

L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO

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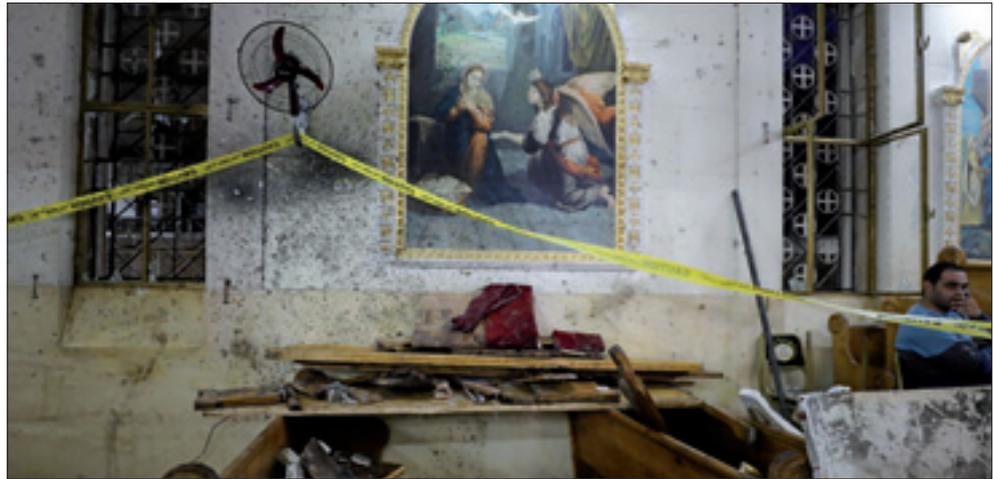
Friday, 14 April 2017

On Palm Sunday the Holy Father prays for victims of attacks in Egypt and Sweden

For the conversion of terrorists

“May the Lord convert the hearts of people who sow terror, violence and death, and also the hearts of those who make and traffic weapons”: shaken by the dramatic news coming out of Egypt as he was celebrating Palm Sunday Mass in Saint Peter’s Square, Pope Francis prayed for the victims of attacks on Coptic Orthodox Churches in the land of the pyramids.

At that time, the Pope had been informed of the first of two attacks carried out against Egypt’s Coptic community on Palm Sunday. The first suicide bombing struck the church of Saint George in Tanta, and some two hours later, a second attacker blew himself up at Saint Mark’s Cathedral in Alexandria. The Patriarch, Pope Tawadros II of Alexandria, who was celebrating Mass in the Cathedral at the time of the explosion there, narrowly escaped with his life. At least 44 other people at the two churches were not so fortunate. More than 100 were injured in the attacks, for which the so-called Islamic State claimed responsibility.



Speaking to the faithful gathered in Saint Peter’s Square at the conclusion of Mass, ahead of the Angelus prayer, Pope Francis also recalled the victims of the terrorist attack in Sweden on 7 April. “To Christ, who today enters into the Passion, and to the Blessed Virgin”, the Holy Father prayed, “let us entrust the victims of the terrorist attack which occurred last Friday in Stockholm, as well as the many who remain severely exhausted by war, the disgrace of the world”. Turning his thoughts to the attack which had just occurred in Egypt, the Pontiff

expressed his “deepest condolences” to his “dear brother, His Holiness Pope Tawadros II, to the Coptic Church, and to the entire dear Egyptian nation”, and assured them of his prayers for the victims and their families.

Earlier, in his homily at Sunday morning’s Mass, the Pope reflected on the Gospel readings of Christ’s Passion, noting that while Palm Sunday is marked by sadness, it also is an occasion of joy, recalling Christ’s entrance into Jerusalem. Francis also noted that this year, Palm Sunday marks the 32nd World

Youth Day, whose joyful celebrations have been ongoing at a diocesan level.

At the conclusion of his homily, the Pope invited the faithful not to contemplate Jesus “only in pictures and photographs, or in the videos that circulate on the internet” but to see his presence “in our many brothers and sisters who today endure sufferings like his own” such as slave labour, family tragedies, disease, war and terrorism.

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Happy Birthday Benedict XVI

Benedict XVI celebrates his 90th birthday on Sunday, 16 April. The staff of *L'Osservatore Romano's* English edition wishes you the Lord’s blessings for a very Happy Birthday!

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The Pope to young people on the eve of 32nd World Youth Day

Never stop moving forward

“Talk” and “listen” to older people, meet “this liquid culture” with “concreteness”, and use the languages of “the mind”, “the heart” and “the hands”. Above all, “never stop moving forward”: this is what Pope Francis told the young people who had gathered in Rome’s Basilica of Saint Mary Major on Saturday, 8 April, for an evening prayer vigil ahead of World Youth Day which this year was celebrated at the diocesan level on 9 April.

The Pope heard testimony from a young Italian Franciscan sister about her bumpy journey towards her vocation and to her current work with children in a region where the Mafia holds reign, and from a 23-year-old man in a wheelchair who, at the age of 8, was the sole survivor of his class when his school collapsed in an earthquake in southern Italy. The young man recounted that despite his suffering,



he had learned to find “the beauty of little things” which remind him each day of how fortunate he is, and that he is now a top paralympic swimmer.

Saturday’s vigil marked the official launch of the youths’ preparation for the 2018 Synod of Bishops on the theme, “*Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment*” and for World Youth Day 2019, to be held in Panama. Setting aside

his prepared remarks after listening to the young people, Pope Francis spoke off the cuff, saying, “we need young people who are ... [not] couch potatoes!”, and he entrusted the youth with the mission of carrying on the dreams of their grandparents, and making them come true.

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AUDIENCES

Thursday, 6 April

H.E. Mr Luiz Felipe Mendonça Filho, Ambassador of Brazil, for the presentation of his Letters of Credence

Cardinal Rubén Salazar Gómez, Archbishop of Bogotá, Colombia

Cardinal Ennio Antonelli, President emeritus of the Pontifical Council for the Family

Bishop Ambrogio Spreafico of Frosinone - Veroli - Ferentino, Italy

Mr Enrico Zampedri, Director of the "Agostino Gemelli" Hospital, Rome

Friday, 7 April

Archbishop Charles John Brown, titular Archbishop of Aquileia, Apostolic Nuncio in Albania

Archbishop Santo Gangemi, titular Archbishop of Umbriatico, Apostolic Nuncio in Guinea and in Mali

Cardinal Francesco Coccopalmerio, President of the Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts

Archbishop Salvatore Fisichella, President of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization

Saturday, 8 April

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

Cardinal Domenico Calcagno, President of the Administration of the Patrimony of the Apostolic See

Sunday, 10 April

Fr Michael Anthony Perry, OFM, Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor;



VATICAN BULLETIN

– Fr Mauro Jöhri, OFM Cap., Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor Capuchin;

– Fr Marco Tasca, OFM Conv., Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor Conventual;

– Fr Nicholas Edward Polichnowski, TOR, Minister General of the Third Order Regular of Saint Francis;

Fr Emili Turú Rofes, Superior General of the Marist Brothers of the Schools

CHANGES IN EPISCOPATE

The Holy Father appointed Msgr Daniel Henry Mueggenborg from the clergy of the Diocese of Tulsa, as Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Seattle, USA, assigning him the titular episcopal See of Tullia. Until now he has been parish priest of Christ the King Parish in Tulsa (6 Apr.).

Bishop-elect Mueggenborg, 55, was born in Okarche, USA. He obtained a bachelor's degree in geology and a licence in biblical theology. He was ordained a priest on 14 July 1989. He has served in parish ministry and as: chaplain to the

Bishop Kelley High School, and of the Saint Philip Neri-Newman Centre at the University of Tulsa; member of the Presbyteral Council; director of the office of the diocesan synod; assistant director for formation at the North American College in Rome and vice rector for the administration of the said Pontifical College; member of the diocesan financial council and of the Board of Governors of the diocesan Caritas.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Hervé Gaschignard of Aire et Dax, France (6 Apr.).

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Bernard Charrier, Bishop emeritus of Tulle, as Apostolic Administrator *sede vacante et ad nutum Sanctae Sedis* of Aire et Dax with the function of Diocesan Bishop (6 Apr.).

The Holy Father appointed Msgr Martin David as Auxiliary Bishop of Ostrava-Opava, Czech Republic assigning him the titular episcopal See of Thuca in Numidia. Until now he has been vicar general of the same Diocese (7 Apr.).

Bishop-elect David, 46, was born in Čeladná, Czech Republic. After graduating from high school he worked at an automobile factory and subsequently completed his military service. He was ordained a priest on 24 June 2000. He has served in parish ministry and as: chaplain to the young of the vicariate forane of Opava; administrator *excurrendo* in the parish of Hlavnice; secretary of the Diocesan Liturgical Commission; vicar general of the diocese; member of the College of Consultors and of the Presbyteral Council.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Jean-Michel di Falco Léandri of Gap, France (8 Apr.).

The Holy Father appointed Fr Xavier Malle as Bishop of Gap. Until now he has been Dean of Chinon, parish priest of Notre-Dame-en-Bouchardais and Saint-Vincent-de-Paul-de-Richelieu, and rector of the Shrine of Notre-Dame de la Prière de l'Île-Bouchard (8 Apr.).

Bishop-elect Malle, 51, was born in Valenciennes, France. He studied law and political sciences. He obtained a degree in theology. He was ordained a priest on 2 July 2000. He has served in parish ministry and as: member of the Communauté de l'Emmanuel; diocesan spiritual advisor to the Scouts d'Europe; co-

ordinator of the vocations service of the Communauté de l'Emmanuel; member of the Episcopal Council of the Archdiocese of Tours.

The Holy Father appointed Fr Dominic Nguyen Van Manh as Co-adjutor Bishop of the Diocese of Đà Lạt, Vietnam. Until now he has been judicial vicar of the same diocese (8 Apr.).

Bishop-elect Nguyen Van Manh, 61, was born in Cơn Tho. He was ordained a priest on 29 May 1994. He has served in parish ministry. From 2003 to 2009 he studied at the Pontifical Urban University in Rome, where he obtained a doctorate in canon law. In 2009 he returned to Đà Lạt.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Woldeghiorghis Matheos, titular Bishop of Turuda, from his office as Vicar Apostolic of Hosanna, Ethiopia (8 Apr.).

The Holy Father appointed Fr Seyoum Franso Noel as Vicar Apostolic of Hosanna, assigning him the titular episcopal See of Eminentiana. Until now he has been delegate vicar of the Apostolic Vicariate of Meki and national director of the Pontifical Mission Societies (8 Apr.).

Bishop-elect Noel, 46, was born in Waragu, Ethiopia. He holds a degree in theology. He was ordained a priest on 5 September 1998. He obtained a diploma in management; he studied missiology at the Pontifical Urban University, where he obtained a licence and a doctorate. He has served in parish ministry and as: assistant to the rector of the Major Seminary in Addis Ababa; rector of the Minor Seminary of Meki; assistant to the secretary of the National Catholic Secretariat in Addis Ababa; vice secretary general of the National Catholic Secretariat in Addis Ababa; national director of the Pontifical Mission Societies; director of the pastoral department of the Catholic Secretariat.

The Holy Father appointed Fr Donatus Edet Akpan from the clergy of Ikot Ekpene, as Bishop of Ogoja, Nigeria. Until now he has been parish priest of Holy Rosary Parish in Wuse, Abuja, Nigeria (9 Apr.).

Bishop-elect Edet Akpan, 64, was born in Ikot Ada Utor, Nigeria. He was ordained a priest on 12 October 1985. He obtained a diploma in education and a master's in biblical theology. He began his service as a *fidei donum* priest in the Archdiocese

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Ambassador of the Republic of Brazil presents his credentials

H.E. Mr Luiz Felipe Mendonça Filho, 68, is married and has one daughter. He holds a law degree. He has served as: third secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1974-77); second secretary at the Embassy in Vienna (1977-79); second secretary at the Embassy in Buenos Aires (1979-81); first secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1983); counsellor, delegation to the Organization of American States, Washington (1991); counsellor at the Embassy in Santiago de Chile (1994); head of Cabinet of the President, Brazil Space Agency (1998); vice director and coordinator of education at the Rio Branco Institute (2003); adjunct general consul at the General Consulate in Miami (2004); Ambassador to El Salvador (2008-12) and to Managua (2012-16).



On Thursday morning, 6 April, Pope Francis received in audience H.E. Mr Luiz Felipe Mendonça Filho, Ambassador of Brazil, for the presentation of the Letters by which he is accredited to the Holy See.

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At the General Audience dedicated to the Paschal Triduum

Hope born of the Cross

"Love is the engine that enables our hope to go on". Pope Francis reiterated this concept several times at the General Audience in Saint Peter's Square on Wednesday, 12 April. In particular, he lauded mothers, who suffer as they labour to give birth, but then rejoice at having brought a child into

the world. On the eve of the Paschal Triduum, the Pontiff reflected on the passage of John (12:24-25), which contrasts worldly hope with the hope of the Cross. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's catechesis, which he gave in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Good morning!

On Sunday we recalled Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem, amid the festive acclamation of the disciples and the large crowd. Those people placed many hopes in Jesus: many expected him to work miracles and great signs, manifest power and even bring freedom from the occupying forces. Who among them could have imagined that within a short time, Jesus would have instead been humiliated, condemned and put to death on the Cross? Those people lost all earthly hope before the Cross. But we believe that precisely in the Crucifix our hope is reborn. Earthly hopes collapse before the Cross, but new hopes are born, those which last forever. The hope born of the Cross is different. It is a different hope from those that collapse, from those of the world. But which hope is it? Which hope is born of the Cross?

It may help us to understand what Jesus said right after he entered Jerusalem: *"unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit"* (Jn 12:24). Let us try to think of a grain or a small seed, that falls upon the soil. If it remains closed within itself, nothing happens; but if instead it splits open, it germinates and then gives life to an ear of wheat; it sprouts, then becomes a plant, and the plant will bear fruit.

Jesus brought new hope into the world and he did so in the manner of the seed: he became very small, like a grain of wheat; he left his heavenly glory in order to come among us: he "fell into the earth". But this still was not enough. In order to bear fruit, Jesus experienced love to the fullest, allowing himself to be split open by death as a seed lets itself split open under the ground. Precisely there, at the lowest point of his abasement – which is also the loftiest point of love – *hope burgeoned*. Should one of you ask: "How is hope born?" – "From the Cross. Look to the Cross; look to Christ Crucified and from there you will receive the hope that never disappears, which lasts to eternal life". Indeed, this hope sprouted from the very force of love: because the love that "hopes all things, endures all things" (1 Cor 13:7), the love that is the life of God, has renewed everything that it touched. Thus, at Easter, Jesus transformed our sin into forgiveness, by taking it upon himself. But feel how truly the Paschal Mystery transforms: Jesus has transformed our sin into forgiveness; our death into resurrection, our fear into trust. This is why there, on the Cross, our hope is always born and born anew. This is why with Jesus, all our darkness can be trans-



formed into light, every defeat into victory, every disappointment into hope. Every one: yes, every one. Hope overcomes all, because it is born of the love of Jesus who made himself as a grain of wheat that fell to the soil and died to give life, and hope comes from that life full of love.

When we choose the hope of Jesus, we gradually discover that the successful way of life is that of the seed, that of humble love. There is no other way to conquer evil and give hope to the world. But you might tell me: "No, it is a losing rationale!". It might seem so, seem that it is a losing rationale, because those who love, lose power; those who give, impart something, and loving is a gift. In reality, the rationale of the seed that dies, of humble love, is God's way, and only this bears fruit. We see it also in ourselves; possessing always spurs desire for something else: I have obtained something for myself and immediately I want another larger one, and so on, and I am never satisfied. That is a pernicious thirst! The more you have, the more

you want. Those who are insatiable are never sated. Jesus says this in a clear way: "He who loves his life loses it" (Jn 12:25). You are insatiable, you seek to have many things but ... you will lose everything, even your life; that is: those who love *their own* and live for their own self-interest only swell with pride and lose. However those who accept, who are ready to serve, live in God's way: thus they are winners, they save themselves and others; they become *seeds of hope* for the world. But it is lovely to help others, to serve others... Perhaps we will get tired! But that is the way life is, and the heart is filled with joy and hope. This is love and hope together: to serve and to give.

Of course, this true love passes through the Cross, sacrifice, as the Cross is the obligatory passage, but it is not the goal; it is a passage: the goal is glory, as Easter shows us. And here another lovely image comes to our aid: that Jesus gave his disciples during the Last Supper. He says: "When a woman is in travail she has sorrow, because her hour has come; but when she is delivered of the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a child is born into the world" (Jn 16:21). Thus: to give life, not to keep it. This is what mothers do: they give another life; they suf-

fer, but then they rejoice, they are happy because they have given birth to another life. It gives joy; love gives birth to life and even gives meaning to pain. Love is the engine that empowers our hope. Let me repeat: love is the engine that empowers our hope. Let each one ask: "Do I love? Have I learned how to love? Do I learn each day to love more?", given that love is the engine that empowers our hope.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, in these days, days of love, let us allow ourselves to be enveloped by the mystery of Jesus who, as a kernel of wheat, gives us life by dying. He is the seed of our hope. Let us contemplate the Crucifix: source of hope. We will slowly understand that to hope with Jesus, is to learn to see, as of now, the plant in the seed, Easter in the Cross, life in death. Now, I would like to give you a task to do at home. It will be good for all of us to pause before the Crucifix – you all have one at home – to look at it and say to it: "With You, nothing is lost. With You, I can always hope. You are my hope". Let us now imagine the Crucifix and let us all together say three times to the [image] of Jesus Crucified: "You are my hope". Everyone: "You are my hope". Louder! "You are my hope". Thank you.

SPECIAL GREETINGS

I greet the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today's Audience, particularly the groups from England, Nigeria, Australia, Canada and the United States of America. I offer a particular greeting to the many student groups present. May this Lenten journey bring all of us to Easter with hearts purified and renewed by the grace of the Holy Spirit. God bless you!

A special greeting goes to *young people, to the sick and to neolyoeds*. Yesterday we recalled Saint Gemma Galgani, apostle of the Passion of Jesus. Dear *young people*, at school you experience the Easter Triduum by reflecting on the love of Jesus who sacrificed himself on the Cross; dear *sick people*, may Good Friday teach you patience even in discomfort; and you *neolyoeds*. May you experience hope even in the difficult moments of your new family.



Salesian Sister Chiara Cazzuola, Vicar General of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (FMA) left, and Sr Carolin Tahhan Fachakh, FMA of Aleppo, Syria centre, met Pope Francis at the General Audience on Wednesday, 12 April. In March, Sr Carolin, who runs a nursery school and a tailoring workshop for displaced and disadvantaged women in Damascus, received the International 'Women of Courage' Award from the U.S. State Department which "recognizes women around the globe who have shown exceptional courage and leadership in advocating for women's rights, empowerment, and justice, often at great personal risk". Sr Carolin has worked tirelessly to support the needs of Syria's most vulnerable populations, particularly internally displaced persons and children.

The Pope calls young people to prepare for 2018 Synod and for WYD 2019

A Synod open to non-believers

The upcoming 2018 Synod might rightly be called "the Synod of Young People": a Synod for young Catholics, but also for agnostics, for those of "lukewarm" faith, those "who no longer go to Church", and even for those who "consider themselves atheists". Indeed, "every young person has something to say to adults, something to say to priests, sisters, bishops and even the Pope". Francis shared these thoughts during the WYD prayer vigil on Saturday evening, 8 April, in Rome's Basilica of Saint Mary Major, to participants in the international conference "From Kraków to Panama: the Synod journeying with the Young". After listening to testimonials regarding young people's struggles, the Pope spoke extemporaneously in Italian. The following is the English text of his remarks.

Dear Young Friends,

Thank you for coming! This evening marks a double beginning. It is the beginning of the journey towards the Synod, which has a very long name – "Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment", but we can just call it the Synod of Young People. That way it is easier to understand! It is also a second beginning, the beginning of our journey to Panama. The Archbishop of Panama is with us, and I greet him warmly.

We have listened to the Gospel, prayed, sung and brought flowers to the Madonna, our Mother. We also brought the World Youth Day cross, which has come from Kraków and will be handed over tomorrow to the young people from Panama. From Kraków to Panama, with the Synod in between. A Synod from which no young person should feel excluded!

Some people say: "Let's hold the Synod for young Catholics, for those belonging to Catholic groups; that way it will be better". No! The Synod is meant to be the Synod for and of all young people. Young people are its protagonists. "But even young people who consider themselves agnostics?" Yes! "Even young people whose faith is lukewarm?" Yes! "Even young people who no longer go to Church?" Yes! "Even young people who – I don't know if there are any here, maybe one or two – consider themselves atheists?" Yes! This is the Synod of young people and we want to listen to one another. Every young person has something to say to others. He or she has something to say to adults, something to say to priests, sisters, bishops and even the Pope. All of us need to listen to you!

Let's think back to Kraków; the cross is a reminder. There I said two things, perhaps some of you will remember. First, it is not good to see a young person already retired at twenty! Second, it is also not good to see a young person spending his or her life on a couch. Isn't this the truth? We need young people who are on the road and moving forward, at each other's side but looking ahead to the future!

In the Gospel (cf. Lk 1:39-45) we heard how Mary receives that grace, that immense vocation of bringing God's gift to us. The Gospel tells us that after hearing that her elderly cousin was expecting a child and needed help, Mary

sets out in haste to help her. She hurries! The world today needs young people who "hurry", who don't get tired of hurrying. We need young people who feel a call, who feel that life offers them a mission. Young people who, as Maria Lisa (a young religious Sister) said so often in her testimony, are on the go. Maria Lisa shared her experience with us: it was an experience of being on the go. We need young people on the go. The world can change only if young people are on the go.

But this is the tragedy of the world today, and of young people



today, that young people are often discarded. They don't have work, they don't have an ideal to pursue, they lack education and they lack integration. So many young people have to flee, to migrate to other lands. Young people today, it is painful to say, are often discarded. We cannot tolerate this! We have to hold this Synod to say: "We young people are here!" And we are going to Panama to say: "We young people are here, on the march, and we don't want to be discarded! We have something of value to give!"

While Pompeo was talking (in the second testimony), I was thinking that twice he was almost at the point of being discarded – when he was eight and again when he was eighteen. But he made it: he was able to pick himself up. Life, when we look up always surprises us. Maria Lisa said this too. They both said this.

We are on the march, towards the Synod and towards Panama. And this march has its risks, but when young people don't take risks, they are already old. We have to take risks.

Maria Lisa said that after receiving the sacrament of Confirmation she fell away from the Church. You all know that here in Italy the sacrament of Confirmation is called the "sacrament of farewell"! After Confirmation, people stop going to church. Why? Because so many young people don't know what to do. But Maria Lisa never stopped, she kept walking: at times along dark ways, poorly-lit ways, without ideals or with ideals that she didn't quite understand; but in the end she too made it. As young people, you have to take a risk in life. You have to prepare for tomorrow today. The future is in your hands.

In the Synod, the entire Church wants to listen to young people: to what they are thinking, to what they want, to what they criticize and to what they are sorry for. Everything. The Church needs lots more springtime, and springtime is the season of the young.

I want to invite you to make this journey, this march towards the Synod and towards Panama, and to make it with joy, with your aspirations, without fear, without shame, and to make it courageously. Courage is needed. But also the effort to appreciate the beauty of little things, as Pompeo said: the beauty of everyday life. Be grateful for life, don't ever lose this ability. Be thankful for what you are: "This is how I am, thank you!" So often in life, we waste time asking ourselves: "Who am I?" You can keep asking, "Who am I?" for the rest of your lives. But the real question is: "For whom am I?" Like Our Lady, who could ask: "For whom, for what person, am I", here and now? She answers, "For my cousin", and off she goes. "For whom am I?", not "Who am I?". The answer to that second question comes later; it is a question that has to be asked, but first you have to ask why: why you do something, something for your entire life, something that makes you think, makes you feel makes you work.

There are these three languages: the language of the mind, the language of the heart, and the language of the hands. Never stop moving ahead.

There is something else I want to tell you. The Synod will not be a "chat room". World Youth Day will not be a chat room, or a form of entertainment, or a nice happy experience from which you can then move on. No! Concreteness! Life demands concreteness of us. In this liquid culture, we need concreteness, and concreteness is your vocation.

Now I would like to conclude... I had a written speech, but after seeing you, after listening to the testimonies, I thought I should say all the things I just told you. There are going to be times when

Prayer for Young People

In view of the forthcoming Synod of Bishops – to be held in October 2018 on the theme: "Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment" – we publish the Holy Father's prayer.

Lord Jesus, in journeying towards the Synod, your Church turns her attention to all the young people of the world.

We pray that they might boldly take charge of their lives, aim for the most beautiful and profound things of life and always keep their hearts unencumbered.

Accompanied by wise and generous guides, help them respond to the call you make to each of them, to realize a proper plan of life and achieve happiness.

Keep their hearts open to dreaming great dreams and make them concerned for the good of others.

Like the Beloved Disciple, may they stand at the foot of the Cross, to receive your Mother as a gift from you.

May they be witnesses to your Resurrection and be aware that you are at their side as they joyously proclaim you as Lord.

Amén.

you don't understand, dark times, painful times, but also wonderful times, times of darkness and times of light... But I want to make one thing clear. We live in the present. At my age, people are getting ready to leave the scene ... right? Who can be sure about life? Nobody. At your age, you have the future ahead of you. Life holds out a mission to young people today; the Church holds out a mission, and I would like to entrust you with this mission. It is to go back and talk to your grandparents. Today more than ever we need this bridge, this dialogue, between grandparents and grandchildren, between the young and the elderly. The prophet Joel makes this prophecy: "Your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions" (2.28). In other words, the young

Meditations for the Way of the Cross presided by the Holy Father on Good Friday evening

With the women of the Gospel

The meditations for the 14 stations of the 'Via Crucis' — at which Pope Francis will preside at the Colosseum during the evening of Good Friday, 14 April — were written by French biblical scholar Anne-Marie Pelletier. The following text has also been published, as customary, by the 'Liberia Editrice Vaticana' (Vatican Publishing House).

Introduction

The hour has now come. Jesus' journey along the dusty roads of Galilee and Judea, an endless encounter with afflicted bodies and hearts, a journey driven by his urgent need to proclaim the Kingdom, ends here, today. On Golgotha. Today the Cross bars the way. Jesus will go no further.

He can go no further!

Here the love of God reveals its full measure, measure beyond measure.

Today the love of the Father, who wills that all be saved in his Son, goes to the extreme, where words fail, where we find ourselves bewildered, our piety overwhelmed by the superabundance of God's thoughts and plans.

On Golgotha, contrary to all appearances, what is at stake is life, and grace and peace. Here what counts is not the kingdom of evil, which we know all too well, but the triumph of love.

Beneath the cross, too, what is at stake is our world, with all its failings and sufferings, its pleas and protests, all those cries that in our day rise up to God from lands of dire poverty and war, from boats teeming with migrants....

How many are the tears, how great is the misery in the chalice that the Son drinks for our sake.

How many are the tears, how great is the misery, yet none of this will be lost in the sea of time. Instead it will be taken up by him, to be transfigured in the mystery of a love which vanquishes all evil.

Golgotha speaks to us of God's unshakeable fidelity to our humanity.

A birth takes place there!

We need the courage to say that all this is about the joy of the Gospel!

Unless we recognize this truth, we remain trapped in the toils of suffering and death. And we fail to let Christ's passion bear fruit in our lives.

Prayer

Lord, our vision is dimmed. How can we walk this far with you?

"Mercy" is your name. But this name is madness.

May the old wineskins of our hearts burst asunder!

Brighten our vision with the good news of the Gospel, in the hour when we stand beneath the Cross of your Son.

Then we will be able to celebrate "the breadth and length and height and depth" (Eph 3:18) of the love of Christ, with hearts comforted and flooded with light.

FIRST STATION

Jesus is condemned to death

From the Gospel according to Luke
When day came, the assembly of the elders of the people gathered together, both chief priests and scribes; and they led him away to their council (22:66).

From the Gospel according to Mark
They all condemned him as deserving death. Some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to strike him, saying to him: "Prophesy!" And the guards received him with blows (14:64-65).

Meditation

The members of the Sanhedrin did not need a lengthy discussion to come to a decision. The matter had long been settled. Jesus must die!

These too were the thoughts of those who sought to hurl Jesus from the brow of the hill that day when, in the synagogue of Nazareth, he unrolled the scroll and applied to himself the words of the prophet Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me ... to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" (Lk 4:18-19).

When he healed the paralytic at the pool of Bethesda and inaugurated the Sabbath of God, which brings freedom from every form of enslavement, the murmuring and threats against his life were already beginning to mount (cf. Jn 5:1-18).

At the very end of the road, as he went up to Jerusalem for the Passover, the trap was now inexorably set. He could no longer escape his enemies (cf. Jn 11:45-57).

But our recollection must go back even further. Starting in Bethlehem, at the very time of his birth, when Herod had decreed that he must die. The henchmen of the usurper king had put the children of Bethlehem to the sword. That time Jesus had fled their fury. But only for a while. Already his life hung in the balance. In the sobbing of Rachel mourning her children who are no more, we hear a prophecy of the sorrow that Simeon will foretell to Mary (cf. Mt 2:16-18; Lk 2:34-35).

Prayer

Lord Jesus, beloved Son, you came to us, doing good in our midst and leading back to life all those who dwell in the shadow of death. You peer into the abyss of our hearts.

We claim to be on the side of good and to desire life. But we are sinners and accomplices of death.

We call ourselves your disciples, but we take paths that lead far from your thoughts, your justice and your mercy.

Do not abandon us to our violent ways.

Do not lose patience with us.
Deliver us from evil!

Pater noster

"My people, what evil have I done to you? How have I offended you? Answer me".

SECOND STATION

Jesus is denied by Peter

From the Gospel according to Luke
About an hour later, still another kept insisting: "Surely this man also was with him; for he is a Galilean". But Peter said, "Man, I do not know



what you are saying". At that moment, while he was still speaking, the cock crowed. The Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said to him, "Before the cock crows today, you will deny me three times". And he went out and wept bitterly (22:59-62).

Meditation

Around a fire, in the courtyard of the Sanhedrin, Peter and a few others warmed themselves in those cold hours of the night, amid a flurry of people coming and going. Inside, Jesus' fate is about to be decided as he confronts his accusers. They will ask for his death.

Like a swelling tide, hostility is increasing all about. Just as a wick takes flame, hatred flares up and spreads. Soon the screaming crowd will demand that Pilate pardon Barabbas and condemn Jesus.

It is hard to say you are the friend of someone condemned to death without a chill of fear. Peter's intrepid fidelity fails before the suspicious question of the servant-girl who kept the gate of that place.

Avowing himself a disciple of the Galilean rabbi would mean putting

fidelity to Jesus ahead of his own life! When this kind of courage is demanded, truth has a hard time finding witnesses.... That is the way we are; many of us prefer lies to the truth. Peter is a man like us. Three times he betrays the Lord. Then he meets the gaze of Jesus. And his tears pour forth, bittersweet, like the water that cleanses a stain.

Soon, in a few days, around another fire, on the shore of the lake, Peter will acknowledge his risen Lord, who will entrust to him the care of his sheep. Peter will learn how boundless are the words of forgiveness that the Risen Lord pronounces over all our betrayals. And he will embrace a fidelity which, from that moment onwards, will allow him to accept his own death as an offering in union with the death of Christ.

Prayer

Lord, our God, you chose Peter, the disciple who denied you and accepted your forgiveness, to be charged with guiding your flock.

Fill our hearts with trust and joy in the knowledge that, in you, we can overcome the hurdles of fear and infidelity.

Taught by Peter, may all your disciples bear witness to your way of regarding our faults. May our moments of harshness and despair never render vain the Resurrection of your Son!

Pater noster

*Christ, put to death for our sins,
Christ, risen for our life,
We beg you: have mercy on us.*

THIRD STATION

Jesus and Pilate

From the Gospel according to Mark
As soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and the scribes and the whole council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. Then the chief priests accused him of many things. Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified (15:1, 3, 15).

From the Gospel according to Matthew
So when Pilate saw he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying: "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves!" (27:24).

From the book of the prophet Isaiah
All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned to our own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all (53:6).

Meditation

The Rome of Caesar Augustus, bearer of civilization, whose legions saw it as their mission to grant van-



"The women at the sepulchre", Poitiers Cathedral (detail)

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

quished peoples the benefits of just order.

Rome too was present at the Passion of Jesus, in the person of Pilate, the representative of the Emperor, the guarantor of law and justice in a foreign land.

Yet the same Pilate who declares that he finds no fault in Jesus is the one who sanctions his death sentence. In the praetorium, where Jesus' trial takes place, the truth becomes all too clear. The justice of the pagans is no better than that of the Jewish Sanhedrin!

Jesus, the Just One who mysteriously takes upon himself the bloodthirsty thoughts of the human heart, reconciles both Jews and pagans. For the moment, he does this by making them equally complicit in his death. Yet the time is coming, and is already at hand, when this Just One will reconcile them in another way, through his cross and the forgiveness to be bestowed on all, Jews and pagans alike, whereby both will be healed of their baseness and set free from their violent ways.

There is but one condition for receiving this gift. It is to acknowledge the innocence of the truly Innocent One, the Lamb of God sacrificed for the sin of the world. It is to renounce the inner presumption that murmurs: "I am innocent of the blood of that man". It is to declare ourselves guilty in the confidence that an infinite love embraces everyone, Jews and pagans alike, and that God calls all men and women to become his children.

Prayer

Lord our God, in looking upon Jesus, handed over and condemned to death, we can only attempt to excuse ourselves and accuse others. For all too long, Christians have laid the blame of your condemnation on the shoulders of your people Israel. For all too long, we have failed to realize the need to accept our own complicity in sin, so as to be saved by the blood of Jesus Crucified.

Grant that we may acknowledge in your Son the Innocent One, the only innocent man in all of history. For he agreed to be "made sin for us" (cf. 2 Cor 5:21), so that through him you might find us once more, restored to the innocence with which you created us and in which you make us your sons and daughters.

Pater noster

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

FOURTH STATION

Jesus, King of Glory

From the Gospel according to Mark
Then the soldiers led him into the courtyard of the palace; and they called together the whole cohort. They clothed him in a purple cloak; and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on him. And they began saluting him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" (15:16-18).

From the book of the prophet Isaiah
He had no form or majesty that we should look at him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity, as one from whom others hide their faces. He was despised and we held him of no account. Yet he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. And we accounted him stricken, struck down by God and afflicted (53:2-4).

Meditation

The banality of evil. How many men, women and even children are victims of violence, abuse, torture and murder, in every time and place.

Jesus does not seek shelter in his divinity. He becomes part of the awful flood of sorrows that man inflicts upon man. He knows the abandonment of the downtrodden and those utterly forsaken.

Can the sufferings of yet one more innocent person really help us?

Jesus is one of us, but first he is the beloved Son of the Father, who comes to fulfill all righteousness by his obedience.

Suddenly the tables are turned. The scorn and contempt of Jesus' torturers reveal to us – in an absolutely paradoxical way – the unfathomable truth of his unique kingship, revealed as a love that seeks only the will of his Father and his desire that all should be saved. "You do not ask for sacrifice and offerings.... Instead, here am I. In the scroll of the book it stands written that I should do your will" (Ps 40:39:17-9).

That is the message of this hour of Good Friday. There is but one glory in this world and in the next: the glory of knowing and doing the Father's will. None of us can aim for a greater dignity than that of being a son or daughter in the Son who became obedient for us, even unto death on a cross.

Prayer

Lord our God, on this holy day that brings your revelation to fulfillment, we ask you to tear down every idol in us and in our world. You know the sway they have over our minds and our hearts. Tear down in us every deceitful illusion of success and of glory.

Tear down in us the images we constantly make for ourselves of a God of our own liking, a distant God, so unlike the face revealed in the covenant and shown today in Jesus. A God beyond our every hope and expectation. For we confess that in Jesus we see "the radiance of your glory" (cf. Heb 1:3).

Grant that we may enter into the eternal joy that leads us to acclaim Jesus, robed in purple and crowned with thorns, as the king of glory. For it is of him that the Psalm sings: "O gates, lift high your heads; grow higher, ancient doors. Let him enter, the king of Glory" (24[23]:9).

Pater noster

O gates, lift high your heads, Grow higher, ancient doors. Let him enter, the King of glory.

FIFTH STATION

Jesus carries his cross

From the Book of Lamentations
Look and see, all you who pass by, if there is any sorrow like my sorrow, which was brought upon me, which the Lord inflicted on the day of his fierce anger (1:12).

From Psalm 146[145]
He is happy who is helped by Jacob's God, whose hope is in the Lord his God.... It is he who sets prisoners free ... who raises up those who are bowed down.... The Lord protects the stranger and upholds the widow and the orphan (vv. 5, 7, 8, 9).

Meditation

Along the rocky way to Golgotha, Jesus did not carry the cross like a trophy! He was completely unlike the heroes of our imagination who triumph over their evil foes.

Step after step, ever more slowly, he went his way, his body weighed down, his flesh bruised and his legs faltering beneath the wood of the cross.

Generation after generation, the Church has meditated on this way, interspersed with obstacles and falls.

Jesus falls, he gets up, then falls again. He resumes his gruelling journey, most likely under the lashings of his military escort, for that is how the condemned of this world are treated and mistreated.

He, who raised the sick from their beds, healed the crippled woman, raised the daughter of Jairus from her deathbed, made the lame walk, now lies sprawled in the dust.

The Most High has fallen to the ground.

Let us fix our gaze on Jesus. Through him, the Most High teaches us that he is at the same time – incredible as it is – the most lowly, ever ready to come down to us, and to descend even lower

if necessary, so that no one will be lost in the depths of his or her misery.

Prayer

Lord our God, you descend into the depths of our night, setting no limits to your abasement, for that is how you come down to the earth, so often thankful and at times devastated, of our lives.

Grant that your Church may testify that the Most High and the Most Lowly are, in you, a single face. May she bring to all who have been brought low the good news of the Gospel: that there can be no fall untouched by your mercy; no loss or abyss so deep that you cannot find one who has gone astray.

Pater noster

Behold, Lord, I come to do your will.

SIXTH STATION

Jesus and Simon of Cyrene

From the Gospel according to Luke
As they led him away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming from the country, and they laid the cross on him, and made him carry it behind Jesus (23:26).

From the Gospel according to Matthew
Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? When was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? When was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?" (25:37-39).

Meditation

Jesus stumbles along the way, his back crushed beneath the weight of the cross. Yet he must not stop but keep going, for Golgotha, the sinister "Place of the Skull" outside the walls of the city, is the destination of Isaiah?

A strong-armed man passes by at that moment. He appears to have nothing to do with what is happening. He is returning home, completely unaware of the events surrounding the rabbi Jesus, when the guards force him to carry the cross.

What could he have known about that convict driven by the guards to his execution? What could he have known about the one whose appearance was "so marred, beyond human semblance", like the suffering servant of Isaiah?

We are told nothing of his surprise, and perhaps his initial refusal, or of the pity that he felt. The Gospel simply mentions his name: Simon of Cyrene. Yet the Gospel has kept alive the name of this Libyan and his simple gesture of help, to teach us that, in casing the pain of someone condemned to death, Simon eased the pain of Jesus, the Son of God. Jesus, who crossed Simon's path in the form of a slave, for our sake, for his sake, for the salvation of the world. Without his even knowing it.

Prayer

Lord our God, you have revealed to us that in each of the poor, the naked, the imprisoned, the thirsty, it is you who stand before us, it is you whom we welcome, visit, clothe and give to drink. "I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me" (Mt 25:36). The mystery of your encounter with our humanity! No one is excluded from this encounter, if he or she chooses to show compassion.

We present to you, as a holy offering, all those acts of kindness, of acceptance, of commitment, that are carried out daily in this world. Deign to acknowledge them as the truth of our humanity, which speaks louder than all acts of rejection and hatred. Deign to bless the men and women of compassion who give you glory, even if they do not yet know your name.

Pater noster

Christ, put to death for our sins, Christ, risen for our life, We beg you, have mercy on us.

SEVENTH STATION

Jesus and the Daughters of Jerusalem

From the Gospel according to Luke
A number of the people followed him, and among them were women who were beating their breasts and wailing for him. Jesus turned to them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and your children.... For if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?" (23:27-28, 31).

Meditation

The tears that Jesus entrusts to the daughters of Jerusalem as an act of compassion, these tears of women are always present in this world.

They fall silently down their cheeks. And undoubtedly, even more often, they fall unseen in the heart, like the tears of blood spoken of by Catherine of Siena.

Not that women alone should weep, as if it were their lot to grieve, passive and helpless, as part of a history that men alone are called to write.

Their grief embraces all those tears shed quietly and without fanfare in a world where there is much to weep for. Tears of terror-stricken children and of those wounded on battlefields crying out for a mother, the tears of the sick and dying, alone on the threshold of the unknown. Tears of dismay falling on the face of this world, which was created on the first day for tears of joy, in the shared rejoicing of man and woman.

Ety Hillelsum, that courageous woman of Israel who remained undaunted amid the firestorm of Nazi persecution, defended to the last the goodness of life. She whispers to us the secret that she grasped at the end of her road: that there are tears crying out for consolation on God's own face, as he weeps for the misery of his children. Amid the

With the women of the Gospel

The Stations of the Cross with Pope Francis at the Colosseum on Good Friday

hell in which the world had been plunged, she dared to say to God in her prayer: "I will try to help you!" What courage, at once so womanly and so divine!

Prayer

Lord our God, God of tenderness and pity, God of utter love and faithfulness, teach us in happy times not to scorn the tears of the poor who cry to you and seek our help. Teach us not to pass them by with indifference. Teach us to have the courage to weep with them. Teach us also, in the night of our own sufferings, of our loneliness and disappointments, to hear the word of grace that you spoke to us on the mountain: "Blessed are those who weep, for they will be comforted" (Mt 5:4).

Pater noster

Christ, put to death for our sins, Christ, risen for our life, We beg you, have mercy on us.

EIGHTH STATION

Jesus is stripped of his garments

From the Gospel according to John
When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier (19:23).

From the book of Job
"Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return there" (1:21).

Meditation

Jesus' disgraced body is stripped. Exposed to the derision and contempt of all eyes. His body, broken and covered with welts, readied for the ultimate punishment of crucifixion. Humanly, what could any of us do but lower our eyes in order not to add to his disgrace?

Yet the Spirit comes to aid us amid our dismay and bewilderment. He teaches us to understand God's language, the language of *kenosis*, the abasement that leads God to come to us wherever we find ourselves. The Orthodox theologian Christos Yannaras tells us of this language that God speaks: "the language of *kenosis*: the child Jesus lying naked in the manger; naked in the river as he receives baptism like a slave; hanging on the tree of the cross, naked, like a common criminal. In all this, he showed his love for us".

When we enter into this mystery of grace, we can enter more open eyes and gaze on the broken body of Jesus. Then we glimpse what our eyes cannot see: that his nakedness radiates the same splendour that brightened his garments at the moment of the Transfiguration.

Light that dispels all darkness. The irresistible light of love to the end.

Prayer

Lord our God, we set before your eyes the immense throngs of men and

women who are victims of torture, the appalling mass of mangled bodies, buffeted by blows and trembling with fear, awaiting death in grim basements and cells.

We beg you, hear their cry. In the face of evil we are speechless and helpless.

Yet you know what we do not. You can find a way through the chaos and bleakness of evil. Even now, in the passion of your beloved Son, you can bring the light of the resurrection.

Pater noster

Christ, put to death for our sins, Christ, risen for our life, We beg you, have mercy on us.

Ninth Station

Jesus is crucified

From the Gospel according to Luke
When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing" (23:33-34).

From the book of the prophet Isaiah
Upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed (53:5).

Meditation

Truly God is where he shouldn't be! The beloved Son, the Holy One of God, is now a body exposed on a cross of shame, abandoned to disgrace, between two criminals. A man of sorrows from whom one turns away, even as we turn away from so many scared men and women we meet along the way.

The Word of God, in whom all things were created, is no more than a mute and suffering mass of flesh. All our human cruelty raged against him and triumphed. Truly, God is where he shouldn't be. Yet, at the same time, he is exactly where we need him to be!

He came to share his life with us. "Take!" So he kept saying, as he offered healing to the sick, forgiveness to wayward hearts and his body at the Passover meal.

Yet he ended up in our hands, in that realm of death and violence that never ceases to shock us when we see it in the world all around us. It lurks in our own hearts as well. The monks killed in Tibhirine were well aware of this; to their prayer: "Disarm them!", they added the petition: "and disarm us!"

The tender love of God had to visit this hell of ours. It was the only way to free us from evil.

Jesus had to bring God's infinite tenderness to the very heart of the world's sin.

Only thus, by directly encountering God's life, would death turn back in its tracks and fall, like a foe who, finding one stronger than himself, takes flight and disappears.

Prayer

Lord our God, receive our silent praise.

Like the kings who remained speechless before the Servant proclaimed in Isaiah's prophecy (cf. 52:15), we remain silent and amazed before the Lamb slain for our life and for the life of the world. We confess that by your wounds we have been healed. "What shall I return to the Lord for all his bounty to me? I will offer to you a thanksgiving sacrifice and call on the name of the Lord" (Ps 116:12:17).

Pater noster

Christ, put to death for our sins, Christ, risen for our life, We beg you, have mercy on us.

TENTH STATION

The crucified Jesus is mocked

From the Gospel according to Luke
The leaders scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!". The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!". One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" (23:35-39).

"If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread.... If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written: [his angels] will bear you up" (43: 9-11).

Meditation

Couldn't Jesus have come down from the cross? We hardly dare ask this question: doesn't the Gospel put it on the lips of the godless?

Yet it continues to haunt us, for we are still part of the world of temptation that Jesus confronted during his forty days in the wilderness, the prelude and inauguration of his ministry: "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread; hurl yourself from the height of the Temple, for God watches over his friends". Yet to the extent that we, who have been baptized into the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, follow in his footsteps, the taunts of the evil one have no grip on us; they are powerless, their deceit is evident.

Only then do we discover the peremptory force of the words, "Was it not necessary...?" (Lk 24:26), that Jesus spoke patiently yet firmly to his disciples on the way to Emmaus.

"It was necessary" that Christ should accept this obedience and this powerlessness, in order to come to us in the powerlessness brought on by our disobedience.

We now begin to understand that "only a God who suffers can save", as Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote a few months before his execution. In experiencing the power of evil to the full, he could sum up, in this simple and overwhelming truth, the profession of the Christian faith.

Prayer

Lord our God, who will set us free from the snares of worldly power? Who will free us from the tyranny of lies,

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which make us exalt the powerful and seek our own empty glory?

You alone can convert our hearts.

You alone can make us love the paths of humility.

You alone, who showed us that there is no victory if not in love, and that all else is but chaff scattered by the wind, a mirage which vanishes in the face of your truth.

We ask you, Lord, to dispel the untruths that seek to reign in our hearts and in our world.

Make us walk in your ways, so that the world may recognize the power of the Cross.

Pater noster

My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

ELEVENTH STATION

Jesus and his Mother

From the Gospel according to John
Standing near the Cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalen. When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother: "Woman, here is your son". Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother". And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home (19:25-27).

Meditation

Mary too has reached the end of the journey. She has come to the day that the elderly Simeon had foretold. When he took the baby in his trembling arms, his thanksgiving gave way to mysterious words that wove together tragedy and hope, sorrow and salvation.

"This child", he said, "is destined for the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed, so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed – and a sword will pierce your own soul too" (Lk 2:34-35).

The visit of the angel had already made Mary's heart thrill to the incredible news that God had chosen her life to bring about the new things promised to Israel: "what no eye has seen nor ear heard" (1 Cor 2:9; cf. Is 64:3). She had consented to that divine plan that would soon involve her flesh and then accompanied her Son, the fruit of her womb, along unforeseen paths.

During the uneventful days of Nazareth, and then during Jesus' public life, when room needed to be made for another family, the family of the disciples, the strangers whom Jesus had made his brothers, sisters, mothers, she had treasured all these things in her heart. She had entrusted them to the great patience of her faith.

Today is the day of fulfilment. The sword that pierced her Son's side pierces her own heart. Mary too plunges into that bottomless trust whereby Jesus lives to the full his obedience to the Father. Standing there, she does not desert him. *Stabat Mater*. In the darkness, but with certainty, she knows that God keeps his promises. In the darkness, but with certainty, she knows that Jesus is both the promise and its fulfilment.

Prayer

Mary, Mother of God and woman of our race, as a mother you give us birth in him to whom you gave birth: sustain us in faith at the hour of darkness and teach us to hope against all hope.

Preserve the entire Church in fidelity and watchfulness, in imitation of your own fidelity, humbly docile to God's thoughts, which lead us where we would not go, that unite us, beyond anything we might imagine, to the work of salvation.

Pater noster

Hail, Holy Queen, Mother of mercy, our life, our sweetness and our hope.

TWELFTH STATION

Jesus dies on the cross

From the Gospel according to John
Jesus said, "I am thirsty". A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the wine, he said, "It is finished". Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit... When the soldiers came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out. He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth" (19:28-30, 33-35).

Meditation

All is now fulfilled. Jesus' work is now complete. He had come forth from the Father on a mission of mercy. That mission was accomplished with a fidelity that led to the utmost bounds of love. All is ended. Jesus commends his spirit into the hands of the Father.

Everything seems to fall into the deadly silence that now descends on Golgotha and the three crosses that stand there. At the close of this day of the Passion, anyone passing that way could only think of the defeat of Jesus, the collapse of the hope that had heartened so many, comforted the poor, lifted up the lowly and enabled the disciples to glimpse that the time had come when God would fulfil the promises proclaimed by the prophets. Now all that seemed lost, shattered, in ruins.

Yet amid that disappointment, the evangelist John has us fix our gaze on a minute detail, which he solemnly describes. Water and blood come forth from the side of Jesus on the Cross. What wonder! The wound opened by the soldier's lance brings forth a flow of water and blood that speaks to us of life and birth.

The message is quite restrained, yet it speaks eloquently to hearts that remember. From Jesus' body comes forth the flood of water that the prophet had seen issuing from the Temple. A flood that swells and becomes a mighty river, whose waters restore and make fruitful all that they touch in their course. Did not Jesus one day speak of his body as the new Temple? The "blood of the covenant" accompanies that water. Did not Jesus speak of his flesh and blood as the food of eternal life?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, during these sacred days of the Paschal mystery, renew within us the joy of our baptism.

As we contemplate the water and the blood flowing from your side, teach us to recognize the wellspring of our new life, the love on which your Church is built, and the hope for which you have chosen us and sent us forth to share with the world.

Here is the wellspring of life that bathes the entire universe, welling up from Christ's wounded side. May our baptism be our only glory, as we give you thanks full of wonder.

Pater noster

The Lamb that was slain is worthy to receive power and wealth, and wisdom and might, and honour, glory and blessing, for ever and ever.

THIRTEENTH STATION

Jesus is taken down from the cross

From the Gospel according to Luke
Joseph of Arimathea took the body of Jesus down, wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid it in a rock-hewn tomb, where no one had ever been laid (23:53).

Meditation

Signs of loving care and honour for the defiled and broken body of Jesus. A few men and women gather at the foot of the cross. Joseph, a native of Arimathea, "a good and righteous man" (Lk 23:50) who, Saint Luke tells us, asked Pilate for the body. Nicodemus, who had come to Jesus by night, so Saint John adds. And some women, faithful to the end, who look on.

The Church's contemplation of this scene has also included the Virgin Mary, who was surely present for this moment.

Mary, Mother of mercy, takes in her arms the body born of her flesh, which she has accompanied, lovingly and quietly, all through the years, like every mother who cares for her children.

Now the body she holds has expanded to the measure of her grief, to the measure of the new creation born of the passion of love that pierced the hearts of Son and Mother alike.

In the great silence that fell after the shouting of the soldiers, the insults of the passers-by and the commotion of the crucifixion, there are only signs of love and care, reverent caresses. Joseph lowers the body, which falls into his arms. He wraps it in a sheet, sets it in a newly-hewn tomb in the garden nearby.

Jesus is taken from the hands of his killers. Now, in death, he is once again in hands that treat him with tenderness and compassion.

The violence of murderous men has receded into the distance. Gentleness has returned to the place of execution.

The gentleness of God and those who are his own, those meek hearts that Jesus promised would one day inherit the earth. The primordial gentleness of creation, and of the man and woman made in the image of God. The gentleness of the end

time, when every tear shall be wiped away and the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, for all flesh shall come to the knowledge of God (cf. Is 11:6, 9).

Hymn to Mary

O Mary, woe no more: your Son, our Lord, has fallen asleep in peace.

His Father, in glory, opens before him the gates of life!

O Mary, rejoice: the Risen Jesus has conquered death!

Pater noster

*I will lie down in your peace, Lord, and sleep comes at once.
I will arise, for you are my strength.*

FOURTEENTH STATION

Jesus is laid in the tomb and the women

From the Gospel according to Luke
The women who had come with him from Galilee followed, and they saw the tomb and how the body was laid. Then they returned, and prepared spices and ointments (23:55-56).

Meditation

The women have departed. The one whom they had accompanied with constant care along the roads of Galilee is no more. This evening he leaves them alone, in the company only of their thoughts of the tomb and the shroud in which he lies. A scant yet precious recollection of those excitement-filled days now past. Solitude and silence. The Sabbath draws near, bidding Israel to rest from work, even as God did when his work of creation was finished, brought to completion with his blessing.

Today has to do with another kind of fulfillment, at present hidden and inscrutable. A *Shabbat* in which to rest quietly, with hearts recollected and minds burdened by grief. But also, for the women, a day to prepare the ointments and spices with which they will pay their last respects to the Lord's body on the morrow, at daybreak.

Are they preparing simply to embalm their hope? What if God has prepared, in response to their act of devotion, something that they cannot possibly foresee, imagine or anticipate? The finding of an empty tomb, the message that he is no longer there, for he has shattered the doors of death....

Prayer

Lord our God, graciously look upon and bless all that women everywhere do to revere weak and vulnerable bodies, surrounding them with kindness and respect.

Grant too that we, who have accompanied you along this path of love to the very end, together with the women of the Gospel, may remain in expectant prayer. For we know that our prayers will be answered by the Resurrection of Jesus, which your Church now prepares to celebrate in the joy of Easter night.

Pater noster

To him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen!

Morning Mass at the Domus Sanctae Marthae

Thursday, 30 March
God's Dreams and
Disappointments

In reference to the day's reading from Exodus (32:7-14) on Thursday morning, 30 March, Pope Francis suggested that the passage could appropriately be entitled "God's Dreams and Disappointments". Because, the Pontiff observed, "God dreamt, and in the end was disappointed".

Indeed, "God had dreamt of a people and he dreamt of them from the beginning", the Pontiff explained. "He chose a man, Abraham; He made him walk for years, and one day He showed him the stars: 'Look, toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them'", it will be likewise for "your descendants, my people", Pope Francis explained. This is "God's dream; he dreamt because he loved". God's love was — and is — so great "that He could not keep it only to Himself. It was to be shared".

"With great kindness", God "promised this people to Abraham who was already elderly, married to a barren woman; 'you will have a son and this son will be your descendancy, as numerous as the stars', and so it was", Pope Francis paraphrased. "Over the years, in time, this people became enslaved in Egypt and the Lord went and set the people free". Indeed, "He set them free and made them cross the ocean as if it were land, because He loved and had this hope for this people". In other words, He was "a father who loved his children".

But they "were a difficult people", the Pope continued. "On the journey toward the definitive land that He wanted to give them, He had Moses climb a mountain in order to give him the Law". And "God begins to feel disappointed: 'Go down; go on, go down — He says to Moses — for your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt — whom I brought out with your help — have corrupted themselves'. In fact, Francis explained, "the people did not have the patience to wait for God, to wait just 40 days; they even ended up saying: 'this God, let us make ourselves another'". Thus, "they made a [molten] calf" as their god, the Pope said; and "it was for their own entertainment, so as to not get bored", he explained. "They had forgotten about God, who had saved them", he stressed.

"The Prophet Baruch has a phrase which depicts these people very well: 'you forgot the One who brought you up'", the Pope continued, and it is this "forgetting about God who created us, who brought us up, who accompanied us in life: this is God's disappointment".

"Many times in the Gospel Jesus talks about that man who plants a vineyard and then fails because the workers want to take it for themselves", Francis continued. "In the heart of man, there is always this anxiety; He is not satisfied with God, with His faithful love". Indeed, "the heart of man is always inclined towards unfaithfulness. This is temptation", the Pontiff warned. For this reason, the Pope explained, "Through a prophet, God scolds these people who have no steadfastness, do not know how to wait, 'have corrupted themselves; they have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them'". "In fact, they made a calf out of molten metal, they bowed before it, made sacrifices and said: 'There is your God; they forgot the other'", the Pontiff explained.

Thus, God, "through His prophet, tells the heart of these people: 'you are always looking for another God'", Francis said. "When the Lord speaks, he speaks forcefully and says some harsh things to us", he stressed.

Here, then "is God's disappointment, the unfaithfulness of the people", the Pope explained. "We too are People of God and we know well how our heart is; and each day we must continue our journey in order to not slip slowly toward idols, toward fantasy, toward worldliness, toward unfaithfulness", he said.

"Today, it will do us good to think about the disappointed God: 'Tell me Lord, are you disappointed with me?'. In some things, yes, certainly", Pope Francis said. It is a good idea "to think about and ask this question", with the certainty that "He has a tender heart, the heart of a father; let us remember when Jesus saw Jerusalem and he cried over her: 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, ... how often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings', and you did not want it!". Francis explained that God is saying these words "to me, to you, to you ... to all of us". Thus we must ask: "Does God weep for me? Is God disappointed by me? Have I moved away from the Lord? — No! I go to Mass every Sunday, every day". And again, "How many idols do I have which I am unable to rid myself of and which enslave me?" In this way, we can recognize "that idolatry we have inside us", the reason that "God weeps for me".

In light of this examination of conscience, Pope Francis said, "let us think today about this disappointment of God, who made us out of love", while "we seek love, wellbeing, entertainment in other places and not in our love for him: we distance ourselves from this God who brought us up", Francis said. "This is a reflection for the Lenten period; it will do us good". It is an exercise, he explained, that we should do "every day, a small examination of conscience: 'Lord, you who have had many dreams about me, I know I have distanced myself, but tell me where, how to return. The surprise will be that He always waits for us, like the father of the prodigal son who, from far off, saw his son arrive, because he was waiting for him', Francis observed.

The Pope ended his reflection by suggesting a prayer to be recited "today and tomorrow, every day: 'Lord, may I not stray from you. Help me. May I be afraid of idols and thus serve you and be happy' because God wants all of us to be happy".

Monday, 3 April

Corruption and mercy

In the profoundly human crossroads between "innocence and sin, corruption and law", Jesus asks that we always look upon others with mercy, without passing judgement on their heart. Pope Francis offered this thought during morning Mass on Monday, 3 April.

"The Word of God that the Church offers for our meditation today", Francis

began, appears to be about two women caught in the act of adultery: one "a fictitious adultery, a pretense; the other true". He was referring to the story of Susanna recounted in the Book of Daniel (13:1-9, 15-17, 19-30, 33-62), and that of the adulteress narrated in the Gospel of John (8:1-11). A "profound" message comes across through these two women, as the two readings present "four people", and "four different situations". It is precisely "what the Church wants us to think about today, to see: innocence meets sin, corruption meets law". Indeed, the Pontiff continued, the day's liturgy offers "an encounter among these four things: innocence, sin, corruption and law".

The Pope began by describing the situation of an innocent woman: "Susanna, falsely accused by those two elder judges. She is forced to choose" between "faithfulness to God and to the law, or saving her life". Who knows, the Pontiff observed, "perhaps Susanna was a woman who had other sins, because we are all sinners". In fact "the only woman who has no sins is Our Lady; all others, all of us, have them". But "Susanna was a woman with minor sins; she was not an adulteress; she was



"Jesus and the adulteress", Rembrandt

faithful to her husband"; and this is "the innocence" presented by the liturgy. Then there is "sin: the other woman" — as told by John — "was caught in the act of sinning; she had truly sinned; she was an adulteress; she had been unfaithful to her husband". Then comes "corruption", which we find "in the judges in both cases, both with Susanna and with the other adulterous woman", because "in both cases the judges were corrupt". And lastly, there is "the law, the fullness of the law: Jesus".

Thus, in the day's liturgy, these four realities meet: "innocence, sin, corruption and law", namely, the "law in its fullness". It is certainly not the only Gospel case of "judges becoming corrupt": in Chapter 18 of Luke, "Jesus speaks about another man who neither fears God nor cares for anyone". Indeed, Francis observed, "there have always been corrupt judges in the world", and we find them "today too, in every part of the world". The question, he said, is "why" a person becomes corrupt.

In reality, the Pope explained, corruption is worse than sin, because I can sin, "I slip, I am unfaithful to God, but then I try to do no more, or I try to settle with the Lord, or

Easter reflection

Christ is Risen!

Msgr WILLIAM MILLEA *

We all love Easter, with its message of new life, which echoes our experience of the return of spring, and the joy of a world reborn, bringing with it new hope and promise. The Church's proclamation of Christ's resurrection resonates with our yearning to leave behind the bleakness of winter and to feel the thrill of nature all about us returning to life.

Perhaps there is a danger to this. We can end up fitting the Christ event into some supposedly larger scheme of things, where we see the resurrection as part of a natural cycle of death and rebirth, or as symbolic of the promise of new beginnings.

The Fathers of the Church, who lived in a religious culture steeped in myths of pagan gods dying and rising, were quite aware of this danger. So they made every effort to stress the fact of Christ's resurrection, its historical reality, as a completely unique event that liberated the world from the shadows of myth and opened the door to true freedom and everlasting life. If anything, they thought, the ancient myths were expressions of an innate human longing for a spiritual rebirth that could only come as a gift of God, and did, in the Passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

This is the message we hear Saint Peter proclaiming on the day of Pentecost, when he tells the crowds gathered in Jerusalem that God, in raising Jesus from the dead, has spoken his definitive word in human history. From this

point forward, life on this earth has been given new meaning; new horizons have opened up to our fallen race, the ancient burden of sin has given way to the promise of new life and freedom. We need but take God at his word, believe in the Gospel of Christ's death and resurrection, and receive the Holy Spirit for the forgiveness of our sins.

Easter is the greatest feast of the Christian year, but I suspect that, for most of us, it is not easy to grasp it in all its richness. All too often, I think, we tend to reduce it to a single event, a commemoration of that moment, hidden to human eyes, when Christ rose from the tomb. But the Church's liturgy reminds us that the resurrection is something that touches each of us, here and now, and gives meaning to our own personal history. For on the day of our baptism, each of us was given a share in the Lord's passover from death to life. Through the grace of the sacrament, we were born to new life in Christ and called to grow in that life daily, until it comes to full flower in eternity. Pope Francis, in his very concrete way, has suggested that each year we celebrate not only our birthday but also the day of our baptism.

We know that our growth in the new life of grace is not simply a matter of passing from glory to glory. It is marked by the shadow of the Cross, for while the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak. In the Risen Christ, we see the pledge of our ultimate victory over the power of sin and death. But we also see, in the wounds



The resurrection: descent into Hades

dwelt. Perhaps we, in our own time, have lost something of that larger, cosmic, perspective. Easter reminds us that the mystery of rebirth in Christ takes place not only in our own lives and in the life of the Church, but also in the growth of God's kingdom of holiness, justice and peace in this world.

To me, it is striking that the eastern Christian tradition depicts the resurrection not by showing Christ's body rising from the tomb, but rather his descent into hell. The Lord is shown, already victorious over death, lifting Adam and Eve out of their graves, taking them by the hand and bringing them forth from their long exile. On the ground beneath their feet, locks and bolts and keys are strewn, as a sign that the gates of hell have been burst asunder by the power of Jesus' new life. History, the long history of sin and death, has been reversed, and a new age has begun.

Those ancient icons, with their image of our Lord stretching out his hand to lift Adam and Eve from the grave, have something very real to say to us. For the Risen Lord also holds out his hand to us, and invites us to rise with him, today and every day of our lives. As sharers in his victory, and in the Spirit who raised him from the dead, he asks us to bring new life to this weary world and to help make it once again the garden of goodness it was created to be.

Christ is risen, and "the joy of the resurrection renews the whole world."

Happy Easter!

* Official at the Secretariat of State, Vatican City

VATICAN BULLETIN

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of Abuja (1989). He has served in parish ministry and as: teacher at the Minor Seminary in Afaha Obong; teacher at the Saints Simon and Jude Seminary, Kuje; rector of the Saints Simon and Jude Minor Seminary, Kuje; administrator of the Our Lady of Nigeria Pro-Cathedral, Garki; president of the Archdiocesan liturgical commission, Abuja; master of ceremonies in the Archdiocese of Abuja.

RELATIONS WITH STATES

The Holy Father appointed Archbishop James Patrick Green, titular Archbishop of Altino, as Apostolic Nuncio in Sweden and in Iceland. Until now he has been Apostolic Nuncio in Peru (6 Apr.).

The Holy Father appointed Archbishop Edward Joseph Adams, titular Archbishop of Scala, as Apostolic Nuncio in Great Britain. Until now he has been Apostolic Nuncio in Greece (8 Apr.).

SPECIAL ENVOY

The Holy Father has appointed Cardinal Manuel Clemente, Patri-

arch of Lisbon, as his Special Envoy at the First National Eucharistic Congress of Angola, to be held in Huambo from 12 to 18 June 2017 (8 Apr.).

START OF MISSION

On 14 February, Archbishop Luciano Russo, titular Archbishop of Monteverde, began his mission as Apostolic Nuncio in Tunisia with the presentation of his Letters of Credence to H.E. Mr Béji Caïd Essebsi, President of Tunisia.

LENTEN SERMON

On Friday morning, 7 April, in the presence of the Holy Father, Fr Raniero Cantalamessa, OFM Cap., Preacher of the Papal Household, delivered the Fourth and last Lenten Sermon in the Vatican's Redemptoris Mater Chapel.

NECROLOGY

Archbishop Clóvis Frainer, OFM Cap., Archbishop emeritus of Juiz de Fora, Brazil, at age 86 (4 Apr.).

that continue to mark the Lord's hands and feet, the eternal cost of that victory. We are reminded that conversion means allowing the Spirit of Christ to penetrate our own flesh, our own history, with all its wounds and flaws, its failings and its regrets, and, slowly but surely, to redeem it by the power of his grace.

In the ancient Apostles' Creed, we profess our faith in the resurrection of the body. The earliest Christians, perhaps more than ourselves, clearly perceived that the resurrection of Christ holds the promise of our future resurrection. It is a first step in the dawning of a world redeemed and transfigured: new heavens and a new earth, as Saint Peter says, where God's justice will

A Synod open to non-believers

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will make things happen because of their vision. So this is the task I am giving you in the name of the Church. *Talk to older people.* You may say: "But it's boring... They are always talking about the same things...". No! Listen to older people, talk to them, ask them questions. Make them dream, and from those dreams take what you need to move forward, so that you can have a vision and make that vision concrete. This is your mission today. This is the mission the Church gives you today.

Dear young friends, be courageous! You may say: "But Father, I have sinned, I fall so often!". I think of an Alpine song, a lovely song that mountaineers sing: "In the art of scaling a mountain, the important thing is not that you fall; it is that

you get up and keep going!". Have you fallen? Get up and keep moving. But think about the dreams your grandfather or grandmother had; make them talk about them, take those things and build the bridge to the future. This is the task and the mission the Church is giving you today.

Thank you so much for your courage and now... off to Panama! I don't know whether I will be there, but the Pope will be there! And the Pope in Panama will ask you this question: "Did you talk to older people? Did you take the dreams of the elderly and make them visions? Are you making them happen? This is your task. May the Lord bless you. Pray for me, and together let us prepare for the Synod and for Panama.

Thank you.

To the National Committee for Biosecurity, Biotechnologies and Life Sciences

Responsible decisions

"To make responsible decisions about which steps to take and which not to take": this was the recommendation the Holy Father made to members of Italy's National Committee for Biosecurity, Biotechnologies and Life Sciences, whom he received in audience in the Hall of Popes on Monday morning, 10 April. The following is a translation of the Pope's address which was given in Italian.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

I cordially welcome each of you and I thank the President, Professor Andrea Lenzi, for the courteous words with which he introduced our meeting. I would like, first of all, to express appreciation for the work done by the National Committee for Biosecurity, Biotechnologies and Life Sciences in the 25 years since its institution at the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. The themes and issues that your Committee addresses are of great importance for contemporary man, both as an individual and in the relational and social dimension, beginning with the family and extending to local, national and international communities, and to the care of creation.

As we read in the Book of Genesis, "The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it" (2:15). Cultivation, of which you are distinguished representatives in the field of Life Sciences and technologies, entails the idea of "tilling". It clearly expresses the effort to make grow, flower and bear fruit, through human ingenuity, what God placed in the world. However, we cannot forget that the biblical text also invites us to "keep" (safeguard) the garden of the world. As I wrote in the Encyclical *Laudato Si'*, while "tilling" refers to cultivating, ploughing or working the earth, "keeping" means caring for, protecting, overseeing and preserving it. This implies a relationship of mutual responsibility between human beings and nature" (cf. n. 67). Your task is not only that of promoting the harmonious and integral development of scientific research and technology regarding the biological processes of plant, animal and human life; you are also asked to foresee and prevent the negative con-

sequences which may result from a distorted use of knowledge and from the ability to manipulate life.

Scientists, like technologists, are called to "know" and to "know how to do", with increasing precision and creativity in their respective fields of competence, and at the same time, to make responsible decisions about which steps to take and which not to take so as to choose a different route. The *principle of responsibility* is an unavoidable cornerstone of the actions of man, who must answer – to himself, to others and ultimately to God – for his own actions and omissions. Technology, even more than science, places enormous and increasing power in the hands of mankind. The grave risk is that citizens and sometimes even those who represent and govern them, do not fully perceive the serious nature of the challenges that arise, the complexity of the problems to be solved, and the danger of misusing the power that the Life Sciences and technologies put in our hands (cf. Romano Guardini, *La fine dell'epoca moderna*, Brescia 1987, pp. 80-81).

When technological power and economic power become more tightly intertwined, interests can condition lifestyles and social orientations in the direction of profit for certain industrial and commercial groups, to the detriment of peoples and of the poorest nations. It is not easy to reach a harmonious balance between the different scientific, productive, ethical, social, economic and political demands

and to promote sustainable development that respects the "common home". Achieving such a harmonious balance calls for humility, courage and readiness to compare the different circumstances, in the certainty that the testimony of scientists to truth and the common good contributes to the maturation of civil conscience.

At the conclusion of this reflection, allow me to remind you that science and technology are made for mankind and for the world, not mankind and the world for science and technology. May they be at the service of a dignified and healthy life for all, in the present and in the future, and may they make our common home more liveable and supportive, better looked after and protected. Lastly, I encourage your Committee to launch and sustain the processes of consensus among scientists, technologists, business people and representatives of Institutions, and to identify strategies to raise public awareness regarding issues arising from developments in life sciences and biotechnologies.

May the Lord bless each of you, your families and your valuable work. I assure you that I will remember you in my prayers and I trust that you will do the same for me. Thank you!



Morning Mass at the Domus Sanctae Marthae

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at least I know it is not good". On the other hand, "corruption is when sin enters" repeatedly "your conscience and does not even leave you room for air; all becomes sin: this is corruption".

As for the corrupt, "they believe they are doing things well in this manner"; they believe they can act with impunity, Pope Francis explained. Moreover, "in the case of Susanna", the two elders "even confess their corruption" and "tell the truth: they were corrupted by the vices of lust". They say to Susanna: "Look, the garden doors are shut, no one sees us, and we are in love with you; so give your consent, and lie with us. If you refuse, we will testify against you that a young man was with you, and this was why you sent your maids away" (Dan 13:20). In other words, they say to her: "either you do this or we will bear false witness".

"It is not the first Bible case with false testimonies", Pope Francis said. "Let us think about Nabot, when Queen Jezebel gives all that false

testimony; let us think of Jesus, who is condemned to death through false witness; let us think about Saint Stephen".

However, the Pontiff warned, referring to John's Gospel passage, "the teachers of the law who bring this woman – scribes, Pharisees – are also corrupt, and they say to Jesus: 'Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. What do you say about her?' (Jn 8:4). Although the testimony against Susanna was false, in this case, Father explained, it was true. And while Susanna "was innocent, this one was a sinner". And in both cases, "they are judges". The elders with Susanna "had lost their minds, allowing lust to take possession of them", Francis explained. Meanwhile, they "had lost their minds, by allowing a very rigid interpretation of the law to grow within them, leaving no room for the Holy Spirit: corruption of lawfulness of legalism, against grace".

"And then there is the fourth person, Jesus: the fullness of the law", Francis continued. He appears "as

teacher of the law before these men who are teachers of the law: 'what do you say about her?', they ask him". The Lord responds to the "false judges who accused Susanna", through Daniel's words: "offspring of Canaan and not Judah, beauty has deceived you and lust has perverted your heart. This is how you have both been dealing with the daughters of Israel, and they were intimate with you through fear" (Dan 13:56). And again, "You old relic of wicked days, your sins have now come home, which you have committed in the past, pronouncing unjust judgements, condemning the innocent and letting the guilty go free" (Dan 13:52).

"This is the corruption of these judges", the Pontiff continued, referring to the passage from the Old Testament. To the other judges, however, "Jesus does not say much". Instead, he responds: "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her". He then turns to the sinner and says "Neither do I condemn you; go and do not sin again". This, the Pope explained, "is the fullness of the law;

not that of the scribes and Pharisees who had corrupted the mind by making many laws, many laws, without leaving room for mercy: Jesus is the fullness of the law, and Jesus, judges with mercy".

The Lord "lets an innocent woman go free through the prophet of the People", Francis said. Indeed, "to the corrupt judges", the Prophet's words are quite harsh: "you old relic of wicked days". He then says to "the judges corrupted by an evil attitude regarding the law: 'let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her'". Thus "Jesus, the completely innocent man, can say 'mother' to the innocent because his mother is the only innocent woman".

The Pope concluded by calling on the faithful to think of "this path, of the evil with which our vices judge people", because "we judge others in our hearts". Thus, we should ask ourselves, whether "we are corrupt, or not yet". We should look to "Jesus who always judges with mercy: Neither do I condemn you; go, and do not sin again".

From the joyful welcome Jesus received as he entered Jerusalem, to the suffering of his Passion, the Pope's homily in Saint Peter's Square on Palm Sunday, 9 April, offered a reflection on the two-fold, "bittersweet" nature of the day's celebration. Thus, "as we joyfully acclaim our King", Francis asked the faithful to also contemplate his suffering – not only in icons but in "our many brothers and sisters who today endure sufferings like his own". The following is the English text of the Pope's homily.

Today's celebration can be said to be bitter-sweet. It is joyful and sorrowful at the same time. We celebrate the Lord's entrance into Jerusalem to the cries of his disciples who acclaim him as king. Yet we also solemnly proclaim the Gospel account of his Passion. In this poignant contrast, our hearts experience in some small measure what Jesus himself must have felt in his own heart that day, as he rejoiced with his friends and wept over Jerusalem.

For thirty-two years now, the joyful aspect of this Sunday has been enriched by the enthusiasm of young people, thanks to the celebration of World Youth Day. This year, it is being celebrated at the diocesan level, but here in Saint Peter's Square, it will be marked by the deeply moving and evocative moment when the WYD cross is handed over from the young people of Kraków to those of Panama.

The Gospel we heard before the procession (cf. Mt 21:1-11) describes Jesus as he comes down from the Mount of Olives on the back of a colt that had never been ridden. It recounts the enthusiasm of the disciples who acclaim the Master with cries of joy, and we can picture in our minds the excitement of the children and young people of the city who joined in the excitement. Jesus himself sees in this joyful welcome an

Logo for the Holy Father's journey to Egypt



The logo for Pope Francis' Apostolic Journey to Egypt on 28-29 April contains three principal elements: Egypt, Pope Francis, and Peace. The motto of the visit, "Pope of Peace in Egypt of Peace", is written in both Arabic and English at the base of the logo. Egypt is represented by the Nile River – a symbol of life –, the pyramids and the Sphinx, which also highlight the country's long history of civilization. The Cross and Crescent Moon at the centre of the logo represent the coexistence among the various components of the Egyptian people. A white dove signifies peace, which is both the highest ideal to which every human being can aspire and the greeting of monotheistic religions. The dove is also represented as preceding Pope Francis, thus announcing the arrival of the Pope of Peace in Egypt, a country of peace.



On Palm Sunday the Holy Father recalls the celebration of WYD

Christ Crucified is present in all who suffer

inexorable force willed by God. To the scandalized Pharisees he responds: "I tell you that if these were silent, the stones would shout out" (Lk 19:40).

Yet Jesus who, in fulfilment of the Scriptures, enters the holy city in this way is no misguided purveyor of illusions, no new age prophet, no imposter. Rather, he is clearly a Messiah who comes in the guise of a servant, the servant of God and of man, and goes to his passion. He is the great "patient", who suffers all the pain of humanity.

So as we joyfully acclaim our King, let us also think of the sufferings that he will have to endure in this week. Let us think of the slanders and insults, the snares and betrayals, the abandonment to an unjust judgment, the blows, the lashes and the crown of thorns.... And lastly, let us think of the way of the cross leading to the crucifixion.

He had spoken clearly of this to his disciples: "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me" (Mt 16:24). Jesus never promised honour and success. The Gospels make this clear. He had always warned his friends that this was to be his path, and that the final victory would be achieved through the passion and the cross. All this holds true for us too. Let us ask for

the grace to follow Jesus faithfully, not in words but in deeds. Let us also ask for the patience to carry our own cross, not to refuse it or set it aside, but rather, in looking to him, to take it up and to carry it daily.

This Jesus, who accepts the hosannas of the crowd, knows full well that they will soon be followed by the cry: "Crucify him!". He does not ask us to contemplate him only in pictures and photographs, or in the videos that circulate on the internet. No. He is present in our many brothers and sisters who today endure sufferings like his own: they suffer from slave labour, from family tragedies; they suffer from diseases.... They suffer from wars and terrorism, from interests that are armed and ready to strike. Women and men who are created, violated in their dignity, discarded.... Jesus is in them, in each of them, and, with marred features and broken voice, he asks – he asks us – to be looked in the eye, to be acknowledged, to be loved.

It is not some other Jesus, but the same Jesus who entered Jerusalem amid the waving of palm branches. It is the same Jesus who was nailed to the cross and died between two criminals. We have no other Lord but him: Jesus, the humble King of justice, mercy and peace.

At Angelus the Pope prays for victims of attacks on Egypt's Coptic Community

For the conversion of terrorists

Before imparting his blessing on those present, the Pope introduced the Angelus prayer with these words:

At the conclusion of this celebration, I cordially greet all of you present here, especially those who have participated in the international meeting in view of the synodal assembly on young people, promoted by the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life in collaboration with the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops. This greeting is extended to all young people who today, gathered around their bishops, are celebrating World Youth Day in every diocese of the world. Begun by Saint John Paul II, it is another leg of the great pilgrimage which last year brought us together in Kraków and that summons us to Panama in January 2019.

In this regard, in a few moments, the Polish young people will deliver the World Youth Day Cross to the youth from Panama, each accompanied by their respective pastors and by civil authorities.

Let us implore the Lord that wherever it passes, the Cross, united to the icon of *Maria Salus Populi Romani*, may increase faith and hope, revealing the invincible love of Christ.

To Christ, who today enters into the Passion, and to the Blessed Virgin, let us entrust the victims of the terrorist attack which occurred last Friday in Stockholm, as well as the many who remain severely exhausted by war, the disgrace of the world. And let us pray for the victims of the attacks unfortunately carried out today, this morning, in a Coptic Church. To my dear brother, His Holiness Pope Tawadros II, to the Coptic Church, and to the entire dear Egyptian nation, I express my deepest condolences; I pray for the dead and the wounded, and am close to the families and to the entire community. May the Lord convert the hearts of people who sow terror, violence and death, and also the hearts of those who make and traffic weapons.