy Spirit who enables us to know Jesus' voice: ‘My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me’”.

In short, to Francis “the Church's going forth is the work of the Holy Spirit. It is he who is at work”. Similarly “Jesus said to the Apostles: ‘I will send the gift of the Father and He will remind you and teach you’”. How? By recalling what Jesus says

and by referring to the prophecies: “This is why, in the first discourses, even that of St Stephen, there is a re-reading”, the Pontiff clarified, “of all the prophecies. It is the work of the Holy Spirit, who makes us recall history with the Risen Jesus as the key: ‘and He will teach you the way’”.

In this regard the Pope also suggested how to be certain that the voice we hear is Jesus' voice, and that whatever we feel we have to do is the work of the Holy Spirit. It is necessary, he said, “to pray. Without prayer, there is no room for the Holy Spirit”. We must “ask God to send us this gift: ‘Lord, give us the Holy Spirit, that we may discern in every moment what we have to do’”. However, this “doesn't mean always repeating the same thing. The message is the same: but the Church goes forth, the Church goes forth with these surprises, with this newness of the Holy Spirit”.

Thus “it must be discerned, and to discern it one must pray, ask for this grace” – just like Barnabas, who “was full of the Holy Spirit and who understood straight away”. Also like Peter, who “saw and said: ‘who am I



to deny baptism here?”. Indeed, the Holy Spirit “doesn't let us make mistakes”.

In this case too, the Pope said he was well aware of the objections that could be raised against his reasoning: “Father, why create so many problems? Let's do things as we have always done them, that way we are more certain”. He responded that this hypothesis might be “an alternative”, but it would be “a sterile alternative; a ‘dead’ alternative”. What is much better, he concluded, is “with prayer, with humility, to take the risk of accepting what the Spirit asks us to change according to the time in which we live: this is the way”.

How the Christian mission is born

When two people meet

LUIS ANTONIO G. TAGLE

All throughout the stages of vocational discernment, seminary formation and permanent formation, the purification of one's motivation for ordained ministry must be faced with courage. Personal, social and cultural factors that influence one's calling need to be addressed. Jesus Christ, whose mission the Church continues, is the model. He was consumed by mission. He was pas-

Ad gentes

For the 50th anniversary of the promulgation of the Conciliar decree *Ad Gentes*, an international conference was recently held at the Pontifical Urbaniana University. Speakers included, among others, Cardinal Fernando Filoni, Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, who spoke of the mission in *Evangelii Gaudium*. Published here are some of the salient points of an address by the Cardinal Archbishop of Manila, entitled: "The Bishops and the Clergy: Missionary Prospect in Formation and Pastoral Care".

sionate about his mission. For Him mission is not only work to be accomplished but the flowering of His intimate relationship with the One He called Abba, the One who sent Him. He does only what he sees Abba doing. He seeks not His own will but the will of the One who sent Him (cf. Jn 5:19, 30).

For Jesus, mission means being sent by the Father – not going where I choose to go, where I choose to stay, where it is convenient for me, where I have charted a career path. If bishops and clergy are continuously formed after the missionary heart of Jesus, they will fulfill God's mission, rather than aspire to a position. Without a consistent prayer life nurtured by humility, bishops and clergy might lose the sense of being sent by God for God's purpose. They would send themselves, promote their goals and build up their kingdoms. Let us not forget that Jesus was sent to preach the Good News to the poor. Hence "prompted by the Holy Spirit, [the Church] must walk the same path which Christ walked: a path of poverty and obedience, of service and self-sacrifice to the death" (*Ad Gentes*, n. 5).

Due to pastoral solicitude, bishops and clergy desire to give exemplary service to their dioceses, parishes or places of ministry. There is a danger though that they could become so focused on their immediate local communities that they would not bother to know the needs and realities of the wider Church. Nor would they allow the conditions of other Churches to affect their local ecclesial life. With insufficient knowledge, they lose interest in and a

sense of responsibility for other Churches. Their pastoral ministry and the local Churches they serve become self-referential. They are neither challenged nor enriched by other Churches. Disastrous consequences may come about – e.g. pastoral care becomes dissociated from mission; local Churches become isolated enclaves thereby losing their full identity as Church; the Universal Church becomes an abstraction. A necessary component of the bishops' and the clergy's missionary formation is the continuing theological reflection on the mutual interiority between the local Churches and the Universal Church.

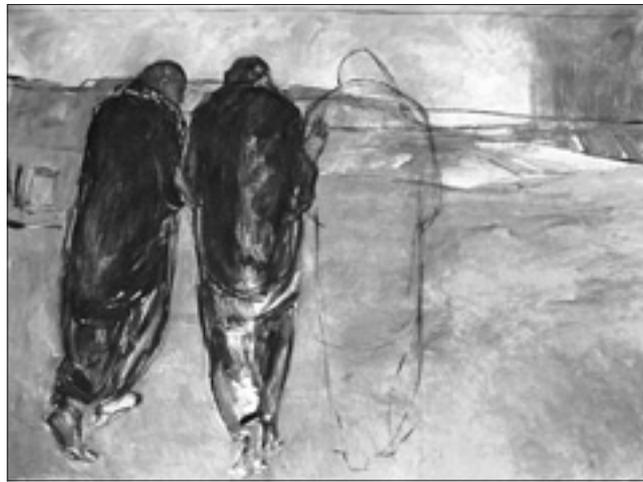
Being self-referential or self-contained weakens the Church. Being other-oriented, being concerned for other Churches as our own, living in communion with other Churches, doing or acting well locally for the good of the universal community all make mission and pastoral care mutually inclusive. But this requires a solid ecclesiological study of the relationship between the Universal Church and the local Churches, the missionary aspect of the collegiality of bishops and the missionary formation of all the baptized according to their callings and states of life. Bishops and the clergy must awaken, animate and form the

laity for mission (*Ad Gentes*, n. 21). They also must be at home with a participatory and collaborative approach to the local Church's missionary engagement.

In Jesus, mission means entering the human condition, getting to know and understand human frailty by uniting himself with it. The mission of bringing the Gospel to peoples requires understanding their worlds through Christ-like solidarity aided by social, cultural and anthropological studies. But as we missionaries go to these worlds, we witness these same worlds coming to us as well. Peoples or nations are in constant movement. Migrants, refugees, displaced peoples, social media, digital technology, etc. have blurred boundaries. There is no exclusively missionary sending Church as there is no exclusively missionary receiving Church. Only God sends. God comes as well. We are all sent. All of us receive. Bishops and clergy need to understand the new worlds they are sent to and that are coming to their worlds. Experiential learning and compassionate understanding are needed as we enter into the increasingly complex and ambiguous phenomena we face. A stance of listening, learning, dialogue, patience and readiness to be surprised would enable them to discern the active presence of the Holy Spirit, who is the main agent of mission.

Jesus' mission of preaching the Good News, gathering a new People and witnessing to the power of God's Kingdom happened mainly through his direct encounter with persons. The opening lines of the first letter of St John describe the mission "methodology" of the Apostles: they begin with their personal encounter with Jesus which they in turn share with people they encounter so that in faith, these people may encounter the person of Jesus (1 Jn 1:1-4). Mission work nowadays has benefited from rationalized visioning, planning and organizational structuring. In our fast paced and fast changing world, systematic approaches to mission are indispensable. Bishops and the clergy need to learn and develop new skills for the sake of local and worldwide mission. But bishops and the clergy must also realize that when circumstances do not allow for the implementation of our plans and organization, the mission of evangelization can and must continue through simple human encounters.

Meeting people even in unexpected or unplanned moments and places could be fertile ground for mission. A person-to-person encounter does not entail much financial expense either. Mission does not have to depend on the availability of financial resources all the time. Where two persons meet, there mission happens. Bishops and the clergy must harness all their relational skills and grab all opportunities for human encounters in the promotion of mission. The very person of the bishop and the clergy should be the contemporary incarnation of the mission of Jesus.



Janet Brooks-Gerloff, "Emmaus" (1992)

Who is my neighbour?

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to those who suffer injustice, inequality, discrimination and poverty in the rest of the world. They are silent heralds of the cry for love that is the soul of effective social and political solutions. Love is the normative principle not only in micro-relationships (friendships, family, small groups) but also in macro-relationships, that is in social, economic and political context (Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*).

Only mercy can break the cycle of egoism and violence and create the possibility of new future. Compassion is the ultimate ethical authority against human cruelty. A society without charity and compassion will no longer be human.

May these brothers and sisters rest in peace! We couldn't offer them our hospitality, our smiles, our hugs; but as we commend them to the Merciful God, we also ask them to forgive us for omitting to take the necessary timely measures which could have spared their lives. May their memory live in our renewed effort

to become neighbours to those who are already on our shores and are approaching our shores.

As today we return back to our daily routines, may the word "Mercy" echo in our hearts and make us reflect and act. As St Gregory the Theologian once wrote: "prove yourself a god to the unfortunate by imitating the mercy of God. There is nothing so godly in human beings as to do good works." May God bless all those "good Samaritans" civil authorities, rescuers, volunteers, men and women of good will who are doing their utmost to reach out to our distressed brothers and sisters. Thank you for being witnesses and models of this merciful love!

Dear brothers and sisters, as I conclude my reflection, you may ask me: *so what do you propose then? Beautiful words Father... but nothing changes!* Inspired by this Gospel, I will pray God to change my heart with his merciful Love... and that will change me to become a neighbour to all my brothers and sisters. I invite all those who believe in the Merciful ever-living God to do the same.

Details emerge in the unsolved mystery

Who betrayed Anne Frank?

ANNA FOA

The question of who betrayed Anne Frank – of who sent the Gestapo on 4 August 1944 to arrest the eight Jews hidden behind a bookcase in the house at Prinsengracht 263 in Amsterdam – continues to galvanize the public and the media. A book recently published in the Netherlands now accuses Nelly Voskujil of doing just that. Nelly was the sister of Elizabeth (“Bep” in Anne’s diary) who was one of the four “angels” – two men and two women – who hid Anne and the other Jews for two years.



Inside of the Frank refuge

Interestingly enough, one of the book’s authors is Joop Van Wijk, Bep’s son and a nephew of the alleged informer. Van Wijk, who co-authored *Silence No More* with journalist Jeroen de Bruyn, boldly admits that his aunt was the one who revealed the Franks’ whereabouts. The book does not, however, offer hard evidence for this claim, but instead cites lost correspondence and family relationships. It appears that Nelly Voskujil, who worked for Otto Frank, began helping the Gestapo during the occupation, after learning of the aid her sister was providing to the family.

The Netherlands was one of the Western countries hardest hit by the Nazi persecution of Jews. When Nazi troops occupied the country in 1940, there were 140,000 Jews. Over 107,000 were deported and only 5,000 returned. These figures are much higher than those of France or Belgium, which also paid a heavy price. The number does, however, come close to that of Poland, where the Jews were almost completely exterminated. Of all the Jews in the Netherlands, 20,000 were refugees from Germany, who had fled the country when Hitler rose to power in 1933. Among these was the Frank family. The Netherlands, prior to Germany ignoring its neutrality with a five-year occupation, seemed to be a safe refuge for Jews, who were accepted and integrated into society.

So what happened during the occupation to cause such a high number of deaths? And what was the Dutch attitude towards the Nazi occupation of their country and the deportation of their Jews? The answer lies in the history of the Nazi occupation of Europe: the attitude of non-Jews towards anti-Semitism

persecution, the resistance – armed or not – to Nazism, were determining factors in whether or not the Nazi’s plan for deportation would succeed. At the start of the occupation, Dutch Jews were subjected to increasing restrictions and discrimination. In September 1941, all Jews in the Netherlands were registered and their identity cards were marked. Just as Italian Jews were registered during the Fascist dictatorship in 1938, this registration was the primary tool for subsequently detecting and deporting them. Beginning in May 1942 they were obliged to wear a yellow star and two months later, in July, the deportations began. In 1943 30,000 Jews were left in the Netherlands, those who had remained in hiding with the help of non-Jews. One-third of them were also eventually deported thanks to whistleblowers who were well compensated.

In July 1942, after Anne’s sister Margot received a letter of deportation, the Frank family decided to go into hiding. Not much is certain of the events that followed, however it is clear that the Franks were Germans hiding from the Nazis. Their story is well-known: they lived in a secret shelter behind a door to the offices of Otto Frank, concealed by a moveable bookcase, which now stands in a museum, visited every year by multitudes of people from all over

the world.

Had the Gestapo not been alerted of their location, had the spy not betrayed them then the Frank family would have quite probably survived the remaining 10 months of the war or they would have at least managed to stay hidden for those few remaining months, from August to November, when the deportations were halted. In fact, when Anne and her family were taken from Westerbork transit camp to Auschwitz in September 1944, it was the last convoy of its kind.

Had the Gestapo not been alerted of their location, the Frank family would have quite probably survived the remaining 10 months of the war

There were more than a few spies in occupied Europe who informed the Nazis of Jews’ hideouts. There were, however, also many rescuers. There were numerous spies in Italy, some of whom were even Jewish, such as Celeste Di Porto, who had many Jews in Rome arrested and deported. No matter the location, spies worked for money. There were others who had ulterior motivations such as the feeling of holding the

power of life and death in their hands.

In May 1944 Anne wrote that anti-Semitism had spread to many unexpected places and that the people’s attitude had changed. Her diary is full of moments when her family were in danger of being caught. After the war, many people were accused of betraying the Franks, including the thieves who entered the office which held the door to their hiding place, warehouse worker William Van Maaren, and Anton Ahlers, a former colleague of Otto Frank who became a fervent Nazi, as well as others. But nothing was ever proven.

Now we are faced with the hypothesis that this betrayal lurked in the heart of the family of one of Anne’s “angels”. Was it indeed Bep’s sister who worked such a great injustice? Will it be possible to prove this theory or should we still look for other suspects and hypotheses?

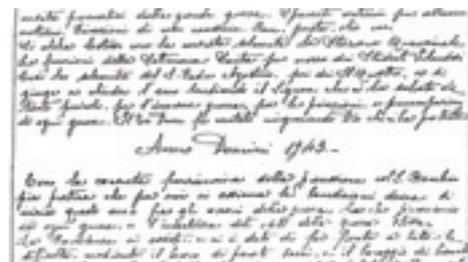


Monasteries in Rome tell the story of Pius XII’s intervention on behalf of persecuted Jews

At the request of the Pope

It was Pius XII who asked that the Jews be sheltered and protected during those terrible months between October 1943 and June 1944 when the Nazis occupied Rome. Testament to this are the chronicles of four monasteries of women religious in Rome. These stories have now been told in a documentary entitled “Lo vuole il Papa” (The Pope wanted it) by Antonello Carvigiani.

“At that point in time Jews, Fascists, soldiers, the military police and bourgeoisie sought refuge in religious institutes which, despite the serious risk, opened their doors to save human lives. This was the desire – but not a demand – expressed by the Holy Father Pius XII”. This is explicitly indicated in the register of events of the Monastery of Santa Maria dei sette dolori in Trastevere, written by the sisters in 1944.



A page from the register of the Monastery of the Santi Quattro Coronati

Also for the first time ever, the stories from the historical notes of the Monastery of Santa Susanna and the Institute of Maria Bambina are being told on film. In addition to these three documents are the more widely-known chronicles of the Monastery of the Santi Quattro Coronati.

The history preserved in these four monasteries in Rome comes together to form a single historical narrative. From their pages a clear picture of the events emerges: Pius XII called for the houses of the religious, even cloisters, to open their doors to those in need.

The documentary also contains the testimonies of several women religious who collected the oral histories of their fellow sisters who had lived through those terrible events. The words of Sr Roberta Capiotti, Prior of the Cistercian Monastery of Santa Susanna, are particularly significant. Originally from Verona, she has been living at the monastery in Rome since 7 December 1950. In the film, Sr Roberta recalls: “When I entered the Monastery of Santa Susanna the then-mothers, Mother De Conti, Abbess, Mother Beatrice Paoletti, Prior, Mother Zarus Elisabetta, Novice Mistress, told us – and I heard with my own ears – that during the war Pius XII had given the order for all superiors to open the doors of the sacred cloister to save, to let as many people as possible enter, including and especially Jews”.

Other important testimonies include those of two individuals, who were children at the time and who were saved in those monasteries. In the film they tell the story they heard and their impressions of those who decided to welcomed them.