

# L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO

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*Unicuique suum Non praevalerunt*

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At the General Audience the Pontiff reflects on the parable of the Good Shepherd

## No one is ever lost

*On Wednesday, 4 May, the Holy Father focused his catechesis on the image of the Good Shepherd who leaves his flock to look for the lost sheep. He reflected on God's tireless love with the faithful gathered in St Peter's Square. The following is a translation of the Pope's catechesis, which was delivered in Italian.*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,  
Good morning!

We are all familiar with the image of the Good Shepherd with the little lamb on his shoulders. This icon has always been an expression of Jesus' care for sinners and of the mercy of God who never resigns himself to the loss of anyone. The parable is told by Jesus to make us understand that his closeness to sinners should not scandalize us, but on the contrary it should call us all to serious reflection on how we live our faith. The narrative sees, on the one hand, the sinners who approach Jesus in order to listen to him and, on the other, the suspicious doctors of the law and scribes who move away from him because of his behaviour. They move away because Jesus approaches the sinners. These men were proud, arrogant, believed themselves to be just.

Our parable unfolds around three characters: the shepherd, the lost sheep and the rest of the flock. The one who acts, however, is only the shepherd not the sheep. The Shepherd, then, is the only real protagonist and everything depends on him. The parable opens with a question:



"What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost, until he finds it?" (Lk 15:4). It is a paradox that arouses doubt about the action of the Shepherd: is it wise to abandon the ninety-nine for one single sheep?

And what's more, not in the safety of a pen but in the desert? According to biblical tradition, the desert is a place of death where it is hard to find food and water, shelterless and where one is at the mercy of wild beasts and thieves. What are the ninety-nine defenseless sheep supposed to do? The paradox contin-

ues, in any case, saying that the shepherd, having found the sheep, "lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me'" (15:5-6). It seems then that the shepherd didn't go back to the desert to recover the rest of the flock! Reaching out to that single sheep he seems to forget the other ninety-nine. But it's not like that really. The lesson that Jesus wants us to learn is, rather, that not a single one of us can be lost. The Lord cannot accept the fact that a single person can be lost. God's action is that of one who goes out seeking his lost children and then rejoices and celebrates with everyone at their recovery. It is a burning desire: not even ninety-nine sheep could stop the shepherd and keep him enclosed in the fold. He might reason like this: "Let me do the sum: If I have ninety-nine of them, I have lost one, but that's no great loss". Nevertheless, he goes looking for that one, because every one is very important to him and that one is in the most need, is the most abandoned, most discarded; and he goes to look for it. We are all warned: mercy to sinners is the style with which God acts and to this mercy he is absolutely faithful: nothing and no one can distract him from his saving will. God does not share our current throw-away culture; it doesn't count to God. God throws no one away; God loves everyone, looks for everyone: one by one! He doesn't know what "throwing people away" means, because he is entirely love, entirely mercy.

The Lord's flock is always on the move: it does not possess the Lord, it cannot hope to imprison him in its structures and strategies. The Shepherd will be found wherever the lost sheep is. The Lord, then, should be sought precisely where he wants to find us, not where we presume to find him! There is no other way to reassemble the flock except by following the path outlined by the mercy of the shepherd. While he is looking for the lost sheep, he challenges the ninety-nine to participate in the reunification of the flock. Then, not only the lamb on his shoulders, but the whole flock will follow the shepherd to his home

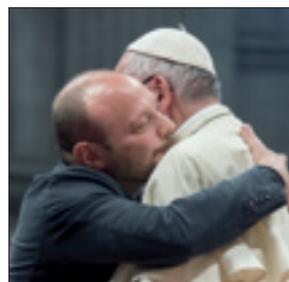
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A vigil of tears in St Peter's

## The hope of the cross

On Thursday evening, 5 May, Pope Francis called the faithful to join him in St Peter's in prayer for all those who are suffering and need consolation. "How many tears are shed every second in our world; each is different but together they form, as it were, an ocean of desolation that cries out for mercy, compassion and consolation". He confided to them: "The power of love turns suffering into the certainty of Christ's victory, and our victory in union with him, and into the hope that one day we will once more be together and will forever contemplate the face of the Blessed Trinity, the eternal wellspring of life and love."

During the vigil the reliquary of Our Lady of Tears of Syracuse was displayed inside the Basilica for the veneration of the faithful. This reliquary is linked to the ex-



traordinary phenomenon that occurred in 1953, when a small plaster picture depicting the Immaculate Heart of Mary that was hanging above the bed of a young Italian married couple shed human tears. The reliquary contains a drop of the tears that flowed miraculously from the image of Our Lady.

At the Jubilee Audience

## No obstacles to reconciliation



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# VATICAN BULLETIN

## AUDIENCES

*Tuesday, 26 April*

Cardinal Angelo Amato, SDB, Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints

*Thursday, 28 April*

The Holy Father paid a visit to the Administration of the Patrimony of the Apostolic See [APSA] and the Secretariat for the Economy

*Friday, 29 April*

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

Cardinal Gualtiero Bassetti, Archbishop of Perugia-Città della Pieve, Italy

Prof. Massimo Gandolfini

*Saturday, 30 April*

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

Graduates of a management course for pastoral and social care in the Archdiocese of Buenos Aires

*Monday, 2 May*

Cardinal Antonio Maria Vegliò, President of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People

Archbishop Piero Marini, titular Archbishop of Martirano, President of the Pontifical Committee for International Eucharistic Congresses

Members of the Board of the Council of the Episcopal Conferences of Europe (CEE)

Prof. Victor García de la Concha, Director of the Cervantes Institute

## CHANGES IN EPISCOPATE

The Holy Father appointed Fr Edgar Xavier Ertl, SAC, as Bishop of Palmas-Francisco Beltrão, Brazil. Until now he has been Provincial Superior of the Province of Nossa Senhora Conquistadora (27 Apr.).

Bishop-elect Ertl, 49, was born in Nova Prata do Iguaçu, Brazil. He made his religious vows for the Society of the Catholic Apostolate (Palottines) on 25 May 1996 and was ordained a priest on 29 December 1996. He holds a degree in dogmatic theology. He has served in parish ministry and as: formator and rector of the Colégio Máximo Palotino; professor of theology; vice-provincial of the Province of Nossa Senhora Conquistadora.

The Holy Father appointed Fr Enrique José Parravano Marino, SDB, as Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Caracas, Venezuela, assigning him the titular episcopal See of Isola. Until now he has been par-



ish priest of San Juan Bosco in Altamira (27 Apr.).

Bishop-elect Parravano Marino, 60, was born in Turmero, Venezuela. He made his religious vows for the Society of Don Bosco on 30 August 1980 and was ordained a priest on 14 January 1984. He holds a specialization in education. He has served in parish ministry and as: chaplain to the Pius XII College in Puerto La Cruz; superior and director of San Luis College in Mérida; superior of the Salesian Community; treasurer of the Province of Caracas.

The Holy Father appointed Fr Hélio Pereira dos Santos from the clergy of Palmeira dos Índios, as Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of São Salvador da Bahia, Brazil, assigning him the titular episcopal See of Thiava. Until now he has been Vicar General and parish priest of Bom Jesus dos Pobres in Quebrangulo (27 Apr.).

Bishop-elect Pereira dos Santos, 48, was born in Pão de Açúcar, Brazil. He was ordained a priest on 19 December 1996. He holds a specialization in history. He has served

in parish ministry and as: treasurer of the Colégio São Vicente in Pão de Açúcar; rector of the São João Maria Vianney Seminary; diocesan pastoral coordinator; chancellor of the Curia.

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Vincenzo Carmine Orofino as Bishop of Tursi-Lagonegro, Italy. Until now he has been Bishop of Tricarico (28 Apr.).

Bishop Orofino, 62, was born in San Severino Lucano, Italy. He was ordained a priest on 4 October 1980. He was ordained a bishop on 15 May 2004, subsequent to his appointment as Bishop of Tricarico.

## Congregation of the Causes for Saints Promulgation of decrees

On Tuesday, 26 April, the Holy Father received in a private audience Cardinal Angelo Amato, SDB, Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. During the audience the Pope authorized the Congregation to promulgate the following decrees:

- the miracle attributed to the intercession of Blessed Alfonso Maria Fusco, diocesan priest and Founder of the Congregation of the Sisters of St John the Baptist; born on 23 March 1839 and died on 6 February 1910;

- the miracle attributed to the intercession of the Venerable Servant of God John Sullivan, professed priest of the Society of Jesus; born on 8 May 1861 and died on 19 February 1933;

- the martyrdom of the Servants of God Vincenç Prensush, OFM, Archbishop of Durres, Albania, and 37 companions killed between 1945 and 1974;

- the martyrdom of the Servants of God José Antón Gómez and three companions of the Order of Saint Benedict of Madrid, Spain, killed in 1936;

- the heroic virtues of the Servant of God Thomas Choe Yang-Eop, diocesan priest; born on 1 March 1821 and died on 15 June 1861;

- the heroic virtues of the Servant of God Sosio Del Prete (in the world: Vincenzo), professed priest of the Order of Friars Minor, Founder of the Congregation of the Little Servants of Christ the King; born on 28 December 1885 and died on 27 January 1952;

- the heroic virtues of the Servant of God Wenanty Katarzyniec (in the world: Józef), professed priest of the Order of Friars Minor Conventual; born on 7 October 1889 and died on 31 March 1921;

- the heroic virtues of the Servant of God Maria Consiglia of the Holy Spirit (in the world: Emilia Pasqualina Addatis), Foundress of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Addolorata, Servants of Mary, born on 5 January 1845 and died on 11 January 1900;

- the heroic virtues of the Servant of God Maria of the Incarnation (in the world: Caterina Carasco Tenorio), Foundress of the Sisters of the Third Order of St Francis of the Rebaño de María [Flock of Mary]; born on 24 March 1840 and died on 24 November 1917;

- the heroic virtues of the Servant of God Maria Laura Baraggia, Foundress of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Family of the Sacred Heart of Jesus; born on 1 May 1851 and died on 18 December 1923;

- the heroic virtues of the Servant of God Ilia Corsaro, Foundress of the Congregation of the Little Missionaries of the Eucharist; born on 4 October 1897 and died on 23 March 1977;

- the heroic virtues of the Servant of God Maria Montserrat Grases García, young laywoman of the Personal Prelature of the Holy Cross and Opus Dei; born on 10 July 1941 and died on 26 March 1959.

The Holy Father appointed Fr Flavian Kassala as Bishop of Geita, Tanzania. Until now he has been Director of the Stella Maris College in Mtwara (28 Apr.).

Bishop-elect Kassala, 48, was born in Sumve, Tanzania. He was ordained a priest on 11 July 1999. He holds a doctorate in theology with a specialization in youth pastoral ministry. He has served in parish ministry and as: formator and spiritual director of the Minor Seminary of Sengerema; diocesan director of the Pontifical Missionary Works; project coordinator of the episcopal office of the Diocese of Geita; professor and director of the University of St Augustine of Tanzania in Arusha.

The Holy Father appointed Bishop José Rafael Palma Capetillo as Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Jalapa, Mexico. Until now he has been titular Bishop of Vallis and Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Yucatán, Mexico (28 Apr.).

Bishop Palma Capetillo, 60, was born in Mérida, Mexico. He was ordained a priest on 14 June 1981. He was ordained a bishop on 3 June 2004, subsequent to his appointment as titular Bishop of Vallis and Auxiliary of Yucatán.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Archbishop Charles Henry Dufour of Kingston in Jamaica, Jamaica. It was presented in accord with can. 401 § 1 of the Code of Canon Law (29 Apr.).

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Kenneth David Oswin Richards as Archbishop of Kingston in Jamaica. Until now he has been Bishop of

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Building dialogue between religions

## Words, heart, hands

If a child can do it, why can't we?



*Before the General Audience on Wednesday, 4 May, the Holy Father went to the study of the Paul VI Hall to meet with participants attending the colloquium for the Royal Institute for Interfaith Studies of Amman, hosted by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. The following is a translation of the spontaneous greeting the Holy Father gave in Italian and which was translated into Arabic.*

It is a pleasure for me to welcome you. And I thank you very much for coming here for this exchange.

I was very, very happy with my visit to Jordan, and I remember it often. It is a beautiful memory that I carry with me.

The work that you do is constructive. We live in a time in which we are accustomed to destruction caused by war. And the work of dialogue, of coming together helps us to build.

In a meeting like this the most important word is *dialogue*. And dialogue means coming out of oneself, with words and listening to the words of the other person. The two words meet, two thoughts meet. It is the first step on a journey.

After this encounter of words, hearts meet and begin a dialogue of friendship, which ends with a handshake. Word, heart, hands. It's simple! A child knows how to do it... Why not us? And this is – little, by little, by little – the step of building, of friendship, of society. We all have a common Father: we are brothers. Let us take this path, which is so beautiful! I thank you for your conviction that it is right to take this path.

Once again, thank you very much. I humbly ask you to pray for me and I promise to pray for you. Thank you!

Video message from the Pope

## How much do we do for women

“The contribution of women in all areas of human activity is undeniable, beginning with the family. But just recognizing it... is that enough?” Pope Francis opened with this question in the video message posted on the website: [www.apmej.org](http://www.apmej.org) – the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network (Apostleship of Prayer). Speaking in Spanish – with subtitles available in six languages at [www.thepopevideo.org](http://www.thepopevideo.org) –, the Pontiff offers his universal intention for the month of May: “That in every country of the world, women may be honored and respected and that their essential contribution to society may be highly esteemed”.

Indeed, the message continues, “we have done little for women who are in very difficult situations: unappreciated, marginalized, and even reduced to slavery”. The Pope's words are accompanied by a series of images of women at work: teachers, doctors, labourers and homemakers in a variety of settings. The pictures then show the exploitation to which many women are subjected, with messages in the background such as: “I do my job as well as a man”, “Enough discrimination at work” spelled out in block letters, and “Men and women are children of God”.

The Pope emphasizes the urgent need to “condemn sexual violence against women and remove the barriers that prevent their full integration into social, political, and economic life”. He then invites the viewer to take action: “If you think this is clearly right, join my petition that in all countries of the world women may be honored and respected and valued for their essential contribution to society”. The video message, like those before it, was prepared by La Machi communications agency, which handles production and distribution, in cooperation with Vatican Television Center, which recorded the images.



## No one is ever lost

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to celebrate with “friends and neighbours”.

We should reflect on this parable often, for in the Christian community there is always someone who is missing and if that person is gone, a place is left empty. Sometimes this is daunting and leads us to believe that a loss is inevitable, like an incurable disease. That is how we run the risk of shutting ourselves in the

pen, where there won't be the odour of the sheep but the stench of enclosure! And Christians? We must not be closed in or we will smell like stale things. Never! We need to go forth, not close in on ourselves, in our little communities, in the parish, holding ourselves to be “righteous”. This happens when there is a lack of the missionary zeal that leads us to encounter others. In Jesus' vision there are no sheep that are definitively lost, but only sheep that must

be found again. We need to understand this well: to God no one is definitively lost. Never! To the last moment, God is searching for us. Think of the good thief; only in the eyes of Jesus no one is definitively lost. For his perspective if entirely dynamic, open, challenging and creative. It urges us to go forth in search of a path to brotherhood. No distance can keep the shepherd away; and no flock can renounce a brother. To find the one who is lost

is the joy of the shepherd and of God, but it is also the joy of the flock as a whole! We are all sheep who have been retrieved and brought back by the mercy of the Lord, and we are called to gather the whole flock to the Lord!

### Special greetings

I greet the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today's Audience, particularly those from England, Scotland, Ireland, South Africa, Australia, China, Indonesia, Singapore, Hong Kong, the Philippines, the Seychelles, Canada and the United States of America. In the joy of the Risen Lord, I invoke upon you and your families the loving mercy of God our Father. May the Lord bless you all!

I extend a special to greeting young people, to the sick and to newlyweds. The month of May is dedicated to devotion to the Mother of God with the daily recitation of the Rosary; dear sick people, may you feel the closeness of Mary of Nazareth especially at the hour of the Cross and you, dear newlyweds, pray to her that love and mutual respect may never lack in your homes.

*Among the many groups at the General Audience, Pope Francis greeted Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow, founder and CEO of Mary's Meals, and the foundation's executive for Italy, Francesco Stefanini. MacFarlane-Barrow was inspired to start the charity by a visit he made to Malawi during the 2002 famine, where he met a 14-year-old boy named Edward, who told him: “I want to have enough food to eat and to go to school one day”. Mary's Meals began by feeding 200 children in a school in Malawi, and now provides daily sustenance for over a million children in schools in Africa, Latin America, Eastern Europe, Asia, and the Caribbean.*



The Pope asks for more attention to rare diseases

## Access to care for all

*Increasing sensitivity, scientific research and above all access to care were the three aspects upon which the Pope wished to reflect in confronting the delicate and painful problem of rare diseases, which "affect millions of people throughout the world". The occasion was his meeting in the Paul VI Hall on Friday morning, 29 April, with participants in the International Conference on the Progress of Regenerative Medicine and its Cultural Impact, the third of its kind sponsored by the Pontifical Council for Culture. The following is the English text of the Pope's address, which was given in Italian.*

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to welcome all of you. I thank Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi for his words and, above all, for having organized this meeting on the challenging problem of rare diseases within today's social and cultural context. During your discussions, you have offered your professionalism and high-level expertise in the area of researching new treatments. At the same time, you have not ignored ethical, anthropological,

social and cultural questions, as well as the complex problem of access to care for those afflicted by rare conditions. These patients are often not given sufficient attention, because investing in them is not expected to produce substantial economic returns. In my ministry I frequently meet people affected by so-called "rare" diseases. These illnesses affect millions of people throughout the world, and cause suffering and anxiety for all those who care for them, starting with family members.

Your meeting takes on greater significance in the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy; mercy is "the fundamental law that dwells in the heart of every person who looks sincerely into the eyes of his brothers and sisters on the path of life" (*Misericordiae Vultus*, 2). Your work is a sign of hope, as it brings together people and institutions from diverse cultures, societies and religions, all united in their deep concern for the sick.

I wish to reflect, albeit briefly, on three aspects of the commitment of the Pontifical Council for Culture and institutions working with it: the



Vatican Science and Faith Foundation-STOQ, the Stem for Life Foundation, and many others who are co-operating in this cultural initiative.

The first is "increasing sensitivity". It is fundamentally important that we promote greater empathy in society, and not remain indifferent to our neighbour's cry for help, including when he or she is suffering from a rare disease. We know that we cannot always find fast cures to complex illnesses, but we can be prompt in caring for these persons, who often feel abandoned and ignored. We should be sensitive towards all, regardless of religious belief, social standing or culture.

The second aspect that guides your efforts is "research", seen in two inseparable actions: education and genuine scientific study. Today more than ever we see the urgent need for an education that not only develops students' intellectual abilities, but also ensures integral hu-

man formation and a professionalism of the highest degree. From this pedagogical perspective, it is necessary in medical and life sciences to offer interdisciplinary courses which provide ample room for a human formation supported by ethical criteria. Research, whether in academia or industry, requires unwavering attention to moral issues if it is to be an instrument which safeguards human life and the dignity of the person. Formation and research, therefore, aspire to serve higher values, such as solidarity, generosity, magnanimity, sharing of knowledge, respect for human life, and fraternal and selfless love.

The third aspect I wish to mention is "ensuring access to care". In my Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* I highlighted the value of human progress today, citing "areas such as health care, education and communications" (52). I also strongly emphasized, however, the need to oppose "an economy of exclusion and inequality" (53) that victimizes people when the mechanism of profit prevails over the value of human life. This is why the globalization of indifference must be countered by the globalization of empathy. We are called to make known throughout the world the issue of rare diseases, to invest in appropriate education, to increase funds for research, and to promote necessary legislation as well as an economic paradigm shift. In this way, the centrality of the human person will be rediscovered. Thanks to coordinated efforts at various levels and in different sectors, it is becoming possible not only to find solutions to the sufferings which afflict our sick brothers and sisters, but also to secure access to care for them.

I encourage you to nurture these values which are already a part of your academic and cultural programme, begun some years ago. So too I urge you to continue to integrate more people and institutions throughout the world into your work. During this Jubilee Year, may you be capable and generous co-operators with the Father's mercy. I accompany you and bless you on this journey; and I ask that you, please, pray for me. Thank you.



The Holy Father illustrates the talent of cooperatives

## Building business beginning with need

Pope Francis asked that business be pursued for the sake of needs rather than opportunistically. He said this in a message addressed to participants in the 39th assembly of the Confederation of Italian Cooperatives. The conference was held in Rome on 4-5 May on the theme: "Protagonists at the service of the country".

In a video message addressing the assembly of 1,000 members of *Confcooperative* [Confederation of Italian cooperatives], the Pontiff recalled the meeting on 28 February 2015 in which he proposed seven points of "concrete encouragement". First, "continue to be the driving force that lifts and develops the weakest part of the community and of society, above all with the founding of new enterprises that create employment; create new welfare solutions; manage cooperatives in a truly cooperative way, involving everyone; support, encourage and facilitate the life of families".

Moreover, Francis explained, "In *Amoris Laetitia*, I pointed to the perspective of joy and responsibility, but people and families should not be left alone, work and family should be balanced". Next, "bring good means together in order to accomplish good works; counter false cooperatives, because cooperatives must foster the economy of honesty; actively participate in globalization so as to integrate, in the world, development, justice and peace". In this respect the Pontiff noted that in the meantime, "the drama, or rather the tragedy of migrants, terrorism without borders, and the

slowing down of the global economy" have made those seven points even more timely. He then referred to the fundamental values that gave rise to *Confcooperative*, calling for greater collaboration with parishes and dioceses and for the ability to lend a hand to "people in difficulty", noting how important it is to keep "this richness" alive.

Lastly, the Pope said he was aware that during assemblies there often emerge "different sentiments: aspirations, concerns, uncertainties about the future, the will to offer a helpful contribution, the desire to be heard, ambitions". That is why he called on participants to be guided by their "commitment for the common good". Because, "if the cooperative functions it makes solidarity grow among members; it strengthens common responsibility, the capacity to recognize in generosity what others can do and also to accept their limitations". In other words, "fraternity grows within cooperatives". Fraternity is "the resource that today the world needs most". Although cooperatives usually are not "the greatest part of a country's economy", neither are they "the least important part". For this reason, the Pontiff concluded, like all "the other businesses they serve to produce income, but they also have the task of making subsidiarity function, to make solidarity concrete, to liberate the dignity and capacities of the people and to produce fraternity".

The Pontiff asks the Mercedarian Order to go to the peripheries

## Pack light

*Inviting them "to go to the peripheries, which need to be approached with light baggage", Pope Francis addressed participants in the General Chapter of the Mercedarian Order [of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mercy] in an audience in the Consistory Hall on Monday, 2 May. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's remarks, which he delivered in Spanish.*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I welcome you and I thank Fr Pablo Bernardo Ordoñez for his words. I entrust to the Lord the work of this Chapter Assembly and the beneficial projects planned for the next six years, and I entrust to the maternal protection of Our Lady of Mercy the new governing group that will result from your deliberations.

With the motto "Mercy, remembrance and prophecy in the peripheries of freedom", you are facing

this General Chapter which opens with the upcoming celebration of the eighth centenary of the Order, a memorial which evokes the great undertakings carried out in these eight centuries: the work of redemption of prisoners and the bold mission in the new world, as well as the many illustrious members who through holiness and writings adorn your history. Surely, there is much to recall and it does us good to remember.

This remembrance, however, must not be limited to an exposition of the past, but must be a serene and conscious act that allows us to appreciate our successes, without forgetting our limitations, and above all to face the challenges that humanity poses to us. May this Chapter be a privileged occasion for a sincere and helpful dialogue that does not stop with the glorious past, but which examines the difficulties



encountered on this journey, the hesitations and also the mistakes. The true life of the Order must be sought in the constant effort to adapt and renew, with the goal of being able to give a generous response to the real needs of the world and of the Church, while remaining faithful to the perennial heritage of which you are depositaries.

With this spirit we are able to really speak of *prophecy*, we cannot do so otherwise. Because being prophets is lending our human voice to the eternal Word, forgetting ourselves so that God may manifest his omnipotence in our weakness. The prophet is a messenger, anointed, having received a gift from the Spirit for the service to the holy People of God. You too have received a gift and you have been consecrated for a mission that is a work of mercy: following Christ, preaching the Good News of the Gospel

to the poor and proclaiming release to prisoners (cf. Lk 4:18).

Dear brothers and sisters, our religious profession is a gift and a great responsibility; may we carry it in vases of terra cotta. Let us not trust our efforts alone without always entrusting ourselves to divine mercy. Vigilance and perseverance in prayer, in cultivating the interior life, are the pillars that sustain us. If God is present in our life, the joy of bringing the Gospel will be our strength and our happiness. God has also called us to serve him in the Church and in the Community. Support each other on this common journey; let fraternal communion and harmony in doing good works testify, before words, to the Message of Jesus and his love for the Church.

A prophet is able to go to the *peripheries*, which need to be approached with light baggage. The Spirit is a light breeze which pushes us forward. Remembering what it was that moved your fathers and where it led them, do your best to follow in their footsteps. They were able to remain as hostages beside the poor, the marginalized, those cast out by society, bringing them comfort, suffering with them, completing in their own flesh what was lacking in Christ's passion (cf. Col 1:24). Doing so every day, in perseverance, in the silence of a life freely and generously given. Following them is accepting that, to set free, we must make ourselves small, joining the prisoner, in the certainty that in this way not only shall we accomplish our goal of redeeming, but we too will find true freedom, because in the poor and in the prisoner we recognize the presence of our Redeemer.

On the eighth centenary of the Order, do not cease "proclaiming the year of the Lord's grace" to all those to whom you have been sent: to those persecuted on account of their faith and to those who are deprived of freedom, to the victims of trafficking and to the youth of your schools, to those whom you assist in your works of mercy and to the faithful of the parishes and missions whom the Church has entrusted to you. To each of them and to the entire Mercedarian family I impart my Blessing and I ask that you too not forget to pray for me.

## For persecuted Christians

"We offer our readiness to the Successor of Peter in order to reinvigorate our service to the persecuted Christians and prisoners on the existential and geographical peripheries of humanity where faith continues to be threatened", Fr Pablo Bernardo Ordoñez, Master General of the Mercedarian Order, shared these words in his greeting to the Holy Father. Fr Ordoñez also recalled the inspiration of their founder, St Peter Nolasco, servant of redeeming mercy, who ingrained the identity of the Order with the visit and redemption of prisoners, as part of their fourth vow. On behalf of those present, Fr Ordoñez expressed the willingness of his order, if necessary, to give their lives to those who are imprisoned for imitating Christ who offered His life for us.

The Assembly of Catholic Bishops implore an end to the violence in the city

## A cry from Aleppo

The Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Aleppo appealed "to the consciences of those who project and carry out this war", crying aloud, "Enough!" for the "love of God" and the "mercy of men". In their message – published on the Fides News Agency website on 2 May – the bishops offered words of consolation and hope for the martyr city in Syria which again has been disrupted by the resurgence of conflict after a few weeks of respite. "We are children of the Resurrection, of Hope, and we firmly believe", the bishops wrote, "that this suffering will not be in vain: following in the footsteps of the saints and martyrs, we add them to the Passion of Christ, so they may become sanctified and sanctify suffering, for peace in Syria and the salvation of our city".

The spiraling violence and terror in Syria – which, since March 2011, has seen the deaths of 270,000 people and the displacement of millions more – is the beginning of an unprecedented humanitarian emergency. Among the most devastated areas is the city of Aleppo,



*A man gestures amid the rubble after buildings were destroyed in a reported air strike on the neighbourhood of al-Kalasa in Aleppo, northern Syria, on 28 April (AFP)*

where Islamic State jihadists and al-Nusra militants (affiliated with al-Qaeda) are fighting the rebels and government forces. It is a merciless battle effecting mostly civilians. According to a statement by Caritas Syria in an AsiaNews report on 29 April, in recent days, in blatant violation of the ceasefire, more than 1,300 mortar shells have been dropped, targeting numerous

areas of the city. Hospitals are on the verge of collapse as the number of wounded rises and supplies dwindle. "Deprivation is widespread", the report states. Trucks and other vehicles run along city streets, "full of wounded, many of them children". The horizon is "obscured by a thick blanket of black smoke", and ambulance sirens can be heard around the clock.

At the Jubilee Audience Francis reasserts the primacy of mercy

## No obstacles to reconciliation

Confessionals mustn't be interrogation rooms

*With an exhortation not to "put up obstacles for people who want to be reconciled to God", Pope Francis addressed all confessors during the Jubilee Audience on Saturday morning, 30 April, in St Peter's Square. The following is a translation of the catechesis, which was given in Italian.*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,  
Good morning!

Today I would like to reflect with you on an important aspect of mercy: reconciliation. God has never failed to offer his forgiveness to men and women: his mercy is felt from generation to generation. Often we believe that our sins distance the Lord from us. In reality, in sinning, we may distance ourselves from him, but, seeing us in danger, he tries all the harder to find us. God never gives in to the possibility that a person could stay estranged from his love, provided, however, that he find in him or her some sign of repentance for the evil done.

By our efforts alone, we cannot be reconciled to God. Sin truly is the expression of the rejection of his love, with the consequence of closing in on ourselves, deluding ourselves into thinking that we have found greater freedom and autonomy. Far from God we no longer have a destination, and we are transformed from pilgrims in this world to "wanderers". To use a common expression: when we sin, we "turn away from God". That's just what we do; the sinner sees only himself and presumes in this way to be self-sufficient. Thus, sin continues to expand the distance between us and God, and this can become a chasm.



Eliane Pradel, "Forgiveness"

However, Jesus comes to find us like a good shepherd who is not content until he has found the lost sheep, as we read in the Gospel (cf. Lk 15:4-6). He rebuilds the bridge that connects us to the Father and allows us to rediscover our dignity as children. By the offering of his life he has reconciled us to the Father and given us eternal life (cf. Jn 10:15).

"Be reconciled to God!" (2 Cor 5:20): the cry that the Apostle Paul addressed to the early Christians in Corinth, today applies to us all with the same vigour and conviction. Let us be reconciled to God! This Jubilee of mercy is a time of reconciliation for everyone. Many people would like to be reconciled to God but they don't know how to do it, or they don't feel

worthy, or they don't want to admit it, not even to themselves. The Christian community can and must foster the sincere return to God for those who feel this yearning. Especially those who carry out the "ministry of reconciliation" (2 Cor 5:18) are called to be instruments docile to the Holy Spirit, for where one has abandoned sin mercy can abound (cf. Rm 5:20). No one should be separated from God because of obstacles put there by mankind! And – I want to underline this – that also goes for confessors. It's valid for them: please, don't put up obstacles for people who want to be reconciled to God. The confessor must be a father! He stands in the place of God the Father! The confessor must welcome those who come to him to be reconciled to God and help them on the journey to this reconciliation that we are making. It is a very beautiful ministry: not a torture chamber or an interrogation room. No. It is the place where the Father receives, welcomes and forgives this person. Let us be reconciled to God! All of us! May this Holy Year be a positive time to rediscover our need for the tenderness and closeness of the Father, to return to him with all our heart.

The experience of reconciliation to God allows us to discover the necessity of other forms of reconciliation: in families, in interpersonal relationships, in ecclesial communities, as well as in social international relations. Someone recently said to me that in the world there are more enemies than friends, and I believe he is right. Instead, let us build bridges of reconciliation among us, beginning in the family. How many siblings have argued and become estranged over inheritance. This shouldn't happen! This year is the year of reconciliation, with God and among us! Reconciliation is also a service to peace, solidarity and the welcome of all.

Let us accept, therefore, the invitation to be reconciled to God, in order to become new creatures and to radiate his mercy among our brothers, among the people.

I affectionately greet *young people, the sick and newlyweds*: to each of you I extend my encouragement to follow Christ. I entrust you all to the motherly protection of Our Lady.



*"Be shining examples of Christian hope, which is the certitude of the victory of love over hate and of peace over war". This was the Pope's call to participants in the Jubilee for the armed forces and law enforcement, who were present in St Peter's Square on Saturday morning, 30 April, at the Jubilee Audience. The following is a translation of the Pope's greeting, which was delivered in Italian after his catechesis.*

With joy I welcome the representatives of the armed forces and police, here from all over the world, on pilgrimage to Rome for the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy. Law enforcement – military and police – have the mission of ensuring a safe environment, so that each and every citizen can live in peace and serenity. In your families, in the various areas in which you operate, may you be instruments of reconciliation, builders of bridges and sowers of peace. Indeed, you are called not only to prevent, manage and put an end to conflicts, but also to contribute to the building of an order founded on truth, on justice, on

love and on freedom, according to St John xxiii's definition of peace in his Encyclical *Paxem in Terris* (nn. 18 ff.).

The affirmation of peace is not an easy task, especially because of war, which uproots hearts and augments violence and hatred. I urge you not to be discouraged. Continue on your journey of faith and open your hearts to God the merciful Father who never tires of forgiving us. Faced with the challenges of every day, be shining examples of Christian hope, which is the certitude of the victory of love over hate and of peace over war.

I greet the English-speaking visitors taking part in today's Audience, particularly those from the armed forces and law enforcement agencies who have come from Canada, Kenya, Korea, the Philippines and the United States of America. I also greet the pilgrimage groups from Scotland and the United States. In the joy of the Risen Lord, I invoke upon you and your families the loving mercy of God our Father. May the Lord bless you all!



At the Regina Caeli Francis speaks of the Holy Spirit's presence in the Church

## We are not alone

*During the Last Supper Jesus promises the Apostles "that they will not be alone" that the Holy Spirit will always be with them "to protect and support them". Pope Francis recalled this at the Regina Caeli on Sunday, 1 May, in St Peter's Square. The following is a translation of the Pope's reflection, which he gave in Italian.*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,  
Good morning!

Today's Gospel takes us back to the Upper Room. During the Last Supper, before confronting his passion and death on the cross, Jesus promises the Apostles the gift of the Holy Spirit, who will have the task of teaching and recalling [Jesus'] words to the community of disciples. Jesus says: "the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you" (Jn 14:26). Teach and recall. This is what the Holy Spirit does in our hearts.

At the moment in which he is about to return to the Father, Jesus foretells of the coming of the Spirit who will first teach the disciples to understand the Gospel ever more fully, in order to welcome it in their existence and to render it living and operative by their witness. While he is about to entrust to the Apostles – which in fact means "envoys" – the mission of taking the Gospel to all the world, Jesus promises that they will not be alone. The Holy Spirit, the Counselor, will be with them, and will be beside them, moreover, will be within them, to protect and support them. Jesus returns to the Father but continues to accompany and teach his disciples through the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The second aspect of the Holy Spirit's mission consists in helping the Apostles to remember Jesus' words. The Spirit has the task of reawakening the memory, recalling Jesus' words. The divine Teacher has already communicated all that he intended to entrust to the Apostles: with Him, the Word made flesh, the revelation is complete. The Spirit will recall Jesus' teachings in the various concrete circumstances of life, so that they may be put into practice. That is precisely what still happens today in the Church, guided by the light and the power of the Holy Spirit, so that he may bring to everyone the gift of salvation, which is the love and mercy of God. For example, each day when you read – as I have

advised you – a passage, a passage of the Gospel, ask the Holy Spirit: "Let me understand and remember these words of Jesus". Then read the passage, every day... But first the prayer to the Spirit, who is in our heart: "Let me remember and understand".

We are not alone: Jesus is close to us, among us, within us! His new presence in history happens through the gift of the Holy Spirit, through whom it is possible to instill a living relationship with Him, the Crucified and Risen One. The Spirit, flowing within us through the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation, acts in our life. He guides us in the way to think, to act, to distinguish between what is good and what is bad; he helps us to practice the charity of Jesus, his giving of himself to others, especially to the most needy. We are not alone! The sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit is also the peace that Jesus gives to his disciples:

"My peace I give to you" (v. 27). It is different from what mankind hopes for or tries to achieve. The peace of Jesus flows from victory over sin, over selfishness which impedes us from loving one another as brothers and sisters. It is a gift of God and a sign of his presence. Each disciple called today to follow Jesus carrying the cross, receives within him- or herself the peace of the Crucified and Risen One in the certainty of his definitive coming.

May the Virgin Mary help us to welcome with docility the Holy Spirit as interior Teacher and as the living Memory of Christ on the daily journey.

*After praying the Regina Caeli, the Holy Father said:*

Dear brothers and sisters, my warm thought goes to our brothers and sisters of the Eastern Churches who are

Patriarch Bartholomew's message for Easter

## Duty to our neighbour

"For us as Orthodox faithful, Pascha is not a fleeting moment of escape from the ugly reality of evil in the world; it is the unwavering conviction that Christ, who trampled down death by death and rose from the dead, is with us 'always, to the close of the age'" (Mt 28:20). Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, Archbishop of Constantinople, addressed an Easter message to the Orthodox faithful who follow the Julian calendar and celebrated the resurrection of Christ on Sunday, 1 May.

"Unfortunately terrorism, war, and bloodshed continue to this day. The lament and agony of victims, particularly as these are rapidly disseminated through modern technological means, tear the world apart and break our heart. This is why the world's leaders – political, religious and church – are obliged and compelled by love to do everything that is possible to avoid such unacceptable conditions. In the midst of this modern 'irrational world,' we Orthodox Christians are called to offer a positive witness of love and sacrifice to our fellow human beings".

The resurrection of Christ is the

centre of the Orthodox faith: "Without the resurrection, our faith is 'in vain' (1 Cor 15:14). Through His resurrection, the divine Word rendered humanity – created in the image of God but wounded and stained by sin – incorrupt and defiled, granting us once again the possibility of achieving divine likeness, of which we were deprived through disobedience". Therefore Easter is "the victory of life over death in a world of violence and war, especially in the name of religion and God". "Many philosophers", Bartholomew continued, "endeavored to find a solution to the problem of death and to overcome death with various theories. We Orthodox Christians celebrate the resurrection of Christ from the dead and boldly declare the destruction of death. We know that it is the Word of God who bestows life and in whom 'was life' (Jn 1:4). We have the joyful experience of the Church, that death was conquered through the resurrection of Christ. All things have

celebrating Easter today. May the Risen Lord bring to all the gifts of his light and his peace. *Christos anesti!*

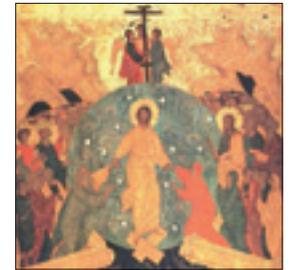
With great sorrow I receive the tragic news coming from Syria, regarding the spiral of violence that continues to worsen the country's already desperate humanitarian situation, particularly in the city of Aleppo, claiming innocent victims, even among children, the sick and those who with great sacrifice are committed to helping their neighbours. I exhort all parties involved in the conflict to respect the cessation of hostilities and to strengthen the ongoing dialogue, the only path that leads to peace.

Tomorrow an international meeting will open in Rome on the theme of "Sustainable Development and the Most Vulnerable Forms of Work". I hope the event will raise the awareness of the authorities, political and economic institutions and civil society so as to foster a model of development that takes human dignity into account, in full respect of the norms on work and on the environment.

I greet you, pilgrims from Italy and from other countries. In particular, I greet the faithful from Madrid, Barcelona and Warsaw, as well as the Abraham Community involved in projects of evangelization in Europe; the pilgrims from Olgettate Comasco, Bagnolo Mella, and the confraternities from Castelli Calepio.

I greet the "Meter" Association, who for many years has been fighting against all forms of abuse of minors. This is a tragedy! We must not tolerate the abuse of minors! We must protect minors and we must severely punish their abusers. Thank you for your commitment and continue with courage in this work!

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



Fifteenth-century Russian icon of the Resurrection, attributed to Dionysius

been filled with joy, having received the experience of resurrection.' This faith brightens all expressions of church life and culminates in the divine Eucharist. The fact that, in the Christian world, it is especially the

# Morning Mass at the Domus Sanctae Marthae

Thursday, 28 April

## Innovation and resistance

On Pentecost the Holy Spirit became the “protagonist of the Church”. It is he who “moves all things”, who helps us “to be strong in martyrdom” but also to “overcome the resistance” that can emerge within the same Christian community. During Mass at Santa Marta on Thursday morning, Pope Francis recounted the history of the journey undertaken by the Church from her origins up to our age. It has been a path which, from the first debates among the Apostles, has incorporated certain approaches: “gathering”, “listening”, “discussing”, “praying and debating” with the Holy Spirit. It is the path, the Pontiff emphasized, “of synodality”, where “the communion of the Church”, which is the work of the Spirit, is expressed.

“The protagonist of the Church, of the work of the Church, of the growth of the Church” is the Spirit. This fact, the Pope recalled, arises clearly from Scripture. It is he, in fact, “who from the first moment gave the strength to the Apostles, one by one, to proclaim the Gospel, the name of Jesus”. The Spirit said to Philip: “Take that road, where the Ethiopian proselyte was...”; likewise, the Spirit sent Peter to Caesarea, and in a dream he said to Paul: “Come over to Macedonia”. There, where Paul and Silas were imprisoned, it was again the Spirit who moved the jailer’s heart when, as the Acts of the Apostles read: “suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and every one’s fetters were unfastened” (16:26). In the face of these extraordinary events the jailer asked for Baptism.

The Pontiff concluded: “It is the Spirit who does all things, the Spirit who also leads the Church forward”. But, the Pope added, he also leads her forward “in facing her problems”. Thus, “when persecution breaks out, after the martyrdom of Stephen, for example, it is the Spirit who gives strength to believers to remain in the faith”. It is again he

“who makes the believers flee from Jerusalem after the martyrdom of Stephen” and who urges them to “carry faith in Jesus to other places”.

In the day’s passage from The Acts of the Apostles (15:7-21), we encounter the action of the Spirit “who leads the Church forward. He leads her forward in times of peace, of joy, of conversion, but also in difficult times of persecution and of the resistance and obstinacy of the doctors of the law”. In this passage, in fact, we read of the “resistance of those who believed that Jesus had come only for the chosen people”. On hearing that the Holy Spirit had come “upon pagans, upon Greeks, upon those who did not belong to the People of God”, they rebelled and said: “No, this cannot be so”. Even being of “good will”, they put up “resistance”. Just as when they themselves introduced other exceptions: “It’s true, the Holy Spirit came upon them, but they must make their way according to the law, that is to say, circumcision and all the rites of belonging to the people of Israel, in order to come to grace”.

It was a situation of “great confusion”, triggered by what the Pope called “surprises of the Spirit”. In other words, “the Spirit set hearts on a new path” and the Apostles “found themselves in situations they would never have believed, new situations”. The problem was “how to manage these new situations?”. It is no coincidence that the passage of the Acts begins by specifying: “In those days, after there had been much debate...”. It was, Francis em-

phasized, a “heated” debate because the Apostles “had the strength of the Spirit – the protagonist – who urged them to go forward, forward, forward”; but at the same time the Spirit “brought them certain innovations, certain things that had never been done” – moreover, things that “they hadn’t even imagined”. Such as, for example, the fact that pagans could receive the Holy Spirit. Thus, they wondered: “What do we do?”. They had, the Pontiff explained, “a hot potato in their hands, and they didn’t know what to do”.

We then read in the Acts that for this reason they held a meeting in which everyone recounted “his own experience – Paul, Barnabas, Peter”, and how in the end the Apostles “came to an agreement”. However, the Pope said, before the final solution, we note “something beautiful: ‘all the assembly kept silence; and they listened to Barnabas and Paul as they related what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles’”. From the recounting of their experiences, a fundamental aspect emerged: “to listen, not to be afraid to listen”. This is important because, Francis said, “when someone is afraid to listen, he does not have the Spirit in his heart”. Above all it is important “to listen with humility”.

Indeed, only “after listening”, did the Apostles decide to send some disciples “to the Greek communities, namely the Christians who came from paganism”, in order “to calm them and tell them: ‘You are fine, go in this way’”. Therefore, “they

reached an agreement, they sent these brothers and decided to write a letter”. In that letter too, the Pontiff stated, “the protagonist is the Holy Spirit”. It reads: “it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us”, and in other translations: “It is the decision of the Holy Spirit and of us...”. Thus, it is clear that the Apostles, “with the Spirit, guided the Church”.

The day’s reading is of course indicative of which is “the way of the Church in the face of the persecutions” and also in the face of the “surprises of the Spirit, because the Spirit always surprises us”. How do they address problems? By “meeting, listening, debating, praying, and the final decision. And the Holy Spirit is there”. A way, a path followed from the beginning “until today”, each time “the Spirit surprises us” with something described in this way: “it has never been done like this” or “it must be done like this”.

The Pope then gave an example “closer to us”, saying: “Think about Vatican II, to the resistance the Second Vatican Council had”. Today too, he said, there is “resistance that continues in one form or another, and the Spirit who moves forward”. But “this is the path of the Church: meeting, joining together, listening, debating, praying and deciding. This is the so-called synodality of the Church, in which the communion of the Church is expressed”.

Once again, Francis explained, we meet the “protagonist” of all time. Indeed, “who creates communion? It is the Spirit!”, and “what does the Lord ask of us? Docility to the Spirit”, in other words, “not to be afraid when we see that it is the Spirit who calls us”. Sometimes, however, it is the Spirit who “stops us” and points us to the right path. Surely the Spirit “never leaves us alone”. He “gives us courage, gives us patience, lets us go confidently on the path of Jesus, helps us to overcome resistance and to be strong in martyrdom”. This Spirit, the Pope concluded, “is the Father’s gift that Jesus sent to us”.

The Pontiff then invited this prayer: “Let us ask the Lord for the grace to understand how the Church has from the first moment faced the surprises of the Spirit”, and let us also ask that we each may have “the grace of docility to the Spirit”.



“Pentecost” (Wells Cathedral, England)

## Duty to our neighbour

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

Orthodox Church that preserved the divine Eucharist as the center of its life and spirituality is inseparably related to the fact that the resurrection is the nucleus of our faith, worship and ecclesiastical ethos. For this reason, the Eucharistic liturgy is always festive, joyous, and primarily linked with the Lord’s day as the day of the resurrection”.

Creation, he states, recalls the “dark realm of death to the heavenly kingdom, whose light has no evening. The faithful, as participants in the resurrection, are called to declare the Gospel of freedom in Christ ‘to the end of the earth’ (Acts 1:8). The Mother Church, which lives the mystery of

the cross and the resurrection simultaneously, today invites us ‘to approach with lit candles’, and ‘together to celebrate the salvific Pascha of God’. Through the resurrection of our Savior, all of humanity has become one people, united in one body. Through His cross and resurrection, Christ definitively destroyed all existing hatred”. Thus, the Orthodox Church, as the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church, “is the Church of the reconciliation of all, the Church of love toward all, friends and enemies. Reconciled, filled with new life, filled with true life, we all become fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God (cf. Eph 2:15-20)”.

In the Easter message Bartholomew then underlined that “Christ has risen and the power of death was abolished; the authority of the powerful over the weak has been destroyed. “Life reigns” and the nurturing love, profound mercy, and endless grace of the risen Christ cover the whole world, from one end to the other. It is sufficient for us to realize that Jesus Christ is the true light, that in Him is life, and that this life is the light of all people (cf. Jn 1:3-4). This is our message to all political and religious leaders of the world”. In conclusion the Archbishop of Constantinople invited the Orthodox faithful to “offer a positive witness of love and sacrifice to our fellow human beings”.

Friday, 29 April

## A double life

St John’s advice to the “adolescent Church” of the first century applies perfectly to us today. Francis thus proposed the content of the Apostle’s First Letter: that we not have a double life and not give in to lies, aware that even as sinners we have a Father who forgives us. This is the reflection the Pope proposed on Friday morning, during Mass at Santa Marta.

“Today’s liturgy”, he began, “speaks to us of meekness, of humility; it speaks to us of God’s comfort when we are weary, oppressed; it speaks to us of kindness”. This is precisely “what Jesus tells us in the Gospel, when he praises the Father: ‘Lord, you have hidden these things from the wise and revealed them to



babes". Indeed, the Pope said, citing the day's passage from the Gospel of Matthew (11:25-30), the Lord "speaks to us of lowliness, of that lowliness that pleases God".

Also in the First Letter of the Apostle John (1:5-2:2), he explained, "what draws attention is the same manner: it makes us think of a grandfather who counsels his young grandchildren". In fact John "is addressing an 'adolescent Church' which, in order to remain in the faith, must remain small, childlike, open, humble".

The day's passage from the First Letter of John, the Pope suggested, begins with very meaningful words: "My little children". That expression contains "the wisdom of a grandfather who speaks and who has a legacy". So, "what is the advice that he gives? Do not be liars! Do not say or lead one to understand that God is a liar". And "how does he give this advice? With pairs of opposite words: light and darkness, sin and grace". It is obvious, the Pope affirmed, that "if we say we are in communion with God, that he is light, but we walk in darkness, we are liars". For this reason, John "simply says: abide in the light; be open with the truth of the Gospel; do not take dark paths, murky paths, because the truth is not there, something else is hidden there, do not be liars!".

In other words, "always light". This is why "if you say that you are in communion with the Lord, walk in the light: not a double life! Not that!". Give a decisive 'no' to "the lies that we are so used to seeing and to falling into: saying one thing and doing another". It is an ever-recurring temptation. "We know where lies come from: in the Bible, Jesus calls the devil the 'father of lies', a liar".

This is exactly why, "with such kindness, with such meekness, this grandfather says to the 'adolescent Church': do not be a liar! You are in communion with God, walk in the light; do works of light, do not say one thing and do another", do not have a "double life". John's advice is "simple", but it "helps us because it leads us to think about ourselves". In this regard, Francis suggested a few direct questions for a personal examination of conscience: "Do I always walk in the light, always in the light of God? Am I transparent or am I sometimes dark and sometimes luminous?".

"If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves", the Pope warned. Because "we are all sinners, we all have sins". Thus, "if we say we have not sinned, we make God a liar", and thus, "his word is not in us, for we are all sinners". John's letter is

clear. He explains: "Fear not, my children, I am writing this to you so that you may not sin; but if you have sinned, if any one does sin, do not be discouraged. We have a Paraclete, a word, an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He justifies us. He gives us grace".

Hearing John's counsel, Francis said, "you feel the desire to ask this grandfather: 'Is it not such a bad thing to have sins?'. No, the Pope continued, "sin is bad! But if you have sinned", know that "they are waiting to forgive you! Always! Because he, the Lord, is greater than our sins".

This, the Pope explained, "is Christian life, this is the advice that this grandfather gives to his grandchildren, to this Church of the first century which is already a beautiful experience of Jesus: always in the light, without lies, without hiding, without hypocrisy. It is the path of light".

With regard to sin, Francis reiterated that while it is true that "we are all weak and we have all sinned", we need not fear, because God "is greater than our sins". And "he awaits us with the attitude that we recited in the Psalm: 'merciful and

gracious, slow to anger and abounding in love. As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities those who fear him. For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust" (Ps 103[102]).

It is, at heart, the "beautiful experience of seeking the Lord, meeting the Lord". It is acknowledging that we have slipped, that we have sinned. It is hearing the Father say: "Don't worry, I forgive you, I embrace you". For "this is the mercy of God, it is the greatness of God: he is greater than our sins", he is "kinder, because he knows that we are dust, we are nothing. Strength comes only from him". Thus, "the Lord always awaits us".

Concluding the homily, Francis recommended that we keep in mind the day's reading from John, who like a grandfather counsels us and calls us "his children". And, according to his advice, "let us walk in the light because God is light: do not go along with one foot in the light and the other in darkness; do not be a liar". The important thing is to be aware that "we have all sinned" and "no one can say: this man is a sinner, this woman is a sinner", while "I, thanks be to God, am just. No!". Because, the Pope said, only "the One who paid for us" is just. And "if someone sins, he awaits us. He forgives us because he is merciful, and knows how we are formed, and remembers that we are dust". May the very "joy that this reading gives us", the Pope prayed, "lead us forward in the simplicity and transparency of Christian life, especially when we turn to the Lord. With the truth".

Monday, 2 May

### The cost of witness

There is a "twofold witness" in Christian life: that of the Spirit who

### Campaign in South Africa

## Taxis against human trafficking

Even a taxi – or better yet the vigilance of its driver – can help to stem the tide of human trafficking so widespread in South Africa. The local Catholic Church is convinced of this, and is promoting an original campaign entitled "Taxis against Human Trafficking".

The initiative was presented during a three-day conference from 12-15 April, organized by the Counter Trafficking in Persons Office (CTIP) of the South African Catholic Bishops Conference (SACBC), in collaboration with superiors of religious congregations. The objective is to call attention to a particularly disturbing phenomenon prevalent in the country – some estimates indicate that roughly 30,000 minors are involved each year in the depraved business of sexual exploitation, adding to the issue of conditions approaching slave labour, a matter statistically incalculable – and above all, to trigger a form of collaboration, or even better a positive synergy with those who are in close contact with the territory on a daily basis and, there-

fore, are able to signal and denounce the suspicious presence or movement of people. "Human trafficking and especially child trafficking is prevalent in South Africa", said Sr Melanie O' Connor the Coordinator of CTIP. "Not only is there internal problem of human trafficking", she continued, "but many of those between the ages of 14 and 23 are trafficked from across our borders by individual agents and organised syndicates". Thus the necessity for timely signaling questionable arrivals, departures, presence and movements. Because, Sr Melanie added, "together we can make a difference".

According to the website of the South African Catholic episcopate, taxi drivers are enthusiastic about the initiative. During a brief ceremony, Fr Barney McAleer, on behalf of the SACBC, explained the significance of the campaign, emphasizing the important role that even drivers of public automobiles can play in fighting this despicable and widespread phenomenon.

"opens the heart", showing us Jesus, and that of the person who "with the power of the Spirit" proclaims "that the Lord lives", even at the cost of "paying the price" of persecution.

Once again the Holy Spirit and his action in the heart of every believer was pivotal to Pope Francis' meditation during Mass at Santa Marta on Monday morning. The liturgy continued to offer passages from The Acts of the Apostles (16:11-15), regarding the first missions of the burgeoning Church and excerpts from Jesus' discourse during the Last Supper (Jn 15:26-16:4). Specifically in the day's Gospel we read that Jesus "speaks of the witness to him that the Holy Spirit, the Counselor, will bear and of the witness to him that we too will have to bear". Francis emphasized that here the "strongest" word is precisely: "witness".

The witness of the Spirit is also seen in the First Reading where, as it speaks of Lydia, "from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, a worshiper of God", it says: "The Lord opened her heart to give heed to what was said by Paul". So who was it that "touched this woman's heart?", the Pontiff asked, recalling that Lydia "felt within her" something that made her say: "This is true! I agree with what this man says, this man who bears witness to Jesus Christ". The answer is: "the Holy Spirit". It is he "who made this woman feel that Jesus was the Lord; he made this woman hear salvation in Paul's words; he made this woman hear the witness".

Thus, the Pope explained, the Spirit "bears witness to Jesus. Each time we feel something in our heart that draws us to Jesus, it is the Spirit working within". Jesus explained the action of the Spirit to the disciples: "He will teach you things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you". And the Spirit, Francis added, "continually opens the heart, as he opened the heart of this woman, Lydia", and he "bears witness" so that we may "hear and remember what Jesus taught us".

This witness, the Pope explained, "is twofold". In other words, "the Spirit bears witness to Jesus for us, and with the power of the Spirit we bear witness to the Lord". Jesus emphasizes this in the Gospel passage: "When the Counselor comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, who pro-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

## Good religious news in Indonesia

A week of all-around reflection, with pastoral and social implications, on the theme: "Communication and Mercy: A Fruitful Encounter", which the Pope chose for the 2016 World Day of Social Communications, is being held from 2 to 8 May on the island of Nias, in the Indonesian Diocese of Keuskupan-Sibolga. The initiative sponsored by the episcopal conference will gather priests, lay people, theologians and pastoral workers.

# VATICAN BULLETIN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

Saint John's-Basseterre, West Indies (29 Apr.).

Archbishop Oswin Richards, 57, was born in Linstead, Jamaica. He was ordained a priest on 29 September 1985. He was ordained a bishop on 8 February 2012, subsequent to his appointment as Bishop of Saint John's-Basseterre.

The Holy Father appointed Archbishop Charles Henry Dufour, Archbishop emeritus of Kingston in Jamaica, as Apostolic Administrator of the *sede vacante* of Mandeville, Jamaica (29 Apr.).

Archbishop Dufour, 76, was born in Kingston in Jamaica, Jamaica. He

was ordained a priest on 12 August 1979. He was ordained a bishop on 10 February 1996 subsequent to his appointment as Bishop of Montego Bay, Jamaica. He was appointed Archbishop of Kingston in Jamaica on 15 April 2011.

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Neil Edward Tiedemann, CP, as Auxiliary Bishop of Brooklyn, USA, assigning him the titular episcopal See of Cova. Until now he has been Bishop of Mandeville, Jamaica (29 Apr.).

Bishop Tiedemann, 68, was born in Brooklyn, USA. He was ordained a priest on 16 May 1975. He was ordained a bishop on 16 August 2008,

subsequent to his appointment as Bishop of Mandeville.

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Heinrich Timmerevers as Bishop of Dresden-Meissen, Germany, transferring him from the titular episcopal See of Tulana. Until now he has been Auxiliary of the Diocese of Münster, Germany (29 Apr.).

Bishop Timmerevers, 63, was born in Garrel-Nikolausdorf, Germany. He was ordained a priest on 25 May 1980. He was ordained a bishop on 2 September 2001, subsequent to his appointment as titular Bishop of Tulana and Auxiliary of Münster.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Archbishop Józef Michalik of Przemyśl for Latins, Poland. It was presented in accord with can. 401 § 1 of the Code of Canon Law (30 Apr.).

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Adam Szal as Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Przemyśl for Latins. Until now he has been titular Bishop of Lavellum and Auxiliary of the said Archdiocese (30 Apr.).

Archbishop Szal, 62, was born in Wysoka Łańcucka, Poland. He was ordained a priest on 31 May 1979. He was ordained a bishop on 23 December 2000, subsequent to his appointment as titular Bishop of Lavellum and Auxiliary of Przemyśl for Latins.

The Holy Father appointed Fr Mandla Siegfried Jwara, CMM, as Vicar Apostolic of Ingwavuma, South Africa, assigning him the titular episcopal See of Elephantaria in Proconsulari. Until now he has been parish priest and regional superior of the Congregation of Mariannhill Missionaries in the Province of Umtata (30 Apr.).

Bishop-elect Jwara, 59, was born in St Nivard, South Africa. He made his perpetual vows for the Congregation of Mariannhill Missionaries in 1986 and was ordained a priest on 14 February 1987. He holds a degree in theology. He has served in parish ministry and as: master of novices; rector of the CMM in Merivale; provincial counsellor; CMM provincial of the Province of Mariannhill; General Councillor, Rome.

## RELATIONS WITH STATES

The Holy Father appointed Archbishop Francis Assisi Chullikatt, titular Archbishop of Ostra, as Apostolic Nuncio in Kazakhstan and in Tajikistan (30 Apr.).

## START OF MISSION

On 8 March, Archbishop Paolo Rocco Gualtieri, titular Archbishop of Sagona, began his mission as Apostolic Nuncio in the Republic of Seychelles with the presentation of his Letters of Credence to H.E. Mr James Alix Michel, President of the Republic.

## NECROLOGY

Bishop Vincent Darius, OP, of Saint George's in Grenada, Antilles, at age 60 (26 Apr.).

Bishop Julio Xavier Labayen, Bishop-Prelate emeritus of Infanta, the Philippines, at age 89 (27 Apr.).

Bishop Hilarius Moa Nurak, SVD, of Pangkal-Pinang, Indonesia, at age 73 (29 Apr.).

Bishop Alphonsus Flavian D'Souza, SJ, of Raiganj, India, at age 76 (30 Apr.).

Bishop Myles McKeon, Bishop emeritus of Bunbury, Australia, at age 97 (2 May).

## AIF's Annual Report for 2015 released

### Effective regulatory framework

On Thursday, 28 April, the Annual Report of the *Autorità di Informazione Finanziaria* (AIF) for 2015 was presented in the Holy See Press Office. The report reviews the financial information and monitoring, in regard to the inspection and prevention of money laundering and financing terrorism. René Brühlhart and Tommaso Di Ruzza, AIF president and director, respectively, presented the report at the press conference.

The report discusses the work and activity of 2015, a year which saw effective implementation and application of the regulatory framework of the Holy See and the Vatican City State. International cooperation has intensified between the competent Vatican authority and its foreign counterparts in the fight against illicit financial activities.

"The full implementation and application of Regulation No. 1 has shown the effectiveness of the regulatory framework of the Holy See and Vatican City State", said René Brühlhart, President of the AIF. "International cooperation remains a key commitment of the AIF. Additional Memoranda of Understandings with competent authorities of other jurisdictions were signed, and the bilateral exchange of information has increased significantly".

The reporting system has been consolidated and, in the last three years, 893 Suspicious Transaction Reports (STR) (202 in 2013, 147 in 2014 and 544 in 2015) have been filed with the AIF. "The increase of STRs was not due to a higher potential for illicit financial activities, but to a number of different factors, namely the finalization of the closure of relationships with clients no longer compliant with Vatican legislation and policies adopted by supervised entities, the monitoring of clients' activities under foreign countries' voluntary tax compliance programs, as well as the general strengthening of the reporting system and increased awareness on the part of the supervised entities" said Tommaso Di Ruzza, Director of the AIF. In 2015,

17 reports were submitted to the Vatican Promoter of Justice for further investigation by judicial authorities. The number of cases of bilateral cooperation between AIF and foreign competent authorities increased from 4 in 2012 to 81 in 2013 to 113 in 2014 and 380 in 2015.

Since 2012, the number of declarations of outgoing cash above the amount of 10,000 EUR decreased steadily from 1,782 in 2012 to 1,557 in 2013, 1,111 in 2014 and remained stable in 2015 (1,196). Declarations of incoming cash also decreased from 598 in 2012 to 550 in 2013 to 429 in 2014 and 367 in 2015. This was due to increased monitoring by the competent authorities and the introduction of reinforced procedures at the supervised entities.

## Jesuit Daniel J. Berrigan dies

### A rebel priest

The Jesuit priest Daniel J. Berrigan died on Saturday, 30 April, at the age of 94. A poet and playwright, Fr Berrigan gained great notoriety in the 1970s and 1980s for his courageous and, at times, clamorous protests against war and other forms of violence. In 1971 *Time* magazine dedicated a cover to him and his brother Philip, also a priest and protest leader, calling them the "rebel priests".

Many of his acts of civil disobedience were unusual, especially given the spirit of the times. He caused particular uproar in his campaign against U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War. On 17 May 1968, Fr Berrigan along with his brother and seven other pacifists went to the Selective Service Office in Catonsville, Maryland, and burnt draft records, a crime for which he served a two-year prison sentence.

"Such blatant anti-war demonstrations and radical protests against U.S. imperialism", Francesco Pistoc-

chini wrote in the October 2009 issue of the Jesuit magazine *Popoli*, "could have created problems for [his] superiors but Jesuit Superior General Pedro Arrupe, who understood the effects of the atomic bomb since he lived in Hiroshima, visited [Fr Berrigan] in the federal prison in Danbury". In fact Fr Berrigan said 40 years after his arrest: "I have never been seriously interested in the outcome. I was interested in trying to do it humanly and carefully and nonviolently and let it go."

His actions in Catonsville were certainly not an isolated event. Several years later, in 1980, he and his brother, along with other pacifists (with whom he founded the Plowshares Movement), went to a nuclear missile facility in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania, where they poured fake blood onto files, to memorialize the innocent civilians killed in war.

Berrigan entered the Society of Jesus in 1939 and then in the 1950s



began a profound reflection on the war, inspired by the example of Dorothy Day. He thus dedicated his activism to peace and justice, joining the civil rights movement. In this perspective, even poetry and theatre became formidable tools to convey the radical good news of the Gospel. His collection of verses *Time Without Number* (1957) received the prestigious Lamont Poetry Prize, and his friendship with Fr Thomas Merton, essayist and poet, also helped to deepen the value of his experience.

*'Women Church World' paves the way to a new and positive perspective: that of hearing the important things women have to say and perceiving the many initiatives they are able to bring about, in order to achieve the synergy of male and female that has so often been invoked in official documents but not always put into practice*



Heeding the feminine voice

## New horizons and perspectives

PIETRO PAROLIN\*

After four years, *L'Osservatore Romano's* monthly insert "Women Church World" has increased in length and, more importantly, has taken on a completely new form, making it easier to read. In a certain sense, though, this publication has never stopped growing over the recent past. For more than a year, it has been translated and printed in Spanish and disseminated quite successfully by the magazine "Vida Nueva", under the direction of editor José Beltrán. "Women Church World" is also available online in various languages: in seven languages on *L'Osservatore Romano's* website; but also in French on that of "La Vie", the weekly publication of *Le Monde*; and in English on the

website of "Catholic Women Speak", thus reaching tens of thousands of subscribers.

Likewise, the array of men and especially women contributors has expanded to include people throughout the world, since its aim is to present an ever broader international dimension. Indeed, for several months the editorial staff of the monthly installment – curated by its coordinator, Lucetta Scaraffia, along with Giulia Galeotti – is comprised of authors from three continents, and includes a Jewish voice represented by Anna Foa, and contributions from Silvana Pérez, Sr Catherine Aubin and Sr Rita Mboshu Kongo. The aim of the initial project has been maintained, with texts written by both women and men, even if the basic intention is to en-

hance the cultural impact of feminine thought on theological reflection and exegesis.

To accompany the graphic renovation – planned and curated by Piero Di Domenicantonio of *L'Osservatore Romano* – there is also another important innovation which draws special attention to the spiritual dimension. Although this aspect has been ever present from the very first issue, now, with the cooperation with the Sisters of the Monastery of Bose, to whom a section of meditations on Scripture and another on art have been entrusted.

During these years, "Women Church World" has taken part in the ecclesial debate, each month publishing a lengthy reflection on themes Pope Francis has indicated as particularly significant for the moment in which we are living: initially a deepening of the theology of women and then, in preparation for the Synod, that of the family. This year saw the start of a series on women in the Old Testament, which will be followed next year by a similar series on those of the New Testament.

The interest generated by the periodical, as well as the notable level of its contributions, have been confirmed by the publication of books – translated into various languages – which gather a large number of thematic articles: the histories of saints recounted in the first two years, and theological reflections on women. In addition to these there are another two books reflecting on the topic of women in the Church, written by Giulia Galeotti and Lucetta Scaraffia.

Additionally, in May 2015 "Women Church World" organized an international conference focusing on the question: "What does the Church have to offer women

today?" which was held in the Casina Pio IV. The initiative offered numerous and original points for reflection and also set in motion procedures to fund an ambulance to serve the urgent need – noted by Clotilde Bikafuluka, a consecrated lay woman in the Democratic Republic of Congo who assists women victims of violence – thereby achiev-

### Women Church World

Since its creation four years ago, this publication has continually grown, and over time has acquired an increasingly international profile. The new beginning of "Women Church World" is the fruit of an ongoing story, faithful to the initial theme of the Visitation, a symbol of encounter, dialogue and cooperation among women. *L'Osservatore Romano's* monthly insert, with a new graphic form and new sections, was presented on Tuesday morning, 3 May, in the Vatican screening room, located in the Palazzo San Carlo. Among those speaking at the conference were Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State (an excerpt of whose text is translated here), Lucetta Scaraffia, coordinator of "Women Church World", and Sr Elisa Zamboni of the Sisters of Bose. In attendance were Msgr Dario Edoardo Viganò, Prefect of the Secretariat for Communications, José Beltrán, Editor-in-Chief of *Vida Nueva*, Giulia Galeotti as well as the entire staff of the monthly.

ing an exquisitely feminine need: that of knowing how to coordinate tangible assistance and intellectual reflection.

The monthly issue, therefore, not only promotes and appreciates the presence of women in the Church, but it paves the way to a new and positive perspective: that of listening to women, of hearing the important things they have to say and perceiving the many initiatives they are able to bring about, in order to achieve the synergy of male and female that has so often been invoked in official documents but not always put into practice.

\*Cardinal Secretary of State

### Morning Mass

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

ceeds from the Father, he will bear witness to me; and you also are witnesses, because you have been with me from the beginning". The Lord, Francis noted, dwells upon the characteristics of this witness – "perhaps the disciples didn't quite understand", he observed – adding: "I have said all this to you to keep you from falling away". Thus, he explains to them "the cost of Christian testimony" in a direct way: "They will put you out of the synagogues; indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God".

Thus, the Pontiff stated, "a Christian, with the power of the Spirit, bears witness that the Lord lives, that the Lord is risen, that the Lord is among us, that the Lord celebrates with us his death, his resurrection, each time we approach the altar". A Christian does this "in his daily life, with his way of acting". This, the Pope added, "is a Christian's unceasing witness". At the same time, a Christian must be aware that sometimes

testimony "provokes attacks, provokes persecution". The persecution can be small, such as "gossip" and "criticism", but it can also be the kind that "fills the history of the Church", such as what leads "Christians to prison" or "even to giving their life".

Therefore, it is the "Holy Spirit who lets us meet Jesus", who pushes us "to make him known, not merely with words, but with the witness of life". And, the Pope suggested, "it is good to ask the Holy Spirit, who comes into our heart, to bear witness to Jesus" and to pray to him in this way: "Lord, let me not move away from Jesus. Teach me what Jesus taught. Remind me what Jesus said and did and also help me to bear witness to these things. Do not let worldliness, easy things, the things that come from the father of lies, from the prince of this world, from sin – do not let these things "distance me from witnessing". Let me not "fall away, as Jesus says, from being Christian, because someone might avoid me or there may be persecution".

As told by Sarah Helm

# A concentration camp for women

ANNA FOA

From 1939 to 1945, Ravensbrück, 100 kilometres north of Berlin, was the location of a concentration camp for women. The camp which, in the beginning held 2,000 women, all political prisoners of Germany and Austria, eventually held more than 45,000. Except for certain times, especially towards the end, most were political prisoners, social outcasts, gypsies and women accused of having had relationships with Jews, thereby contaminating

the race. The number of Jewish women never exceeded 10 percent of the camp's population. Beginning in the fall of 1944, when Auschwitz's gas chambers closed, the camp was equipped with one, perhaps two, similar gas chambers and began functioning as an extermination camp. The camp also held important detainees who were generally treated better than the others as they were considered possible hostages. Such prisoners included Gemma La Guardia, a Jew and the sister of the Mayor of New York, and Geneviève, the niece of General De Gaulle. The number of women who perished varies according to historians, but typically falls between 30,000 and 90,000. The number of female prisoners exceeded 100,000.

The women in the camp came from many different countries, including those occupied by the Nazis. Many of the women were Russian, soldiers from the Red Army, as well as Polish and French. There were also ten English women who were secret service agents arrested in France, and approximately a thousand Italian women who were mostly political prisoners. Ravensbrück was liberated on 30 April 1945 by the Red Army.

Written by British journalist Sarah Helm, *Ravensbrück: Life and Death in Hitler's*

*Concentration Camp for Women* tells the terrifying and fascinating story of this concentration camp and its women. The author writes in a narrative style that makes this 700-page book a pleasure to read despite its subject and size. She scrupulously weaves together historic documents and oral accounts and indeed interviewed many detainees herself. Names rather than numbers are at the heart of the book and Helm is clearly interested in restoring life to these women and describing how they lived in the camp where they died, and their endless stories of fortitude, heroism, pain and death.

Beginning in 1942 medical experiments were performed on the prisoners in Ravensbrück, most of the test subjects – approximately 100 – were Polish and many of the “rabbits”, as they were called in the camp, died. Some, however, survived and were able to send messages to Poland and then to the Allies, containing detailed news of the experiments and cries for help.

Attempts to end the Red Cross' non-intervention were to no avail, due to the strong influence of Ernst Grawitz, President of the German Red Cross and a friend of Karl Gebhardt, medical director of experiments in Ravensbrück, who prevented every intervention until 1945. Grawitz committed suicide after the Reich fell, and Gebhardt, who was also on Himmler's medical staff, was charged during the Nuremberg Trials and hanged in 1948: further evidence of the involvement of the Nazi medical staff in the extermination.



Will Lammert, “*Tragende*”, memorial dedicated to the prisoners of Ravensbrück (1959)



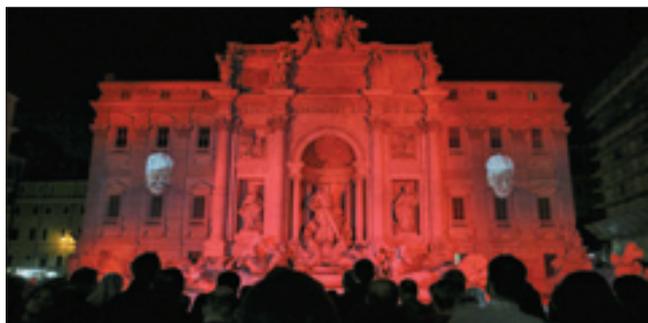
Prisoners in Ravensbrück after the Soviets liberated the camp (30 April 1945)

Prayer Vigil in Rome to denounce the martyrdom of Christians

## The fountain ran red

A wake-up call to shake the conscience. On Friday, 29 April, at 8:00 pm, a light display turned Trevi Fountain's brilliant white marble to red, in memory of the blood of persecuted and martyred Christians throughout the world. Indeed, blood is the symbol of Christians in Syria, as testified by Bishop Antoine Audo, SJ, of Alep for Chaldeans, Syria, who spoke about the gravity of the situation and denounced the indifference of the powers that be. Bishop Audo spoke on behalf of his people in Syria who continue to suffer, fleeing their homeland to escape an otherwise certain death. The event, intended to pierce “the veil of silence”, was sponsored by the Italian section of the association Aid to the Church in Need (ACS).

In a message for the ACS event, Cardinal Angelo Bagnasco, President of the Italian Episcopal Conference, called the reddening of the famous landmark an “occasion to offer to all a sign of the presence, still today, of martyrdom, and to offer up a prayer to the Lord in favour of persecuted Christians and all those who are oppressed, in the hope that



Trevi Fountain on Friday night, 29 April

greater sensitivity to this theme” comes about, along with “greater commitment and more active involvement”. Trevi Fountain, he said, “in its architecture and its composition, offers a representation of the sea: a symbol of globalization, as it joins all the parts of the planet”, and at the same time is a symbol “of the migration of countless brothers and sisters who cross the sea seeking salvation and hope”.

In a message written for the occasion, Cardinal Mauro Piacenza, ACS President, stated that Rome raised a “prophetic voice” calling for what is necessary: “to feed those who hunger for bread and justice, seeing in them Jesus”. The Cardinal indicated the need for prayer and action “so the hearts of the people open in order to dry ‘God's tears’ wherever he weeps: to educate and love even the persecutors themselves and to un-

derstand the Church as body”. Thus the Cardinal called for the “remembrance of the blood of Christian martyrs, shed through the violence of men and sin in the world: as Pope Francis maintains, the code of silence and silence itself are also sins”.

During the Prayer Vigil, testimony was given of several contemporary martyrs: Shahbaz Bhatti, killed in Pakistan in 2011; Fr Andrea Santoro, assassinated in Turkey in 2006; the four *Caritas* missionaries massacred in Yemen in March, and the students of Garissa University killed last year in Kenya. Notable participants included Francesco Paolo Tronca, Extraordinary Commissioner of Rome; Alfredo Mantovano, President of the Italian section of ACS; and Pietro Grasso, President of the Italian Senate. The Vigil concluded with the recitation of the prayer of Pope Pius XII for the persecuted Church, and throughout the night images were projected on the marble of the Trevi fountain, “stained” with the blood of Christian martyrs.