

L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO

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At the General Audience the Holy Father explains the nature of true love, freely given and received

God's love is unconditional

"The *first step* that God takes towards us is that of a love that anticipates and is unconditional". At the General Audience on Wednesday, 14 June, continuing his series of catecheses on Christian hope, the Holy Father emphasized that "God is the first to love", and he does so "because he himself is love". Pope Francis observed that the source of Christian hope is found in God's unconditional love, revealed for us in the coming of the Son and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

None of us can live without love, the Pope said, noting that happiness comes from the experience of knowing love, freely given and received. So much unhappiness in our world is born of the feeling of not being loved for our own sake. Faith teaches us that God loves us with an infinite love, not for any merit of our own, but out of his sheer goodness.

Like the merciful father in the parable of the prodigal son, even when we stray from him, God seeks us out, offers us forgiveness, and restores us to his embrace. In the words of Saint Paul: "*While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us*" (Rom 5:8), so that we might become beloved sons and daughters of our heavenly Father. Just as the unfailing love of a mother or father, God's love for us never fails.



Through the resurrection of Jesus and the grace of the Holy Spirit, we become sharers in God's own life of love; thus may we find in God's embrace the promise of new life and freedom.

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Pope Francis' Message for first World Day of the Poor

Do not be resigned to the scandal of poverty

At the conclusion of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, with the Apostolic Letter *Misericordia et misera*, Pope Francis instituted the annual World Day of the Poor. For the first such occasion, which will be celebrated on Sunday, 19 November 2017, the Pontiff's Message was published on Tuesday, 13 June. "If we want to help change history and promote real develop-

ment", the Message reads, "we need to hear the cry of the poor and commit ourselves to ending their marginalization". We must recognize that "their outstretched hand is also an invitation to step out of our certainties and comforts, and to acknowledge the value of poverty in itself".

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More room for the
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For the formation of
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For the good of the
People of God

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VATICAN BULLETIN



AUDIENCES

Tuesday, 6 June

Bishop César Daniel Fernández of Jujuy, Argentina

Thursday, 8 June

Cardinal Carlos Aguiar Retes, Archbishop of Tlalnepantla, Mexico

Presidency of the Episcopal Conference of Venezuela:

– Archbishop Diego Rafael Padrón Sánchez of Cumaná, President

– Bishop José Luis Azuaje Ayala of Barinas, First Vice President

– Bishop Mario del Valle Moronta Rodríguez of San Cristóbal de Venezuela, Second Vice President

– Bishop Victor Hugo Basabe of San Felipe, Secretary General

– Cardinal Jorge Liberato Urosa Savino, Archbishop of Caracas

– Cardinal Baltazar Enrique Porras Cardozo, Archbishop of Mérida

Delegation from the Diocese of Ahíara, Nigeria

Members of the Episcopal Conference of Panama, on a visit *ad limina Apostolorum*:

– Archbishop José Domingo Ulloa Mendieta, OSA, of Panama, with the Auxiliaries: Bishop Pablo Varela Server, titular Bishop of Macomades rusticiana; Bishop Uriah Ashley, titular Bishop of Agbia

– Bishop Rafael Valdivieso Miranda of Chitré

– Bishop Manuel Ochogavía Barahona, OSA, of Colón-Kuna Yala

– Cardinal José Luis Lacunza Maestrojuán, OSA, Bishop of David

– Bishop Edgardo Cedeño Muñoz, SVD, of Penonomé

– Bishop Audilio Aguilar Aguilar of Santiago de Veraguas

– Bishop Aníbal Saldaña Santamaría, OAR, Prelate of Bocas del Toro

– Bishop Pedro Joaquín Hernández Cantarero, CME, titular Bishop of Thabraca, Vicar Apostolic of Darién

Friday, 9 June

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

Saturday, 10 June

Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, Prefect of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches

CHANGES IN EPISCOPATE

The Holy Father appointed Fr Juárez Delorto Secco, Ist. del Prado, from the clergy of the Diocese of Cachoeiro de Itapemirim, as Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of São Sebastião do Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, assigning him the titular episcopal See of Vegesela in Numidia. Until now he has been parish priest of the Cathedral (7 June).

Bishop-elect Delorto Secco, 46, was born in Cachoeiro de Itapemirim, Espírito Santo State. Before entering the seminary, he practiced as a civil lawyer. He studied philosophy and theology and obtained a specialization in canon law. He was ordained a priest on 10 March 2001. He has served in parish ministry and as: diocesan coordinator of the vocational pastoral ministry; member of the Presbyteral Council and of the College of Consultors; chancellor of the Curia; vice rector of the Major Seminary; professor at the diocesan school; judge of the ecclesiastical tribunal in Vitória and regional coordinator of pastoral ministry.

The Holy Father appointed Fr Francisco Cota de Oliveira from the clergy of the Diocese of Divinópolis as Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Curitiba, Brazil, assigning him the titular episcopal See of Fiorentino. Until now he has been parish priest of Nossa Senhora do Pilar Parish in Pitangui (7 June).

Bishop-elect Costa de Oliveira, 47, was born in Onça do Pitangui, Brazil. He was ordained a priest on 1 August 1999. He has served in parish ministry and as: diocesan assessor for the youth pastoral ministry; teacher at the propaedeutic seminary and of the theology course for lay people; vicar forane; promoter of justice in the diocesan ecclesiastical

tribunal, and member of the diocesan financial board.

The Holy Father appointed Fr Amilton Manoel da Silva, CP, as Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Curitiba, Brazil, assigning him the titular episcopal See of Tsuruos. Until now he has been parish priest of São Paulo da Cruz Parish in São Paulo (7 June).

Bishop-elect Manoel da Silva, 54, was born in Osvaldo Cruz, São Paulo State. He studied philosophy and theology. He made his religious vows for the Congregation of the Passion of Jesus Christ (*Passionists*) on 18 January 1997 and was ordained a priest on 17 December 2000. Within his Congregation he has served as: formator of postulants; master of novices; coordinator of the spirituality team in the Province of Calvario, and then of the Passionist family throughout Brazil; coordinator of the formation team for various countries in America; member on the team of the General Council for Formation; provincial counsellor; and provincial superior of the Passionist Province of Calvario in São Paulo; assessor of the Conference of Religious of Brazil in the Region of

Paraná; preacher of spiritual exercises.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Pablo Lizama Riquelme of Antofagasta, Chile (8 June).

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Ignacio Francisco Ducasse Medina as Archbishop of Antofagasta. Until now he has been Bishop of Valdivia, Chile (8 June).

Archbishop Ducasse Medina, 60, was born in Santiago de Chile. He was ordained a priest on 24 March 1984. He was ordained a bishop on 13 July 2002, subsequent to his appointment as Bishop of Valdivia.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Philip Boyce, OCD, of Raphoe, Ireland (9 June).

The Holy Father appointed Fr Alexander Aloysius (Alan) McGuckian, SJ, as Bishop of Raphoe. Until now he has been director of the *Living Church Office* in the Diocese of Down and Connor (9 June).

Bishop-elect McGuckian, 64, was born in Ballymena in County Antrim. He entered the Society of Jesus on 21 October 1972, and obtained a degree in Spanish, in Latin, and in philosophy. He completed his theology studies in Toronto and was ordained a priest on 22 June 1984. He spent the third year of his novitiate in Tamil Nadu, India, and then took his final vows in Dublin on 15 February 1997. He has served in parish ministry and

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With Bishops of Panama on their visit 'ad limina Apostolorum'



On Thursday morning, 8 June, the Holy Father received in audience Bishops of Panama on their 'ad Limina' visit.

With the Presidency of the Episcopal Conference of Venezuela



On Thursday morning, 8 June, the Pope met members of the Presidency of the Episcopal Conference of Venezuela.

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At the General Audience the Holy Father explains the freely given nature of true love

God's love is unconditional

"The first step that God takes towards us is that of a love that anticipates and is unconditional". Pope Francis explained this concept to the faithful who gathered on Wednesday, 14 June, for the General Audience in Saint Peter's Square. Continuing his series of catecheses on Christian hope, the Pontiff emphasized that "God is the first to love", and he does so "because he himself is love". The following is a translation of the Holy Father's catechesis, which he delivered in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Good Morning!

Today we are holding the audience in two places, but we are connected by jumbo screens: the sick are in the Paul VI Hall so that they do not suffer the heat so much, and we are here. But we are still all together and we are connected by the Holy Spirit, who always creates unity. Let us greet those who are in the Hall!

None of us can live without love. And a bad form of slavery to which we can all fall victim is that of thinking that love must be earned. Perhaps a good part of contemporary man's anguish comes from this: believing that, if we are not strong, attractive and beautiful, no one will take care of us. Many people nowadays seek visibility only to fill an interior void, as though we were always in need of approval. However, can you imagine a world in which everyone is looking for ways to attract the attention of others, and in which no one is instead willing to *freely give love to another person*? Imagine a world like this: a world without freely given love! It appears to be a human world but in reality it is hellish. Much of mankind's narcissism conceals a feeling of loneliness and orphanhood. Behind many forms of behaviour that seem to be unexplainable there lies a question: is it possible that I do not deserve to be called by name, that is, to be loved? Because love always calls [us] by name....

When an adolescent is not loved or does not feel loved, this can lead to violence. Behind many forms of social hatred and "hooliganism", there is very often a heart which has not been given due recognition. There are no bad children just as there are no adolescents who are entirely evil, but *unhappy* people do exist. And what can make us feel *happy* if not the experience of giving and receiving love? The life of human beings is an exchange of *glances*: someone who, by looking at us, steals a first *smile*. Thus, we who smile freely at those who are locked up in sadness, open a way out for them: an exchange of glances, looking people in the eye will open the doors of hearts.

The *first step* that God takes towards us is that of a love that anticipates and is unconditional. God is the first to love. God does not love because there is something in us that engenders love. God loves us because he himself *is love*, and, by its very

nature, love tends to spread and give itself. God does not even condition his benevolence on our conversion. If anything, this is a consequence of God's love. Saint Paul expresses this perfectly: "God shows his love for us in that *while we were yet sinners* Christ died for us" (Rom 5:8). *While we were yet sinners*. An unconditional love. We were "distant", as was the prodigal son in the parable: "while he was yet at a distance, his father saw him and had compassion ..." (Lk 15:20). Out of love for us, God undertook an exodus from himself, to come and find us in this wasteland where it made no sense for him to pass. God loved us even when we were wrong.

Who among us loves in this way, if not a father or a mother? A mother continues to love her son even if he is in prison. I remember [seeing] many mothers queuing up to enter prison, in my previous diocese. And they were not ashamed. Their son was in jail, but he was *their* son. And they suffered many humiliations during searches before being allowed to enter but: "He is *my* son!" – "But, madam, your son is a delinquent!" – "He is *my* son!". Only this love from a mother or a father helps us to understand how God's love is. A mother does not ask for human justice to be rescinded, because each mistake demands atonement. But a mother never stops suffering for her own child. She loves the child even though a sinner. God does the same with us: *we are his beloved children!* But is it possible that God has some children whom he does not love? No. We are all God's beloved children. There is no curse on our life, but just a benevolent word from God, who drew us into life from nothing. The truth of everything is that *relationship of love* which links the Father to the Son through the Holy Spirit, a relationship into which we are welcomed thanks to grace. In him, in Jesus Christ, we were all wanted, loved, desired. There is Someone who has impressed within us a primordial beauty, which no sin, no bad choice can ever completely erase. In the eyes of God, we are



"The return of the Prodigal Son", Macha Chmakoff

always small fountains made to gush forth good water. Jesus says to the Samaritan woman: "the water that I shall give [you] will become in [you] a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (Jn 4:14).

What medicine is needed in order to change the heart of an unhappy person? What medicine can

change the heart of a person who is not happy? [they reply: "love!"] Louder! [they shout: "love!"] Good! Very good, well done everyone! And how do we make the person feel that we love them? We must first embrace them. Make them feel wanted, which is important, and they will stop being sad. *Love calls for love* in a stronger way than hatred calls for death. Jesus did not die and rise for himself, but for us, so that our sins might be forgiven. It is therefore the time of resurrection of all: time to raise the poor once again from their discouragement, in particular those who have been lying in the sepulchre for much longer than three days. A wind of liberation blows here on our faces. Here, the gift of hope is sprouting up. And the hope is that of God the Father who loves us as we are: he loves us all and always. Thank you!

SPECIAL GREETINGS

I greet the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today's Audience, particularly the groups from England, Sweden, Hong Kong, Pakistan, the Philippines, Korea, Thailand, Canada and the United States of America. Upon all of you, and your families, I invoke the joy and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Lastly, I address a special greeting to *young people*, to the *sick* and to *newlyweds*. Yesterday, in our Liturgy, we remembered Saint Anthony of Padua, "eminent preacher and Patron Saint of the poor and the suffering". Dear *young people*, imitate his exemplary Christian life; dear *sick people*, never tire of asking God the Father, through his intercession, for what you need; and you dear *newlyweds*, aim for knowledge of the Word of God, at his school.

Pope Francis sends condolences and responds to attacks in Tehran

The so-called Islamic State has claimed responsibility for two terrorist attacks carried out in Tehran on Wednesday, 7 June. The attacks at the parliament building and the mausoleum of Imam Khomeini left at least 17 people dead and some 50 injured. Iran's Intelligence Minister confirmed that the five attackers had left Iran to fight for ISIS in Mosul and Raqqa and returned to the country in August to establish a jihadist cell. The cell was originally uncovered by Iranian authorities but later managed to elude them. The terrorists were all Iranian nationals.

Pope Francis expressed his solidarity and condolences for the victims in a telegram signed by Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Parolin. The telegram reads: "The Holy Father Francis sends his heartfelt condolences to all those affected by the barbaric attack in Tehran, and laments this senseless and grave act of violence. In expressing his sorrow for the victims and their families, His Holiness commends the souls of the deceased to the mercy of the Almighty, and he assures the people of Iran of his prayers for peace".

Iran's President Hassan Rouhani renewed his government's commitment in the fight against jihadist extremism, warning that Iran is determined in its opposition to terrorism, extremism and violence, and will demonstrate this "with more unity and more strength".

Meanwhile, Iran's media has blamed Saudi Arabia for the attacks, suggesting that Saudi nationals were behind the planning and funding. Saudi Arabia has denied any involvement.



On Friday morning, 2 June, in the Paul VI Hall, Pope Francis met with over 5,000 middle school students who belong to the Christian educational initiative called the "Grail" or "The Knights". The following is the translation of the question and answer session which the Pope had with the children in Italian.

Marta: Dear Pope Francis, my name is Marta. In this period, I am very concerned by the fact that, being in eighth grade, I will no longer see most of my best friends next year and I am afraid of this jump from middle to high school. I am fine the way I am now, with my current friends. Why do I have to change everything? Why does it scare me so much to grow up? I cannot and do not want to imagine my life and everything that will happen to me without those friends whom I love. What should I do? How will I cope later on?

Thank you Marta. I will tell you this. Life is a continuous 'hello' and 'goodbye'. Many times, these are small things, but many times it is a 'goodbye' for years or forever. We grow by meeting and by bidding farewell to each other. If you do not learn to take your leave well, you will never learn how to meet new people. What you are talking about here, Marta, is a challenge. It is the challenge of life. It is true, your classmates will not be the same – maybe you will see them, you will talk..., but there are new classmates that you must meet and that is the challenge. And in life, we must get used to this path: leaving something behind and finding new things. And this is also a risk. There are people who are really afraid – you used the word afraid, "I am afraid" – of taking a step, who remain always still, too calm, without growing. When a boy or a girl, a man or a woman, says "enough" and – as the parish priest mentioned – becomes "comfortable on the couch", they do not grow. They close the horizon of life. And here I will use another word.... Do you see that wall: what is behind the wall? Can't you see what is behind the wall? Tell me, tell me, come to the microphone....

Marta: I don't know....

You don't know.... That is how it is when someone does not want to grow: they have a wall before them, they do not know what is there [on the other side]. But if you go out to the country – think – where there are no walls, what do you see?

Marta: I see everything....

Everything. You see the horizon. We must learn to look at life by looking at horizons, always more, always farther, always forward. And this means meeting new people, encountering new situations. Not forgetting about others, no! There are always beautiful memories and usually one meets old friends, one greets them.... But we always have to journey in order to grow. It is true that you used the word 'afraid': "I am afraid of growing up"; "I am afraid of moving forward..."; but instead, use the word "I have a challenge": "Do I overcome the challenge or do I let the challenge defeat me?". Do you understand? Look at the wall and think about what it's like in the countryside, along the horizon. And this is the choice you have to make. You cannot see behind the wall; you go further with the horizon; the more horizon there is, the more you move forward: the horizon never ends! And we have to grow along the horizon. I don't know if I have explained myself. And I said one word: 'remember' your past friends, all those whom you have to leave in order to take another path. Remember them, call them sometimes, meet up with them.... But live with the new ones and journey with the new ones. And that is how we grow. But you were good! Because you were unable to tell me what lies behind the wall and this is a very good thing, because you can't see behind the wall, and you were able to tell me that when you are in the country and you look to the horizon, you can see everything. Good girl! Let's go on!

Giulia: Dear Pope Francis, my name is Giulia and I would like to ask you what we young people can do concretely to change somewhat the world that surrounds us, with everything that is happening....

We can think about calling a fairy to come with a magic wand and change the world. Can we do this? How do we change the world? Is it possible to change the world? Answer all of you: is it possible?

Children: "Yes!".

Is it easy to change the world?

Children: "No!".

Is it difficult to change the world?

Children: "Yes!".

If it is difficult for grown ups, for people who have studied, for people who have the ability to govern countries, how much more difficult will it be for a young boy and a girl, right? It is difficult. But I would like to ask all of you a question: can you change the world?

Children: "Yes!".

You are not very sure, are you? Can you or can't you?

Children: "Yes!".

There, that's better. But how? With the things around you. For example, always, when I meet children – you are a bit bigger, but children – I ask this question: if you have two pieces of candy and a friend

To student members of the 'The Knights'

With an open hand

comes over, what do you do? Almost everyone says: "I give one to him and one to me". Some don't say this but think: "I will keep them both in my pocket and I will eat them later when he leaves". The first is a positive attitude: 'one for you, one for me'. The other is a selfish attitude, negative: all for me. Look at your hands. Each of you, look at your hands and do this gesture, [he gestures]. Positive gesture: how is the hand? Let us all do it together: *Take it, yes ... let us share.*

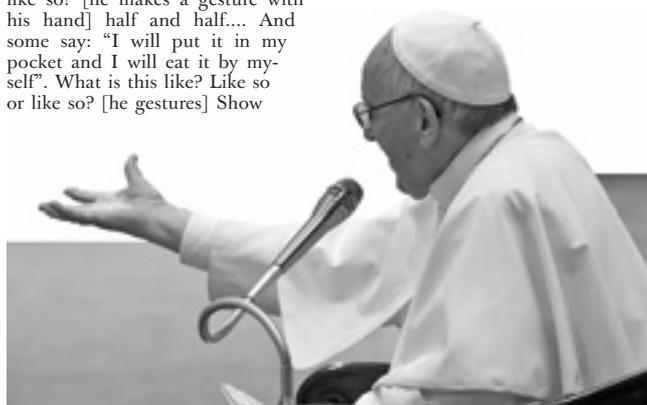
Negative attitude: How is the hand? Closed [he gestures]. Let us make the gesture. In order to change the world, do we need a closed hand?

Children: "No!".

Which one do we need? Show me.... There it is! Yes, we need the hand open. But the hand is a symbol for the heart. We cannot do this with the heart; it would be difficult.... But it is a symbol for the heart: an open heart. You can begin to change the world with an open heart. Next comes another question I ask children. And if you have only one piece of candy and a friend comes, what do you do? It is not easy! The majority answers: "half and half". And is this like so, or like so? [he makes a gesture with his hand] half and half.... And some say: "I will put it in my pocket and I will eat it by myself". What is this like? Like so or like so? [he gestures] Show

who make you suffer. Jesus says: "As our Father who is in heaven, make the sun shine on the good and the bad". Yes, pray for everyone. Pray for all and do not wish harm on others. This is how the world can be changed. There is no magic wand, but there are small everyday things that we must learn. And I have a proposal for you. Discuss this as a group for about half an hour. Small groups, when you are all gathered together. If they do this to me, what should I do? If I am faced with this choice, what should I do? Speak about which things are like so and which are like so [he gestures] with the heart. Thank you for your question.

Tanio: Dear Pope Francis, my name is Tanio. I was born in Bulgaria and when I was one month old, my parents left me in an orphanage. When I was five years old I was adopted by a new Italian family. After one year, however, my new mother died. I have lived with Dad and my grandparents until now. This year, my grandparents also died. The "Knights" are a gift, a great gift, for me: because they are close to me and they support me in every moment of my life. But this question comes to mind: how can you believe that the



me.... The world is changed by opening our hearts, listening to others, welcoming others, sharing things. And you can do the same. If you have an acquaintance, a friend, a classmate ... whom you do not like, who is a bit disagreeable – if you go to others to gossip about that person, what is this like: like this or like this? [he gestures] Good job. Instead, if you let it go – "well I don't like him but I will say nothing" – what is this like? Good job. You have understood. Changing the world with small every day things: with generosity, sharing, creating these attitudes of fraternity. If someone insults me and I insult him, what is this like? Instead, if someone insults me and I do not respond, what is this like? Do you understand? Never exchange harm for harm! [the children applaud]. Never. Do you hurt me? What did Jesus teach us about this? Listen: pray for everyone; pray for your friends and also pray for your enemies, for those

Lord loves you when he lets you lose people, or things happen that you would never want?

How can we understand that the Lord loves us when he lets you lose people or things that you would never want to lose? Let us think a little all together with our imagination about any children's hospital. How can we think that God loves those children and allows them to become sick, allows them to die, so often? Think about this question: why do children suffer? Why are there children in the world who suffer from hunger and in other parts of the world there is such great waste? Why? You know there are questions – like the one you asked – which cannot be answered with words. Tanio, you asked this question and there are no words to explain this. You will only find some explanation – not to the "perché" ["why"], but to the "para que" ["for

Francis asks for appreciation of women's role in dialogue and education

More room for the feminine presence

It is important to "make more room for a more incisive feminine presence". Pope Francis made this recommendation on Friday morning, 9 June, in an audience in the Consistory Hall with participants in the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. The Plenary had been in session since Wednesday, 7 June, to reflect on the theme of "The role of women in education towards universal fraternity". The following is a translation of the address the Holy Father delivered in Italian.

Dear Cardinals,
Dear Brother Bishops,
Brothers and Sisters,

I welcome you with joy and I thank Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran for the greeting he addressed to me, also on your behalf. We meet at the conclusion of your Plenary Assembly, during which you considered "The role of women in education towards universal fraternity". Certainly, very rich discussion is not lacking on this theme, which is of the utmost importance for mankind's journey toward fraternity and peace, a journey which is by no means predictable and linear, but is marked by difficulties and obstacles.

Unfortunately we see that today the figure of woman as an educator towards universal fraternity is obfuscated and often unappreciated, as a result of the many evils that afflict this world and which, in particular, strike women in their dignity and in their role. Women, and even children, are in fact among the most frequent victims of indiscriminate violence. There, where hatred and violence gain

the upper hand, [these evils] lacerate families and society, impeding women from carrying out, in communion of intent and of action with men, their mission as educators in a peaceful and effective manner.

Reflecting on the theme you have addressed, I would like to pause in particular on three aspects: *appreciating the role of women, educating towards fraternity, and dialoguing.*

1. *Appreciating the role of women.* In today's complex society, characterized by plurality and globalization, there is need for a greater appreciation of women's capacity for educating towards universal fraternity. When women have the opportunity to fully pass on their gifts to the entire community, the very manner by which society is understood and organized becomes positively transformed by it, managing to better reflect the substantial unity of the human family. Here lies the most valid premise for the consolidation of authentic fraternity. The growing presence of women in the social,



economic and political life at local, national and international levels, as well as the ecclesial, therefore, is a healthy process. Women have the full right to be actively included in all areas, and their right must be affirmed and protected, even through legal instruments wherever it may be necessary.

It is a matter of making more room for a more incisive feminine presence. There are many, many women who, in the roles they perform daily, with dedication and integrity, at times with heroic courage, have made and do make the most of their accomplishments, their valuable traits in the most varied, specific and specialized skills, joined with the real experience of being mothers and formators.

2. *Educating towards fraternity.* Women, as educators, have a particular vocation, making it possible for new forms of welcome and mutual esteem to be created and to grow. The female figure has always been at the centre of family education, not exclusively as mother. Women's contribution in the field of education is priceless. Education carries a wealth of implications for woman herself, for her way of being, and for her relationships, through the way she offers herself in regard to human life and to life in general.

Ultimately, all – men and women – are called to contribute to education towards universal fraternity which is then, in the final analysis, education for peace in the complementarity of diverse sensitivities and of proper roles. In this way women, intimately bound to the mystery of life, can do much to promote the spirit of fraternity, with their care for the preservation of life and with their conviction that love is the only power that can render the world livable for everyone.

Indeed, women are often the only ones who accompany others, especially those who are weakest in the family and in society, the victims of conflict and those who must face everyday challenges. Thanks to their contribution, education towards fraternity – through its inclusive and bond-producing nature – can overcome the throw-away culture.

3. *Dialoguing.* It is obvious that education for universal fraternity, which also means to say learning to build bonds of friendship and respect, is important in the field of interreligious dialogue. Women are engaged, often more than men, at the level of the "dialogue of life" in the interreligious sphere, and thus contribute to a better understanding of the challenges typical of a multicultural reality. But women are also able to fully integrate in exchanges at the level of religious experience, as well as in those at the theological level. Many women are well prepared to take on encounters of interreligious dialogue at the highest levels and not only on the Catholic side. This means that women's contribution must not be limited to "feminine" topics or to encounters only among women. Dialogue is a journey that men and women must undertake together. Today more than ever, it is necessary that women be present.

Women, possessing particular traits, can offer an important contribution to dialogue with their capacity to listen, to welcome and to open themselves generously to others.

I thank you all, Members, Consultants and Collaborators of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, because you perform a valuable service. I hope that you continue to weave the delicate fabric of dialogue with all who seek God and people of good will. I invoke upon you an abundance of the Lord's blessings and I ask you, please, to pray for me.

With an open hand

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

what purpose"] – in the love of those who love you and support you. It is not an explanation for why these things happen, but there are people who accompany you. I tell you sincerely, and you will understand this ... I ask myself in prayer: "why do children suffer?" I usually do so when I go to children's hospitals and then I leave. To tell you the truth, with my – I wouldn't say 'destroyed, but – deeply saddened heart, the Lord does not answer me. I just look to the Crucifix. If God allowed his Son to suffer so for us, there must be something there that makes some sense. However, dear Tanio, I cannot explain the meaning. You will find it later on in life or in the next life. But as for explanations, as one explains a mathematical theory or a historical question, neither I nor anyone can give you any. There are in life – understand this well! – there are some questions and situations which cannot be explained. One of them is the one you have experienced, about your suffering. But behind this, there is always God's love. "And how do you explain this?" It cannot be explained. I cannot explain it. And if someone says to you: "Come, come I will explain it to you", be skeptical. Only those who support you, accompany you and help you grow can make you feel

God's love. Thank you for having asked this question because it is important that you, boys and girls, at this age, begin to understand these things, because this will help you to grow well and to go forward.

Thank you Tanio.

And embracing some of the pain from the last question, let us turn to our Mom, to our Mom in Heaven, to Mother: She understands pain, as all mothers do, and let us pray together the consecration.

[Prayer of consecration]

Jesus, my Lord and King....

[Blessing]

And before we finish, in order to go forward in life, and to have a generous heart, how must the heart be? [Show me] with your hand....

Children: "Open!"

To go backwards ... to go backwards: how do we go backwards? With the heart how?

Children: "Closed!"

Closed; and another question: can all, all of life's situations be explained?

Children: "No!"

I did not understand.... I cannot hear....

Children: [louder] "No!"

That's it, onward!

Pope Francis' Message for the First World Day of the Poor

Do not be resigned to the scandal of poverty

The first 'World Day of the Poor' will be celebrated on 19 November, the 33rd Sunday of Ordinary Time. The Holy Father instituted the event last year, at the conclusion of the Jubilee of Mercy, with the Apostolic Letter 'Misericordia et misera'. The following is the English text of the Papal Message issued on Tuesday morning, 13 June, for the upcoming event.



LET US LOVE, NOT WITH WORDS
BUT WITH DEEDS

1. "Little children, let us not love in word or speech, but in deed and in truth" (1 Jn 3:18). These words of the Apostle John voice an imperative that no Christian may disregard. The seriousness with which the "beloved disciple" hands down Jesus' command to our own day is made even clearer by the contrast between the empty words so frequently on our lips and the concrete deeds against which we are called to measure ourselves. Love has no alibi. Whenever we set out to love as Jesus loved, we have to take the Lord as our example, especially when it comes to loving the poor. The Son of God's way of lov-

"If we want to help change history and promote real development, we need to hear the cry of the poor and commit ourselves to ending their marginalization"

ing is well-known, and John spells it out clearly. It stands on two pillars: God loved us first (cf. 1 Jn 4:10, 19), and he loved us by giving completely of himself, even to laying down his life (cf. 1 Jn 3:16).

Such love cannot go unanswered. Even though offered unconditionally, asking nothing in return, it so sets hearts on fire that all who experience it are led to love back, despite their limitations and sins. Yet this can only happen if we welcome God's grace, his merciful charity, as fully as possible into our hearts, so that our will and even our emotions are drawn to love both God and neighbour. In this way, the mercy that wells up – as it were – from the heart of the Trinity can shape our lives and bring forth compassion and works of mercy for the benefit of our brothers and sisters in need.

2. "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him" (Ps 34:6). The Church has always understood the importance of this cry. We possess an

outstanding testimony to this in the very first pages of the Acts of the Apostles, where Peter asks that seven men, "full of the Spirit and of wisdom" (6:3), be chosen for the ministry of caring for the poor. This is certainly one of the first signs of the entrance of the Christian community upon the world's stage: the service of the poor. The earliest community realized that being a disciple of Jesus meant demonstrating fraternity and solidarity, in obedience to the Master's proclamation that the poor are blessed and heirs to the Kingdom of heaven (cf. Mt 5:3).

"They sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had need" (Acts 2:45). In these words, we see clearly expressed the lively concern of the first Christians. The evangelist Luke, who more than any other speaks of mercy, does not exaggerate when he describes the practice of sharing in the early community. On the contrary, his words are addressed to believers in every generation, and thus also to us, in order to sustain our own witness and to encourage our care for those most in need. The same message is conveyed with similar conviction by the Apostle James. In his Letter, he spares no words: "Listen, my beloved brethren. Has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom that he has promised to those who love him? But you have dishonoured the poor man. Is it not the rich who oppress you, and drag you into court?... What does it profit, my brethren, if a man says he has faith but has not works? Can his faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and filled', without giving them the things needed for the body; what does it profit? So faith by itself, if it has not works, is dead" (2:5-6, 14-17).

3. Yet there have been times when Christians have not fully heeded this appeal, and have assumed a worldly way of thinking. Yet the Holy Spirit has not failed to call them to keep their gaze fixed on what is essential. He has raised up men and women who, in a variety of ways, have devoted their lives to the service of the poor. Over these two thousand years, how many pages of history have been written by Christians who, in utter simplicity and humility, and with generous and creative charity, have served their poorest brothers and sisters!

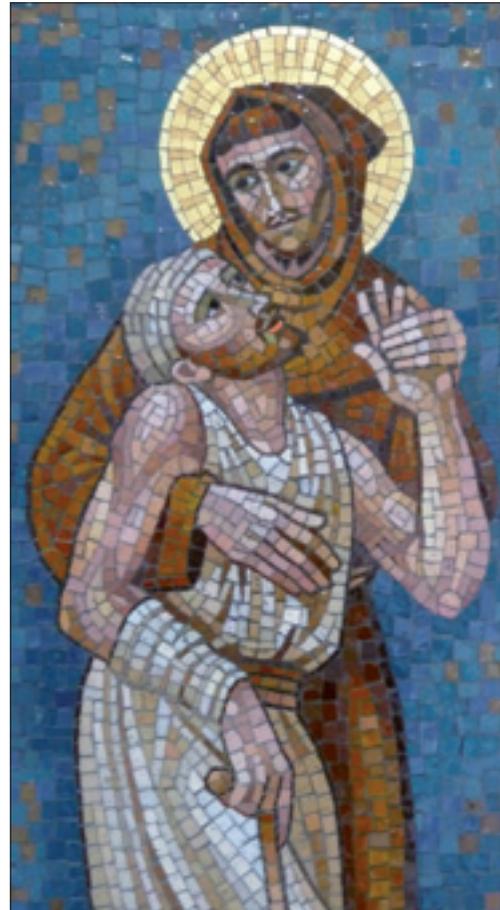
The most outstanding example is that of Francis of Assisi, followed by

many other holy men and women over the centuries. He was not satisfied to embrace lepers and give them alms, but chose to go to Gubbio to stay with them. He saw this meeting as the turning point of his conversion: "When I was in my sins, it seemed a thing too bitter to look on lepers, and the Lord himself led me among them and I showed them mercy. And when I left them, what had seemed bitter to me was changed into sweetness of mind and body" (Text 1-3; FF 110). This testimony shows the transformative power of charity and the Christian way of life.

We may think of the poor simply as the beneficiaries of our occasional volunteer work, or of impromptu acts of generosity that appease our conscience. However good and useful such acts may be for making us sensitive to people's needs and the injustices that are often their cause, they ought to lead to a true encounter with the poor and a sharing that becomes a way of life. Our prayer and our journey of discipleship and conversion find the confirmation of their evangelic authenticity in precisely such charity and sharing. This way of life gives rise to joy and peace of soul, because we touch with our own hands the flesh of Christ. If we truly wish to encounter Christ, we have to touch his body in the suffering bodies of the poor, as a response to the sacramental communion bestowed in the Eucharist. The Body of Christ, broken in the sacred liturgy, can be seen, through charity and sharing, in the faces and persons of the most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters. Saint John Chrysostom's admonition remains ever timely: "If you want to honour the body of Christ, do not scorn it when it is naked; do not honour the Eucharistic Christ with silk vestments, and then, leaving the church, neglect the other Christ suffering from cold and nakedness" (Hom. in Matthaeum, 50.3; PG 58).

We are called, then, to draw near to the poor, to encounter them, to meet their gaze, to embrace them, and to let them feel the warmth of love that breaks through their solitude. Their outstretched hand is also an invitation to step out of our certainties and comforts, and to acknowledge the value of poverty in itself.

4. Let us never forget that, for Christ's disciples, poverty is above all a call to follow Jesus in his own poverty. It means walking behind him and beside him, a journey that leads to the beatitude of the Kingdom of heaven (cf. Mt 5:3; Lk 6:20). Poverty means having a humble heart that accepts our creaturely limitations and sinfulness and thus enables us to overcome the temptation to feel omnipotent and immortal. Poverty is an interior attitude that avoids looking upon money, career and luxury as our goal in life and the condition for our happiness. Poverty instead creates the conditions for freely should-



"Saint Francis and the leper", Franciscans of the Eucharist of Chicago

dering our personal and social responsibilities, despite our limitations, with trust in God's closeness and the support of his grace. Poverty, understood in this way, is the yardstick that allows us to judge how best to use material goods and to build relationships that are neither selfish nor possessive (cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, Nos. 25-45).

Let us, then, take as our example Saint Francis and his witness of authentic poverty. Precisely because he

kept his gaze fixed on Christ, Francis was able to see and serve him in the poor. If we want to help change history and promote real development, we need to hear the cry of the poor and commit ourselves to ending their marginalization. At the same time, I ask the poor in our cities and our communities not to lose the sense of evangelical poverty that is part of their daily life.

5. We know how hard it is for our contemporary world to see poverty

clearly for what it is. Yet in myriad ways poverty challenges us daily, in faces marked by suffering, marginalization, oppression, violence, torture and imprisonment, war, deprivation of freedom and dignity, ignorance and illiteracy, medical emergencies and shortage of work, trafficking and slavery, exile, extreme poverty and forced migration. Poverty has the face of women, men and children exploited by base interests, crushed by the machinations of power and money. What a bitter and endless list we would have to compile were we to add the poverty born of social injustice, moral degeneration, the greed of a chosen few, and generalized indifference!

Often, in our own time, even as ostentatious wealth accumulates in the hands of the privileged few, often in connection with illegal activities and the appalling exploitation of human dignity, there is a scandalous growth of poverty in broad sectors of society throughout our world. Faced with this scenario, we cannot remain passive, much less resigned. There is a poverty that stifles the spirit of initiative of so many young people by keeping them from finding work. There is a poverty that dulls the sense of personal responsibility and leaves others to do the work while we go looking for favours. There is a poverty that poisons the wells of participation and allows little room for professionalism; in this way it demeans the merit of those who do work and are productive. To all these forms of poverty we must respond with a new vision of life and society.

All the poor – as Blessed Paul VI loved to say – belong to the Church by "evangelical right" (Address at the Opening of the Second Session of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, 29 September 1963), and require of us a fundamental option on their behalf.

Blessed, therefore, are the open hands that embrace the poor and help them: they are hands that bring hope. Blessed are the hands that reach beyond every barrier of culture, religion and nationality, and pour the balm of consolation over the wounds of humanity. Blessed are the open hands that ask nothing in exchange, with no "ifs" or "buts" or "maybes"; they are hands that call down God's blessing upon their brothers and sisters.

6. At the conclusion of the Jubilee of Mercy, I wanted to offer the Church a World Day of the Poor, so that throughout the world Christian communities can become an ever greater sign of Christ's charity for the least and those most in need. To the World Days instituted by my Prede-



cessors, which are already a tradition in the life of our communities, I wish to add this one, which adds to them an exquisitely evangelical fullness, that is, Jesus' preferential love for the poor.

I invite the whole Church, and men and women of good will everywhere, to turn their gaze on this day to all those who stretch out their hands and plead for our help and solidarity. They are our brothers and sisters, created and loved by the one Heavenly Father. This Day is meant, above all, to encourage believers to react against a culture of discard and waste, and to embrace the culture of encounter. At the same time, everyone, independent of religious affiliation, is invited to openness and sharing with the poor through concrete signs of solidarity and fraternity. God created the heavens and the earth for all; yet sadly some have erected barriers, walls and fences, betraying the original gift meant for all humanity, with none excluded.

7. It is my wish that, in the week preceding the World Day of the Poor, which falls this year on 19 November, the Thirty-third Sunday of Ordinary Time, Christian communities will make every effort to create moments of encounter and friendship, solidarity and concrete assistance. They can invite the poor and volunteers to take part together in the Eucharist on this Sunday, in such a way that there be an even more authentic celebration of the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Universal King, on the following Sunday. The kingship of Christ is most evident on Golgotha, when the Innocent One, nailed to the cross, poor, naked and stripped of everything, incarnates and reveals the fullness of God's love. Jesus' complete abandonment to the Father expresses his utter poverty and reveals

the power of the Love that awakens him to new life on the day of the Resurrection.

This Sunday, if there are poor people where we live who seek protection and assistance, let us draw close to them: it will be a favourable moment to encounter the God we seek. Following the teaching of Scripture (cf. Gen 18:3-5; Heb 13:2), let us welcome them as honoured guests at our table; they can be teachers who help us live the faith more consistently. With their trust and readiness to receive help, they show us in a quiet and often joyful way, how essential it is to live simply and to abandon ourselves to God's providence.

8. At the heart of all the many concrete initiatives carried out on this day should always be prayer. Let us not forget that the Our Father is the prayer of the poor. Our asking for bread expresses our entrustment to God for our basic needs in life. Everything that Jesus taught us in this prayer expresses and brings together the cry of all who suffer from life's uncertainties and the lack of what they need. When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray, he answered in the words with which the poor speak to our one Father, in whom all acknowledge themselves as brothers and sisters. The Our Father is a prayer said in the plural: the bread for which we ask is "ours", and that entails sharing, participation and joint responsibility. In this prayer, all of us recognize our need to overcome every form of selfishness, in order to enter into the joy of mutual acceptance.

9. I ask my brother Bishops, and all priests and deacons who by their

"It is my wish that, in the week preceding the World Day of the Poor, ... Christian communities will make every effort to create moments of encounter and friendship, solidarity and concrete assistance"

vocation have the mission of supporting the poor, together with all consecrated persons and all associations, movements and volunteers everywhere, to help make this World Day of the Poor a tradition that concretely contributes to evangelization in today's world.

This new World Day, therefore, should become a powerful appeal to our consciences as believers, allowing us to grow in the conviction that sharing with the poor enables us to understand the deepest truth of the Gospel. The poor are not a problem: they are a resource from which to draw as we strive to accept and practise in our lives the essence of the Gospel.

From the Vatican, 13 June 2017
Memorial of Saint Anthony of Padua



Prayer, journey and sharing

For the formation of young priests

"To pray tirelessly, to be always on the move and to share with the heart means to live the priestly life by gazing heavenward and thinking big": this is what Pope Francis told participants of the Plenary Assembly of the Congregation for the Clergy, whom he received in audience in the Consistory Hall on Thursday morning, 1 June. In particular, the Pontiff spoke of young priests "who experience the joy of the start of their ministry, and with it, also feel its burdens". The following is a translation of the Holy Father's address, which he delivered in Italian.

Your Eminences,
Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I extend my cordial greetings to all of you and I thank you for your generous commitment to the service of priests and to their formation. I offer my heartfelt thanks to Cardinal Beniamino Stella for his words and for the great deal of work he is doing.

I am pleased to be having a dialogue with you on the great gift of the ordained ministry, just months since the promulgation of the new *Ratio Fundamentalis*. This document speaks about an *integral formation*, meaning, capable of including all aspects of life; and thus it indicates the path of formation of the missionary disciple; an *alluring*, and at the same time, *demanding* path.

Reflecting on these two aspects – the allure of the call and the exacting commitments involved – I thought of *young priests* in particular, who experience joy at the beginning of their ministry, and with it, also feel its weight. A young priest's heart lives between enthusiasm for initial projects and anxiety over apostolic struggles, into which he immerses himself with a certain reverence, which is a sign of wisdom. He profoundly feels the jubilation and power of the anointing received, but his shoulders gradually become burdened with the weight of responsibility, the numerous pastoral commitments and the expectations of the People of God.

How does a young priest experience this? What does he carry in his heart? What does he need to keep his feet, which run to spread the Good News of the Gospel, from becoming paralyzed, when faced with fear and the first difficulties, to keep from following the temptation to take shelter in rigidity or to leave everything and become one of the "lost"?

One has to admit that young people are often judged in a somewhat superficial way and are too easily labeled as a "liquid" generation, lacking passion and ideals. Certainly, there are young people who are fragile, disoriented, fragmented or infected by the culture of consumerism and individualism. But this should not prevent us from recognizing that young people are capable of "firmly" putting their stakes on life and of generously taking up a challenge; of fixing their gaze on

the future and thus, of being an antidote with respect to the resignation and loss of hope that marks our society; of being creative and imaginative, courageous in changing, magnanimous when it comes to dedicating themselves to others or to ideals such as solidarity, justice and peace. With all of their limitations, they are still a resource.

We may ask ourselves then, in our presbyterate, how do we view young priests? Firstly, let us allow ourselves to be enlightened by the Word of God which shows us how the Lord calls young people, trusts them and sends them out on mission.

Whereas, *"the word of the Lord was rare in those days"* (1 Sam 3:1), because the people had become depraved and were no longer listening to the voice of the Lord, God turned to the boy Samuel, a small "altar server of the Temple" who would become prophet of the people (cf. 1 Sam 3:1-10). Then the gaze of the Lord, going beyond any



appearances, chose David, the youngest of Jesse's children, and anointed him King of Israel (cf. Sam 16:1-13). And to Jeremiah, who worried he was too young for the mission, the Lord offered his paternal reassurance: *"Do not say, 'I am only a youth... for I am with you'"* (Jer 1:7-8). We can also see that the Lord's choice falls to the little ones in the Gospels. And the mission entrusted to the disciples to proclaim the Gospel was not based on the greatness of human strength, but rather on the willingness to allow



oneself to be guided by the gift of the Spirit.

This is what I would like to say to young priests: you are chosen; you are dear to the Lord! God looks upon you with a father's tenderness and, after having caused your heart to fall in love, he will not allow your steps to falter. You are important in his eyes and he trusts that you will rise to the height of the mission to which he has called you. How important it is for young priests to find parish priests and bishops who encourage them in this perspective, not only because they are waiting for them because they need a replacement or to fill vacancies!

I would like to say two things on this, off the cuff. *Vacancies*: Do not fill these empty posts with people who were not called by the Lord; do not take men from anywhere. Carefully examine a young man's vocation, its authenticity, and whether he is in search of refuge or because he hears the Lord's call. To accept someone only because there is a need, dear bishops, is a lien on the Church! A lien. Secondly: Do not leave them on their own. *Closeness*: bishops, be close to priests; bishops, be close to priests. How many times have I heard complaints from priests.... I have said this many times – you may have heard it –: "I telephoned the bishop; he was not in and the secretary told me that he was not there; I asked for an appointment"; "He's all booked up for three months...". And that priest is left cut off from the bishop. But if you, bishop, know that the call list your secretary leaves you includes a call from a priest and you have a full agenda, that same day, in the evening or the next day – no longer than that – phone him back and tell him how things are, determine together whether it is urgent or not.... But the important thing is that that priest will feel he has a father, a father who is close by. Closeness. Closeness to priests. A diocese cannot be governed without closeness; one cannot help a priest to grow and be sanctified without the paternal closeness of the bishop.

I am always happy when I meet young priests because I see the youthfulness of the Church in them. Therefore, thinking about the new *Ratio* which speaks of the priest as a missionary disciple in permanent formation (cf. n. 3), I would like to

emphasize, above all for young priests, several important aspects: *to pray tirelessly, to be always on the move and to share with the heart.*

To pray tirelessly, because we can only be "fishers of men" if we first recognize that we were "caught" by the tenderness of the Lord. Our vocation began when, after giving up the terrain of our individualism and our own personal projects, we set forth on the "holy journey", consigning ourselves to that Love which sought us in the night and to that Voice which set our heart beating. Thus, like the fishermen of Galilee, we have left our nets to grasp those that the Teacher has given us. If we do not continue to remain closely bound to him, our fishing cannot be successful. Pray always, I implore you!

During the years of formation, the hours of our days were divided in such a way as to leave the time necessary for prayer. Later, it is not possible to have everything arranged in this way – life is another thing – everything is organized from the moment that one is immersed in the sometimes pressing rhythm of pastoral commitments. Nevertheless, the very things we acquired during the time at the Seminary – experiencing harmony amid prayer, work and rest – are a precious resource when facing the apostolic struggle. Each day, we need to stop, listen to the Word of God, and pause before the Tabernacle. "I try, but ... I fall asleep before the Tabernacle". Go ahead and fall asleep because it pleases the Lord; but stay there, before him. And also take care to listen to our body, which is a good doctor and warns us when fatigue has exceeded our limitations. Prayer, the relationship with God, and care of the spiritual life enliven the ministry, and the ministry, so to speak, gives shape to the spiritual life: because the priest sanctifies himself and others in the concrete exercise of the ministry, in particular by preaching and celebrating the Sacraments.

Secondly, *be always on the move*, because a priest never "arrives". He is always a disciple, a pilgrim on the way of the Gospel and of life, facing the threshold of the mystery of God and on the holy ground of the people entrusted to him. He will never feel satisfied nor be able to ex-

To a Delegation from the Nigerian Diocese of Ahiara

For the good of the People of God

Pope Francis received in audience on Thursday, 8 June, members of a Delegation from the Diocese of Ahiara, Nigeria, accompanied by: Cardinal John Onaiyekan, Archbishop of Abuja and Apostolic Administrator of Ahiara; Archbishop Anthony Obinna, Metropolitan Archbishop of Owerri; Archbishop Ignatius Kaigama of Jos, President of the Episcopal Conference of Nigeria; and Bishop Peter Okpaleke of Ahiara. Also in attendance were the Cardinal Secretary of State, and the Prefect and Superiors of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. Fr Clement O. Ebii, Fr Jude N. Uwalaka and Fr Uhuegbu Innocent Olekamma were part of the

Delegation, along with Sr Bernadette O. Ezeyi and Stanley Pius Iwu, traditional leader on behalf of religious and lay faithful. Following Francis' address and an expression of gratitude by Cardinal Onaiyekan, Cardinal Fernando Filoni, Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, requested that, at the conclusion of this sequence of events, the Diocese of Ahiara, with its Bishop, make a pilgrimage to Rome and meet the Holy Father, who granted the request. The following is the English text of the Pontiff's address.

I cordially greet the delegation and thank you for coming from Nigeria in a spirit of pilgrimage.

For me, this meeting is a consolation because I am deeply saddened by the events of the Church in Ahiara.

In fact, the Church (and excuse the wording) is like a widow for having prevented the Bishop from coming to the Diocese. Many times I have thought about the parable of the murderous tenants, of which the Gospel speaks (cf. Mt 21:33-44), that want to grasp the inheritance. In this current situation the Diocese of Ahiara is without the bridegroom, has lost her fertility and cannot bear fruit. Whoever was opposed to Bishop Okpaleke taking possession of the Diocese wants to destroy the Church. This is forbidden; perhaps he does not realize it, but the Church is suffering as well as the People of God within her. The Pope cannot be indifferent.

I know very well the events that have been dragging on for years and I am thankful for the attitude of great patience of the Bishop, indeed the holy patience demonstrated by him. I listened and reflected much, even about the possibility of suppressing the Diocese, but then I thought that the Church is a mother and cannot abandon her many children. I feel great sorrow for those priests who are being manipulated even from abroad and from outside the Diocese.

I think that, in this case, we are not dealing with tribalism, but with an attempted taking



of the vineyard of the Lord. The Church is a mother and whoever offends her commits a mortal sin, it's very serious. However, I decided not to suppress the Diocese. Instead, I wish to give some indications that are to be communicated to all: first of all it must be said that the Pope is deeply saddened. Therefore, I ask that every priest or ecclesiastic incardinated in the Diocese of Ahiara, whether he resides there or works elsewhere, even abroad, write a letter addressed to me in which he asks for forgiveness; all must write individually and personally. We all must share this common sorrow. In the letter

1. one must clearly manifest total obedience to the Pope, and

2. whoever writes must be willing to accept the Bishop whom the Pope sends and has appointed.

3. The letter must be sent within 30 days, from today to July 9th, 2017. Whoever does not do this will be *ipso facto* suspended *a divinis* and will lose his current office.

This seems very hard, but why must the Pope do this? Because the people of God are scandalized. Jesus reminds us that whoever causes scandal must suffer the consequences. Maybe someone has been manipulated without having full awareness of the wound inflicted upon the ecclesial communion.

To you brothers and sisters, I would like to express my sincere thanks for your presence; and also to Cardinal Onaiyekan for his patience and to Bishop Okpaleke, whose patience and humility I admire.

Thank you all.

For the formation of young priests

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

tinguish the healthy restlessness that leads him to extend his hands to the Lord, to allow himself to be formed and fulfilled. Therefore, always keep up to date and remain open to the surprises of God! In this openness to what is new, young priests can be creative in evangelization, making discerning use of the new means of communication, where they may encounter people's faces, stories and questions, developing social and interpersonal skills and a greater capacity to proclaim the faith.

Likewise, they can "network" with other priests and prevent the gnawing of self-centredness from hindering the regenerative experience of priestly communion. In fact, in every aspect of priestly life, it is important to progress in faith, love and pastoral charity, without becoming rigid in one's convictions or being stuck in one's own frame of mind.

And lastly, *share with the heart*, because priestly life is not a bureaucratic office nor a series of religious or liturgical procedures to fulfil. We have spoken at length of the "bureaucratic priest" who is a "state cleric" and not a pastor of the people. Being a priest is putting oneself on the line for the Lord and for brothers and sisters, bearing in one's very flesh the joys and the anguish of the people, spending time and lending an ear to heal the

wounds of others, and offering the Father's tenderness to everyone. Beginning with the memory of their personal experiences – when they were at the oratory, nurturing dreams and friendships enlivened by young love for the Lord –, new priests have the great opportunity to experience this sharing with young people and teens. It means being among them – here too, closeness – not only as a friend among others, but as one who, with the heart, knows how to share their life, listen to their questions and participate in a practical way in the various vicissitudes of their life. Young people do not need a professional of the sacred or a hero who answers their questions from above and from the outside. They are more attracted by those who know how to become sincerely involved in their life, supporting them with respect and listening to them with love. It means having a heart that is full of passion and compassion, above all, towards young people.

To pray tirelessly, to be always on the move and to share with the heart means to live the priestly life by gazing heavenward and thinking big. It is not an easy task, but we can put our trust completely in the Lord because he always precedes us on the journey! May Mary Most Holy, who prayed tirelessly, who walked behind her son and shared his life up to the foot of the Cross, guide us and intercede for us. Please, pray for me!

New website for Synod on youth

The General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops has announced the launch of a new website in preparation for the 15th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops which will be held in October 2018 on the theme: "Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment". The new site went online on 14 June at the following address: <http://youth.synod2018.va>.

Organizers say the initiative will permit greater interaction with young people across the globe, who are encouraged to turn to the site for information on the Synod events and to share their ideas and experiences. In particular, the site includes an online questionnaire on different themes and in various languages (English, Italian, French, Spanish and Portuguese) for young people, who are invited to submit their responses to the General Secretariat by 30 November 2017. The General Secretariat of the Synod says the submissions will be highly useful in the course of Synod preparations and will be part of the broader consultation underway on all levels among the faithful.

Tuesday, 23 May

The Church is not for the lukewarm

The Church ought not ever to be "lukewarm" and is called, as is every single Christian, to a journey of "daily conversion". It is important to be attentive and not to become comfortable within a "tranquil" or "worldly" state, but rather to be always open to "the joyful proclamation that Jesus is Lord". As an example, the Pope recalled Archbishop Óscar Amulfo Romero during Mass on Tuesday, 23 May, the second anniversary of the latter's beatification.

The Holy Father began his homily by returning to the day's first reading (Acts 16:22-34) and, while explaining that this was the final part of a broader discourse, he summarized the entire passage. It is a crucial moment in the preaching of Paul and Silas who, having arrived at the city of Philippi, found "a slave who was a soothsayer" and who, as a result, earned a lot of money for her masters. This woman, seeing that the two were "going to pray", began to cry out: "These are the ser-

vice household. And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their wounds, and he was baptized at once, with all his family. Then he brought them up into his house, and set food before them; and he rejoiced with all his household; they celebrated this grace". This, the Pope said, concluding the narrative, is "a beautiful story that makes us think".

From here he pointed out how, above all in the present incident, we meet with a type of "transition". It starts, in fact, from "a situation of calm preaching where Paul and Silas should have been pleased with the fact that this slave who had quite a lot of authority, this sorceress, this soothsayer, said that they were men of God". The fact is that that "was not in truth". And "Why?", the Holy Father asked. "Because Paul", the Pope responded, "moved by the Spirit, understood that that was not the Church of Christ, that that was not the way of conversion for that city, that everyone would remain calm, that there were no conversions. Yes, all accepted the doctrine: 'How lovely, how beautiful, we are all fine'".

This is explained by the fact that "the evil spirit prefers a calm Church without risks, a Church of business, a comfortable Church, comfortably tepid, lukewarm".

To better understand this reasoning, the Pope recalled two words found in the day's Scripture passage, one "at the beginning of the story" and one "at the end". If one reads carefully, in fact, one can see that "the masters of this woman, this slave, this sorceress, were angry because they had lost their ability to earn money". And so the first word: "money". In fact "the evil spirit always enters through the pocket" and, the Holy Father suggested, "when the Church is lukewarm, calm, all organized, when there are no problems, look immediately to where there is business".

There is then a second word that emerges towards the end of the passage: "joy". In fact we read that the jailer, after being baptized, "set food before them; and he rejoiced with all his household that he had believed in God". Thus, "the way of our daily conversion", Pope Francis said, is "to pass from a worldly way of life, calm, without risks, Catholic, yes, yes, but so lukewarm, to a state of life in the true proclamation of Jesus, to the joy of proclaiming Christ; to pass from a religiosity which looks too much at earnings, to [the way of] faith and to proclaiming: 'Jesus is Lord'". And this, Francis added, "is the miracle which the Holy Spirit works".

Therefore, the Pope suggested a re-reading of chapter 16 of the Acts of the Apostles so as to better understand "this journey" and also how "the Lord with his witnesses, with his martyrs, moved the Church forward". We must recognize that "a Church without martyrs creates doubt; a Church which does not risk creates doubt; a Church which is afraid to proclaim Jesus Christ and to cast out demons, idols, the other lord, which is money, is not the Church of Jesus".

Concluding his meditation, Francis recalled that, in the liturgy of the day, there was a prayer in which we thank "the Lord for the renewed youthfulness which Jesus gives us". Even the Church of Philippi, he said, "was renewed and became a young Church". We ought then to pray until "we all have this: a renewed youthfulness, a conversion from a lukewarm way of living to the joyful proclamation that Jesus is Lord".

Friday, 26 May

Topography of the Spirit

There are three "places of reference" in the life of every Christian: "Galilee", "heaven" and "the world". To these three places correspond certain "words" – "memory, prayer and mission" – which represent each person's journey. This is the "topography of the Spirit" outlined by Pope Francis during Mass at Santa Marta on Friday, 26 May.

Drawing inspiration from the day's readings, the Holy Father stressed that Jesus, in the 40 days that passed between the Resurrection and the Ascension, "remained with the disciples: teaching them, accompanying them, preparing them to receive the Holy Spirit ... giving them strength". And Scripture, Pope Francis said, points to "three places of reference in our Christian journey, three words which point to how our journey must be".

The Pope explained that the first place to consider is "Galilee". "The first Apostle, Mary Magdalene" was told: "Tell the disciples that they are to go into Galilee". Clarifying the point, Pope Francis described the place as one of "reference", full of significance for the disciples. It was in Galilee, in fact, that the Apostles "had their first encounter with Jesus; it was the place where Jesus encountered them, chose them, taught them from the beginning, invited them to follow him". A "place" that has meaning in the life of every Christian: "each one of us has his or her own

Mass at the Domus Sanctae Marthae



vants of God!". Apparently, the Pope noted, this was a type of "praise". But her words, repeated "for many days", brought about a certain consequence. We read in the Acts, in fact, that "Paul was annoyed". The Apostle, the Holy Father explained, "had the spirit of discernment and knew that this woman was possessed by an evil spirit", so "he turned to her" and "cast out the evil spirit". The immediate consequence was that "this woman, this slave, could no longer practice magic and her masters saw that their earnings had disappeared – they had been earning a lot – and so they seized Paul and Silas and took them to the rulers". A series of accusations began. And here, the day's passage indicates that "the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods. And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, charging the jailer to keep them safely. Having received this charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks".

At this point, however, the Pope said that "God intervened" and thus, at "about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them"; there was "a great earthquake ... and all the doors were opened". With this exceptional occurrence, the jailer, fearing that the prisoners had escaped, was about to kill himself because, according to "the law of the time", when prisoners escaped, the jailer was held responsible.

But "Paul cried with a loud voice: 'Do not harm yourself, for we are all here'. And that man did not understand: 'How can this have happened? That these delinquents, instead of taking the opportunity to escape, are still here?'. The jailer recognized that "something very strange" had occurred, "and that this was some sign from God; including the earthquake, the opened doors and also that not one of them had escaped". He rushed in "and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas and brought them outside and said: 'Men, what must I do to be saved?'. Evidently, Pope Francis noted, this was "a man whose heart was touched by the Spirit". The two men responded: "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, you and your

This situation, the Pope emphasized, "repeats" many times "in the history of salvation": in fact, "when the People of God were calm, or at the service of worldliness"; but when they served "worldliness and they were lukewarm", the Lord "sent prophets". Furthermore: "the same thing happened to the prophets as happened to Paul: they were persecuted, beaten. Why? Because they were causing trouble". This is exactly what Paul did, "the man of discernment", understood that the spirit possessed the sorceress, that "it was a spirit of tepidness, that it was making the Church lukewarm". And "thus, he understood the deceit and he cast out the evil spirit. And the truth came out".

This dynamic, the Holy Father said, occurs even today in the Church: "when someone denounces various mundane ways, he is regarded with a strange look; this man is strange, better to keep clear of him". And the Pope added: "I recall in my own country many, many men and women, fine consecrated people, not ideologues, but who would say: 'No, the Church of Jesus is like this...', and some people said of them: 'he's a communist, throw him out!'. And they would cast them out; they would persecute them. Just think of Blessed Romero". And this happened to "many, many people in the history of the Church, even here in Europe".



"Ascension of Jesus Christ", Gloria Ssali

Domus Sanctae Marthae

The second place in this ideal "topography of the Spirit" is "heaven". We see this, for example, in the passage which "recounts the Lord's Ascension": the Apostles, in fact, "had their eyes fixed upon heaven to such an extent that several angels came to them to say: 'But, why do you stand looking to heaven? He has gone. He is there. He will return, but he is there'".

Heaven, the Holy Father explained, is "where Jesus is now, but he is not separated from us; physically yes, but he is always joined to us to intercede for us". There, Jesus shows the Father "the wounds, the price he has paid for us, for our salvation". Therefore, Pope Francis added, "just as it was necessary to remember the first encounter with the grace of memory, we should also ask for the grace to contemplate heaven, the grace of prayer, the union with Jesus in prayer who, at this moment, is listening to us; he is with us". And just as he said to Paul, Jesus tells us: "Do not be afraid because I am with you". And so, heaven is "the second reference point in life".

Finally, the third point of reference, Francis observed, is the "world". Again, in the Gospel of the Ascension we read that Jesus says to his disciples: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations". From this we understand, said Pope Francis, that "a Christian's place is the world, in order to announce the word of Jesus, to say that we are saved, that he has come to give us grace, to bring all with him before the Father".

This is how the Pontiff illustrated the "topography of the Christian Spirit". He reiterated "three reference places of our life: memory

(Galilee); prayer, intercession (heaven); and mission, going into the world". And he added: "a Christian must move in these three dimensions and ask for the grace of memory" with a prayer "that I will not forget that moment when you chose me, that I will not forget those moments when we encountered each other". It is also necessary "to pray, to lift our gaze to heaven because he is there to intercede" for us. And, finally, "to go on mission". Which is not to say, the Holy Father made clear, "that everyone must go abroad; going on mission is living and giving testimony to the Gospel; it is making Jesus known to people". This, Pope Francis explained, we do "with witness and with the word, because if I say who Jesus is, how Christian life is, but I live as a pagan, that does not work. The mission is not effective".

Therefore, to summarize: the "Galilee of memory; the heaven of intercession and of prayer; and mission to the world". And, the Pope concluded, "if we live Christian life in this way, our life will be beautiful; it will also be joyful". One consequence that comes from the last phrase pronounced by Jesus in the day's Gospel (Jn 16:20-23): "That day, the day in which you will live Christian life thus, you will know all and 'no one can take away your joy'. These words are applicable to every Christian: "because I remember the encounter with Jesus; I have the certainty that Jesus is in heaven at this moment and intercedes for me, that he is with me; and I pray and I have the courage to speak, to go out from myself and tell others and bear witness through my life that the Lord is Risen, he is alive". Thus: "memory, prayer, mission".

Galilee", the Pope stressed. It is "the moment in which we encountered Jesus, he showed himself to us, we came to know him, and we had this joy, this enthusiasm to follow him". Each one of us, therefore, has his or her own unique Galilee different from that of everyone else: "I encountered the Lord in this way: in this family with my mum, grandmother, catechist..." whereas another person might recount: "I, instead, encountered the Lord in this way..."

In sum, Galilee represents for each one of us "the grace of memory", because "to be a good Christian it is always necessary to remember our first meeting with Jesus or our successive encounters" with him. This is what will give us "certainty", the Pope indicated, "in the moment of trial".

VATICAN BULLETIN

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as: prefect and teacher at Clongowes Wood College; director of vocations; director of the Jesuit Communications Centre in Dublin; superior of the Community of Jesuits of Leinster Road, Dublin; editor of the Irish language magazine "An Timire" and superior of the Jesuit Community in Belfast. In 2015 he became consulor of the Irish Province of the Society of Jesus.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Archbishop Alfredo Horacio Zecca from his office as Archbishop of Tucumán, Argentina, at the same time transferring him to the titular episcopal See of Bolsena (9 June).

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Charles C. Thompson as Archbishop of Indianapolis, USA. Until now he has been Bishop of Evansville, USA (13 June).

Archbishop Thompson, 56, was born in Louisville, USA. He was ordained a priest on 30 May 1987. He was ordained a bishop on 29 June 2011, subsequent to his appointment as Bishop of Evansville.

COLLEGE OF CARDINALS

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Cardinal Roger Etchegaray from his office as Vice Dean of the College of Cardinals and approved the election by the Cardinals of the Order of Bishops of the new Vice Dean of the aforementioned College, Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, of

the Title of the Suburbicarian Church of Sabina-Poggio Mirteto (10 June).

HOLY SEE — APSA

The Holy Father appointed as member of the Administration of the Patrimony of the Apostolic See (APSA) Cardinal Kevin Joseph Farrell, Prefect of the Dicastery for the Laity, the Family, and Life (10 June).

RELATIONS WITH STATES

The Holy Father appointed Archbishop Alessandro D'Errico, titular Archbishop of Carini, as Apostolic Nuncio in Malta. Until now he has been Apostolic Nuncio in Libya (10 June).

CARDINAL TAKES POSSESSION

On Sunday, 11 June, Cardinal Baltazar Enrique Porras Cardozo, Archbishop of Mérida, Venezuela took possession of the Title of Santi Giovanni Evangelista e Petronio in Rome.

On Sunday, 11 June, Cardinal Carlos Aguiar Retes, Archbishop of Tlalnequanta, Mexico, took possession of the Title of Santi Fabiano e Venanzio in Rome.

NECROLOGY

Bishop William Clifford Newman, Auxiliary emeritus of Baltimore, USA, and titular Bishop of Numluli, at age 88 (20 May)

Council of Cardinals

The Council of Cardinals met in the Vatican on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, 12-14 June. All members were present except for Cardinal Sean O'Malley of Boston. Pope Francis, who attended the meetings, was absent on Wednesday morning due to the General Audience.

Sessions took place in the mornings and afternoons and were dedicated to studying the ways in which the Roman Curia can better serve the local Churches, including the possibility of broader consultations with the participation of members of consecrated life and of the laity, regarding candidates for appointment as bishop. Other proposals included the possibility of transferring some authority from the Roman Dicastries to local Bishops or to Episcopal Conferences, in a spirit of healthy decentralization.

The Cardinals gave further consideration to various Dicastries of the Curia, in particular, the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. They studied and reread texts proposed for submission to the Holy Father regarding the Dicastries for: Interreligious Dialogue; the Oriental Churches; Legislative Texts; and three Tribunals: the Apostolic Penitentiary, the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signature, and the Tribunal of the Roman Rota. Prefects of the Secretariats for the Economy and for Communication, Cardinal George Pell and Msgr Dario Edoardo Viganò, respectively, presented reports on their Dicastries.

The next meeting of the Council is scheduled for 11-13 September 2017.

*"The Holy Trinity", Redemptoris
Mater Chapel, Vatican City*

"God always seeks us first, awaits us first, loves us first", Pope Francis recalled at the Angelus on Sunday, 11 June, as he spoke to the faithful in Saint Peter's Square about the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's reflection, which he offered in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Good morning!

The Bible readings for this Sunday, feast of the Most Holy Trinity, helps us to enter into the identity of God. The second reading presents the departing words that Saint Paul bids to the community of Corinth: "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you" (2 Cor 13:13). This – as we say – "blessing" of the Apostle is the fruit of his personal experience with God's love, that love which the Risen Christ revealed to him, which transformed his life and "impelled" him to take the Gospel to the peoples. Beginning from his experience of grace, Paul could exhort Christians with these words: "... rejoice. Mend your ways, encourage one another, agree with one another" (v. 11). The Christian community, even with all its human limitations, can become a reflection of the communion of the Trinity, of its kindness, of its beauty. But this – just as Paul himself testifies – necessarily passes through the experience of God's mercy, of his forgiveness.

It is what happens to the Hebrews in the Exodus journey. When the people break the covenant, God presents himself to Moses in the cloud in order to renew that pact, proclaiming his own name and its meaning. Thus he says: "the Lord, a merciful and gracious God, slow to anger and rich in kindness and fidelity" (Ex 34:6). This name implies that God is not distant and closed within himself, but is Life which seeks to be communicated, is openness, is Love which redeems man of his infidelity. God is "merciful", "gracious"



At the Angelus the Pope speaks of the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity

Sought and awaited by God

and "rich in charity" because he offers himself to us so as to fill the gap of our limitations and our shortcomings, to forgive our mistakes, to lead us back to the path of justice and truth. This revelation of God is fulfilled in the New Testament thanks to the Word of Christ and to his mission of salvation. Jesus made manifest the face of God, in substance One and in persons Triune; God is all and only Love, in a subsistent relationship that creates, redeems and sanctifies all: Father and Son and Holy Spirit.

Today's Gospel "sets the stage" for Nicodemus, who, while playing an important role in the religious and civil community of the time, has not ceased seeking God. He did not think: "I have arrived"; he did not cease seeking God; and now he has perceived the echo of His voice in Jesus. In the nighttime

dialogue with the Nazarene, Nicodemus finally understood that he had *already* been sought and awaited by God, that he was personally loved by Him. God always seeks us first, awaits us first, loves us first. He is like the flower of the almond tree; thus says the Prophet: "It blooms first" (cf. Jer 1:11-12). In fact Jesus speaks to him in this way: "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life" (Jn 3:16). What is this eternal life? It is the immeasurable and freely given love of the Father which Jesus gave on the Cross, offering his life for our salvation. And this love with the action of the Holy Spirit has shined a new light on the earth and into every human heart that welcomes him; a light that reveals the dark corners, the hardships that impede us from bearing the good fruits of charity and of mercy.

May the Virgin Mary help us to enter ever deeper, with our whole being, into the Trinitarian Communion, so as to live and witness to the love that gives meaning to our existence.

Cardinals take Possession



Santi Giovanni Evangelista e Petronio

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Santi Fabiano e Venanzio

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After the Angelus, the Holy Father continued:

Dear brothers and sisters, yesterday in La Spezia, Itala Mela was beatified. She was raised in a family far removed from the faith; in her youth she professed to be an atheist, but converted after an intense spiritual experience. She worked among Catholic university students; she then became a Benedictine Oblate and followed a mystic path centred on the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity, which we celebrate today in a special way. May the witness of the new Blessed encourage us, during our days, to turn our thought often to God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit who abides in the chamber of our heart.

I greet all of you, dear Roman people and pilgrims: parish groups, families, associations. In particular I greet the faithful who have come from Montpellier, from Corsica and from Malta; and from Italy, the faithful of Padua, Norbello and the young people of Sassuolo.

A special thought goes to the Bolivian community that lives in Rome and celebrates the *Virgen de Copacabana*.

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