

# L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO

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At the General Audience the Pope highlights that mercy is at the centre of the Holy Year

## What pleases God most

*"Why have a Jubilee of Mercy?", the Pope asked at the General Audience in St Peter's Square on Wednesday morning, 9 December. The reflection he offered to the faithful, on the morning after the opening of the extraordinary Holy Year, was aimed at answering this question. The following is a translation of the Pontiff's address, which he delivered in Italian.*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,  
Good morning.

Yesterday I opened here, in St Peter's Basilica, the Holy Door of the Jubilee of Mercy, after having previously opened it in the Cathedral of Bangui, Central Africa. Today I would like to reflect together with you on the meaning of this Holy Year, responding to the question: *Why have a Jubilee of Mercy?* What does this mean?

The Church is in need of this extraordinary occasion. I am not saying: this extraordinary occasion is good for the Church. I am saying: the Church needs this extraordinary occasion. In this era of profound changes, the Church is called to offer her particular contribution, rendering visible the signs of the presence and closeness of God. The Jubilee is a favourable time for all of us, because by contemplating Divine Mercy, which overcomes all human limitations and shines in the darkness of sin, we are able to become more certain and effective witnesses.



Turning our gaze to God, merciful Father, and to our brothers and sisters in need of mercy, means focusing our attention on the *essential contents of the Gospel*: Jesus, Mercy made flesh, who renders the great mystery of the Trinitarian Love of God visible to our eyes. Celebrating a Jubilee of Mercy is equivalent to placing once again the specific

nature of the Christian faith, namely Jesus Christ, the merciful God, at the centre of our personal life and that of our communities.

It is a Holy Year, therefore, so as to *live mercy*. Yes, dear brothers and sisters, this Holy Year is offered to us so that we may experience in our lives the sweet and gratifying touch

of God's forgiveness, his presence beside us and his closeness especially in the moments of greatest need.

This Jubilee, in other words, is a privileged moment for the Church to learn to choose only *"what pleases God most"*. What is it that *"pleases God most"*? Forgiving his children, having mercy on them, so that they may in turn forgive their brothers and sisters, shining as a flame of God's mercy in the world. This is what pleases God most. St Ambrose, in a theological book that he wrote about Adam, takes up the story of the creation of the world and says that each day after God made something – the moon, the sun or the animals – [the Bible] says: "God saw that it was good". But when he made man and woman, the Bible says: "He saw that it was

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On the Feast

### Celebrating the Immaculate Conception



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### The Jubilee of the Council

GIOVANNI MARIA VIAN

In order to emphasize the decisions of Vatican II and disseminate them throughout the Church, at the conclusion of the Council Paul VI called for an extraordinary jubilee to be celebrated in dioceses throughout the world from 1 January through 29 May 1966, the Feast of Pentecost. Fifty years later, his current Successor – a son of the Council yet, due to his age, the first Pope not to have participated in it – opened another holy year, which is extraordinary for more than one reason.

It is extraordinary because it does not entail the customary time frame, but even more so due to Pope Bergoglio's wish that it be linked explicitly to mercy, which is central to the Gospel and to jubilee years. Extraordinary not so much for its taking place around the world, as for its advance opening

in the heart of Africa. The first ordinary jubilee to follow the Council was celebrated in 1974, first throughout the world and then in Rome. Never before, however, has a Pontiff opened a holy door outside of his own diocese.

Under completely different circumstances Boniface VIII proclaimed the first jubilee, interpreting the apprehension of the Christian people. Likewise, once again, Pope Francis perceived and understood the needs of the faithful, along with those of so many women and men who are perhaps unable to recognize themselves within the confines of the visible Church, which, he said in the first General Audience of the Jubilee Year, "is in need of this extraordinary occasion. I am not saying: this extraordinary occasion is good for the Church. I am saying: the

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*From the Middle Ages to modern times*

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### A sign of hope

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# VATICAN BULLETIN

## AUDIENCES

Thursday, 3 December

H.E. Mr Tuilaepa Fatialofa Lupesoliai Sailele Mallelegaoi, Prime Minister of the Independent State of Samoa, with his wife and entourage

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

Bishop David Douglas Crosby, OMI, of Hamilton, Canada, President of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, with Bishop Lionel Gendron, PSS, of Saint-Jean-Longueuil, Vice-President; Msgr Frank Leo, Jr, Secretary General

Cardinal João Braz de Aviz, Prefect of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, with the Secretary, Archbishop José Rodríguez Carballo, OFM, titular Archbishop of Belcastro

## With the President of the Philippines



On Friday, 4 December, the Holy Father received in audience the President of the Republic of the Philippines, H.E. Mr Benigno S. Aquino III, who subsequently met with Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State, accompanied by Msgr Antoine Camilleri, Undersecretary for Relations with States.

During the cordial discussions, the dialogue between the various members of Filipino society was evoked, as well as the contribution of the Catholic Church to the life of the country.

Special reference was made to the peace process in Mindanao, with the hope that commitment from the Parties may guarantee stable and lasting peace to the region. This was followed by an exchange of opinions on the international and regional situations, with special reference to the question of climate change and the COP21 Conference in Paris.

Friday, 4 December

Cardinal George Pell, Prefect of the Secretariat for the Economy

H.E. Mr Benigno S. Aquino III, President of the Republic of the Philippines, with his entourage

Archbishop Edgar Peña Parra, titular Archbishop of Thelepte, Apostolic Nuncio in Mozambique

Saturday, 5 December

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

H.E. Mr Volker Bouffier, Minister-President of Hesse, Federal Republic of Germany, with his wife and entourage

H.E. Mr Eduardo Félix Valdés, Ambassador of Argentina, with his wife, on a farewell visit

Monday, 7 December

Cardinal Kurt Koch, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, presented the Holy Father with a gift on behalf of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomaios, Archbishop of Constantinople, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the removal of the Excommunication

H.E. Ms María Elvira Velásquez Rivas-Plata, Ambassador of Peru, for the presentation of her Letters of Credence

Cardinal Fernando Filoni, Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples

Cardinal Telesphore Placidus Toppo, Archbishop of Ranchi, India

Archbishop Jean-Marie Speich, titular Archbishop of Sulci, Apostolic Nuncio in Ghana

## The Pope receives the Prime Minister of the Independent State of Samoa

On Thursday, 3 December, the Holy Father received the Prime Minister of the Independent State of Samoa, H.E. Mr Tuilaepa Lupesoliai Sailele Mallelegaoi, who subsequently met with Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State, accompanied by Msgr Antoine Camilleri, Undersecretary for Relations with States.

During the cordial discussions, the Parties focused on some aspects of the social and economic life of the country, as well as the valued contribution of the Catholic Church in various sectors of Samoan society and, in particular, in the field of education.

This was followed by an exchange of opinions on the interna-

tional and regional situations, with special reference to the Conference on climate change currently taking place in Paris, and the environmental problems that some Pacific island states are facing.

H.E. Mr Eduard Habsburg-Lothringen, Ambassador of Hungary, for the presentation of his Letters of Credence

Ms Nadège Védie, President of the World Conference of Secular Institutes, with her entourage

## NEW DIOCESE

The Holy Father established the new Diocese of Guasualito, Venezuela, with territory taken from the Diocese of San Fernando de Apure and from the Diocese of Barinas, making it a suffragan of the Archdiocese of Mérida, Venezuela. He also appointed Fr Pablo Modesto González Pérez, sdb, as the first Bishop of Guasualito. Until now he has been director of the Don Bosco Agricultural Centre in El Molinete, Venezuela (3 Dec.).

Bishop-elect González Pérez, 56, was born in San Antonio de los Altos, Venezuela. He holds degrees in science and in philosophy, and licences in education and in pastoral theology. He made his religious vows for the Congregation of the Society of Don Bosco on 3 September 1983 and was ordained a priest on 26 July 1986. He has served in parish ministry and as: treasurer of San Francisco de Sales parish; provincial counsellor and local superior of San Juan Bosco Parish in Los Teques.

## CHANGES IN EPISCOPATE

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Fernando Antônio Figueiredo, OFM, of Santo Amaro, Brazil. It was presented in accord with can. 401 § 1 of the Code of

Canon Law. He is succeeded by Bishop Giuseppe Negri, PIME, who until now has been Coadjutor of the said Diocese (2 Dec.).

Bishop Negri, 56, was born in Milan, Italy. He was ordained a priest on 7 June 1986. He was ordained a bishop on 5 March 2006, subsequent to his appointment as titular Bishop of Puppi and Auxiliary of Florianópolis. On 18 February 2009 he was transferred to the Diocese of Blumenau.

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Rodolfo Luis Weber as Archbishop of Passo Fundo, Brazil. Until now he has been Bishop of the Territorial Prelature of Cristalândia, Brazil (2 Dec.).

Archbishop Weber, 52, was born in Bom Princípio, Italy. He was ordained a priest on 5 January 1991. He was ordained a bishop on 15 May 2009, subsequent to his appointment as Bishop of the Territorial Prelature of Cristalândia.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Anthony J. Farquhar from his office as Auxiliary of the Diocese of Down and Connor, Ireland. It was presented in accord with can. 401 and 411 § 1 of the Code of Canon Law (3 Dec.).

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Heinrich Musinghoff of Aachen, Germany. It was presented in accord with can. 401 § 1 of the Code of Canon Law (8 Dec.).

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Paul Darmanin OFM Cap., of Garissa, Kenya. It was presented in accord with can. 401 § 1 of the Code of Canon Law. He is succeeded by Bishop Joseph Alessandro, OFM Cap., who until now has been Coadjutor of the said Diocese (8 Dec.).

Bishop Alessandro, 71, was born in Paola, Malta. He was ordained a priest on 5 April 1970. He was ordained a bishop on 29 September 2012, subsequent to his appointment as coadjutor of Garissa.

## RELATIONS WITH STATES

The Holy Father appointed Archbishop Miguel Maury Buendía, titular Archbishop of Italcia, as Apostolic Nuncio in Romania. Until now he has been Apostolic Nuncio in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tadjikistan (5 Dec.).

The Holy Father appointed Archbishop Luciano Suriani, titular Archbishop of Amitermo, as Apostolic Nuncio in Serbia. Until now he has served as Delegate for the Pontifical Representations (7 Dec.).

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## At the General Audience

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very good". St Ambrose asks himself: "Why does He say 'very good'? Why is God so content after the creation of man and woman?". Because finally he had someone to forgive. This is beautiful: God's joy is forgiving, God's being is mercy. This is why we must open our hearts this year so that this love, this joy of God may fill us all with this mercy. The Jubilee will be a "favourable time" for the Church if we learn to choose "what pleases God most", without giving in to the temptation of thinking that something else is more important or primary. Nothing is more important than choosing "what pleases God most", in other words, his mercy, his love, his tenderness, his embrace and his caresses!

The necessary work of renewing the institutions and structures of the



Hans Jüchser, "The Return of the Prodigal Son" (1952)

Church is also a way that should lead us to make a living and vivifying experience of God's mercy, which alone can guarantee that the Church is that city set on a hill that cannot be hid (cf. Mt 5:14). Only a merciful Church shines! Should we forget, for even just a moment, that mercy is "what pleases God most", our every effort would be in vain, for we would become slaves to our institutions and our structures, inasmuch as they may be renewed. But we would always be slaves.

"To experience strongly within ourselves the joy of having been found by Jesus, the Good Shepherd who has come in search of us because we were lost" (*Homily of First Vespers of Divine Mercy Sunday*, 11 April 2015): this is the objective that the Church establishes for herself in this Holy Year. In this way we will strengthen in ourselves the certainty that mercy can truly help in the edification of a more human world. Especially in our time, in which forgiveness is a rare guest in the spheres of human life, the call to mercy is made more urgent, and this is so in every place: in society, in institutions, at work and even in the family.

Of course, someone could object: "Father, shouldn't the Church do

something more this Year? It is right to contemplate the mercy of God, but there are so many urgent needs!". It is true, there is much to do, and I for one never tire of remembering this. However, we must bear in mind that whenever mercy is obliterated *self-love* is at the root. In the world, this takes the form of exclusively seeking one's own interests, pleasures and honours joined with the desire to accumulate wealth, whereas in the life of a Christian it is often disguised in hypocrisy and worldliness. All of these things are contrary to mercy. Surges of self-love, which make mercy a stranger in the world, are so abundant and numerous that we are often unable to recognize them as limitations and as sin. This is why it is necessary to recognize ourselves as sinners, so as to strengthen within us the certainty of divine mercy. "Lord, I am a sinful man; Lord, I am a sinful woman: come with your mercy". This is a beautiful prayer. It is an easy prayer to say every day: "Lord, I am a sinner: come with your mercy".

Dear brothers and sisters, I hope that, in this Holy Year, each one of us may experience God's mercy, in order to be witnesses to "what pleases God most". Is it naive to believe that this can change the world? Yes, humanly speaking, it is foolish, but "the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men" (1 Cor 1:25).

### SPECIAL GREETINGS

I greet the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today's

Audience, including those from Scotland, Denmark, Indonesia, Japan, Canada and the United States of America. My special greeting goes to the international team of the Galileo space programme. Upon you and your families I invoke the Lord's blessings of joy and peace. God bless you all!

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Church needs this extraordinary occasion", in order to render "visible the signs of the presence and closeness of God".

She needs the mercy, first of all, which is at the heart of the Gospel and which impels Christians to go outside of themselves to be witnesses to Christ. Thus, surprising everyone and overcoming certain resistance, the Pope demonstrated this to the world by opening the Holy Door in the Cathedral of Bangui and inaugurating the Jubilee for the dioceses of Central Africa lashed by poverty and violence. In view of this anticipated opening, and following the ritual



Francis remotely lights the tree and nativity scene in Assisi

## A sign of hope

On Sunday afternoon, 6 December, from the study in the Paul VI Hall, Francis remotely lit the Christmas tree and the nativity scene set up in front of the Lower Basilica of St Francis of Assisi. The ceremony was held following a Mass celebrated by Archbishop Georg Gänswein, Prefect of the Papal Household. The creche has been built into a seven-metre boat which was used in March 2014 to transport nine Tunisians to the Island of Lampedusa. Among those present were 31 refugees from Afghanistan, Cameroon, Iran and Nigeria, who are being hosted by Assisi's branch of Caritas, along with an official of the Italian Navy who helped save the migrants in the Strait of Sicily. The Pope spoke to those present at the ceremony via video connection. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's words which were delivered in Italian.

Looking at that boat ... Jesus is always with us, even in difficult times. How many brothers and sisters have drowned at sea! They are with the Lord now. But he came to give us hope, and we must take this hope. He came to tell us that he is stronger than death, that he is greater than any evil. He came to tell us he is merciful, all mercy; and this Christmas I invite you to open your hearts to mercy and forgiveness. But it is not easy to forgive these massacres. It's not easy.

I would like to thank the Navy: the good men and women. I thank you, for you were the instrument of hope that brings us Jesus. You, among us, you have been sowers of hope, the hope of Jesus. Thank you, Antonio, you and all your

teammates and all that this land of Italy has so generously received: Southern Italy is an example of solidarity for the whole world! For everyone who looks at the crib, they can say to Jesus: "But, I too have lent a hand because you are a sign of hope".

And to all refugees, I say a word, that of the prophet: Raise your head, the Lord is near. And with him is strength, salvation, hope. The heart, perhaps, [is] sorrowful, but the head [is] high in the hope of the Lord.

I embrace all of you refugees and all of you in the Navy and I wish you a blessed Christmas, full of hope and with much affection from the Lord.

## The Jubilee of the Council

that arose under Alexander VI, Pope Francis opened the Holy Door of St Peter's in a manner even more suggestive in its simplicity. This event is to be followed by the opening of a vast multitude of holy doors both in Rome and in dioceses around the world. In the background is Vatican II, opened by John XXIII and concluded by Paul VI under the auspices of mercy. It was Pope Montini himself, the only Predecessor whom Francis recalled in the inaugural homily of the Jubilee, who summarized the meaning of the Council with the Parable of the Good Samaritan, the image par excellence of mercy. Vatican II, he said, was "a

true encounter between the Church and the men of our time", which allowed the Church to "emerge from the shoals which for years had kept her self-enclosed", while Christianity "seemed more and more to be losing its power", as Benedict XVI has written.

Pope Francis was the first to pass through the Holy Door, followed by Benedict XVI. Having embraced his Predecessor moments before in the atrium of the Basilica, Francis waited and greeted him once again inside before setting out to pray at Peter's tomb, supported by the ministry of Paul VI with the Cross of Christ.

G.M.V.

To the COP21 the Holy Father calls for courageous choices on climate change and poverty

# For the good of the human family

*We are all in need of conversion, Pope Francis reiterated at the Angelus on Sunday, 6 December. The Holy Father's address to the faithful in St Peter's Square was characterized by a strong appeal to the climate summit in Paris. The following is a translation of the Pope's address which was delivered in Italian.*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,  
Good morning!

On this second Sunday of Advent, the Liturgy places us in the school of John the Baptist, who preached "a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins". Perhaps we ask ourselves, "Why do we have to convert? Conversion is about an atheist who becomes a believer or a sinner who becomes just. But we don't need it. We are already Christians. So we are okay". But this isn't true. In thinking like this, we don't realize that it is precisely because of this presumption – that we are Christians, that everyone is good, that we're okay – that we must convert: from the supposition that, all things considered, things are fine as they are and we don't need any kind of conversion. But let us ask ourselves: is it true that in the various situations and circumstances of life, we have within us the same feelings that Jesus has? Is it true that we feel as Christ feels? For example, when we suffer some wrongdoing or some insult, do we manage to react without animosity and to forgive from the heart those who apologize to us? How difficult it is to forgive! How difficult! "You're going to pay for this" – that phrase comes from inside! When we are called to share

joys or sorrows, do we know how to sincerely weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who rejoice? When we should express our faith, do we know how to do it with courage and simplicity, without being ashamed of the Gospel? Thus we can ask ourselves so many questions. We're not all right. We must always convert and have the sentiments that Jesus had.

The voice of the Baptist still cries in the deserts of humanity today, which are – what are today's deserts? – closed minds and hardened hearts. And [his voice] causes us to ask ourselves if we are actually following the right path, living a life according to the Gospel. Today, as then, he admonishes us with the words of the Prophet Isaiah: "Prepare the way of the Lord!" (v. 4). It is a pressing invitation to open one's heart and receive the salvation that God offers ceaselessly, almost obstinately, because he wants us all to be free from the slavery of sin. But the text of the prophet amplifies this voice, portending that "all flesh shall see the salvation of God" (v. 6). And salvation is offered to every man, and every people, without exclusion, to each one of us. None of us can say, "I'm a saint; I'm perfect; I'm already saved". No. We must always accept this offer of salvation. This is the reason for the Year of Mercy: to go



Marc Chagall, "Paris Through the Window" (1913)

farther on this journey of salvation, this path that Jesus taught us. God wants all of mankind to be saved through Jesus, the one mediator (cf. 1 Tim 2:4-6).

Therefore, each one of us is called to make Jesus known to those who do not yet know him. But this is not to proselytize. No, it is to open a door. "Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!" (1 Cor 9:16), St Paul declared. If Our Lord Jesus has changed our lives, and he changes it every time we go to him, how can we not feel the passion to make him known to those we encounter at work, at school, in our apartment building, in the hospital, in meeting places? If we look around us, we find people who would be willing to begin – or begin again – a journey of faith were they to encounter Christians in love with Jesus. Shouldn't we and couldn't we be these Christians? I leave you this question:

"Am I truly in love with Jesus? Am I convinced that Jesus offers me and gives me salvation?" And, if I am in love, I have to make him known! But we must be courageous: lay low the mountains of pride and rivalry; fill in the ravines dug by indifference and apathy; make straight the paths of our laziness and our compromises.

May the Virgin Mary, who is Mother and knows how to do so, help us to tear down the walls and the obstacles that impede our conversion, that is, our journey toward the encounter with the Lord. He alone, Jesus alone can fulfil all the hopes of man!

*After praying the Angelus with the faithful, the Holy Father said:*

Dear brothers and sisters, I am closely following the work of the climate conference underway in Paris, and a question I asked in *Laudato Si'* comes again to my mind: "What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up?"

(n. 160). For the good of our common home, of all of us and of the future generations, in Paris every effort should be directed toward mitigating the impacts of climate change and, at the same time, opposing poverty and leading human dignity to flourish. The two choices go together. Stopping climate change and curbing poverty so that human dignity may flourish. Let us pray that the Holy Spirit enlighten those who are called to make such important decisions and give them the courage to always have as the prime criterion the greater good of the human family.

Tomorrow, we mark the 50th anniversary of a memorable event between Catholics and Orthodox. On 7 December 1965, the vigil of the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council, a joint declaration of Paul VI and Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras eliminated the sentences of excommunication exchanged between the Churches of Rome and Constantinople in 1054. It is truly providential that this historic gesture of reconciliation, which created the conditions for a new dialogue between Orthodox and Catholics in love and truth, would be commemorated precisely at the beginning of the Jubilee of Mercy.

*"Let us pray that the Holy Spirit enlighten those who are called to make such important decisions and give them the courage to always have as the prime criterion the greater good of the human family"*

There is no authentic path toward unity without a petition for forgiveness, to God and among ourselves, for the sin of division. Let us recall in our prayer the dear Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and the other leaders of the Orthodox Churches and let us ask the Lord that relations between Catholics and Orthodox be always inspired by fraternal love.

Yesterday in Chimbote, Peru, Michał Tomaszek and Zbigniew Strzałkowski, Conventual Franciscans, and Alessandro Dordi, a *fidei donum* priest, who were assassinated in hatred of the faith in 1991, were beatified. May these martyrs' fidelity in following Jesus give all of us, especially Christians persecuted in different parts of the world, the strength to bear witness to the Gospel with courage.

I wish you all a happy Sunday and a good preparation for the beginning of the Year of Mercy. Please don't forget to pray for me. Have a good lunch. *Arrivederci!*

Cardinal Parolin addresses the Climate Conference in Paris

## Looking to the future of humanity

"A global and 'transformational' agreement based on the principles of solidarity, justice, equality and participation". Recalling the words of Pope Francis on his recent visit to the UN in Nairobi, Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Parolin addressed the 21st Conference of Parties – COP21 – in Paris on Monday, 30 November.

In particular the Secretary of State emphasized the three pillars in which the agreement should be anchored. The adoption of a clear ethical orientation, the transmission of clear signs to guide the behaviour of all those involved, beginning with governments, and the vision of the future.

"COP21 is not a moment of arrival or a starting point, but rather a crucial path in a process that without doubt will not end in 2015", Cardinal Parolin underlined. Calling for a long-term agreement, the Secretary of State continued by stating that effective and dynamic



The conference's logo at Le Bourget

follow up is essential. "It is necessary", he said, "to take into serious consideration the implementation of sustainable models of production and consumption, new attitudes and new lifestyles. Here we enter the fundamental fields of education and training, unfortunately often situated at the margins of negotiations for international agreements. Technical solutions are necessary, but they are not enough if they do not consider education in sustainable lifestyles and responsible awareness".

## The final days of the Council

GIOVANNI MARIA VIAN

In the Basilica of St Paul Outside-the-Walls on 25 January 1959, John XXIII unexpectedly announced the Council. There too, on Saturday afternoon, 4 December 1965, its concluding phase began with Paul VI's joint prayer with the non-Catholic observers. Incense and song were interlaced with Bible passages in Latin, English, French and Greek. Then, in French, the Pope read an address which was moving from the very outset: "Your departure engenders a solitude around us which we did not know before the Council, and which now saddens us: we would like to see you always with us!".

After the Liturgy, Pope Montini, a man of signs, gave a bronze bell to each of the observers. "Keep it", Paul VI urged them, "in memory of our common prayer and in anticipation, until the day in which the hour of our reunification rings out", as Henri de Lubac noted the following day. That Sunday, along with Jean Guittou and Oscar Cullmann, de Lubac was invited to lunch by the Pontiff. That fact in itself was exceptional, but Montini simply explained to his guests: "Perhaps you are asking yourselves how things are done by the Pope; you'll see, it's like anyplace else".

During the conversation one of the secretaries came in to bring a document and, after skimming it over, Paul VI spoke about it to his three guests: it was the definitive text of the joint declaration between the Churches of Rome and Constantinople on the "elimination from memory" of the excommunications exchanged between the two Sees in 1054. The Pope, again according to the writings of the French theologian, "tells us that it will be announced on Tuesday". On 7 December, in St Peter's and in the Phanar, simultaneously, the joint text was read along with a pontifical brief and a patriarchal *tómos*.

That Tuesday was a truly historic day, packed with signs and events. In the last public session of Vatican II, before the Mass, the final vote took place, approving almost unanimously the final four Conciliar documents: three decrees on religious freedom, missions, and priests, in addition to the pastoral constitution on the Church in the modern world. Then the joint declaration was read, defining the two Churches as "sisters", along with the papal brief. Paul VI conveyed it with an embrace to the envoy of Patriarch Athenagoras. The two men then brought to the tomb of St Leo IX, the Bishop of Rome at the time of the Schism, nine roses to commemorate the nine centuries of separation.

The homily that Montini gave on 7 December is one of his most beautiful and inspired texts. It

The Pope recalls both the difficulties and the dynamism of the peoples of Africa

## Servant of the mission

*"It is not the Church that makes the mission, but the mission that makes the Church". Pope Francis addressed these words to the participants of the Plenary Assembly of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples on Thursday morning, 3 December, in the Clementine Hall. The following is a translation of his address which was delivered in Italian.*

Cardinals,  
Dear Brother Bishops and Priests,  
Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I welcome you on the occasion of your Plenary Assembly, in which you focused on the *Missio ad Gentes*, in addition to offering precious indications for the future. As Cardinal Filoni said, I have just returned from my first Apostolic Journey in Africa, where I saw firsthand the spiritual and pastoral dynamism of so many young Churches of that continent, as well as the serious difficulties in which a large part of the population lives. I was able to see that, where there are needs, the presence of the Church is almost always there, ready to heal the wounds of the neediest, in whom she recognizes the wounded and crucified body of the Lord Jesus. How many works of charity and of human promotion! How many anonymous Good Samaritans work every day in the missions!

An evangelizer by nature, the Church always begins by evangelizing herself. A disciple of the Lord Jesus, she listens to his Word, from which she draws the reasons for the hope that does not disappoint, because it is founded on the grace of the Holy Spirit (cf. Rom 5:5). Only in this way is she able to preserve her freshness and apostolic impetus. The Conciliar Decree *Ad Gentes* and the Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*, from which your plenary drew inspiration, state that "it is from the mission of the Son and from the mission of the Holy Spirit that [the Church] draws her origin, in accordance with the decree of God the Father" (*Ad Gentes*, n. 2). The mission does not respond, in the first place, to human initiatives; the principal agent is the Holy Spirit, this project is his (cf. *Redemptoris Missio*, n. 21). The Church is servant of the mission. It is not the Church that makes the mission, but the mission that makes the Church. Therefore, the mission is not the instrument, but the point of departure and the goal.

In recent months, your Dicastery has carried out an inquiry on the vitality of the young Churches, to understand how to render the work of the *Missio ad Gentes* more effective, also considering the ambiguity to which the experience of faith is exposed sometimes today. The secularized world, in fact, even when it is receptive to the Gospel values of love, justice, peace and sobriety, does not show the same willingness to the person of Jesus: it neither regards him as Messiah nor as Son of God. At most it considers him an enlightened man. Therefore, it separates the message from the Messen-



"Barnabas and Paul" (Cyprus, Monastery of Stavrovouni)

ger and the gift from the Donor. In this situation of detachment, the *Missio ad Gentes* acts as engine and horizon of the faith. It is vital at the present moment for the Church "to go forth and preach the Gospel to all; to all places, on all occasions, without hesitation, reluctance or fear" (Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 23). In fact, the mission is a force capable of transforming the interior of the Church even before the life of peoples and cultures. Therefore, every parish should make its own the style of the *Missio ad Gentes*. In this way, the Holy Spirit will transform habitual faithful into disciples, dissatisfied disciples into missionaries, drawing them out of fears and closures and propelling them in every direction, to the ends of the earth (cf. Acts 1:8). May the kerygmatic approach to the faith, so familiar among the young Churches, also find space among those of ancient tradition.

Paul and Barnabas did not have a missionary dicastery behind them. Yet, they proclaimed the Word, gave life to several communities and shed their blood for the Gospel. Over time grew complexities and the need for a special connection between the Churches of recent foundation and the universal Church. Therefore, four centuries ago, Pope Gregory XV instituted the Congregation *Propaganda Fide*, which since 1967 has assumed the name Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. It is evident that in this phase of history "mere administration [of the existing reality] can no longer be enough. Throughout the world let us be 'permanently in a state of mission'" (Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 25): it is a paradigm. St John Paul II specified the modality of it, affirming: "All renewal in the Church must have mission as its goal if it is not to fall prey to a kind of ecclesial introversion" (Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Oceania*, n. 19). "Going" is inherent in Baptism, and its boundaries are those of the world. Therefore, continue to commit yourselves so that the spirit of the *Missio ad Gentes* may animate the path of the

Church, and that she may always be able to hear the cry of the poor and of those who are distant, to encounter all and to proclaim the joy of the Gospel.

I thank you for your work of missionary enthusiasm and cooperation, with which you remember all the Churches that, if constrained within their own horizons, run the danger of becoming atrophied and of dying out. The Church lives and grows by "going forth", taking the initiative and becoming neighbour. Therefore, you must encourage the communities to be generous even in moments of vocational crises. "For missionary activity renews the Church, revitalizes the faith and Christian identity, and offers fresh enthusiasm and new incentive" (*Redemptoris Missio*, n. 2).

The dawn of a new day is already visible in many areas of the *Missio ad Gentes*, as demonstrated by the fact that the young Churches are able to give, not only receive. The first fruits are their willingness to give their priests to sister Churches of the same nation, of the same continent, or to serve needy Churches in other areas of the world. Cooperation is no longer only along the north-south axis. There is also an inverse movement of restitution of the good received from the first missionaries. These are also signs of an attained maturity.

Brothers and sisters, let us pray and work so that the Church may be ever more in keeping with the model of the Acts of the Apostles. Let us allow ourselves to be urged on by the strength of the Gospel and of the Holy Spirit; let us go forth from our enclosures, let us emigrate from the territories in which we are sometimes tempted to enclose ourselves. Thus we will be able to walk and sow further, a step beyond. May Mary Most Holy, Mother of God, St Francis Xavier, today, and St Thérèse of the Child Jesus, Patrons of the Missions, illumine our steps in the service of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus. I accompany you with my blessing and, please, I ask you to pray for me. Thank you.

Pope Francis opens the Holy Door of St Peter's Basilica on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception

# With the mercy of the Good Shepherd

The Jubilee began with a sign of affection between Pope Francis and Pope Benedict in the atrium of St Peter's Basilica. Following the Eucharistic celebration inaugurating the Holy Year, on Tuesday, 8 December, Francis presided at the Rite of opening the Holy Door – which in essence was established by Alexander VI for the Jubilee of 1500 – however this year it was simplified and recited in Italian instead of Latin. After reciting a few phrases, Francis climbed the few steps to the door and before opening it, he stopped to pray for a few moments. Benedict XVI followed him, along with the cardinals, bishops, as well as other religious representatives and lay people. The Mass, celebrated

exactly 50 years after the close of Vatican II, began with readings from four conciliar constitutions and two passages from the decree on ecumenism and the decree on religious freedom. The Sistine Chapel Choir provided the music, along with the Mater Ecclesiae Choir and that of the Pontifical Institute for Sacred Music. Among those concelebrating were Cardinal Dean Sodano, Cardinal Secretary of State Parolin, as well as Archbishop Fischella, Archbishop Ruiz Arenas, Bishop Têbartz-van Elst, of the Congregation for the New Evangelization, charged with organizing the Jubilee. The following is the English text of the Holy Father's homily which he delivered in Italian.

In a few moments I will have the joy of opening the Holy Door of Mercy. We carry out this act – as I did in Bangui – so simple yet so highly symbolic, in the light of the word of God which we have just heard. That word highlights the primacy of grace. Again and again these readings make us think of the words by which the angel Gabriel told

saving love. The words of Genesis reflect our own daily experience: we are constantly tempted to disobedience, a disobedience expressed in wanting to go about our lives without regard for God's will. This is the enmity which keeps striking at people's lives, setting them in opposition to God's plan. Yet the history of sin can only be understood in the light of God's love and forgiveness. Sin can only be understood in this light. Were sin the only thing that mattered, we would be the most desperate of creatures. But the promised triumph of Christ's love enfolds everything in the Father's mercy. The word of God which we have just heard leaves no doubt about this. The Immaculate Virgin stands before us as a privileged witness of this promise and its fulfillment.

This Extraordinary Year is itself a gift of grace. To pass through the Holy Door means to rediscover the infinite mercy of the Father who welcomes everyone and goes out personally to encounter each of them. It is he who seeks us! It is he who comes to encounter us! This will be a year in which we grow ever more convinced of God's mercy. How much wrong we do to God and his grace when we speak of sins being punished by his judgment before we speak of their being forgiven by his mercy (cf. St Augustine, *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum*, 12, 24)! But that is

and dread, for these do not befit men and women who are loved. Instead, let us experience the joy of encountering that grace which transforms all things. Today, here in Rome and in all the dioceses of the world, as we pass through the Holy Door, we also want to remember another door, which 50 years ago the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council opened to the world. This anniversary cannot be remembered only for the legacy of the Council's documents, which testify to a great advance in faith. Before all else, the Council was an encounter. A genuine encounter between the Church and the men and women of our time. An encounter

marked by the power of the Spirit, who impelled the Church to emerge from the shoals which for years had kept her self-enclosed so as to set out once again, with enthusiasm, on her missionary journey. It was the resumption of a journey of encountering people where they live: in their cities and homes, in

their workplaces. Wherever there are people, the Church is called to reach out to them and to bring the joy of the Gospel, and the mercy and forgiveness of God. After these decades, we again take up this missionary drive with the same power and enthusiasm. The Jubilee challenges us to this openness,

and demands that we not neglect the spirit which emerged from Vatican II, the spirit of the Samaritan, as Blessed Paul VI expressed it at the conclusion of the Council. May our passing through the Holy Door today commit us to making our own the mercy of the Good Samaritan.



an astonished young girl of the mystery which was about to unfold her: "Hail, full of grace" (Lk 1:28).

The Virgin Mary was called to rejoice above all because of what the Lord accomplished in her. God's grace enfolds her and made her worthy of becoming the Mother of Christ. When Gabriel entered her home, even the most profound and impenetrable of mysteries became for her a cause for joy, a cause for faith, a cause for abandonment to the message revealed to her. The fullness of grace can transform the human heart and enable it to do something so great as to change the course of human history.



May the Jubilee of Mercy bring us all closer to God's goodness and love!

(@Pontifex)

The feast of the Immaculate Conception expresses the grandeur of God's love. Not only does he forgive sin, but in Mary he even averts the original sin present in every man and woman who comes into this world. This is the love of God which precedes, anticipates and saves. The beginning of the history of sin in the Garden of Eden yields to a plan of

the truth. We have to put mercy before judgement, and in any event God's judgement will always be in the light of his mercy. In passing through the Holy Door, then, may we feel that we ourselves are part of this mystery of love, of tenderness. Let us set aside all fear



The Angelus in St Peter's Square

## The epitomizing word of the Gospel

"One cannot understand a true Christian who is not merciful, just as one cannot comprehend God without his mercy. This is the epitomizing word of the Gospel: mercy". Pope Francis emphasized this before reciting the Angelus with the faithful in St Peter's Square on Tuesday, 8 December, following the Mass opening the Jubilee. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's address which was delivered in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning and happy feast day!

Today the Feast of the Immaculate Conception leads us to contemplate Our Lady who, by unique privilege, was preserved from original sin from the very moment of her conception. Even living in a world marked by sin, she was not touched by it: Mary is our sister in suffering, but not in evil or in sin. Instead, evil was conquered in her even before deflowering her, because God had filled her with grace (cf. Lk 1:28). The Immaculate Conception signifies that Mary is the first one to be saved by the infinite mercy of the Father, which is the first fruit of salvation which God wills to give to every man and woman, in Christ. For this reason the Immaculate One has become the sublime icon of the divine mercy which conquered sin. Today, at the beginning of the Jubilee of Mercy, we want to look to this icon with trusting love and to contemplate her in all her splendour, emulating her faith.

In the Immaculate Conception of Mary we are invited to recognize the dawn of the new world, transformed by the salvific work of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. The dawn of the new creation brought about by divine mercy. For this reason the Virgin Mary, never infected by sin and always full of God, is the mother of a new humanity. She is the mother of the recreated world.

Celebrating this feast entails two things. First: fully welcoming God and his merciful grace into our life. Second: becoming in our turn artisans of mercy by means of an evangelical journey. The Feast of the Immaculate Conception then becomes the feast of all of us if, with our daily "yes", we manage to overcome our selfishness and make the life of our brothers ever more glad, to give them hope, by drying a few tears and giving a bit of joy. In imitation of Mary, we are called to become hearers of Christ and witnesses to his love, looking first of all to those who are privileged in the eyes of Jesus. It is they who he himself indicated: "I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me" (Mt 25:35-36).

Today's Feast of the Immaculate Conception has a specific message for us: it reminds us that in our life everything is a gift, it is all mercy. May the Blessed Virgin, first fruit of



there we see the face of divine mercy. Let us not be afraid: let us allow ourselves to be embraced by the mercy of God who awaits us and forgives all. Nothing is sweeter than his mercy. Let us allow ourselves to be caressed by God: the Lord is so good, and he forgives all.

Through the intercession of Immaculate Mary, may mercy take possession of our hearts and transform our whole life.

After the Angelus, the Holy Father said:

Dear brothers and sisters, I greet you all with affection, especially families, parish groups and associations.

This afternoon I shall go to Piazza di Spagna, to pray at the feet of the monument to the Immaculate. I will then go to St Mary Major. I ask you to join me spiritually on this pilgrimage, which is an act of filial devotion to Mary, Mother of Mercy. I shall entrust to her the Church and all of humanity, and in a special way the city of Rome.

Today Pope Benedict also passed through the Door of Mercy. Let us greet Pope Benedict from here!

I wish everyone a happy feast day and an abundantly fruitful Holy Year, with the guidance and intercession of our Mother; a Holy Year filled with mercy, for you and, from you, for others. Please, ask this of the Lord for me too, as I have such a need for it! Enjoy your lunch! *Arrivederci!*

A Marian pilgrimage to the Spanish Steps

# Beneath her mantle there is space for everyone

Later on Tuesday afternoon, the Holy Father arrived by car at Via dei Due Macelli. Along with the crowds, awaiting him were the Vicar of Rome, Cardinal Vallini; the Commissioner of the City of Rome, Paolo Tronca; Regent of the Prefecture of the Papal Household, Msgr Sapiezna; Master of Apostolic Ceremonies, Msgr Marini; and Papal Master of Ceremonies, Msgr Dubina. Then Francis made his way towards the square near the Spanish Steps. On reaching the column with the statue of Mary, the Holy Father recited a prayer. Then as the Sistine Chapel Choir sang the litanies of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Pontifical Gestatorial Chair Bearers laid white roses at the foot of the statue. After the blessing the Pope greeted those present, including Cardinal Filoni, Prefect of Propaganda Fide; Archbishop Hom Thai-Fai; Archbishop Rugambwa; Archbishop Lamone and Bishop Leuzzi. Also present were civil authorities including the Spanish Ambassador to the Holy See, the President of the Region of Lazio and the Deputy Mayor of Rome. After the prayer, the Pope stopped to greet the many sick who were accompanied by LUNTAISI volunteers. After bidding a final farewell to the crowd, the Pontiff boarded the car and went to the Basilica of St Mary Major where he paid tribute to "Salus populi Romani". The following is a translation of the Holy Father's prayer at the foot of the statue of Mary in Piazza di Spagna, which was delivered in Italian.

Virgin Mary, On this day, the feast of your Immaculate Conception, I come to pay you homage in faith and love. On behalf of God's holy people who live in this city and diocese. I come in the name of families, with their joys and troubles; On behalf of children and young people, open to life; On behalf of the elderly, laden with age and years of experience; In a special way, I come on behalf of the sick, the imprisoned, and those who have difficult paths. As Shepherd, I also come on behalf of all those who have come from far-away lands in search of peace and work. There is space for everyone beneath your mantle, Because you are the Mother of Mercy. Your heart is full of tenderness for all your children: The tenderness of God, who, by you, became incarnate and became our brother, Jesus, Saviour of every man and woman.

Looking at you, Our Immaculate Mother, We see the victory of divine Mercy over sin and all its consequences; And hope for a better life is reignited within us. Free from slavery, rancor and fear. Here, today, in the heart of Rome, we hear your voice as mother. Calling all of us to walk towards the door, which represents Christ. You say to everyone: "Come, come closer, faithful ones; Enter and receive the gift of mercy; Do not be afraid, do not be ashamed: The Father awaits you with open arms. He will forgive and welcome you into his house. Come, all those in search of peace and joy". We thank you, Immaculate Mother, Because you do not let us walk along this path alone; you guide us, You are near us and help us through every difficulty. May God bless you, Mother, now and forever. Amen.



The Pope affirms that men become priests to serve

## Taken from the flock

*"Taken from among men", "ordained for men", and present "on earth with other men": these are words from the Conciliar Decree "Presbyterorum Ordinis" which Pope Francis used to describe priests of today. He did so in an audience on Friday, 20 November, in the Sala Regia with participants of a conference organized by the Congregation for the Clergy in honour of the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council. In his greeting to the Pope, Cardinal Prefect Beniamino Stella explained that the work of the conference seeks "to reap the many fruits of the conciliar reflection, to understand ever more clearly, to analyze it and enrich it, in the light of the experiences and the lives of so many particular Churches throughout the world".*

Cardinals,  
Dear Brother Bishops and Priests,  
Brothers and Sisters,

I extend my cordial greetings to each of you, and I express my sincere gratitude to you, Cardinal Stella, and to the Congregation for the Clergy, who invited me to participate in this Conference, 50 years after the promulgation of the Conciliar Decrees *Optatam Totius* and *Presbyterorum Ordinis*.

I apologize for having changed the first plan, which was that I should come to you, but you saw that there was no time and even here I arrived late!

This is not a "historical reenactment". These two Decrees are seeds that the Council has scattered in the field of the Church; over the course of these five decades they have grown, they have become a robust plant, with a few dry leaves, of course, but above all with many flowers and fruits that adorn the Church today. Retracing the path undertaken, this Conference has demonstrated these fruits and has constituted a proper ecclesial reflection on the work that is still to be done in this area that is so vital for the Church. There is still work to be done!

*Optatam Totius* and *Presbyterorum Ordinis* were mentioned together, as two halves of a single reality: the formation of priests, which we distinguish as initial and ongoing, but which represents for them a unique experience of discipleship. It was not by chance that Pope Benedict, in January 2013 (*Motu proprio Ministerium Instituitio*), gave a concrete and juridical form to this reality, also

giving the Congregation for the Clergy competence over seminaries. In this way the Dicastery itself can begin to take care of the life and ministry of priests from the moment they enter the seminary, working to ensure that vocations are promoted and looked after, and that they may blossom in the lives of holy priests. A priest's path to holiness begins in the seminary!

Since the vocation to the priesthood is a gift that God gives to some for the good of all, I would like to share some thoughts with you, starting with the relationship between priests and others, according to n. 3 of *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, which is like a small compendium of the theology of the priesthood, taken from the Letter to the Hebrews: "Priests, who are taken from among men and ordained for men in the things that belong to God in order to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins, nevertheless live on earth with other men as brothers".

Let us consider these three circumstances: "taken from among men", "ordained for men", and present "on earth with other men".

The priest is a man who is born into a certain human context; there he learns the primary values, absorbs the spirituality of the people and acclimates to the relationships. Priests too have a history; they are not "mushrooms" that suddenly spring in a Cathedral on the day of their ordination. It is important that formators and the priests themselves remember this and are able to take account of this personal history along the path of formation. On ordination day I always tell the priests, the new priests: remember where



you were taken from, from the flock, never forget your mother and your grandmother! This is what Paul said to Timothy, and I say it again today. This means that you cannot become a priest believing that one has been formed in a laboratory, no; it begins in the family with the "tradition" of the Faith and with the whole family experience. It must be personalized, because it is a concrete person that is called to discipleship and the priesthood, taking into account that in each case Christ is the Master to follow and after whom to model oneself.

In this regard I like to recall that fundamental "centre of pastoral vocation" which is the family, the domestic Church and the first and most fundamental place of human formation, where the desire for a life conceived as a vocational path can burgeon in young people, to be followed with commitment and generosity.

In families and all the other community contexts – school, parishes, associations, groups of friends – we learn to have relationships with real people, we are moulded by our relationships with them, and we also become who we are because of them.

A good priest, therefore, is first of all a man with his own humanity, who knows his own history, with its riches and its wounds, and who has learned to make peace with it, reaching an underlying serenity, that of a disciple of the Lord. Human formation is therefore a necessity for priests so that they learn not to be dominated by their limitations, but instead to build on their talents.

A priest who is a peaceful man will know how to spread serenity around him, even in the most trying of moments, conveying the beauty of his relationship with the Lord. It is not normal for a priest to be often sad, nervous or harsh of character; it is not okay and it does no good, neither for the priest, nor for his people. If you have an illness, if you're overwrought, go to the doctor! Go to the spiritual doctor and the medical doctor: both of them will give you medicine that will be good for you! The faithful should not have to pay for the neurosis of the priests! Do not lambast the faithful; be close at heart to them.

We priests are apostles of joy, we proclaim the Gospel, that is, the "good news" par excellence; it is certainly not we who give strength to the Gospel – some believe that –, but we can either help or hinder the encounter between the Gospel and people. Our humanity is the "earthen vessel" in which we safeguard the treasure of God, a vessel which we must take care of, in order to properly pass on its precious content.

A priest cannot lose his roots; he always remains a man of the people and of the culture that engendered him. Our roots help us to remember who we are and where Christ has called us. We priests do not drop from above, but instead we are called, called by God, who takes us "from among men", so as to be "for men". Allow me to share an anecdote. In the diocese, years ago... No, not in the diocese, it was in the Society, there was a very good priest, he was young, and had been a priest for two years. He became confused, and spoke with his spiritual director, with his superiors and with the doctors, saying: "I'm leaving, I can't any more, I am leaving". After thinking things over – I knew his mother, they were humble people – I said to him: "Why don't you go to your mom and talk with her about this?". He went and he spent the whole day with his mother, and he came back changed. His mother gave him two spiritual "slaps", she told him three or four things, put him in his place, and he went on. Why? Because he went to the root. This is why it is important to never remove the roots of where we come from. In the seminary you have to do mental prayer... Yes, of course, this must be done, to learn... But before all else you pray the way your mom taught you, and then you move forward. The root is always there, the root of family, as you learned to pray as a child, even with the same words, begin to pray like that. Then you will go forward in prayer.

Here is the second step: "ordained for men".

Here is a key point to the life and ministry of priests. Answering God's call, you become a priest to serve your brothers and sisters. The images

## The final days of the Council

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

captures the essence of the Council: "Perhaps never as on this occasion has the Church felt the need to know, to be close to, to understand, to permeate, to serve, to evangelize the surrounding society, and to gather it up, almost to go after it in its rapid and constant change". Moreover: "The religion of the God who became Man has encountered the religion (because it is) of man who makes himself God. What came about? A clash, a struggle, an anathema? It could have happened but did not. The ancient story of the Samaritan was the paradigm of the spirituality of

the Council. It was completely permeated by immense geniality".

On that same day, in another meaningful gesture, the Pope signed a *motu proprio* by which he reformed the ancient Holy Office. Then on 8 December, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, with the sun shining on St Peter's Square, Paul VI concluded the Second Vatican Council, repeating in his homily that "for the Catholic Church no one is a stranger, no one is excluded, no one is far away". Montini defined these parting words as "not of farewell which separates, but of friendship that remains".

G.M.V.

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## Men become priests to serve

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

of Christ that we take as a reference for the ministry of priests are clear: He is the "High Priest", close in the same way to God and to mankind; he is the "Servant", who washes feet and who becomes a neighbour to the weakest; he is the "Good Shepherd", who always has as his goal the care of the flock.

There are three images that we should look to when thinking about the ministry of priests: sent to serve men, to help them obtain the mercy of God, and to proclaim his Word of life. We are not priests for ourselves, and our sanctification is closely linked to that of our people, our unction for their unction; you are anointed for your people. Knowing and remembering that he is "ordained for men" – the holy people, the People of God – helps a priest not to think of himself, to be authoritative and not authoritarian, firm but not harsh, joyful but not superficial, in short, to be a pastor and not an official. Today, in both Readings of the Mass, we clearly see the people's ability to rejoice, when the temple is restored and purified, while at the same time we see the chief priests and scribes' incapacity for joy at seeing Jesus drive the merchants out of the temple. A priest must learn to rejoice, moreover he must never lose the capacity for joy: if he loses it something is not right. I tell you honestly, I'm afraid of ri-

Approved by Moneyval

### Holy See fights financial crime

On Tuesday, 8 December, in Strasbourg the Plenary Meeting of Moneyval (the "Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism") approved the Second Progress Report of the Holy See/Vatican City State. The approval of this latest Report, which follows on the Mutual Evaluation Report of 4 July 2012 and of the Progress Report of 9 December 2013, is part of the ordinary reporting process foreseen in the Rules of Procedure of Moneyval for all member States. The Moneyval Committee has welcomed the outcome of the continued efforts by the Holy See and Vatican City State to further strengthen their institutional, legal and operational framework for combating money laundering and the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT). "The latest Progress Report confirms that the Holy See has established a functional, sustainable and effective system, aimed at preventing and fighting financial crimes", said Msgr Antoine Camilleri, Undersecretary for Relations with States and Head of the Delegation of the Holy See and Vatican City State to the Moneyval plenary.

gidity, I am afraid. Rigid priests... Stay away! They bite you! And I recall an expression of St Ambrose, from the fourth century: "Where there is mercy there is the spirit of the Lord, and where there is rigidity there are only his ministers". A minister without the Lord becomes rigid, and this is a danger to God's people. Be pastors, not officials.

The People of God and all of humanity are the beneficiaries of the mission of priests, and all the work of formation is geared toward this mission. Human, intellectual and spiritual formation flow naturally into this ministry, which such formation provides with tools, virtues and personal predisposition. When all of this harmonizes and blends with true missionary zeal, along the path of an entire lifetime, the priest can fulfil the mission that Christ has entrusted to his Church.

Furthermore, what is born of the people must remain with the people; the priest is always "on earth with other men", he is not a professional in pastoral ministry or in evangelization, who arrives and does what he must – perhaps well, but as if it were a trade – and then leaves to live a separate life. One becomes a priest to be on earth with the people: closeness. And if I may, brother bishops, we bishops should also have this closeness with our priests. This also applies to us! How often do we hear priests complain: "Well, I called the bishop because I have a problem.... The secretary, the secretary told me he is very busy, that he is out, that he will not be able to see me for another three months...". Two things. The first: a bishop is always busy, thanks be to God, but if you bishops receive a call from a priest and cannot receive him because you have a lot of work, at least pick up the phone, call him and ask: "Is it urgent? Is it not urgent? When, come that day...", in this way you are close. There are bishops who seem to move away from the priests.... Closeness, at least a phone call! That is fatherly love, fraternity. And the other thing: "No, I have a conference in the city and then I have to make a trip to America, and then...". But, listen, the decree of Trent concerning residence is still in force! And if you do not feel like staying in the diocese, resign and travel the world doing a different, very good apostolate. However, if you're the bishop of that diocese: residence. These two things: closeness and residence. This is for us bishops! One becomes a priest to be on earth with the people.

The good that the priests can do is born mainly from their closeness and their tender love for people. They are neither philanthropists nor officials; priests are fathers and brothers. The fatherhood of a priest does so much good.

Closeness, the depths of mercy, a loving gaze: to experience the beauty of a life lived according to the Gospel and the love of God, which is also made concrete through his ministers. God never refuses. And here I think of the confessional. You can always find ways of giving absolution; to welcome the good.

But sometimes you cannot absolve. There are priests who say: "No, because of this I cannot absolve you, go away". This is not the way. If you cannot give absolution, explain and say: "God loves you so much, God loves you. There are so many ways to reach God. I cannot give you absolution; I give you the blessing. But come back, always come back here, and whenever you come back I'll give you a blessing as a sign that God loves you". And that man or woman will go away full of joy because he found the image of the Father, who never refuses; in one way or another, he has embraced that person.

This too is a good examination of conscience for a priest: if the Lord were to return today, where would he find me? "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Mt 6:21). And where is my heart? Is it among the people, praying with and for the people, involved with their joys and sufferings, or is it rather among worldly things, earthly affairs, in my private "spaces"? A priest cannot have a private space, because he is always either with the Lord or with the people. I think of those priests that I knew in my city, when there were no answering machines, who slept with a phone on the bedside table. At whatever time people would call, they got up to give the anointing: no one died without the sacraments! They did not even have a private space when they rested. That is apostolic zeal. The answer to the question "Where is my heart?" can help every priest to guide his life and his ministry toward the Lord.

The Council left the Church "precious pearls". Like the merchant in the Gospel of Matthew (13:45), today we go in search of them, to bring new impetus and new instruments for the mission that the Lord has entrusted to us.

One thing that I would like to add to the text – sorry! – is vocational discernment, the admission to seminary. Seek the health of that young man, the spiritual, physical, material, physical and mental health. Once, when I had just been appointed master of novices in 1972, I took the results of a personality test to

the psychologist, it was a simple test that was done as one of the elements of discernment. She was a good woman, and also a good doctor. She said to me: "This one has this problem, but he can proceed if he does so in this way...". She was also a good Christian, but in some cases was adamant: "This one cannot" – "But doctor, this young man is so good" – "He is good now, but know that there are young people who unconsciously know, they are not aware of it, but unconsciously they feel that they are mentally ill, and seek strong structures that will protect them in life, in order to go on. And they go on fine, until the moment comes when they feel well established and there the problems begin" – "It seems a bit strange to me...". And I will never forget her response, it was like that of the Lord to Ezekiel: "Father, have you ever wondered why there are so many police officers who torture? They enter young, they seem healthy but when they feel confident the illness begins to emerge. Those are the strong institutions that these unconsciously sick ones seek: the police, the army, the clergy.... And we all know that there are many illnesses which come out". It's curious. When I realize that a young man is too rigid, too fundamentalist, I do not have confidence; in the background there is something that he himself does not know. But when they feel confident.... Ezekiel 16, I cannot remember the verse, but it is when the Lord tells his people all that he did for them: he found them when they were just born, and he clothed them, he espoused them.... "And then, when you felt secure, you prostituted yourself". It is a rule, a rule of life. Eyes open to the mission in seminaries. Eyes open.

I trust that the result of the work of this Conference – with so many distinguished speakers from different regions and cultures – can be offered to the Church to update the teachings of the Council in a useful way, contributing to the formation of priests, those who are there and those who the Lord will give us, so that, increasingly configured to him, they will be good priests according to the heart of the Lord, not officials! Thank you for your patience.

## Memorandum of Understanding between Italy and the Vatican

On Thursday, 26 November, in the Vatican a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Governorate of Vatican City State and the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities of the Italian Republic concerning cooperation in the protection and enhancement of the cross-border UNESCO site "Historic Centre of Rome, the Extraterritorial Properties of the Holy See in the city and St Paul Outside-the-Walls", written in the World Heritage List.

Since the site involves both Italy and the Holy See – barring a few exceptions – the Memorandum of

Understanding commits both countries to continue cooperation in the protection and enhancement of the site and the conservation of its outstanding universal value, as provided in the Convention for the protection of the World cultural and Natural Heritage and in its guidelines.

To achieve these goals, the agreement also establishes a standing body for mutual cooperation, known as the "Group of cross-border coordination", which recognizes the competencies of co-ordination, monitoring, information and promotion of the site.

Bartholomew's greeting to the Holy See delegation on the Feast of St Andrew

## Healing wounds

*The following is the text of Patriarch Bartholomew's greeting to the Holy See delegation on their visit to Istanbul for the Feast of St Andrew on Monday, 30 November.*

Your Eminence Cardinal Kurt Koch and the honorable entourage of the official delegation of our sister and elder Church of Rome, Your Eminence Cardinal Reinhard Marx, Archbishop of Munich and Freising, President of the Catholic Conference of Bishops in Germany,

It is with profound love and particular honor that we greet your presence here as bearers of the fraternal charity and congratulatory wishes of His Holiness Pope Francis, our dearly beloved brother, to whom we express our fervent gratitude personally and on behalf of our most holy Church of Constantinople for the gracious participation once again of his Church, through your person, in this year's celebration of our thronal feast. It is with special joy and thanks that we recall the personal presence of His Holiness among us on this auspicious occasion last year, for which we once again express our fervent thanks; for we appreciate this presence as a manifestation of Christ's love, which according to the Apostle "compels us" (2 Cor 5:14), and as support and solidarity for our Church in the struggle to bear witness to the Gospel in the contemporary world.

Today's thronal feast of our Church is in many ways a common feast for both of our Churches, of

elder and new Rome alike. This is because our founders, the Apostles Peter and Andrew were brothers in the flesh but also because, in accordance with the holy Gospel reading that we heard during today's Divine Liturgy, they both encountered the Lord and acknowledged Him as the Messiah and Savior of the world. Since that time, for almost an entire millennium, the two Churches founded by their preaching and martyrdom journeyed in the same faith, united in the one chalice of life, sharing the same Fathers and teachers, honoring the same saints and in particular the Most-Holy Theotokos. It is this full communion and union that both Churches now seek to rediscover, transcending and healing the wounds inflicted on the body of the Church during the second millennium, through the dialogue of love and truth that commenced at the historical initiative of the late venerable leaders of our two Churches and by God's grace continues to this day.

Among these initiatives, the dialogue of love began with an exceptionally symbolical Act on the part of both Churches, namely the lifting in 1965 of the anathemas, through which the Churches of Rome and Constantinople were – for reasons known to God – separated during the Schism of 1054, the start of unfortunate events that ensued in relations between the Churches of East and West for the next thousand years. This year, we are celebrating the 50th anniversary since the historic Act of the lifting of the anathem-

as, and we offer glory to the God of love for obliterating from our hearts every trace of malicious memory for whatsoever disrupted the fraternal relations of our Churches during the second millennium; for "cleansing our memory" has reestablished us as "sister Churches" in pursuit, through the dialogue of truth, of full reconciliation of our union in the communion of the Eucharistic Table. Blessed be the name of the Lord for this restored love, which we pray will remain seamless to the ages!

We reap and enjoy the wonderful fruits of this "dialogue of love" each day in the life of our faithful, especially in the Diaspora and in countries that historically always belonged to the jurisdiction of the Church of Rome, where the peaceful and creative coexistence and cooperation between Roman Catholics and Orthodox Christians is particularly strong. One such place of positive and fraternal collaboration between clergy and laity of both our Churches is Germany; this is why we take this opportunity of the presence of Your Eminence, Reinhard Cardinal Marx, Archbishop of Munich and Freising, President of the Catholic Conference of Bishops in Germany, to express – both to you personally as to the local Church that you head – the warm thanks of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and of our Modesty for the manifold and invaluable assistance that you provide to our beloved brother Metropolitan Avgoustinos of Germany, as well as to the Orthodox clergy and faithful there, for the smooth management of their work and ministry by means of a wonderful collaboration with their Roman Catholic brothers and sisters. We pray that this harmonious coexistence and cooperation may be strengthened and developed continually and increasingly for the progress of the unity of Christ's Church and the promotion of the Gospel message in our contemporary world.

Moreover, it is with great attention and vigilant prayer that we also follow from this sacred Center the advancement of the "dialogue of truth," that other pillar in the bilateral relations between our two Churches, which from 1980 to this day steadily accompanies the "dialogue of love." We know and acknowledge the difficulties that this dialogue is undergoing, especially in its present phase, when it is examining thorny issues such as Primacy in the Church; however, we are encouraged in ascertaining that solid and proper foundations for resolving this matter have already been established with the exceptional common text of Ravenna, which creates the context and conditions for exercising Primacy in the Church, which is a primacy of service, rooted in the very nature of the Church and ex-



*On 7 December Cardinal Koch presented Pope Francis with an artistic depiction of the embrace between the Pontiff and the Ecumenical Patriarch on 30 November 2014 during the papal visit in Turkey. Bartholomew gave Cardinal Koch the gift during his visit to the Phanar for the Feast of St Andrew*

tremely necessary for the fulfillment of its ministry in the world. We profoundly appreciate the labors of Your Eminence Cardinal Kurt Koch and your Orthodox co-chairman in the commission for dialogue, His Eminence Elder Metropolitan John of Pergamon; and we pray that this Dialogue may continue its work, supported by the finest theological resources and far away from every form of interests beyond witnessing to the truth in love.

This journey toward restoration of full unity between our Churches is carried out in a world torn apart by hatred and much turmoil. Each day we witness conflicts and assaults, often against innocent people, even in the name of God. The victims of these circumstances include Christians in lands where the Church of Christ emerged and was established, who are obliged at times to flee their ancestral homes and at other times to endure torture and even death. Human personhood and life itself are prone to lose their value, while the world is engulfed in an unprecedented darkness. Our heart aches from pain and anguish; our prayer to the God of love intensifies as it implores divine intervention. At the same time, we are increasingly obliged as believers in Christ to become witnesses to the Gospel of peace and charity "in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation" (Phil 2:15) so as to be first in providing an example of reconciliation and love. Perhaps never before has the reconciliation of Christians proved so mandatory and imperative as today.

May the Lord, through the intercessions of St Andrew the First-Called of His Apostles, whom we commemorate today, and his brother St Peter the Apostle, on whose preaching and martyrdom our two Churches were founded, increase the love that unites us in the bond of peace, for the benefit of humanity which is suffering so much and for the glory of our God-in-Trinity.

With these thoughts and sentiments, we welcome you on this festive day, once again wholeheartedly thanking you and His Holiness our brother Bishop of Rome, who sent you, together with all your Church.

"May the God of love and peace be with you" (cf. 2 Cor 13:11). Amen!

## VATICAN BULLETIN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

The Holy Father appointed Archbishop Jan Romeo Pawlowski, titular Archbishop of Sejny, as Delegate for the Pontifical Representations. Until now he has been Apostolic Nuncio in the Republic of Congo and in Gabon (7 Dec.).

### START OF MISSION

On 13 October, Archbishop Thomas Edward Gullickson, titular Archbishop of Bomarzo, began his mission as Apostolic Nuncio in the Swiss Confederation with the presentation of his Letters of Credence to H.E. Ms Simonetta Sommaruga, current President of the Confederation.

On 26 October, Archbishop Thomas Edward Gullickson, titular Archbishop of Bomarzo, began his mission as Apostolic Nuncio in the Principality of Liechtenstein with the presentation of his Letters of Credence to H.S.H. Alois, Hereditary Prince of Liechtenstein.

### CARDINAL TAKES POSSESSION

On Saturday, 5 December, Cardinal Soane Patita Pains Mafi, Bishop

of Tonga, took possession of the Title of Santa Paola Romana.

On Sunday, 6 December, Cardinal Pierre Nguyễn Văn Nhơn, Archbishop of Hanoi, took possession of the Title of San Tommaso Apostolo.

### ADVENT SERMON

On Friday morning, 4 December, in the presence of the Holy Father, Fr Raniero Cantalamessa, OFM cap., Preacher of the Papal Household, delivered the first Advent Sermon in the Vatican's Redemptoris Mater Chapel.

### NECROLOGY

Bishop Antonio Troyo Calderón, titular Bishop of Burca, Auxiliary Bishop emeritus of San José de Costa Rica, at age 92 (1 Dec.).

Archbishop Ricardo Guizar Díaz, Archbishop emeritus of Tlalneantla, Mexico, at age 82 (4 Dec.).

Archbishop Luigi Conti, titular Archbishop of Gratiana, Apostolic Nuncio, at age 86 (4 Dec.).

Francis asks health care workers to take care of others regardless of social and religious differences

## Beyond every barrier

*Closeness to others "surmounts every barrier of nationality, of social extraction, of religion". Pope Francis addressed the participants of an international conference of the Pontifical Council for Health Pastoral Care on Thursday morning, 19 November, in the Regia Hall. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's address which was delivered in Italian.*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Thank you for your welcome! I thank Archbishop Zygmunt Zimowski for the courteous greeting he addressed to me on behalf of all those present, and I give my cordial welcome to you, organizers and participants of this 30th International Conference on "The Culture of *Salus* and of Hospitality at the Service of Man and of the Planet". I extend a heartfelt thank you to all the collaborators of the Dicastery.

Many questions will be addressed in this annual meeting, which marks the 30 years of activity of the Pontifical Council for Health Pastoral Care, and which also coincides with the 20th anniversary of the publication of St John Paul II's Encyclical Letter *Evangelium Vitae*.

In fact respect for the value of life and, even more so, love for it, finds irreplaceable fulfillment in reaching out, drawing near, taking care of those who suffer in body and spirit: all actions that characterize health pastoral care. Actions and, even before, attitudes that the Church will especially emphasize during the Jubilee of Mercy, which calls us all to be close to our most suffering brothers and sisters. In *Evangelium Vitae* we can trace the constitutive elements of the "culture of *salus*": namely, *hospitality, compassion, understanding and forgiveness*. They are the habitual attitudes of Jesus in relation to the multitude of needy people that approached him every day: the sick of every kind, public sinners, the demon-possessed, the marginalized, the poor, foreigners.... And, curiously, in our *throwaway culture*, they are rejected, they are left aside. They don't count. It's curious... What does this mean? That the throwaway culture is not of Jesus, it's not Christian.

Pope Francis attends a Council for the Economy meeting

### At the centre of the reforms

On Thursday afternoon, 3 December, the Holy Father participated in the meeting of the Council for the Economy. The Pope explained that the reason for his visit was to personally thank and encourage Council members for the important role they fulfil in the vigilance of the financial and administrative structures of the Holy See. He further confirmed the central role of the Council in this work of reform to which the Holy Father is committed.

On behalf of the Council, Cardinal Reinhard Marx, the Coordinator of the Council, warmly thanked the Holy Father for his presence at the meeting and reconfirmed its full commitment to the financial and administrative reforms initiated by Pope Francis. Since its founding the Council has dedicated significant time and energy to the consideration and eventual implementation of measures aimed at transparency and the more effective management of the resources of the Holy See.



Such attitudes are what the Encyclical calls "positive requirements" of the Commandment about the inviolability of life, which, with Jesus, are manifested in all their breadth and depth, and which again today can, or better yet, must distinguish health pastoral care: they "range from caring for the life of one's brother (whether a blood brother, someone belonging to the same people, or a foreigner living in the land of Israel) to showing concern for the stranger, even to the point of loving one's enemy" (n. 41).

This *closeness to the other* – true closeness, not feigned – to the point of regarding him as someone that belongs to me – an enemy also belongs to me as brother – surmounts every barrier of nationality, of social extraction, of religion... as the "Good Samaritan" of the Gospel parable teaches us. It also surpasses that culture in a negative sense, according to which, whether in rich countries or in poor ones, human beings are accepted or rejected according to utilitarian criteria, in particular, social or economic utility. This mentality is parent of the so-called "medicine of desires": an ever more widespread custom in rich countries, characterized by the quest for physical perfection at any cost, in the illusion of eternal youthfulness; a custom that in fact leads to discarding or marginalizing those who are not "efficient", those who are regarded as a burden, a bother, or are simply unappealing.

Likewise, "reaching out" – as I recalled in my recent Encyclical *Laudato Si'* – also implies assuming un-

breakable responsibilities towards Creation and the "common home", which belongs to all and is entrusted to the care of all, also for the coming generations.

The anxiety that the Church harbours is for the fate of the human family and of all of creation. It is about educating everyone to "care for" and to "administer" Creation as a whole, as a gift entrusted to the responsibility of every generation, so that it is handed down as intact and humanly liveable as possible to the coming generations. This conversion of heart to the "Gospel of Creation" implies that we make our own and render ourselves interpreters of the cry for human dignity, which is raised above all by the poorest and most excluded, as sick and suffering people often are. In the now imminence of the Jubilee of Mercy, may this cry find a sincere echo in our hearts, so that in the exercise of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, according to the different re-

sponsibilities entrusted to each one, we can also receive the gift of God's grace, while we render ourselves "channels" and witnesses of mercy.

I hope that in these days of reflection and debate, in which you also consider the environmental factor in its aspects most strongly related to the physical, psychological, spiritual and social health of the person, you may contribute to a new development of the culture of *salus*, understood also in an integral sense. I encourage you, in this perspective, to always bear in mind in your work the reality of those populations, which suffer most the damages that stem from environmental degradation, it is a surprise for me to find – when I go to the Wednesday Audience or to parishes – so many sick people, especially children... The parents say to me: "He has a rare illness! They don't know what it is". These rare illnesses are the consequence of the sickness that we inflict on the environment. And this is serious!

Let us ask Mary Most Holy, Health of the Sick, to accompany the work of your conference. We entrust to her the commitment that, every day, the different professional figures of the world of health carry out in favour of the suffering. I wholeheartedly bless you, your families, your communities, as well as all those you meet in hospitals and in nursing homes. I pray for you; and you, please, pray for me. Thank you.

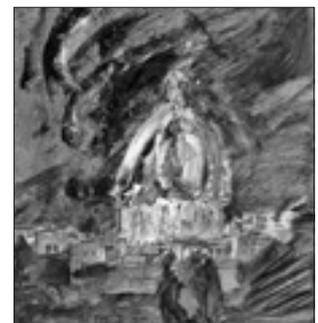
First Advent sermon at the Vatican

### The light of the nations

"People do not accept Christ because of love for the Church but they accept the Church because of love for Christ, even a Church disfigured by the sin of its many representatives", because "what counts is not the position I occupy in the Church but the position that Christ occupies in my heart!"

In his first Advent sermon on Friday morning, 4 December, in the Redemptoris Mater Chapel of the Apostolic Palace, in the presence of Pope Francis, Fr Raniero Cantalamessa, OFM Cap., began his series of meditations dedicated to the Church through the Constitution *Lumen Gentium*. The preacher of the Papal Household explained that, 50 years after the conclusion of Vatican II, it is useful to focus on the main documents of the Council, which have been discussed over the years regarding "doctrinal and pastoral applications", but "focused very few times on its spiritual content strictly speaking".

To really understand what it means that the Church is the body and bride of Christ, Fr Can-



Jean Guittón, "The Apostles of the Council" (1964, detail)

talamesa began precisely with the first sentence of the constitution "*Lumen Gentium cum sit Christus*" ("Christ is the light of the nations"). Here, he said, "is the key to interpreting the whole ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council". It shows that "people do not accept Christ out of love for the Church but they accept the Church out of love for Christ".

The Jubilee from the Middle Ages to modern times

## Hospitality for pilgrims in Rome

ANNA FOA

The first Jubilee in Christian history was in 1300, proclaimed by Pope Boniface VIII. An enormous influx of pilgrims arrived in Rome, so many that the city, lacking accommodation, lodgings and inns, was unable to house them all. The crowds were such that as recalled in Canto XVIII of Dante's *Inferno*, a system of alternating traffic was introduced in order for them to cross the Sant'Angelo Bridge. In the centuries that followed the situation would grow even worse and pilgrims belonging to the different confraternities would fight, weapons in hand, for the right of way on the bridge.

On the occasion of the Jubilee of 1300, Romans created provisional inns by transforming their homes into lodgings, a practice that would continue for centuries, until today. During the first and in subsequent Jubilees, women played a fundamental role in the work of providing hospitality. Given the risks and difficulties of long journeys on foot through unknown places fraught with danger not only to their baggage but also to their chastity, there were fewer women than men who participated as pilgrims. Instead, women in Rome became innkeepers, hostesses and nurses, alleviating the



Matthius Meyoogel, "Caritas Romana" (1628)

pilgrims' weariness with food, drink, warm rooms and comfortable beds. Often, although perhaps not always true, municipal authorities feared that prostitutes might hide in the ranks of these innkeepers, and thus inns without signs were mistrusted and thus authorities sought in vain to control and discourage them.

Until well after the 16th century the Jubilee was a business opportunity for innkeepers, since pilgrims paid for their board and lodging and had to stay for at least a fortnight in Rome in order to make the repeated visits to the basilicas necessary to gain the Plenary Indulgence.

During these 14 days they also had to sleep and eat. However, from the mid-16th century, in an atmosphere of increasing religious discipline, the mercenary aspect of accommodation during the Jubilee sharply declined since the network of more or less improvised hostels and inns was replaced by the network of hospitals and confraternities which played the role of providing assistance free of charge as a religious obligation.

Pilgrimages increasingly acquired a group character, the number of individual pilgrims dwindled and the part played by secular confraternities developed. Here too the role of women was very important, particularly that of those belonging to the upper classes, aristocrats and upper-middle-class women, who spared no effort in offering the services of hospitality. They washed the pilgrims' feet and waited on them at table. It was they who were responsible for welcoming the pilgrims and for collecting funds, and they who financed the hospices and hospitals.

However, let us attempt to trace this process a little more closely. As the Jubilee of 1300 was marked by the flourishing of inns and hostels, somewhat similar to today's bed and breakfasts, in subsequent Jubilees too the problem of how to lodge, feed and help such a large number of pilgrims remained open. This was particularly true during the important Jubilee of 1450, which seemed to mark the end of Rome's decadence after the period of the exile of the popes in Avignon and the great Schism.

Just as it was ushering in the great season of city planning which was to change its aspect, Rome attracted an incredible number of pilgrims, so many that 1,022 official lodging houses were listed in the city, that is, those equipped with the standard sign, as well as many other non-official ones, namely, homes transformed into hostels. Offering hospitality to pilgrims was one of the most nagging problems which characterized that Holy Year: many people slept outside and, despite the increase in

their number, the lodging houses and hostels proved insufficient to meet the need.

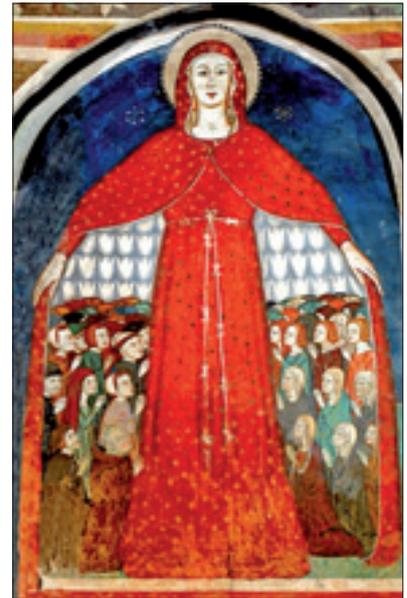
In the Jubilee of 1500 an important role in organizing accommodation was played by Vannoza Caetani. She was the lover of Cardinal Rodrigo Borgia, who acceded to the papal throne in 1492, and was the mother of his four children. When she ceased to be Alexander VI's favourite, Vannoza became an able businesswoman and, among other things, an innkeeper, making the most of the circumstance of the Jubilee to take on the management of at least five inns. These included

one called della Vacca, one of the best in the city, where it seems that in addition to board and lodging pilgrims were also offered courtesans and prostitutes. In this case they might have thought that the Plenary Indulgence to be gained in the following days would cancel their every sin. The former favorite of the Pope followed the example of the Roman people, but she operated at a higher level. Vannoza invested, earned and expanded her business affairs with the Holy Year, also making the most of the favourable attitude which the authorities could not fail to take towards the woman who was the mother of the Pontiff's children. Indeed she was not exempt from the suspicion of usury and, as we have seen, of pandering.

Towards the mid-16th century in the atmosphere of renewed devotional fervour, hospitality for pilgrims also and above all became a superior form of religious devotion. The steadily increasing confraternities equipped themselves to offer pilgrims accommodation free of charge. In 1548 St Philip Neri founded the Archconfraternity of Santissima Trinità dei Pellegrini. In the Santissima Trinità boarding house, as in the hostels of the confraternities, men and women were given separate quarters. The number of women pilgrims, perhaps not as low at the outset as people usually think, increased, since records show a considerable female presence.

However, it was through the assistance women provided that they became truly dominant. The iconography of the Roman Pietà came into being, depicting a provocative woman suckling an old man, which we see in so many paintings of the time, from Caravaggio to Rubens, wholly Baroque in symbolism. The female role is explained, especially at the level of the upper classes of society, by the involvement of women of the nobility in the works of the confraternities and in assistance. Sumptuously dressed, these Roman noblewomen would serve the pilgrims at table and wash their feet, dusty after their long journey. It also happened that grand courtesans would sometimes infiltrate among these women, also to carry out the gratifying and honourable task of tending to and comforting the pilgrims.

In the Jubilee of 1675 Queen Christina of Sweden, having converted to Catholicism and moved to Rome, took part in a sort of purification ceremony in which the most unbridled luxury was juxtaposed with poverty, coloured silk fabrics against the worn and sober clothing of the pilgrims. A quite unusual figure, Christina claimed a central role



"Our Lady of Mercy"  
(Church of St Francis, Monteleone di Spoleto)

not only in assistance but even in the management of the Jubilee. She was the Queen of Rome, or at least was seen as such by the Romans. At the opening of the Holy Door, contrary to all etiquette, she raised her somewhat raucous mannish voice to tell off the English Protestant gentlemen who had failed to kneel. Everyone heard her, including the Pope, but pretended they had heard nothing. Thus, with her but also with other female figures of the time, the charity of hospitality was transformed into a Baroque theatricality for the apparent purpose of serving as an example. Yet it was also a none too well concealed means for them to outshine others, and especially other women.

The era of the women hoteliers and that of the charitable ladies who spared no effort in offering hospitality ended with modern times, the crisis of the Church in the 18th century and the end of the temporal power of the Popes. Men and women carried out beside each other the religious task of the Holy Year pilgrimage. The network of parishes, confraternities and religious institutions replaced – although not entirely – the medieval network of houses turned into hostels. Prostitutes, confined to brothels until fairly recent times, no longer infiltrated in their garish clothes among the noblewomen intent on practising Christian charity. It was now hard to confuse them.

The pilgrimage, once a risky moment of crossing a threshold, became a journey, no longer on foot as in the centuries of the Middle Ages and in the early modern era, but on trains or buses equipped with certain comforts. Are women still innkeepers? Yes, perhaps, but as hotel owners or employed by real estate agencies, and without mixing religious devotion with the desire for profit and worldliness.

women church world women church world women church world