

# L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO

WEEKLY EDITION  IN ENGLISH*Unicuique suum Non praevalent*

Fifty-first year, number 2 (2529)

Vatican City

Friday, 12 January 2018

## Reaffirm human rights to build peace

Pope Francis addresses members of the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See

It is important to re-establish the fundamental rights of every human person so as to build a new climate of peace and trust between nations. Pope Francis emphasized this in his address to members of the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See, whom he received on Monday, 8 January, for the traditional meeting at the start of the new year. The Holy Father welcomed the occasion as an opportunity to review the current international situation through the lens of the United Nations' *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, which the Pontiff recalled was adopted "in order to remove the barriers that divide the human family".

PAGES 6-9

Solemnity of the Epiphany

Take risks to find Jesus

PAGE 5

Feast of the Lord's Baptism

With the language of love

PAGE 12

At the General Audience

### A school of prayer



PAGE 3



Wounded man being carried after an airstrike in Syria (AP)

Video Message to Chile and Peru

### Together to experience God's closeness

In the Holy Father's video message to the people of Chile and Peru, the two South American nations he will be visiting from 15 to 21 January, he emphasized his wish to share peace and confirm hope as the key goals of his imminent Apostolic Journey. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's message, which he delivered in Spanish.

Dear Brothers and Sisters of Chile and Peru,

As my journey to these lands approaches, I greet you warmly. I come to you as a pilgrim of the joy of the Gospel, to share the "Lord's peace" with everyone and to "confirm you in a single hope". Peace and hope shared among all.

I wish to meet you, to look into your eyes, to see your faces and to be able to experience together God's closeness, his tenderness and the mercy which embraces and comforts us.



I know the history of your countries, forged with commitment and dedication. Together with you, I wish to give thanks to God for the faith and for our love for God and our neediest brothers and sisters, especially for the love you feel for those who are rejected by society. The throwaway culture has increasingly invaded us. I wish to take

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

### Framed by two anniversaries

GIOVANNI MARIA VIAN

The lengthy discourse that the Pope delivered to the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See at the start of 2018 was framed by two anniversaries: the centenary of the Great War, whose conclusion in 1918 "reconfigured the face of Europe and the entire world", and the half century since 1968 and its "social upheaval", which changed the global cultural landscape, introducing "a number of 'new rights'". And it was precisely on human rights, declared in 1948 by the General Assembly of the United Nations following the disaster of the Second World War, that Pope Bergoglio wished first and foremost to reflect, also recalling the principal crises in Asia, Venezuela, Africa and Ukraine.

In 1965, 20 years after the conclusion of that conflict, for the first time a Pope addressed the Assembly at the Tribunal of the United Nations, and he did so on behalf of "the dead as well as the living", Pope Montini had said then. Likewise, his Successor presently makes his own the voice of countless victims of what he has defined as "a third world war fought piecemeal", fulfilling its "role to appeal to the principles of humanity and fraternity" and recalling that for the Holy See, "to speak of human rights means above all to restate the centrality of the dignity of the human person, willed and created by God in his image and likeness". On this basis Pope Francis criticized the confusion that the introduction of "new rights" has caused. Indeed, if on the one hand these new rights have favoured an "ideological colonization by the stronger and the wealthier, to the detriment of the poorer and the most vulnerable", on the other hand they have provided the pretext for failing to respect the "fundamental rights" enunciated in the 1948 Declaration.

Thus, today, human rights are affected not only by war or violence because "in our day, there are more subtle means", said Pope Francis who, for the umpteenth time, clearly denounced such infringement: that carried out against "children discarded even

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

# VATICAN BULLETIN



## AUDIENCES

Thursday, 4 January

H.E. Mr Mario Juan Bosco Cayota Zappetini, Ambassador of Uruguay, for the presentation of his Letters of Credence

Archbishop Protase Rugambwa, Secretary of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples

Archbishop Riccardo Fontana, Bishop of Arezzo-Cortona-Sansepolcro, Italy

Friday, 5 January

H.E. Mr Antonio Raymond Andary, Ambassador of Lebanon, for the presentation of his Letters of Credence

Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, President of the Pontifical Academy for Life

Archbishop Giambattista Diquattro, titular Archbishop of Giru Mons, Apostolic Nuncio in India

## CHANGES IN EPISCOPATE

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Joaquín María López de Andújar y Cánovas del Castillo of Getafe, Spain (3 Jan.).

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Ginés Ramón García Beltrán as

Bishop of Getafe. Until now he has been Bishop of Guadix, Spain (3 Jan.).

Bishop García Beltrán, 56, was born in Lorca, Spain. He was ordained a priest on 20 September 1985. He was ordained a bishop on 27 February 2010, subsequent to his appointment as Bishop of Guadix.

The Holy Father appointed Msgr Dermot Pius Farrell, from the clergy of the Diocese of Meath, as Bishop of Ossory, Ireland. Until now he has served as parish priest of Dunboyne and as Vicar General of Meath (3 Jan.).

Bishop-elect Farrell, 63, was born in Castletown-Geoghegan, in the County of Westmeath, Ireland. He holds a licence in Sacred Theology and a doctorate in Dogmatic Theology. He was ordained a priest on 7 June 1980. After ordination he served as assistant priest of the Cathedral and then was sent to Rome, where he obtained his doctorate. Upon returning to Ireland, he began teaching moral theology at Saint Patrick College in Maynooth, of which he later became vice-president and then president.

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Francisco Canindé Palhano as Bishop of Petrolina, Brazil. Until now he

has been Bishop of Bonfim, Brazil (3 Jan.).

Bishop Canindé Palhano, 69, was born in São José de Mipibu, State of Rio Grande do Norte, Brazil. He was ordained a priest on 2 February 1975. He was ordained a bishop on 21 October 2006, subsequent to his appointment as Bishop of Bonfim.

The Holy Father appointed Archbishop Michel Aupetit of Paris, France, as Ordinary for Eastern Rite Catholics residing in France without their own Hierarchy (8 Jan.).

## NECROLOGY

Bishop Clément Fecteau, Bishop emeritus of Sainte-Anne-de-la-Pocatière, Canada, at age 84 (31 Dec. 2017)

Archbishop Serafino Sprovieri, Archbishop emeritus of Benevento, Italy, at age 87 (2 Jan. 2018)

Bishop Francis Adeodatus Micallef, OCD, titular Bishop of Tinisa in Proconsulari, Vicar Apostolic emeritus of Kuwait, at age 89 (3 Jan.)

Bishop Heriberto Hermes, OSB, Bishop-Prelate emeritus of the Territorial Prelature of Cristalândia, Brazil, at age 84 (3 Jan.)

Bishop Vincent Mojwok Nyiker, Bishop emeritus of Malakal, South Sudan, at age 84 (5 Jan.)

Bishop Emanuel Barbara, OFM Cap., of Malindi, Kenya, at age 68 (5 Jan.)

## Ambassador of the United States of America

H.E. Mrs Callista L. Gingrich, 51, is married. She earned a degree from Luther College in Decorah, Iowa.

Mrs Gingrich has held the following positions: chief clerk for the House Committee on Agriculture, Washington DC (from 2001 to 2007); President of the Gingrich Foundation, Arlington, Virginia (from 2005 to 2017); and President and CEO of Gingrich Productions Incorporated, Arlington, Virginia (from 2007 to the present).



On Friday, 22 December 2017, the Pope received in audience H.E. Mrs Callista L. Gingrich, Ambassador of the United States of America, for the presentation of the Letters by which she is accredited to the Holy See.

## In memoriam of Bishops Lucas Li Jingfeng and Matthew Yü Chengxin

*Bishop Lucas Li Jingfeng*

Bishop Lucas Li Jingfeng, Coadjutor of Fengxiang, Shaanxi Province [Xi'an] (Mainland China), died on 17 November 2017, after a serious illness. He was 96.

Li Jingfeng was born on 15 January 1921 in Tongyuanfang village in the district of Gaoling, Shaanxi. He was ordained a priest on 29 June 1947 and served in various roles in the diocese, including teacher in the diocesan seminary at which he served as rector and chancellor from 1956 to 1959.

He was arrested in 1959 for opposing the "Three-Self Patriotic Movement", and was sentenced to 20 years of forced labour. He was released in 1979, and was ordained a bishop on 25 April 1980 by Bishop Anthony Zhou Weidao, OFM, subsequent to his appointment as Coad-

jutor of Fengxiang. On 14 February 1983, following the death of Bishop Zhou, Li Jingfeng became Bishop of Fengxiang. In 2004, the government recognized him as the official Bishop of Fengxiang despite his non-membership in the Patriotic Association.

On 6 January 1996, he ordained Peter Zhang Zhiyong as Coadjutor Bishop of Fengxiang. Due to illness, Bishop Zhiyong retired in 2010 without succeeding Bishop Li Jingfeng. In October 2005, Li Jingfeng was among four Chinese Bishops invited by Benedict XVI to participate in the Synod of Bishops on the Eucharist. However, permission was denied by the Chinese government.

Bishop Li Jingfeng staunchly defended the doctrinal principles of the Catholic Church, opposing any unwelcome political interference in

ecclesiastical matters, while maintaining openness to dialogue and mediation. He is remembered with esteem and gratitude by priests and the faithful for his loyalty to the Successor of Peter, for demonstrating his fidelity even during difficult times, and for his untiring commitment to the local Church.

Bishop Li Jingfeng was succeeded by Coadjutor Bishop Peter Li Huiyuan, who was ordained by Bishop Li Jingfeng himself when he was already in his 90s. His funeral Mass was held in Tiefeng parish on 25 November 2017 and his mortal remains were buried on the same day in the Cathedral of Fengxiang. Today the Diocese of Fengxiang numbers some 23,000 faithful, about 40 priests, 20 Franciscan Friars Minor and about 100 religious sisters.

*Bishop Matthew Yü Chengxin*

Bishop Matthew Yü Chengxin, Coadjutor Bishop emeritus of Hanzhong, Shaanxi Province (Mainland China), died on 7 December 2017, following a long illness. He was 89.

Yü Chengxin was born on 28 February 1928 in the village of Yüjüwan, Hantai district, Shaanxi. His older brother Bartholomew Yü Chengti, who died in 2009, had been Bishop of Hanzhong and his only sister, Yü Yongjie, was also consecrated to religious life.

Yü Chengxin received his formation at the Minor Seminary of Hanzhong and the Seminary of Kaifeng, the latter of which was later closed by the "Three-Self Patriotic Movement". During the cultural revolution, he was kept under house arrest

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

## L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO

WEEKLY EDITION  IN ENGLISH  
Unicusque suum  Non praevalent

Vatican City  
cd.english@ossrom.va  
www.osservatoreromano.va

GIOVANNI MARIA VIAN  
Editor-in-Chief

Giuseppe Fiorentino  
Assistant Editor

Editorial office  
via del Pellegrino, 00120 Vatican City  
telephone +390669899300, fax +390669893675

TIPOGRAFIA VATICANA EDITRICE  
L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO  
don Sergio Pellini S.N.B.  
Director General  
Photo Service  
photo@ossrom.va www.photo.va  
Advertising Agency  
Il Sole 24 Ore S.p.A.  
System Comunicazione Pubblicitaria  
Via Monte Rosa 91, 20149 Milano  
segreteria@dirizionesystem@ilsole24ore.com

Subscription rates: Italy - Vatican: € 3.00; Europe: € 100.00 - US\$ 148.00 E 80.00; Latin America, Africa, Asia: € 100.00 - US\$ 160.00 - £ 88.00; Oceania, North America: € 160.00 - US\$ 240.00 - £ 130.00. Management Office: phone +390669899480; fax +390669885164; e-mail subscriptions@ossrom.va. *for India:* The weekly English Edition of L'Osservatore Romano is published and distributed in India by Camel International Publishing House, Cotton Hill, Tiruvandrum - 605 014, Kerala-India; phone: +914752723; fax: +914752819; 239224; e-mail: cip@india.ossrom.net; kooceam@camel-publications.com. *for North America:* L'Osservatore Romano (USPS 016-410) is published fifty times per year (weekly, except third week in August and last week in December) by Our Sunday Visitor, L'Osservatore Romano, English Edition, 200 Noll Plaza, Huntington, IN 46730. Periodicals Postage Pending at Huntington, IN, and additional mailing offices, USA - phone: 800-348-2440 ext7; fax: 866-891-7390 - e-mail: osssales@ossrom.com. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Our Sunday Visitor, 200 Noll Plaza, Huntington, IN 46730

At the General Audience recalling the importance of silence

## The liturgy is a school of prayer



*The Orant (3rd century, Catacomb of Priscilla)*

*“May the Liturgy become for all of us a true school of prayer”: with this hope the Pope concluded a reflection on the importance of the “Gloria” and of the collect prayer, at the General Audience on Wednesday, 10 January. As he continued his series of catecheses on the Mass, addressing the faithful present in the Paul VI Hall, the Pontiff also cautioned priests not to rush through the moments of silence during celebrations. The following is translation of the catechesis which the Holy Father offered in Italian.*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,  
Good Morning!

Over the course of the series of catecheses on the Eucharistic celebration, we have seen that the Penitential Act helps us to strip ourselves of our presumptions and to present ourselves to God as we truly are, conscious of being sinners, in the hope of being forgiven.

It is in the very encounter between human misery and divine mercy that the gratitude expressed in the “Gloria” comes alive; “a very ancient and venerable hymn in which the Church, gathered together in the Holy Spirit, glorifies and entreats God the Father and the Lamb” (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 53).

The beginning of this hymn – “Glory to God in the Highest” – recalls the song of the Angels at Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem: a joyful heralding of the embrace between heaven and earth. This song also engages us, gathered in prayer: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will”.

After the “Gloria” or in its absence, immediately following the Penitential Act, prayer takes on a particular form in the oration known as the “collect”, through which the very character of the celebration is expressed, with variations according to the days and time of the year (cf. *ibid.*, 54). With the invitation “let us pray”, the priest encourages the people to recollect themselves with him in a *brief silence*, so that they may be conscious that they are in God’s presence and so that all can formulate with their own heart the personal petitions with which they are participating in the Mass (cf. *ibid.*, 54). The priest says “let us pray” and then there is a brief silence, and each one thinks about the things they need, that they wish to ask for in the prayer.

The silence is not confined to the absence of words but rather to preparing oneself to listen to other voices: the one in our heart and, above all, the voice of the Holy Spirit.

In the Liturgy, the nature of sacred silence depends on the moment in which it takes place: “within the Act of Penitence and again after the invitation to pray, all recollect themselves; but at the conclusion of a reading or the homily, all meditate briefly on what they have heard; then after Communion, they praise and pray to God in their hearts” (*ibid.*, 45). Thus, before the opening prayer, silence helps us to recollect ourselves and to contemplate why we are there. This, then, is the importance of listening to our heart, so as to then open it to the Lord. Perhaps we have experienced days of toil, of joy, of pain, and we want to tell the Lord about it, to invoke his help, to ask that he be at our side; we may have relatives and friends who are ill or who are undergoing difficult trials; we may wish to entrust to God the future of the Church and the world. And this is the purpose of the brief silence before the priest; *collecting everyone’s petitions*, he expresses aloud to God, on behalf of all, the common prayer, which concludes the Introductory Rites by offering the “collect” of the individual petitions. I strongly recommend that priests observe this moment of silence and not rush: “Let us pray”, and let there be silence. I recommend this to priests. Without this silence, we run the risk of neglecting the collection of the soul.

The priest recites this plea, this collect prayer, with outstretched arms. It is the

prayerful manner practiced by Christians ever since the first centuries – as attested in numerous frescoes in the catacombs in Rome – to imitate Christ with his arms outstretched on the wood of the Cross. And there, Christ is both the One praying and also the Prayer! In the Crucifix, we recognize the Priest who offers God the worship He cherishes, namely, filial obedience.

Prayers in the Roman Rite are concise but rich in meaning. One can have beautiful meditations on these prayers. Very beautiful! Returning to meditate on these texts, even outside the Mass, can help us understand how to address God, what to ask and which words to use. May the Liturgy become for all of us a true school of prayer.

### SPECIAL GREETINGS

I greet all the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today’s Audience, particularly those from Norway, New Zealand and the United States of America. In a special way, I greet the numerous seminarians and university students present. Upon you and your families, I invoke the joy and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ. God bless you all!



Lastly, I offer a special greeting to *young people*, to the *sick* and to *newlyweds*. Dear *young people*, may you be bearers of Christ’s love among your peers; dear *sick people*, may you find support for your pain in the tenderness of God; and may you, dear *newlyweds*, be witnesses to the beauty of the Sacrament of Marriage through your faithful love.

## Ambassador of Lebanon



*On Friday morning, 5 January, the Holy Father received in audience H.E. Mr Antonio Raymond Andary, Ambassador of Lebanon, for the presentation of the Letters by which he is accredited to the Holy See.*

H.E. Mr *Antonio Raymond Andary*, 63, was born in Knaywer, Lebanon. He is married with three children. After attending primary and secondary school with the Carmelite Fathers in Tripoli, North Lebanon, he earned a degree in political science from the University of Texas, Edinburg Campus (1981), and subsequently obtained a master’s degree in international relations from American University, Washington (1985).

He has held the following positions: attaché at the embassy in Washington DC; member of the Executive Committee of the Maronite League; director of the Maronite League; director for Foreign Relations at the Maronite Foundation in the World; Ambassador to Argentina (since 2013). He has held numerous lectures on Lebanon, its culture and political system, and on Eastern Christians.

## The Pontiff speaks about the Penitential Act which introduces the Mass

# Sin separates us from God and from brothers and sisters

*Not only does sin separate us from God, but it "also divides us from our brothers and sisters". Pope Francis recalled this at the General Audience in the Paul VI Hall on Wednesday morning, 3 January. As he continued his series of catecheses on the Eucharistic celebration, the Pontiff spoke about the Penitential Act which introduces the Mass. The following is a translation of the catechesis which the Holy Father delivered in Italian.*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,  
Good morning!

Resuming the catecheses on the Eucharistic celebration, let us consider today, in the context of the Introductory Rites, the *Penitential Act*. In its sobriety, it favours the attitude with which we are prepared to worthily celebrate the holy mysteries, that is, by acknowledging our sins before God and our brothers and sisters, acknowledging that we are sinners. In fact the priest's invitation is addressed to the whole community in prayer, because we are all sinners. What can the Lord give to one whose heart is already filled with self-importance, with one's own success? Nothing, because a presumptuous person is incapable of receiving forgiveness, as he is satisfied by his presumed righteousness. Let us consider the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector, where only the latter – the tax collector – returns home justified, that is, forgiven (cf. Lk 18:9-14). One who is aware of his own wretchedness and lowers his gaze with humility feels God's merciful gaze set upon him. We know through experience that only one who is able to acknowledge his mistakes and apologize receives the understanding and forgiveness of others.

Quietly listening to the voice of our conscience allows us to recognize that our thoughts are far from divine thoughts, that our words and our actions are often worldly, guided, that is, by choices contradictory to the Gospel. Therefore, at the beginning of Mass, as a community, we perform the Penitential Act through a formula of *general confession*, recited in the *first person singular*. Each one confesses to God and to his brothers and sisters to having "greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do". Yes, even in omissions, that is, in having neglected to do the good I could have done. We often feel that we are good because – we say – "I did no harm to anyone". In reality, it is not enough to refrain from doing harm to our neighbour; we must choose to do good, by seizing opportunities to bear good witness that we are disciples of Jesus. It is good to emphasize that we confess to being sinners *both to God and to our brothers and sisters*: this helps us understand the dimension of sin which, while separating us from God, also divides us from our brothers and sisters, and vice versa. Sin severs: sin severs the relationship



Eduardo Kingman, "World without answers"

with God and it severs the relationship with brothers and sisters, relationships within the family, in society and in the community: sin always severs; it separates; it divides.

The words we say with our mouth are accompanied by the *gesture of striking our breast*, acknowledging that I have sinned through my own fault and not that of others. Indeed, it often happens that, out of fear or shame, we point a finger to blame others. It costs us to admit being at fault, but it does us good to confess it sincerely. Confess your own sins. I remember an anecdote that an elderly missionary used to tell, of a woman who went to confession and started speaking about her husband's failings. Then she moved on to talk about her mother-in-law's failings and then the sins of her neighbours. At a certain point, the confessor said to her: "But, madam, tell me: have you finished? – Very well: you have finished with the sins of others. Now start telling your own". Tell your own sins!

After the confession of sins, we ask the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Angels and Saints to pray to the Lord for us. In this too, the *communion of Saints* is valuable: that is, the intercession of these "companions and life examples" (cf. Preface of 1 November) supports us on the journey toward full communion with God, when sin will be abolished once and for all.

In addition to "I confess", the Penitential Act can be performed with other formulae, for example: "Have mercy upon us, O Lord, / for we have sinned against thee. / Show us thy mercy, O Lord, / and grant us thy salvation" (cf. Ps 123[122]:3; Jer 14:20; Ps 85:8). Especially on Sundays, the blessing and sprinkling of water may be performed as a reminder of Baptism (cf. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 51), which washes away all sins. It is also possible, as part of the Penitential Act, to sing the *Kyrie eleison*: with the ancient Greek expression, we

praise the Lord – *Kyrios* – and implore his mercy (*ibid.*, 52).

Sacred Scripture offers us luminous examples of "penitent" figures who, coming back into themselves after having committed sin, find the courage to take off the mask and open themselves to the grace that renews the heart. Let us think of King David and the words attributed to

him in the Psalm: "Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy steadfast love; according to thy abundant mercy blot out my iniquity" (cf. 51[50]:1-2). Let us consider the prodigal son who returns to the father: "God, be merciful to me a sinner" (Lk 18:13). Let us also think of Saint Peter, of Zacchaeus, of the Samaritan woman. Measuring ourselves with the fragility of the clay of which we are molded is an experience that strengthens us: as it makes us take account of our weakness, it opens our heart to invoke the divine mercy which transforms and converts. And this is what we do in the Penitential Act at the beginning of Mass.

### SPECIAL GREETINGS

I greet all the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today's Audience, particularly those from Korea, Canada and the United States of America. May each of you, and your families, cherish the joy of this Christmas season, and draw near in prayer to the Prince of Peace who has come to dwell among us. God bless you all!

I address a special thought to *young people, to the sick and to newlyweds*. In this New Year I invite you to welcome and share God's tenderness each day. Dear *young people*, may you be messengers of Christ's love among your peers; dear sick people, may you find in God's caress support in your suffering; and may you, dear newlyweds, be witnesses to the joy of the Sacrament of Marriage through your faithful and reciprocal love.

## Surprise party

### Pope Francis visits children's hospital

Pope Francis made a surprise visit to the Palidoro branch of Rome's Bambino Gesù Children's Hospital on Friday afternoon, 5 January, the eve of Epiphany, as part of his "Mercy Friday" visits, to the delight of the patients, their families and hospital staff. Accompanied by the hospital's president, Mariella Enoc, the Pope spent over two-and-a-half hours, visiting each of the rooms in the hospital's three departments, including the surgical and intensive care units.

As he made the rounds, the Pope inquired after the health of the 120 children who are currently patients at the hospital, and offered affectionate caresses, blessings, embraces and high fives. He shared words of comfort with the patients' parents, sharing in their pain and instilling in them hope and the strength to bear their own suffering as they witness that of their children.

"Children express themselves better with gestures than with words.... The drawings they make are gestures that come from their heart and many times they caress our souls", the Holy Father said. And indeed, several children improvised drawings for him when news of his unexpected visit had spread.

Hospital staff and volunteers were moved to tears as the Pope thanked them for their contribu-



tion and even paused to take some "selfies" with them.

Before leaving, Pope Francis donated Rosary beads and many toys for the children. He was given a small wooden sculpture of Saint Joseph made by a young man from Bangui, capital of the Central African Republic, where, at the Holy Father's request, Bambino Gesù is running a training programme for the medical staff of the local paediatric centre.

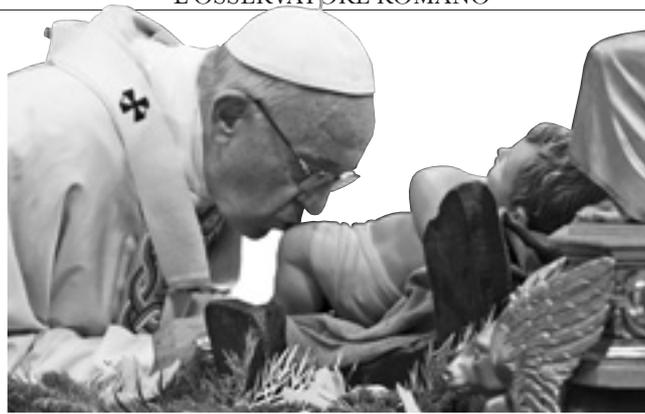
The Palidoro branch of Bambino Gesù was donated in 1978 by Pope Paul VI. Known as the "Pope's hospital", it is the largest paediatric hospital and research centre in Europe.

To find Jesus, "we have to overcome our fear of taking risks, our self-satisfaction and our indolent refusal to ask anything more of life": this was the lesson offered to humanity by the Magi and evoked by Pope Francis during Mass on Saturday, 6 January, Feast of the Epiphany of the Lord. The following is the English text of the Holy Father's homily.

Three actions of the Magi guide our journey towards the Lord, who today is revealed as light and salvation for all peoples. The Magi see the star; they set out and they bring gifts.

*Seeing the star.* This is where it starts. But why, we might ask, did the Magi alone see the star? Perhaps because few people raised their eyes to heaven. We often make do with looking at the ground: it's enough to have our health, a little money and a bit of entertainment. I wonder if we still know how to look up at the sky. Do we know how to dream, to long for God, to expect the newness he brings, or do we let ourselves be swept along by life, like dry branches before the wind? The Magi were not content with just getting by, with keeping afloat. They understood that to truly live, we need a lofty goal and we need to keep looking up.

Yet we can also ask why, among all those who looked up at the heavens, so many others did not follow that star, "his star" (Mt 2:2). Perhaps because the star was not eye-catching, did not shine any brighter than other stars. It was a star – so the Gospel tells us – that the Magi saw "at its rising" (vv. 2, 9). Jesus' star does not dazzle or overwhelm, but gently invites. We may ask ourselves what star we have chosen to follow in our lives. Some stars may be bright, but they do not point the



Mass for the Epiphany of the Lord

## To find Jesus we must take risks

way. So it is with success, money, career, honours and pleasures when these become our life. They are meteors: they blaze momentarily, but then quickly burn out and their brilliance fades. They are shooting stars that mislead rather than lead. The Lord's star, however, may not always overwhelm by its brightness, but it is always there, ever kindly: it takes you by the hand in life and accompanies you. It does not promise material reward, but ensures peace and grants, as it did to the Magi, "exceedingly great joy" (Mt 2:10). But it also tells us to set out.

*Setting out,* the second thing the Magi do, is essential if we are to find Jesus. His star demands a decision to take up the journey and to advance

tirelessly on our way. It demands that we free ourselves from useless burdens and unnecessary extras that only prove a hindrance, and accept unforeseen obstacles along the map of life. Jesus allows himself to be found by those who seek him, but to find him we need to get up and go, not sit around but take risks, not stand still, but set out. Jesus makes demands: he tells those who seek him to leave behind the armchair of worldly comforts and the reassuring warmth of hearth and home. Following Jesus is not a polite etiquette to be observed, but a journey to be undertaken. God, who set his people free in the exodus and called new peoples to follow his star, grants freedom and joy always and only in the course of a journey. In other words,

if we want to find Jesus, we have to overcome our fear of taking risks, our self-satisfaction and our indolent refusal to ask anything more of life. We need to take risks simply to meet a Child. Yet those risks are immensely worth the effort, since in finding that Child, in discovering his tenderness and love, we rediscover ourselves.

Setting out is not easy. The Gospel shows us this through a cast of characters. There is Herod, wild with fear that the birth of a king will threaten his power. So he organizes meetings and sends people out to gather information, yet he himself does not budge; he stays locked up in his palace. Even "all Jerusalem" (v. 3) is afraid: afraid of the new things God is bringing about. They want everything to remain as it was – that is the way it has always been – no one has the courage to leave. The temptation of the priests and scribes is more subtle: they know the exact place and tell it to Herod, quoting the ancient prophecy. They know, but they themselves make no move towards Bethlehem. Theirs can be the temptation of those who are used to being believers: they can talk at length about the faith they know so well, but will not take a *personal* risk for the Lord. They talk, but do not pray; they complain, but do no good. The Magi, on the other hand, talk little and journey much. Ignorant of the truths of faith, they are filled with longing and set out. So the Gospel tells us: They "came to worship him" (v. 2); "they set out; they went in, and fell down and worshiped him; they went back" (vv. 9, 11, 12). They kept moving.

*Bringing gifts.* Having come to Jesus after a long journey, the Magi do as he does: they bring gifts. Jesus is there to give his life; they offer him their own costly gifts: gold, incense and myrrh. The Gospel becomes real when the journey of life ends in giving. To give *freely*, for the Lord's sake, without expecting anything in return: this is the sure sign that we have found Jesus. For he says: "The gift you have received, give freely as a gift" (Mt 10:8). To do good without counting the cost, even when unasked, even when you gain nothing thereby, even if it is unpleasant. That is what God wants. He, who became small for our sake, asks us to offer something for the least of his brothers and sisters. Who are they? They are those who have nothing to give in return, the needy, the hungry, the stranger, the prisoner, the poor (cf. Mt 25:31-46). We give a gift pleasing to Jesus when we care for a sick person, spend time with a difficult person, help someone for the sake of helping, or forgive someone who has hurt us. These are gifts freely given, and they cannot be lacking in the lives of Christians. Jesus reminds us that if we only love those who love us, we do as the pagans do (cf. Mt 5:46-47). Today let us look at our hands, so often empty of love, and let us try to think of some free gift that we can give without expecting anything in return. That will please the Lord. And let us ask him: "Lord, let me rediscover the joy of giving".

Dear brothers and sisters, let us imitate the Magi: looking upwards, setting out, and freely offering our gifts.

## On a journey with the Magi

At the Angelus in Saint Peter's Square

The Magi "do not hesitate to set out on a journey" and "with great care, they attempt to locate where the newborn King can be found". This is the attitude which Pope Francis suggested to all Christians while speaking about the meaning of the Epiphany during the Angelus on Saturday morning, 6 January in Saint Peter's Square. The following is a translation of his reflection which he delivered in English.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Happy feast day!

Today, the Feast of the Epiphany of the Lord, the Gospel (cf. Mt 2:1-12) presents us with three attitudes with which Christ Jesus' coming and his manifestation to the world were welcomed. The first attitude: *searching, diligent searching*; the second: *indifference*; the third: *fear*.

*Diligent searching:* The Magi do not hesitate to set out on a journey to seek the Messiah. Arriving in Jerusalem, they ask: "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and

have come to worship him" (v. 2). They made a long journey and now with great care, they attempt to locate where the newborn King can be found. In Jerusalem, they turn to King Herod, who asks the high priests and the scribes to discover the place where the Messiah was to be born.

This diligent searching of the Magi contrasts with the second attitude: the *indifference* of the high priests and the scribes. These people are very complacent. They know the Scriptures and are able to give the correct answer on the birthplace: "in Bethlehem of Judea; for



Rogier van der Weyden, "The Vision of the Magi"

so it is written by the prophet" (v. 5); they know, but they do not go out of their way to visit the Messiah. And Bethlehem is a

few kilometres away, but they don't budge.

Even more negative is the third attitude, that of Herod: fear. He is afraid that that Child will take away his power. He summons the Magi and has them tell him when the star appeared to them and he sends them to Bethlehem saying: "Go and search diligently for the child and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him" (v. 8). In reality, Herod does not want to go to worship Jesus; Herod wants to know where the child is – not to adore Him – but to eliminate Him, because he considers Him a rival. And listen carefully: fear always leads to hypocrisy. Hypocrites are like this because their hearts are filled with fear.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

## Pope Francis to the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See

# Reaffirm human rights to build peace

It is essential to reaffirm the fundamental rights of every human being so as to build a new climate of peace and trust between nations. Pope Francis emphasized this to members of the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See, whom he received in the Sala Regia on Monday morning, 8 January, for the traditional meeting at the beginning of the year. The following is the English text of the Pontiff's address.

Your Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our meeting today is a welcome tradition that allows me, in the enduring joy of the Christmas season, to offer you my personal best wishes for the New Year just begun, and to express my closeness and affection to the peoples you represent. I thank the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, His Excellency Armando Fernandes do Espírito Santo Vieira, Ambassador

mission and the work of the Catholic Church in your respective countries. This is also the context for the Holy See's pactional activities, which last year saw the signing, in February, of the Framework Agreement with the Republic of the Congo, and, in August, of the Agreement between the Secretariat of State and the Government of the Russian Federation enabling the holders of diplomatic passports to travel without a visa.

In its relations with civil authorities, the Holy See seeks only to promote the spiritual and material wellbeing of the human person and to pursue the common good. The Apostolic Journeys that I made during the course of the past year to Egypt, Portugal, Colombia, Myanmar and Bangladesh were expressions of this concern.

I travelled as a pilgrim to Portugal on the centenary of the apparitions of Our Lady of Fatima, to celebrate the canonization of the shepherd children Jacinta and Francisco Marto.

There I witnessed the enthusiastic and joyful faith that the Virgin Mary roused in the many pilgrims assembled for the occasion. In Egypt, Myanmar and Bangladesh too, I was able to meet the local Christian communities that, though small in number, are appreciated for their contribution to development and fraternal coexistence in those countries. Naturally, I also had meetings with representatives of other religions, as a sign that our differences are not an obstacle to dialogue, but rather a vital source of encouragement in our common desire to know the truth and to practise justice. Finally, in Colombia I wished to bless the efforts and the courage of that beloved people, marked by a lively desire for peace after more than half a century of internal conflict.

Dear Ambassadors,

This year marks the centenary of the end of the First World War, a conflict that reconfigured the face of Europe and the entire world with the emergence of new states in place of ancient empires. From the ashes of the Great War, we can learn two lessons that, sad to say, humanity did

not immediately grasp, leading within the space of twenty years to a new and even more devastating conflict. The first lesson is that victory never means humiliating a defeated foe. Peace is not built by vaunting the power of the victor over the vanquished. Future acts of aggression are not deterred by the law of fear, but rather by the power of calm reason that encourages dialogue and mutual understanding as a means of resolving differences.<sup>1</sup> This leads to a second lesson: peace is consolidated when nations can discuss matters on equal terms. This was grasped a hundred years ago – on this very date – by the then President of the United States, Woodrow Wilson, who proposed the establishment of a general league of nations with the aim of promoting, for all states, great and small alike, mutual guarantees of independence and territorial integrity. This laid the theoretical basis for that multilateral diplomacy, which has gradually acquired over time an increased role and influence in the international community as a whole.

Relations between nations, like all human relationships, "must likewise be harmonized in accordance with the dictates of truth, justice, willing cooperation, and freedom".<sup>2</sup> This entails "the principle that all states are by nature equal in dignity"<sup>3</sup> as well as the acknowledgement of one another's rights and the fulfilment of their respective duties.<sup>4</sup> The basic premise of this approach is the recognition of the dignity of the human person, since disregard and contempt for that dignity resulted in barbarous acts that have outraged the conscience of mankind.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, as the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* affirms, "recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world".<sup>6</sup>

I would like to devote our meeting today to this important document, seventy years after its adoption on 10 December 1948 by the General Assembly of the United Nations. For the Holy See, to speak of human rights means above all to restate the centrality of the human person, willed and created by God in his image and likeness. The Lord Jesus himself, by healing the leper, restoring sight to the blind man, speaking with the publican, saving the life of the woman caught in adultery and demanding that the injured wayfarer be cared for, makes us understand that every human being, independent of his or her physical, spiritual or social condition, is worthy of respect and consideration. From a Christian perspective, there is a significant relation between the Gospel message

and the recognition of human rights in the spirit of those who drafted the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

Those rights are premised on the nature objectively shared by the human race. They were proclaimed in order to remove the barriers that divide the human family and to favour what the Church's social doctrine calls *integral human development*, since it entails fostering "the development of each man and of the whole man... and humanity as a whole".<sup>7</sup> A reductive vision of the human person, on the other hand, opens the way to the growth of injustice, social inequality and corruption.

It should be noted, however, that over the years, particularly in the wake of the social upheaval of the 1960's, the interpretation of some rights has progressively changed, with the inclusion of a number of "new rights" that not infrequently conflict with one another. This has not always helped the promotion of friendly relations between nations,<sup>8</sup> since debatable notions of human rights have been advanced that are at odds with the culture of many countries; the latter feel that they are not respected in their social and cultural traditions, and instead neglected with regard to the real needs they have to face. Somewhat paradoxically, there is a risk that, in the very name of human rights, we will see the rise of modern forms of *ideological colonization* by the stronger and the wealthier, to the detriment of the poorer and the most vulnerable. At the same time, it should be recalled that the traditions of individual peoples can-

not be invoked as a pretext for disregarding the due respect for the fundamental rights proclaimed by the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

At a distance of seventy years, it is painful to see how many fundamental rights continue to be violated today. First among all of these is the right of every human person to life, liberty and personal security.<sup>9</sup> It is not only war or violence that infringes these rights. In our day, there are more subtle means: I think primarily of innocent children discarded even before they are born, unwanted at times simply because they are ill or malformed, or as a result of the selfishness of adults. I think of the elderly, who are often cast aside, especially when infirm and viewed as a burden. I think of women who repeatedly suffer from violence and oppression, even within their own families. I think too of the victims of human trafficking, which violates the prohibition of every form of slavery. How many persons, especially those fleeing from poverty and war, have fallen prey to such commerce perpetrated by unscrupulous individuals?

Defending the right to life and physical integrity also means safeguarding the right to health on the part of individuals and their families. Today this right has assumed implications beyond the original intentions of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, which sought to affirm the right of every individual to receive medical care and necessary social services.<sup>10</sup> In this regard, it is my hope that efforts will be made within the appropriate international forums



to facilitate, in the first place, ready access to medical care and treatment on the part of all. It is important to join forces in order to implement policies that ensure, at affordable costs, the provision of medicines essential for the survival of those in need, without neglecting the area of research and the development of treatments that, albeit not financially profitable, are essential for saving human lives.

Defending the right to life also entails actively striving for peace, universally recognized as one of the supreme values to be sought and defended. Yet serious local conflicts continue to flare up in various parts of the world. The collective efforts of the international community, the humanitarian activities of international organizations and the constant pleas for peace rising from lands rent by violence seem to be less and less effective in the face of war's perverse logic. This scenario cannot be allowed to diminish our desire and our efforts for peace. For without peace, integral human development becomes unattainable.

Integral disarmament and integral development are intertwined. Indeed, the quest for peace as a precondition

for development requires battling injustice and eliminating, in a non-violent way, the causes of discord that lead to wars. The proliferation of weapons clearly aggravates situations of conflict and entails enormous human and material costs that undermine development and the search for lasting peace. The historic result achieved last year with the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons at the conclusion of the United Nations Conference for negotiating a legally binding instrument to ban nuclear arms, shows how lively the desire for peace continues to be. The promotion of a culture of peace for integral development calls for unremitting efforts in favour of disarmament and the reduction of recourse to the use of armed force in the handling of international affairs. I would therefore like to encourage a serene and wide-ranging debate on the subject, one that avoids polarizing the international community on such a sensitive issue. Every effort in this direction, however modest, represents an important step for mankind.

For its part, the Holy See signed and ratified, also in the name of and on behalf of Vatican City State, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. It did so in the belief, expressed by Saint John XXIII in *Pacem in Terris*, that "justice, right reason, and the recognition of man's dignity cry out insistently for a cessation to the arms race. The stockpiles of armaments which have been built up in various countries must be reduced all round and simultaneously by the parties concerned. Nuclear weapons must be banned".<sup>11</sup> Indeed, even if "it is difficult to believe that anyone would dare to assume responsibility for initiating the appalling slaughter and destruction that war would bring in its wake, there is no denying that the conflagration could be started by some chance and unforeseen circumstance".<sup>12</sup>

The Holy See therefore reiterates the firm conviction "that any disputes which may arise between nations must be resolved by negotiation and agreement, not by recourse to arms".<sup>13</sup> The constant production of ever more advanced and "refined" weaponry, and dragging on of numerous conflicts – what I have referred to as "a third world war fought piecemeal" – lead us to reaffirm Pope John's statement that "in this age which boasts of its atomic power, it no longer makes sense to maintain that war is a fit instrument with which to repair the violation of justice... Nevertheless, we are hopeful that, by establishing contact with one another and by a policy of negotiation, nations will come to a better recognition of the natural ties that bind them together as men. We are hopeful, too, that they will come to a fairer realization of one of the cardinal duties deriving from our common nature: namely, that love, not fear, must dominate the relationships between individuals and between nations. It is principally characteristic of love that it draws men together in all sorts of ways, sincerely united in the bonds of mind and matter; and this is a union from which countless blessings can flow".<sup>14</sup>

In this regard, it is of paramount importance that the dialogue on the Korean peninsula be resumed, in order to find new ways of overcoming the current disputes, increasing mu-



## To members of the Diplomatic Corps

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

tual trust and ensuring a peaceful future for the Korean people and the entire world.

It is also important for the various peace initiatives aimed at helping Syria to continue, in a constructive climate of growing trust between the parties, so that the lengthy conflict that has caused such immense suffering can finally come to an end. Our shared hope is that, after so much destruction, the time for rebuilding has now come. Yet even more than rebuilding material structures, it is necessary to rebuild hearts, to re-establish the fabric of mutual trust, which is the essential prerequisite for the flourishing of any society. There is a need, then, to promote the legal, political and security conditions that restore a social life where every citizen, regardless of ethnic and religious affiliation, can take part in the development of the country. In this regard, it is vital that religious minorities be protected, including Christians, who for centuries have made an active contribution to Syria's history.

It is likewise important that the many refugees who have found shelter and refuge in neighbouring countries, especially in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey, be able to return home. The commitment and efforts made by these countries in this difficult situation deserve the appreciation and support of the entire international community, which is also called upon to create the conditions for the repatriation of Syrian refugees. This effort must concretely start with Lebanon, so that that beloved country can continue to be a "message" of respect and coexistence, and a model to imitate, for the whole region and for the entire world.

The desire for dialogue is also necessary in beloved Iraq, to enable its various ethnic and religious groups to rediscover the path of reconciliation and peaceful coexistence and cooperation. Such is the case too in Yemen and other parts of the region, and in Afghanistan.

I think in particular of Israelis and Palestinians, in the wake of the tensions of recent weeks. The Holy See, while expressing sorrow for the loss of life in recent clashes, renews its pressing appeal that every initiative be carefully weighed so as to avoid exacerbating hostilities, and calls for a common commitment to respect, in conformity with the relevant United Nations Resolutions, the *status quo* of Jerusalem, a city sacred to Christians, Jews and Muslims. Seventy years of confrontation make more urgent than ever the need for a political solution that allows the presence in the region of two independent states within internationally recognized borders. Despite the difficulties, a willingness to engage in dialogue and to resume negotiations remains the clearest way to achieving at last a peaceful coexistence between the two peoples.

In national contexts, too, openness and availability to encounter are essential. I think especially of Venezuela, which is experiencing an

increasingly dramatic and unprecedented political and humanitarian crisis. The Holy See, while urging an immediate response to the primary needs of the population, expresses the hope that conditions will be created so that the elections scheduled for this year can resolve the existing conflicts, and enable people to look to the future with newfound serenity.

Nor can the international community overlook the suffering of many parts of the African continent, especially in South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, Nigeria and the Central African Republic, where the right to life is threatened by the indiscriminate exploitation of resources, terrorism, the proliferation of armed groups and protracted conflicts. It is not enough to be appalled at such violence. Rather, everyone, in his or her own situation, should work actively to eliminate the causes of misery and build bridges of fraternity, the fundamental premise for authentic human development.

A shared commitment to rebuilding bridges is also urgent in Ukraine. The year just ended reaped new victims in the conflict that af-



flicts the country, continuing to bring great suffering to the population, particularly to families who live in areas affected by the war and have lost their loved ones, not infrequently the elderly and children.

I would like to devote a special thought to families. The right to form a family, as a "natural and fundamental group unit of society... is entitled to protection by society and the state",<sup>15</sup> and is recognized by the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Unfortunately, it is a fact that, especially in the West, the family is considered an obsolete institution. Today fleeting relationships are preferred to the stability of a definitive life project. But a house built on the sand of frail and fickle relationships cannot stand. What is needed instead is a rock on which to build solid foundations. And this rock is precisely that faithful and indissoluble communion of love that joins man and woman, a communion that has an austere and simple beauty, a sacred and inviolable character and a natural role in the social order.<sup>16</sup> I consider it urgent, then, that genuine policies be adopted to

support the family, on which the future and the development of states depend. Without this, it is not possible to create societies capable of meeting the challenges of the future. Disregard for families has another dramatic effect – particularly present in some parts of the world – namely, a decline in the birth rate. We are experiencing a true demographic winter! This is a sign of societies that struggle to face the challenges of the present, and thus become ever more fearful of the future, with the result that they close in on themselves.

At the same time, we cannot forget the situation of families torn apart by poverty, war and migration. All too often, we see with our own eyes the tragedy of children who, unaccompanied, cross the borders between the south and the north of our world, and often fall victim to human trafficking.

Today there is much talk about migrants and migration, at times only for the sake of stirring up primal fears. It must not be forgotten that migration has always existed. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, the history of salvation is essentially a history of migration. Nor should we

which are always limited. By practising the virtue of prudence, government leaders should take practical measures to welcome, promote, protect, integrate and, 'within the limits allowed by a correct understanding of the common good, to permit [them] to become part of a new society' (*Pacem in Terris*, 57). Leaders have a clear responsibility towards their own communities, whose legitimate rights and harmonious development they must ensure, lest they become like the rash builder who miscalculated and failed to complete the tower he had begun to construct" (cf. *Lk* 14:28-30).<sup>18</sup>

I would like once more to thank the authorities of those states who have spared no effort in recent years to assist the many migrants arriving at their borders. I think above all of the efforts made by more than a few countries in Asia, Africa and the Americas that welcome and assist numerous persons. I cherish vivid memories of my meeting in Dhaka with some members of the Rohingya people, and I renew my sentiments of gratitude to the Bangladeshi authorities for the assistance provided to them on their own territory.

I would also like to express particular gratitude to Italy, which in these years has shown an open and generous heart and offered positive examples of integration. It is my hope that the difficulties that the country has experienced in these years, and whose effects are still felt, will not lead to forms of refusal and obstruction, but instead to a rediscovery of those roots and traditions that have nourished the rich history of the nation and constitute a priceless treasure offered to the whole world. I likewise express my appreciation for the efforts made by other European states, particularly Greece and Germany. Nor must it be forgotten that many refugees and migrants seek to reach Europe because they know that there they will find peace and security, which for that matter are the fruit of a lengthy process born of the ideals of the Founding Fathers of the European project in the aftermath of the Second World War. Europe should be proud of this legacy, grounded on certain principles and a vision of man rooted in its millenary history, inspired by the Christian conception of the human person. The arrival of migrants should spur Europe to recover its cultural and religious heritage, so that, with a renewed consciousness of the values on which the continent was built, it can keep alive her own tradition while continuing to be a place of welcome, a herald of peace and of development.

In the past year, governments, international organizations and civil society have engaged in discussions about the basic principles, priorities and most suitable means for responding to movements of migration and the enduring situations involving refugees. The United Nations, following the 2016 New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, has initiated important preparations for the adoption of the two Global Compacts for refugees and for safe, orderly and regular migration respectively.



Ron Waddams, "All Human Beings are Born Free and Equal in Dignity and Rights"

The Holy See trusts that these efforts, with the negotiations soon to begin, will lead to results worthy of a world community growing ever more independent and grounded in the principles of solidarity and mutual assistance. In the current international situation, ways and means are not lacking to ensure that every man and every woman on earth can enjoy living conditions worthy of the human person.

In the Message for this year's World Day of Peace, I suggested four "mileposts" for action: welcoming, protecting, promoting and integrating.<sup>19</sup> I would like to dwell particularly on the last of these, which has given rise to various opposed positions in the light of varying evaluations, experiences, concerns and convictions. Integration is a "two-way process", entailing reciprocal rights and duties. Those who welcome are called to promote integral human development, while those who are welcomed must necessarily conform to the rules of the country offering them hospitality, with respect for its identity and values. Processes of integration must always keep the protection and advancement of persons, especially those in situations of vulnerability, at the centre of the rules governing various aspects of political and social life.

## Framed by two anniversaries

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

before they are born", that against the elderly who are "cast aside, especially when infirm and viewed as a burden", that against women "who repeatedly suffer from violence and oppression, even within their own families", and lastly, violence against victims of trafficking, "which violates the prohibition of every form of slavery".

In 1948 the right to found a family was recognized as a "natural and fundamental group unit of society". Today it is held, especially in the West, as "an obsolete institution". But neglecting the family and failing to support it has had

the implicit and dramatic consequence of an increasingly grim "demographic winter", in a disquieting and unpredictable scenario where the right of families is trampled upon in countless households split by poverty, by war and by forced migration. Formulated in the United Nations Declaration, and also overturned, is "the right to freedom of thought, conscience and of religion, including the freedom to change religion", recalled the Pontiff, who lastly denounced religious extremism, marginalization and the persecution of many believers.

G.M.V.

## Reaffirm human rights to build peace

The Holy See has no intention of interfering in decisions that fall to states, which, in the light of their respective political, social and economic situations, and their capacities and possibilities for receiving and integrating, have the primary responsibility for accepting newcomers. Nonetheless, the Holy See does consider it its role to appeal to the principles of humanity and fraternity at the basis of every cohesive and harmonious society. In this regard, its interaction with religious communities, on the level of institutions and associations, should not be forgotten, since these can play a valuable supportive role in assisting and protecting, in social and cultural mediation, and in pacification and integration.

Among the human rights that I would also like to mention today is the right to freedom of thought, conscience and of religion, including the freedom to change religion.<sup>20</sup> Sad to say, it is well-known that the right to religious freedom is often disregarded, and not infrequently religion becomes either an occasion for the ideological justification of new forms of extremism or a pretext for the social marginalization of believers, if not their downright persecution. The condition for building inclusive societies is the integral comprehension of the human person, who can feel himself or herself truly accepted when recognized and accepted in all the dimensions that constitute his or her identity, including the religious dimension.

Finally, I wish to recall the importance of the right to employment. There can be no peace or development if individuals are not given the chance to contribute personally by their own labour to the growth of the common good. Regrettably, in many parts of the world, employment is scarcely available. At times, few opportunities exist, especially for young people, to find work. Often it is easily lost not only due to the effects of alternating economic cycles, but to the increas-

ing use of ever more perfect and precise technologies and tools that can replace human beings. On the one hand, we note an inequitable distribution of the work opportunities, while on the other, a tendency to demand of labourers an ever more pressing pace. The demands of profit, dictated by globalization, have led to a progressive reduction of times and days of rest, with the result that a fundamental dimension of life has been lost – that of rest – which serves to regenerate persons not only physically but also spiritually. God himself rested on the seventh day; he blessed and consecrated that day "because on it he rested from all the work that he had done in creation" (*Gen* 2:3). In the alternation of exertion and repose, human beings share in the "sanctification of time" laid down by God and ennoble their work, saving it from constant repetition and dull daily routine.

A cause for particular concern are the data recently published by the International Labour Organization regarding the increase of child labourers and victims of the new forms of slavery. The scourge of juvenile employment continues to compromise gravely the physical and psychological development of young people, depriving them of the joys of childhood and reaping innocent victims. We cannot think of planning a better future, or hope to build more inclusive societies, if we continue to maintain economic models directed to profit alone and the exploitation of those who are most vulnerable, such as children. Eliminating the structural causes of this scourge should be a priority of governments and international organizations, which are called to intensify efforts to adopt integrated strategies and coordinated policies aimed at putting an end to child labour in all its forms.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In recalling some of the rights contained in the 1948 Universal Declaration, I do not mean to overlook one of its important aspects, namely, the recognition that every individual also has duties towards the community, for the sake of "meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society".<sup>21</sup> The just appeal to the rights of each human being must take into account the fact that every individual is part of a greater body. Our societies too, like every human body, enjoy good health if each member makes his or her own contribution in the awareness that it is at the service of the common good.

Among today's particularly pressing duties is that of caring for our earth. We know that nature can itself be cruel, even apart from human responsibility. We saw this in the past year with the earthquakes that struck different parts of our world, especially those of recent months in Mexico and in Iran, with their high toll of victims, and with the powerful hurricanes that struck different countries of the Caribbean, also reaching the coast of the United States, and, more recently, the Phil-

ippines. Even so, one must not downplay the importance of our own responsibility in interaction with nature. Climate changes, with the global rise in temperatures and their devastating effects, are also a consequence of human activity. Hence there is a need to take up, in a united effort, the responsibility of leaving to coming generations a more beautiful and livable world, and to work, in the light of the commitments agreed upon in Paris in 2015, for the reduction of gas emissions that harm the atmosphere and human health.

The spirit that must guide individuals and nations in this effort can be compared to that of the builders of the medieval cathedrals that dot the landscape of Europe. These impressive buildings show the importance of each individual taking part in a work that transcends the limits of time. The builders of the cathedrals knew that they would not see the completion of their work. Yet they worked diligently, in the knowledge that they were part of a project that would be left to their children to enjoy. These, in turn, would embellish and expand it for their own children. Each man and woman in this world – particularly those with governmental responsibilities – is called to cultivate the same spirit of service and intergenerational solidarity, and in this way to be a sign of hope for our troubled world.

With these thoughts, I renew to each of you, to your families and to your peoples, my prayerful good wishes for a year filled with joy, hope and peace. Thank you.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris*, 11 April 1963, 90.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 10 December 1948.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* Preamble.

<sup>7</sup> PAUL VI, Encyclical Letter *Populorum Progressio*, 26 March 1967, 14.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, Preamble.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, Art. 3.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, Art. 25.

<sup>11</sup> *Pacem in Terris*, 112.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 126.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 127 and 129.

<sup>15</sup> *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, Art. 16.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. PAUL VI, *Address in the Basilica of the Annunciation in Nazareth*, 5 January 1964.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, Art. 13.

<sup>18</sup> FRANCIS, *Message for the 2018 World Day of Peace*, 13 November 2017, 1.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, Art. 18.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, Art. 29.

The Pontiff calls for research and investment aimed at the good of all mankind

## No to scientific progress that benefits the few

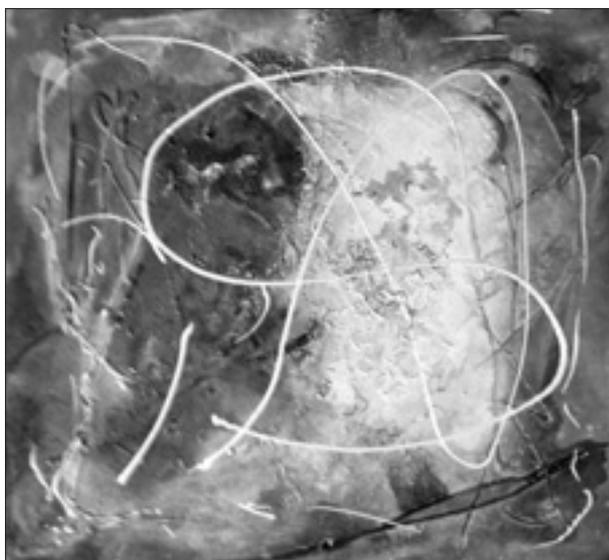
*With a firm 'no' to scientific progress for the benefit of the few, Francis called for research and investment aimed at the good of all of humanity. He shared these thoughts with members of the Pontifical Council for Culture on the final day of their Plenary Session which was held 15-18 November. The Pope offered a reflection on the theme of their work, which was dedicated to the "Future of humanity: new challenges to anthropology". The following is a translation of the Pontiff's remarks, which he delivered in Italian.*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I welcome you and I thank Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi for his greeting and introduction. Your Plenary Assembly has chosen the anthropological issue as its theme, intending to include prospects for future development in science and technology. Among the many available topics for discussion, you have particularly focused your attention on three subjects.

In the first place, *medicine and genetics*, which allow us to look inside the most intimate structure of the human being and to even intervene in it in order to modify it. They enable us to eradicate diseases believed until recently to be incurable; but they also open up the possibility to determine human beings by "programming in them" certain qualities, so to speak.

In the second place, *neurosciences* offer ever increasing information about the functioning of the



Anneke van Opstal, "Progress"

human brain. Through this information, fundamental realities of Christian anthropology such as the soul, self-awareness and freedom now appear in an unprecedented light and can even be seriously called into question by some.

Lastly, incredible breakthroughs in *autonomous and thinking machines*, which have already in part become components of our daily lives, lead us to reflect on what is specifically human and what makes us different from machines.

All these scientific and technical developments spur some to believe that we are in a unique moment in human history, almost at the dawn of a new era and at the birth of a new human being, superior to what we have known up to now.

The questions and issues that we are facing are indeed great and serious. They have been partly anticipated by science fiction literature and film, echoing mankind's fears and expectations. For this reason, the Church, which attentively follows the joys and hopes, the anguish and fears of today's mankind, wishes to place human persons and the questions that concern them at the centre of her own reflections.

The question regarding the human being, "what is man that thou art mindful of him?" (cf. Ps 8:5), echoes in the Bible from its very first passages and has accompanied the entire journey of Israel and of the Church. The Bible itself has offered an anthropological response to this question, a response which is already delineated in *Genesis* and spans all of Revelation, evolving around the fundamental elements of *relationship and freedom*. Relationship branches out according to a threefold dimension: toward matter, earth and animals; toward divine transcendence; and toward other human be-

ings. Freedom is expressed in autonomy – naturally relative – and in moral choices. For centuries this fundamental structure has supported the thinking of most of humanity, and it continues to retain its validity today. But, at the same time, today we realize that the great principles and fundamental concepts of anthropology are often called into question also on the basis of a greater knowledge of the complexity of the human condition, and they require further in-depth examination.

Anthropology is the horizon of self-understanding in which we all operate and it also determines our concept of the world and of existential and ethical choices. In our time, it has often become a fluid, inconstant horizon, due to socio-economic changes, population displacements and the relative intercultural confrontations, but also due to the spreading global culture and, above all, to incredible scientific and technological discoveries.

How should we react to these challenges? First of all, we must express our gratitude to the men and women of science for their efforts and for their commitment in favour of humanity. This *appreciation for the sciences*, which we have not always been able to demonstrate, finds its ultimate foundation in the plan of God who "chose us before the creation of the world and destined us to be his adoptive children" (cf. Eph 1:4-5), and who entrusted us with the care of creation: "to till and keep" the earth (cf. Gen 2:15). Precisely because man is the image and likeness of God who created the world through love, the safekeeping of the whole of creation must follow the rationale of gratuitousness and love, of service, and not that of dominion and abuse.

Science and technology have helped us to broaden the confines of our knowledge of nature and, in particular, of the human being. But they alone are not enough to provide all the answers. Today we are increasingly aware that it is necessary to draw from the treasures of wisdom preserved in religious traditions, from popular wisdom, from literature and the arts, which touch the depths of the mystery of the human being, without forgetting, indeed rediscovering, those contained in philosophy and in theology.

As I wished to affirm in the Encyclical *Laudato Si'*: "We urgently need a humanism capable of bringing together the different fields of knowledge [...] in the service of a more integral and integrating vision" (n. 141), so as to overcome the tragic division between the "two cultures" – the humanistic-literary-theological culture and the scientific one – which leads to mutual impoverishment, and in order to encourage a greater dialogue even among the Church, the community of believers, and the scientific community.

The Church, for her part, offers several great principles to support this dialogue. The first is *the centrality of the human person*, which should be considered an end and not a means. The person must be placed in harmonious relation with creation, therefore, not as a despot over God's legacy, but as a loving guardian of the work of the Creator.

The second principle that is essential to remember is that of the *universal destination of goods*, which also concerns the goods of knowledge and technology. Scientific and technological progress serves the good of all humanity and its benefits cannot inure to the benefit of only the few. This will prevent the future from adding new forms of knowledge-based inequality and increasing the gap between rich and poor. The big decisions concerning the direction of scientific research and investment therein must be undertaken by society as a whole, and not dictated solely by the rules of the market or by the interests of the few.

Lastly, the principle that *not everything that is technically possible or viable is thereby ethically acceptable* remains ever valid. Science, as any other human activity, knows that it has limitations to respect for the good of humanity itself, and that it needs a sense of ethical responsibility. The true measure of progress, as Blessed Paul VI recalled, is that which seeks the good of each man and of the whole man.

I thank all of you, Members, Consultants and Collaborators of the Pontifical Council for Culture, because you perform a valuable service. I invoke upon you an abundance of the Lord's blessings, and I ask you, please, to pray for me. Thank you.

## In memoriam

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

and later forced into hard labour.

After the resumption of religious life in China, Yü Chengxin was ordained a priest on 10 December 1981. He carried out his pastoral ministry in the area of Fengjiaying, Wangjiabao and Shangyanguan, where he is remembered as a jovial person dedicated to the care of the faithful, sparing no sacrifice. He was ordained a bishop on 12 December 1989 and was appointed Coadjutor of the Diocese of Hanzhong by Bishop Li Zhengrong of Xianxian.

With the aim of promoting reconciliation and communion within the Diocese of Hangzhong, Bishop Yü Chengxin never exercised his episcopal ministry, continuing to serve as a simple priest throughout his life and offering his hardships for the local Church.

After Bishop Yü Chengxin suffered a debilitating stroke in 2007 the clergy and the faithful of Hangzhong continued to show him their care and affection. His funeral Mass, which was held on 12 December in the Church of Xiaozai in Chenggu County, was presided by Yü Runshen and concelebrated by all the diocesan priests, with a large number of faithful in attendance. Today the Diocese of Hanzhong numbers some 43,000 faithful, about 40 priests and two congregations of women religious.

## On a journey with the Magi

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

These are the three attitudes that we find in the Gospel: *the diligent searching of the Magi; the indifference of the high priests and the scribes, of those familiar with theology; and the fear of Herod.* And we too can think and choose which of the three to assume. Do I wish to diligently search for Jesus? "But Jesus means nothing to me... I have peace of mind...". Or, do I fear Jesus and want to eliminate him from my heart?

Selfishness can lead us to consider Jesus' coming into our life as a threat. Thus we try to suppress or to silence Jesus' message. When we follow human ambitions, the most comfortable prospects, tendencies toward evil, Jesus is perceived as an obstacle.

On the other hand, the temptation of indifference is also always present. Even though we know that Jesus is the Saviour – ours, of us all – we prefer to live as if he were not: instead of behaving in coherence with our own Christian faith, we follow worldly principles that entice us to satisfy tendencies toward arrogance, toward thirsting for power, toward riches.

We are instead called to follow the example of the Magi: to be *diligent in searching*, prepared to go out of our way to encounter Jesus in our lives. Seeking him in order to adore him, to acknowledge that he is our Lord, the One who reveals the true path to be followed. If we have this attitude, Jesus truly saves us, and we can live a fine life; we can grow in faith, in hope, in charity toward God and toward our brothers and sisters.

Let us invoke the intercession of Mary Most Holy, star of pilgrim humankind throughout time. With her maternal help, may every person come to Christ, Light of Truth, and may the world advance along the path of justice and peace.

After the Angelus, the Pope offered best wishes to Eastern Catholic and Orthodox Churches celebrating Christmas:

Dear brothers and sisters, several Catholic and Orthodox *Oriental Churches* are currently celebrating the *Lord's Birth*. I offer them my most cordial wishes: may this joyous celebration be the source

of new spiritual vigour and communion among all of us Christians who recognize him as Lord and Saviour. In a special way, I would like to express my closeness to Coptic Orthodox Christians, and to cordially greet my brother Tawadros II on the joyous occasion of the consecration of the new Cathedral in Cairo.

The Epiphany is also the *World Day of Missionary Childhood*, which this year invites young missionaries to assume Jesus' gaze so that he becomes the precious guide of their commitment to prayer, fraternity and sharing with the most needy of their peers.

## Ambassador of Uruguay

H.E. Mr *Mario Juan Bosco Cayota Zappettini*, 81, was born in Montevideo, Uruguay. He is married with five children. He attended elementary and secondary schools at the *Colegio Sagrado Corazón "Antiguo Seminario"* of the Society of Jesus, and subsequently obtained a degree in Philosophy and a PhD from the University of La Plata, Argentina.

He has held the following positions: professor of history and philosophy in secondary schools; professor of history and philosophy in numerous seminars at university level and also at the University of Petrópolis, Brazil, the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile, and the University of Trento, Italy; professor of history and philosophy at the "Msgr Mariano Soler" Faculty of Theology of Montevideo (1976-2006); president of the Christian Democratic Party; member of the *Fronte Amplio*, holding the office of vice president until November 2016; director and president of the departmental council of Montevideo (2000-

I extend my cordial greeting to all of you, individual pilgrims, families, parish groups and associations from Italy and different countries. In particular, I greet the faithful of Lavello and those from San Martino in Rio, the Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Apparition, and the confirmands from Bonate Sotto and Romano di Lombardia.

A special greeting goes to the historical folkloric procession that promotes the values of the Epiphany and that this year is dedicated to the territory of the *Monti Prenestini*. I would also like to mention the procession of the Magi taking place in many cities in Poland with broad participation of families and associations.

I wish everyone a happy feast day. Please do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch. *Arriverà!*



On Thursday morning, 4 January, the Pope received in audience H.E. Mr *Mario Juan Bosco Cayota Zappettini*, Ambassador of Uruguay, for the presentation of the Letters by which he is accredited to the Holy See.

2005); Ambassador to the Holy See (2005-2011); minister of the Secular Franciscan Order; and director of the Franciscan Centre for Historical Documentation (CEFRADOHIS), for Latin America. He is currently a member of the Truth and Justice Commission.

## Ambassador of Egypt

H.E. Mr *Mahmoud Ahmed Samir Samy*, 54, holds a law degree from Ein-Shams University, a diploma in Refugee Law from the International Institute of Humanitarian Law in San Remo, Italy (2001), and attended a UNITAR Visitors' Program for Diplomats accredited to the United Nations at the New York School of Law (2005). He also obtained a diploma from the Rhodes Academy of Law and Policy in Greece (2005).

He has held the following offices: official in the Department of International Legal Affairs and Treaties (1986-1988); third Embassy Secretary in Rome and Deputy Permanent Representative at the FAO (1988-1992); second Secretary at the Division of Environmental Issues at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) (1992-1994); first Embassy Secretary in Washington DC (1994-1998); legal adviser in the Cabinet of the MFA (1998-2002); head of the Anti-Terrorism Unit in the Cabinet of the Minister of Foreign Affairs (2000-2002); legal counsel and representative of Egypt at the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly of



On Friday morning, 22 December 2017, the Pope received in audience H.E. Mr *Mahmoud Ahmed Samir Samy*, Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt, for the presentation of the Letters by which he is accredited to the Holy See.

the Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York (2002-2006); deputy assistant to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, head of the Department of International Treaties (2008-2009); Ambassador to the Netherlands (2009-2013); deputy assistant to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and head of the Department of Environment and Sustainable Development (2013-2015); and assistant to the Minister of Foreign Affairs for International Legal Affairs and Treaties (since 2015).

## To experience God's closeness

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

part in your joys, sorrows, difficulties and hopes, and to tell you that you are not alone, that the Pope is with you, that the entire Church welcomes you, that the Church looks towards you.

I wish to experience with you the peace that comes from God, which is so necessary; he alone can give it to us. It is the gift that Christ gives to each of us, the foundation of our coexistence and of society. Peace rests on justice and allows us to find occasions for communion and harmony. We must ask this of the Lord constantly and the Lord will give it to us. It is the peace of the Risen One who brings joy and encourages us to be missionaries, rekindling the gift of faith which leads us to encounter, to the shared communion of a single celebrated and communicated faith.

This encounter with the Risen Christ confirms us in hope. We do not want to be anchored to the things of this world. Our gaze goes far beyond; our eyes are fixed on his mercy which heals our miseries. He gives us the impetus to stand up and continue. Experiencing first hand this closeness to God makes us a lively community, capable of being moved by those who are at our side and of taking firm steps in friendship and fraternity. We are brothers and sisters who go to encounter others in order to confirm ourselves in a single faith and hope.

I entrust this Apostolic Journey, and all the intentions we nurture in our hearts, to the hands of the Virgin Mary, Mother of America, that as a good Mother she may welcome them and show us the path towards the Son.

See you very soon! And, please do not forget to pray for me. See you soon!

Mass in the Sistine chapel for the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord

## Speak the language of love

The Pope explains how parents can transmit the faith to their little ones

*A family's task is to "transmit the faith" and Baptism is the "first step" in that task. But for transmission of the faith to be effective, it must be done with a "language of love" and "in the dialect" of the family, and of children: this message lay at the heart of Pope Francis' homily for the Mass on Sunday, 7 January, Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. At this year's customary celebration in the Sistine Chapel, the Holy Father baptized 34 infants: 18 boys and 16 girls. The following is a translation of the homily which the Holy Father delivered in Italian.*

Dear Parents,

You have brought your children for Baptism, and this is the first step in that task that you have, the task of transmitting the faith.

But we need the Holy Spirit to transmit the faith; we cannot do it alone. Being able to transmit the faith, the opportunity to transmit it, is a grace of the Holy Spirit; and this is why you have brought your children here: so that they may receive the Holy Spirit, receive the Trinity – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit – who will dwell in their hearts.

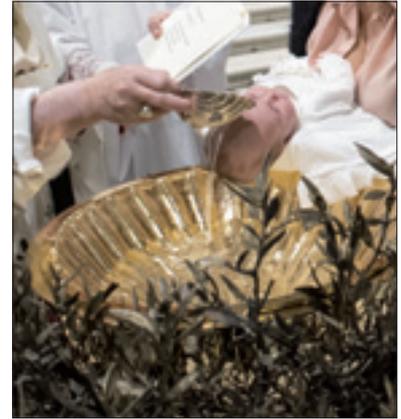
I would like to tell you only one thing, which pertains to you:

transmission of the faith can only be done "in dialect", in the dialect of daddy and mommy, of grandpa and grandma. Then the catechists will come to develop this first transmission, with ideas, with explanations.... But do not forget this: it is done "in dialect", and if the dialect is missing, if at home that language of love is not spoken between the parents, then the transmission is not very easy; it cannot be done. Do not forget. Your task is to transmit the faith, but to do so with the dialect of love of your home, of your family.

They too [children] have their own "dialect", which does us

good to hear! Now they are all quiet, but suffice it that one give the tone and then the orchestra follows! The dialect of children! And Jesus advises us to be like them, to speak like them. We must not forget this language of children, who speak how they are able, but it is the language that is so pleasing to Jesus. And, in your prayers, be simple like them. Tell Jesus what comes into your heart, as they do. Today they will say it with cries, yes, as babies do. The parents' dialect which is love for transmitting the faith, and the children's dialect which must be welcomed by parents in order to grow in faith.

Now we will continue the ceremony; and if they begin to perform a concert it is because they are not comfortable, or are too hot, or do not feel at ease, or are hungry.... If they are hungry, nurse them, without worry; feed them, because this too is a language of love.



Holy Father's reflection at the Angelus

## Remember that date

*At the Angelus in Saint Peter's Square on Sunday morning, 7 January, Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, the Holy Father urged the faithful not to forget the day of their baptism because it is "the date of the great forgiveness". The following is a translation of the Pope's reflection, which he shared in Italian.*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,  
Good morning!

Today's celebration of the Baptism of the Lord concludes the Christmas Season and invites us to think about our baptism. Jesus wished to receive the baptism that John the Baptist preached and administered in the Jordan. It was a baptism of repentance: those who approached expressed the wish to be purified of sins and, with the help of God, they committed to begin a new life.

Thus we understand the great *humility* of Jesus, the One who had no sin, in joining the queue of the penitents, mingling among them to be baptized in the waters of the river. How humble Jesus is! And in so doing, he manifested what we celebrated at Christmas: Jesus' willingness to immerse himself in the river of humanity, to take upon himself the failings and weaknesses of men and women, to share their wish for liberation and the triumph over all that distances one from God and renders one a stranger to brothers and sisters. As in Bethlehem, even along the banks of the Jordan, God keeps his promise to take upon himself the destiny of the human being, and Jesus is the tangible and definitive sign of it. He took all of us upon his shoulders; he carries all of us, in life, in our days.

Today's Gospel passage emphasizes that when Jesus "came up out of the water, immediately he



saw the heavens opened and the Spirit descending upon him like a dove" (Mk 1:10). The *Holy Spirit*, who had worked from the beginning of creation and had led Moses and the people in the desert, now descends in fullness upon Jesus to give him the power to accomplish his mission in the world. The Spirit is the creator of Jesus' baptism and also of our baptism. He opens the eyes of our hearts to the truth, to the whole truth. He propels our life along the path of charity. He is the gift that the Father has given to each one of us on the day of our baptism. He, the Spirit, transmits the tenderness of divine forgiveness to us. And it is again he, the Holy Spirit, who makes the revelatory Word of the Father resonate: "You are my Son" (cf. v. 11).

The celebration of Jesus' baptism invites every Christian to *remember his or her own baptism*. I cannot ask you whether you remember the day of your baptism, because most of you were infants, like me; we were baptized as infants. But I ask you another question: do you know the date of your baptism? Do you know what day you were baptized? Each one think about it. And if you do not know the date or have forgotten it, upon returning home, ask your mom, grandma, uncle, aunt, grandpa, godfather, godmother: what is the date? We must always keep that date in our memory, because it is a date of celebration; it is the date of our initial sanctification; it is the date

on which the Father gave us the Holy Spirit who encourages us to walk; it is the date of the great forgiveness. Do not forget: what is the date of my baptism? Let us invoke the maternal protection of Mary Most Holy, that all Christians can understand ever better the gift of baptism and commit to living it with coherence, witnessing to the love of the Father and of the Son and of the Spirit.

*After the Angelus the Holy Father continued:*

Dear brothers and sisters, I greet you all, faithful of Rome and pilgrims from Italy and from various countries. In particular I greet the faithful from South Korea and those from Biella.

This year too, on today's celebration of the Baptism of Jesus, I have had the joy of baptizing 34 infants. Upon them and all the children who have been baptized recently, I invoke the maternal protection of the Mother of God, so that, helped by the example of their parents, godfathers and godmothers, they may grow as disciples of the Lord.

I wish everyone a happy Sunday and a good journey in the year just begun, thanks to the light that Jesus has given us in his Birth.

Do not forget the homework: what is the date of my baptism? Understood?

And please, do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch. *Arrivederci!*