

# L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO

WEEKLY EDITION  IN ENGLISH

*Unicuique suum Non praevalent*

Fifty-first year, number 7 (2534)

Vatican City

Friday, 16 February 2018

## Break the chains of slavery

In separate audiences, Pope Francis spoke with members of the Santa Marta Group and with participants in the International Day of Prayer and Awareness against Human Trafficking.



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In his Ash Wednesday homily Pope Francis indicates the best way to live out Lent

## Pause, see, return



On Ash Wednesday, 14 February, Pope Francis led the traditional penitential procession from the Church of Saint Anselm to the nearby Basilica of Saint Sabina on the Aventine Hill. Taking part in the procession were Cardinals, Archbishops, Bishops, the Benedictine Monks of Saint Anselm, the Dominican Friars of Saint Sabina and a group of faithful. The Holy Father then presided at Mass in the Basilica, where he

blesed the ashes and was the first to receive them, imposed by Cardinal Jozef Tomko, Cardinal-Priest of Saint Sabina. In his homily, the Pope urged the faithful to *pause* amid the frenzy of daily life, to *see* "the real face of Christ crucified", and to *return* "to experience the healing and reconciling tenderness of God".

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## Condolences after mass shooting in Florida May such senseless violence cease

Pope Francis expressed his solidarity and condolences following a deadly mass shooting at a high school in Parkland, Florida, USA, which claimed 17 lives and wounded 14 others on Wednesday, 14 February. In a telegram sent on Thursday, 15 February, to Archbishop Thomas Gerard Wenski of Miami, and signed by Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Parolin, the Holy Father assured

"all those affected by this devastating attack of his spiritual closeness" and of his prayers "that Almighty God may grant eternal rest to the dead and healing and consolation to the wounded and those who grieve". Invoking "the divine blessings of peace and strength" for the victims' families, the Pontiff expressed his "hope that such senseless acts of violence may cease".

## With Greek Melkites In communion



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# VATICAN BULLETIN



## AUDIENCES

Thursday, 8 February

Members of the Supervisory Commission of Cardinals for the Institute for Works of Religion

Cardinal Domenico Calcagno, President of the Administration of the Patrimony of the Apostolic See, with the Assessor Bishop Gustavo Óscar Zanchetta, Bishop emeritus of Orán, Argentina

Members of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Malaysia-Singapore-Brunei, on a visit *ad limina Apostolorum*:

– Archbishop John Wong Soo Kau, of Kota Kinabalu

– Bishop Cornelius Piong of Keningau

– Bishop Julius Dusin Gitom of Sandakan

– Archbishop Julian Leow Beng Kim of Kuala Lumpur, with Cardinal Anthony Soter Fernandez, Archbishop emeritus, and Archbishop emeritus Murphy Nicholas Xavier Pakiam

– Bishop Anthony Bernard Paul, of Melaka-Johor

– Bishop Sebastian Francis of Penang, with Bishop emeritus Antony Selvanayagam

– Archbishop Simon Poh Hoon Seng of Kuching

– Bishop Richard Ng of Miri

– Bishop Joseph Hii Teck Kwong of Sibü

– Archbishop William Seng Chye Goh of Singapore

– Bishop Cornelius Sim, titular Bishop of Putia in Numidia, Vicar Apostolic in Brunei

Friday, 9 February

H.E. Mr Jüri Ratas, Prime Minister of the Republic of Estonia, with his wife and entourage

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

H.E. Mr Mariano Fernández Amunátegui, Ambassador of Chile, with his wife, on a farewell visit

Saturday, 10 February

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

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

Monday, 12 February

Cardinal Mauro Piacenza, Major Penitentiary, with Msgr Krzysztof Józef Nykiel, Regent of the Apostolic Penitentiary

H.E. Ms Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of Bangladesh, with her entourage

Cardinal Reinhard Marx, Coordinator of the Council for the Economy

Cardinal Juan Luis Cipriani Thorne, Archbishop of Lima, Peru

Members of the Melkite Greek Synod

## CHANGES IN EPISCOPATE

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Guilherme Antônio Werlang, MSE, as Bishop of Lages, Brazil. Until now he has been Bishop of Ipameri, Brazil (7 Feb.).

Bishop Werlang, 67, was born in São Carlos, State of Santa Catarina, Brazil. He was ordained a priest on 2 August 1979. He was ordained a bishop on 17 July 1999, subsequent to his appointment as Bishop of Ipameri.

The Holy Father appointed Fr Willem Christiaans, OSFS, as Bishop of Keetmanshoop, Namibia. Until now he has been Diocesan Administrator of the same Diocese and national director of the Pontifical Mission Societies in Namibia (7 Feb.).

Bishop-elect Christiaans, 57, was born in Gabis, Namibia. He made his perpetual vows for the Congregation of the Oblates of Saint Francis de Sales on 23 January 1983 and was ordained a priest on 10 December 1988. He has served in parish ministry and as: director of the OSFS pre-Novitiate; director of OSFS students; superior provincial of the OSFS for three consecutive terms; vicar general of Keetmanshoop; national director of P.P.O.O.M.M. in Namibia.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Archbishop José Luis Chávez Botello of Antequera, Oaxaca, Mexico (10 Feb.).

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Pedro Vázquez Villalobos as Archbishop of Antequera. Until now he has served as Bishop of Puerto Escondido, Mexico (10 Feb.).

Archbishop Vázquez Villalobos, 67, was born in Huisquilco, Mexico. He was ordained a priest on 15 April

1979. He was ordained a bishop on 30 January 2013, subsequent to his appointment as Bishop of Puerto Escondido.

The Holy Father appointed Fr Abel C. Apigo from the clergy of the Archdiocese of Davao, the Philippines, as Bishop of Mati, the Philippines. Until now he has been rector of the Major Regional Seminary of Saint Francis Xavier of Davao (10 Feb.).

Bishop-elect Apigo, 49, was born in Calinan, the Philippines. He holds a licence in Church History. He was ordained a priest on 18 April 1994. He has served in parish ministry and as: pastoral director; professor, coordinator, vice-rector and Dean of the Saint Francis Xavier Major Regional Seminary of Davao; episcopal vicar for the Archdiocesan clergy.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Michael Gregory Campbell, OSA, of Lancaster, England (12 Feb.).

The Holy Father appointed as Bishop of Lancaster the Rev. Canon Paul Swarbrick from the clergy of the Diocese of Lancaster. Until now he has been parish priest of Christ the Good Shepherd Parish and Dean of Our Lady and Saint Benedict, West Cumbria (12 Feb.).

Bishop-elect Swarbrick, 59, was born in Garstang, County of Lancashire. He was ordained a priest on 10 July 1982. He has served in parish ministry and as a *fidei donum* priest in the Diocese of Monze, Zambia. On his return he served as parish priest in various parishes.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop John Dennis Corriveau, OFM Cap., of Nelson, Canada (13 Feb.).

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Gregory John Matthew Bittman as Bishop of Nelson. Until now he has been titular Bishop of Caltadria and Auxiliary of Edmonton, Canada (13 Feb.).

Bishop Bittman, 56, was born in Hamilton, Ontario. He was ordained a priest on 15 August 1996. He was ordained a bishop on 13 September 2012, subsequent to his appointment as titular Bishop of Caltadria and Auxiliary of Edmonton.

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## Radio Vaticana Italia to broadcast Pope's Rosary throughout Lent

During Lent, *Radio Vaticana Italia* will broadcast at 8:00 pm daily the recitation of the Holy Rosary led by Pope Francis. The first broadcast will be on Sunday, 18 February. The recordings, produced by the Secretariat for Communications in collaboration with the Pauline Publishing House, will be available on CD at Pauline Publishing book stores.

## Prime Minister of Estonia

On Friday morning, 9 February, the Holy Father received in audience H.E. Mr Jüri Ratas, Prime Minister of the Republic of Estonia, who subsequently met with Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Parolin, and Msgr Antoine Camilleri, Undersecretary for Relations with States.

During the cordial discussions, appreciation was expressed for the good bilateral relations between the two States and for the Church's positive contribution to Estonian society.

Attention then turned to various regional and global themes of mutual interest, including environmental protection, migration and the international community's commitment to conflict resolution.



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WEEKLY EDITION  IN ENGLISH  
Unicuique suum  Non praevalentibus

Vatican City  
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Subscription rates: Italy - Vatican: € 28.00; Europe: € 100.00 - US\$ 148.00; Latin America, Africa, Asia: € 100.00 - US\$ 160.00 - £ 88.00; Oceania, North America: € 162.00 - 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, Tiruvandur - 605 014, Kerala-India; phone: +9147572723; fax: +9147528189; 239224; e-mail: ciph@indiasolnet.in; kococms@camelpublications.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

# The Word is a right

Francis recommends that the Gospel be read well and explained well during Mass

*"When we go to Mass, each of us has the right to receive in abundance the Word of God read well, said well and then, explained well in the homily. It is a right!". The Pope explained this to the faithful who had gathered in Saint Peter's Square and in the Paul VI Hall for the General Audience on Ash Wednesday, 14 February. Continuing with a series of catecheses on the Eucharistic celebration, the Pontiff focused this particular reflection on the Creed and on the Universal Prayer. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's catechesis, which he gave in Italian.*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,  
Good morning!

Good morning, even if the day is a little unpleasant. But if the soul is joyful it is always a good day. So, good day! Today the Audience is taking place in two places: a small group of sick people is in the Hall, due to the weather, and we are here. But we see them and they see us on the jumbo screen. Let us greet them with a round of applause.

We are continuing with the catechesis on the Mass. To what does

homily. It is a right! And when the Word of God is not read well, not preached with fervour by the deacon, by the priest or by the bishop, then the faithful are deprived of a right. We have the right to hear the Word of God. The Lord speaks for everyone, Pastors and the faithful. He knocks at the heart of those who participate in the Mass, each one in his or her condition of life, age, situation. The Lord comforts, calls, brings forth sprouts of a new and reconciled life. And this is through his Word. His Word knocks at the heart and changes hearts!

Therefore, after the homily, a moment of silence allows the seed received to settle in the soul, so that intentions to heed what the Spirit has suggested to each person may sprout. Silence after the homily. A good moment of silence must be observed there, and each one should ponder what he or she has heard.

After this silence, how does the Mass continue? The personal response of faith is integrated in the Church's *Profession of Faith*, expressed in the *Creed*. We all recite the *Creed* in the Mass. Recited by the entire assembly, the *Symbolum* manifests the common response to what is heard together from the Word of God (cf. *Catechism of the*



the deacon or a reader, the congregation joins its voice, invoking: "Hear us, Lord".

Indeed, let us remember what the Lord Jesus told us: "If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you" (Jn 15:7). "But we do not believe this, because we have little faith". But if we had faith – Jesus says – like the mustard seed, we would have received all. "Ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you". And in this moment of universal prayer after the *Creed*, it is the time to ask the Lord for the most important things in the Mass, the things we need, what we want. "It shall be done for you"; in one way or another, but "it shall be done for you". "All things are possible to him who believes", the

Lord said. What did that man respond, to whom the Lord had addressed these words – "all things are possible to him who believes"? The man said: "I believe, Lord. Help my little faith". We too can say: "Lord, I believe. But help my lack of faith". And we must pray with this spirit of faith: "I believe, Lord; help my lack of faith". Worldly demands, however, do not ascend toward heaven, just as self-referential requests remain unheard (cf. Jas 4:2-3). The intentions for which the faithful people are invited to pray must give voice to the concrete needs of the ecclesial community and of the world, avoiding recourse to conventional and short-sighted formulas. The "universal" prayer, which concludes the Liturgy of the Word, exhorts us to turn our gaze to God, who takes care of all his children.

*Catholic Church*, 185-197). There is an essential nexus between listening and faith. They are linked. Indeed, this – faith – does not arise from human imagination, but, as Saint Paul recalls, "comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ" (Rom 10:17). Thus, faith is nourished by what is heard and leads to the Sacrament. In this way, reciting the *Creed* enables the liturgical assembly to "call to mind and confess the great mysteries of the faith ... before these mysteries are celebrated in the Eucharist" (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 67).

The *Symbolum of Faith* joins the Eucharist to Baptism, received "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit", and recalls that the Sacraments are understood in the light of the faith of the Church.

The response to the Word of God heard with faith is then expressed in the common petition, called the *Universal Prayer*, because it embraces the needs of the Church and of the world (cf. *GIRM*, 69-71; *General Introduction to the Lectionary*, 30-31).

The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council wished to restore this prayer after the Gospel and homily, especially on Sundays and feast days, so that, with the participation of the people, "intercession will be made for holy Church, for the civil authorities, for those oppressed by various needs, for all mankind, and for the salvation of the entire world (Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 53; cf. 1 Tim 2:1-2). Therefore, under the guidance of the priest who introduces and concludes, the people, "exercising the office of their baptismal priesthood, offer prayers to God for the salvation of all" (*GIRM*, 69). And after the individual intentions, proposals by

## SPECIAL GREETINGS

I greet the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today's Ash Wednesday Audience, particularly those from England, Ireland, China and the United States of America. I wish you and your families a holy and fruitful Season of Lent, and I invoke upon you the grace and peace of Christ our Lord. May God bless you all!

I address a special thought to *young people*, to the *sick* and to *newlyweds*. Today, Ash Wednesday, our Lenten journey begins. Dear *young people*, I hope you may live this time of grace as a return to the love of the Father who awaits everyone with open arms. Dear *sick people*, I encourage you to offer your suffering for the conversion of those who live far from the faith; and I invite you, dear *newlyweds*, to build your new family on the rock of God's love.



*When we confess our sins with humility and sincerity, we receive forgiveness and are reunited with God and our brothers and sisters*

(@Pontifex)

listening to the Bible readings, which are elaborated upon in the homily, respond? It responds to a right: the spiritual right of the People of God to receive abundantly from the treasury of the Word of God (cf. *General Introduction to the Lectionary*, 45). When we go to Mass, each of us has the right to receive in abundance the Word of God read well, said well and then, explained well in the



With the Melkite Greek Synod the Pope assures his closeness to Christians in the Middle East

## Unspeakable suffering in Syria

*During an audience with Melkite Greek Bishops on Monday, 12 February, Pope Francis ensured his prayers and closeness to the faithful of the Middle East, and in particular to the people of Syria, "which has been struck by unspeakable suffering in the last few years". The Bishops, with His Beatitude Youssef Absi, Patriarch of Antioch, were in Rome to conclude their Synod Assembly with the public manifestation of "ecclesiastical communion". The following is a translation of the Holy Father's address.*

Your Beatitude,  
Dear Brothers in the Episcopate,

I thank you for your visit. The happy occasion is the public manifestation of ecclesiastical communion which will take place tomorrow morning during the Eucharistic celebration, and which I had previously accorded your Beatitude in a letter dated 22 June last, following your election as Patriarch, *Pater et Caput*, by the Synod of Bishops.

Today, just as then, dear Brother, I assure you of my constant closeness in prayer. May the Risen Christ be close to you and accompany you in the mission entrusted to you. It is a prayer which cannot be dissociated from that for beloved Syria and the entire Middle East, the region in which your Church is deeply rooted and where it carries out a valuable service for the good of the People of

God. Your presence is not limited to the Middle East, but for many years now, it has extended to countries where many Melkite Greek faithful have relocated, in search of a better life. My prayers and affectionate thoughts also go to these faithful in diaspora and to their pastors.

In this difficult historical period, many Christian communities in the Middle East are called to live their faith in the Lord Jesus amid many trials. I ardently hope that with their living witness, the Melkite Greek Bishops and priests will be able to encourage the faithful to remain in the land of birth that Divine Providence desired for them. In the previously mentioned letter of June, I recalled that "in this particularly difficult time, Pastors are called upon to manifest communion, unity, closeness, solidarity and transparency before the suffering People of God". I



fraternally invite you to continue on this path. As you know, I have called for a day of prayer and fasting for peace to be held on the 23rd of this month. On that occasion I will be sure to remember in a special way Syria, which has been struck by unspeakable suffering in the last few years.

You have come as pilgrims to Rome, to the tomb of the Apostle Peter, at the conclusion of your recent Synod Assembly which took place in Lebanon in the first days of the month. It is always a fundamental moment, a shared journey during which the Patriarch and the Bishops are called to make important decisions for the good of the faithful, also through the election of new Bishops, of Pastors who bear witness to the Risen Christ; Pastors who, as the Lord did with his disciples, revitalize the hearts of the faithful by being close to them, comforting them, serving them and their needs; Pastors who, at the same time, lead them heavenward, to "seek the things that are above, where Christ is, not things that are on earth", (cf. Col 3:1-2). We are in great need of Pastors who embrace life with the vastness of God's heart,

who do not yield to earthly satisfactions, who are not content with things as they are, but always aiming heavenward; Pastors who are *heralds of the Almighty*, free from the temptation of staying "under the radar", free from the restrictive measures of a lukewarm and habitual life; Pastors who are poor, not attached to money and luxury; in the midst of poor, suffering people; consistent proclaimers of Paschal hope, on a continuous journey with our brothers and sisters. While I will be happy to grant my Pontifical Assent to the Bishops elected by you, I would like to be able to experience first-hand the greatness of these horizons.

Your Beatitude, Your Excellencies, I warmly renew my gratitude to you for your fraternal visit. When you return to your Sees and meet your priests, men and women religious and faithful, remind them that they are in the Pope's heart and prayers. May the Most Holy Mother of God, Queen of Peace, keep you and protect you. And while I have the joy of imparting my blessing to you and your communities, I ask that you please, not forget to pray for me.

Thank you!

### The meaning of ecclesiastical communion

## A people crucified

In an expression of ecclesiastical communion, Pope Francis celebrated Mass at Santa Marta on Tuesday morning, 13 February, with His Beatitude Youssef Absi, Patriarch of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church. Concelebrants included Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, Prefect of the

logy, with its own marvelous liturgy", and whose people presently "are being crucified, like Jesus". Pope Francis therefore offered the day's celebration for persecuted Christians in the Middle East and for the ministry of "our brother Youssef".



Congregation for the Oriental Churches, with the Secretary, Archbishop Cyril Vasil', and Bishops of the Synod of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church.

During the Mass, the Pope described the Patriarch as "the Father of a Church, a very ancient Church, who has come to embrace Peter, to say 'I am in communion with Peter'". And thus, the significance of the day's celebration was that of "the Father's embrace of a Church with Peter". His Beatitude's Church, the Pontiff explained, is "a rich Church, with its own theology within Catholic theo-

On behalf of the Synod of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church, Patriarch Youssef thanked the Holy Father for the Mass. "I am personally very moved by your fraternal charity and by the gestures of fraternity and solidarity which you have shown to our Church throughout this Mass", he said, adding: "We will always remember this event, these historical moments, this moment which I cannot describe for its beauty". At the end of Mass, the Patriarch and the Holy Father imparted the final blessing together.

## Prime Minister of Bangladesh

On Monday, 12 February, the Holy Father received in audience H.E. Ms Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, who subsequently met with Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Parolin, accompanied by Msgr Antoine Camilleri, Undersecretary for Relations with States.

During the cordial discussions, the good bilateral relations between the two States were evoked, and satisfaction was expressed for the Holy Father's recent apostolic visit to Bangladesh and for the population's keen participation in the event, including that of many non-Catholics.

Attention then turned to the Church's contribution in the country, particularly in the field of education, and to the State's efforts to promote the peaceful coexistence of the various religious communities and the defence of minorities and refugees. Appreci-

ation was expressed for the country's reception of the Rohingya as well as the hope for a just and lasting solution to their ordeal.



## Pause, see, return

In his Ash Wednesday homily Francis indicates the best way to live out Lent



*"Lent is the ideal time to unmask ... temptations, to allow our hearts to beat once more in tune with the vibrant heart of Jesus". During the Ash Wednesday liturgy, this message is echoed by "three words offered to us in order to rekindle the heart of the believer: 'pause', 'see' and 'return'". Pope Francis emphasized this as he celebrated Mass on 14 February in the Basilica of Saint Sabina in Rome, following the penitential procession from the Church of Saint Anselm. The following is the English text of the Pope's homily, which he delivered in Italian.*

The season of Lent is a favourable time to remedy the dissonant chords of our Christian life and to receive the ever new, joyful and hope-filled proclamation of the Lord's Passover. The Church in her maternal wisdom invites us to pay special attention to anything that could dampen or even corrode our believing heart.

We are subject to numerous temptations. Each of us knows the difficulties we have to face. And it is sad to note that, when faced with the ever-varying circumstances of our daily lives, there are voices raised that take advantage of pain and uncertainty; the only thing they aim to do is sow distrust. If the fruit of faith is charity – as Mother Teresa often used to say – then the fruit of distrust is apathy and resignation. Distrust, apathy and resignation: these are demons that deaden and paralyze the soul of a believing people.

Lent is the ideal time to unmask these and other temptations, to allow our hearts to beat once more in tune with the vibrant heart of Jesus. The whole of the Lenten season is imbued with this conviction, which we could say is echoed by three

words offered to us in order to rekindle the heart of the believer: *pause, see and return.*

*Pause* a little, leave behind the unrest and commotion that fill the soul with bitter feelings which never get us anywhere. *Pause* from this compulsion to a fast-paced life that scatters, divides and ultimately destroys time with family, with friends, with children, with grandparents, and time as a gift ... time with God.

*Pause* for a little while, refrain from the need to show off and be seen by all, to continually appear on the "noticeboard" that makes us forget the value of intimacy and recollection.

*Pause* for a little while, refrain from haughty looks, from fleeting and pejorative comments that arise from forgetting tenderness, compassion and reverence for the encounter with others, particularly those who are vulnerable, hurt and even immersed in sin and error.

*Pause* for a little while, refrain from the urge to want to control everything, know everything, destroy everything; this comes from overlooking gratitude for the gift of life and all the good we receive.

*Pause* for a little while, refrain from the deafening noise that weakens and confuses our hearing, that makes us forget the fruitful and creative power of silence.

*Pause* for a little while, refrain from the attitude which promotes sterile and unproductive thoughts that arise from isolation and self-pity, and that cause us to forget going out to encounter others to share their burdens and suffering.

*Pause* for a little while, refrain from the emptiness of everything that is instantaneous,

momentary and fleeting, that deprives us of our roots, our ties, of the value of continuity and the awareness of our ongoing journey.

*Pause* in order to look and contemplate!

*See* the gestures that prevent the extinguishing of charity, that keep the flame of faith and hope alive. Look at faces alive with God's tenderness and goodness working in our midst.

*See* the face of our families who continue striving, day by day, with great effort, in order to move forward in life, and who, despite many concerns and much hardship, are committed to making their homes a school of love.

*See* the faces of our children and young people filled with yearning for the future and hope, filled with "tomorrows" and opportunities that demand dedication and protection. Living shoots of love and life that always open up a path in the midst of our selfish and meagre calculations.

*See* our elderly whose faces are marked by the passage of time, faces that reveal the living memory of our people. Faces that reflect God's wisdom at work.

*See* the faces of our sick people and the many who take care of them; faces which in their vulnerability and service remind us that the value of each person can never be reduced to a question of calculation or utility.

*See* the remorseful faces of so many who try to repair their errors and mistakes, and who from their misfortune and suffering fight to transform their situations and move forward.

*See and contemplate* the face of Crucified Love, who today from the cross continues to bring us

hope, his hand held out to those who feel crucified, who experience in their lives the burden of failure, disappointment and heartbreak.

*See and contemplate* the real face of Christ crucified out of love for everyone, without exception. For everyone? Yes, for everyone. To *see* his face is an invitation filled with hope for this Lenten time, in order to defeat the demons of distrust, apathy and resignation. The face that invites us to cry out: "The Kingdom of God is possible!"

*Pause, see and return. Return* to the house of your Father. *Return* without fear to those outstretched, eager arms of your Father, who is rich in mercy (cf. Eph 2:4), who awaits you.

*Return* without fear, for this is the favourable time to come home, to the home of my Father and your Father (cf. Jn 20:17). It is the time for allowing one's heart to be touched.... Persisting on the path of evil only gives rise to disappointment and sadness. True life is something quite distinct and our heart indeed knows this. God does not tire, nor will he tire, of holding out his hand (cf. *Misericordiae Vultus*, 19).

*Return* without fear, to join in the celebration of those who are forgiven.

*Return* without fear, to experience the healing and reconciling tenderness of God. Let the Lord heal the wounds of sin and fulfil the prophecy made to our fathers: "A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh" (Ezek 36: 26).

Pause, see and return!



# Break the chains of slavery

The Pope calls for responsibility and political will to combat trafficking

it to be talked about, because they are directly involved in the criminal organizations that reap handsome profits from trafficking. Yes, it takes courage and honesty, "when, in our daily lives, we meet or deal with persons who could be victims of human trafficking, or when we are tempted to select items which may well have been produced by exploiting others".<sup>1</sup>

The work of raising awareness must begin at home, with ourselves, because only in this way will we be able to then make our communities aware, motivating them to commit themselves so that no human being may ever again be a victim of trafficking.

This seems like an easier task for young people, given that they are less structured in their thinking, less confused by prejudices, freer to reason with their own minds. The more enthusiastic and spontaneous voice of young people can break the silence in order to denounce the atrocities of trafficking and propose concrete solutions. Adults who are ready to listen can be of great help.

For my part, as you may have noted, I have never missed an opportunity to openly denounce trafficking as a crime against humanity. It is "a true form of slavery, unfortunately more and more widespread, which concerns every country, even the most developed. It is a reality which affects the most vulnerable in society: women of all ages, children, the handicapped, the poorest, and those who come from broken families and from difficult situations in society".<sup>2</sup>

I have also said that "what is called for, then, is a shared sense of responsibility and firmer political will to gain victory on this front. Responsibility is required towards those who have fallen victim to trafficking in order to protect their rights, to guarantee their safety and that of their families, and to prevent the corrupt and criminals from escaping justice and having the last word over the lives of others".<sup>3</sup>

"A shared sense of responsibility and firmer political will" are necessary in order to definitively conquer the scourge of human trafficking. Pope Francis emphasized this on Monday morning, 12 February, to a group who had participated in the International Day of Prayer and Awareness against Human Trafficking on 8 February. The encounter, which was held in the Clementine Hall, unfolded as a dialogue between the Pontiff and several of the participants. The following is a translation of the discussion.

[Joy Monday] First of all we would like to thank you for your tireless and benevolent attention and concern for all migrants and victims of trafficking. We have experienced many difficulties and a great deal of suffering before arriving in Italy. Once we arrive in Italy we work hard to integrate, and finding dignified work is nearly impossible. Do you think that the surprising silence surrounding trafficking is due to ignorance of the phenomenon?

Certainly there is a lot of ignorance on the topic of trafficking. But sometimes there also seems to be little will to understand the scope of the issue. Why? Because it touches close to our conscience, because it is thorny, because it is shameful. Then there are those who, even knowing this, do not want to speak because they are at the end of the "supply chain", as a user of the "services" that are offered on the street or on the Internet. There are, lastly, those who do not want

[Silvia Migliorini, Via Dalmazia High School, Rome] Many of us young people would like to have a better understanding of trafficking, migration and their causes. Yes, we would like to commit ourselves to making this world more just. We would like to address topics like this with the young people of our society, using social networks too, using their considerable power of communication. Dear Pope Francis, in parish groups, in youth movements, in Catholic educational institutions, sometimes there are not adequate and sufficient avenues to address these topics. Moreover, it would be nice if activities were organized to promote social and cultural integration with those who are victims of trafficking, so it would be easier for them to overcome their tragedy and rebuild a life. What can we young people do? What can the Church do?

Young people are in a privileged position to encounter survivors of human trafficking. Go to your parishes, to an association near home; meet the people, listen to them. Your response and concrete commitment will grow from there. In fact, I see the risk that this may become an abstract issue, but it is not abstract. There are signs that you can learn how to "read", which tell you: this could be a victim of trafficking here, a slave. We need to promote the culture of encounter which in itself leads to an unexpected wealth and great surprises. Saint Paul gives us an example: in Christ, the slave Onesimus is no longer a slave but much more; he is a beloved brother (cf. Philem 1:16).

You young people can find hope in Christ, and you can also encounter him in migrants, people who have fled from home, and who remain trapped in the networks. Do not be afraid to encounter them. Open your heart, let them in, be ready to change. Encountering the other naturally leads to change, but there is no need to fear this change. It will always be for the best. Remember the words of the Prophet Isaiah: "Enlarge your tent" (cf. Is 54:2).

The Church must promote and create spaces for encounter. For this reason I have requested that parishes be opened for welcoming. It is important to recognize the great task in response to my appeal, thank you! I ask you who are present here today to work in favour of opening up to others, especially when they are wounded in their dignity. Become promoters of initiatives that your parishes can host. Help the Church to create spaces for sharing experiences and integration of faith and of life.

Social networks too, especially for young people, are a seemingly endless opportunity for encounter: the Internet can offer more opportunities for encounter and solidarity among all, and this is a good thing; it is a gift of God. However, for every instrument that is offered to us, the choice that mankind decides to

make of it is fundamental. The communicative environment can help us to grow or, on the contrary, to become disoriented. The risks inherent in some of these virtual spaces must not be underestimated; through the web, many young people are lured and drawn into slavery from which it then becomes beyond their ability to free themselves. In this sphere, adults, parents and teachers – also older siblings and cousins – are called to the task of watching over and protecting youths. You must do the same with your relatives and friends: perceive and point out particular vulnerabilities, suspicious cases on which light must be shed.

Thus, use the web to share a positive account of your experiences of encounter with our brothers and sisters in the world, recount and share good practices and generate a virtuous circle.

[Faith Outcry] I am one of many young women who have come from a faraway country, with a different culture, with different life situations and the experience of a different Church. Now I am here and I would like to build my future here. But I think about my country, of many young people who are misled with false promises, swindled, enslaved, prostituted. How can we help these young people to avoid falling into the trap of illusions and into the hands of traffickers?

As you said, it must be ensured that young people not fall "into the hands of traffickers". And how horrible it is to realize that many young victims were first abandoned by their families, considered as rejects by their society! Many were then introduced to trafficking by their own families and so-called friends. It happened in the Bible too: remember that the older brothers sold the young Joseph as a slave, and thus he was enslaved in Egypt!

Also in conditions of extreme poverty, education is shown to be important. It is an instrument of protection against trafficking; in fact it helps to identify dangers and to avoid illusions. A healthy school environment, like a healthy parish environment, allows young people to condemn traffickers without shame and to become bearers of just messages for other young people, so that they do not wind up in the same trap.

All those who have been victims of trafficking have been immeasurable sources of support for new victims, and extremely important informational resources to save many other young people. It is often fake news, spread via word of mouth or filtered through social media, that entraps the innocent. Young people who have encountered organized crime can play a key role in describing the dangers. Traffickers are often people without scruples, without morals or ethics, who live on other people's misfortunes, exploiting human emotions and people's desperation in order to subjugate them to their will, rendering them slaves and subservient. Suffice it to think how many very young

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

In even the most prosperous societies

## A modern-day scandal

"Modern forms of slavery are far more widespread than previously imagined, even – to our scandal and shame – within the most prosperous of our societies". Pope Francis emphasized this in a discourse to members of the Santa Marta Group, whom he received in audience in the Clementine Hall on Friday, 9 February, at the conclusion of their annual conference dedicated to the fight against human trafficking. The following is the English text of the Holy Father's address.

Dear Brother Bishops,  
Dear Friends,

I am happy to greet you, the members of the Santa Marta Group, at the conclusion of your Conference, which is devoted this year to providing a worldwide perspective on human trafficking and modern slavery. As leaders in law enforcement, research and public policy, and pastoral assistance, you offer an essential contribution to addressing the causes and effects of this modern-day scourge, which continues to cause untold human suffering.

It is my hope that these days of reflection and shared experiences have brought into clearer light the interplay between the global and local aspects of human trafficking. Experience shows that such modern forms of slavery are far more widespread than previously imagined, even – to our scandal and shame – within the most prosperous of our societies.

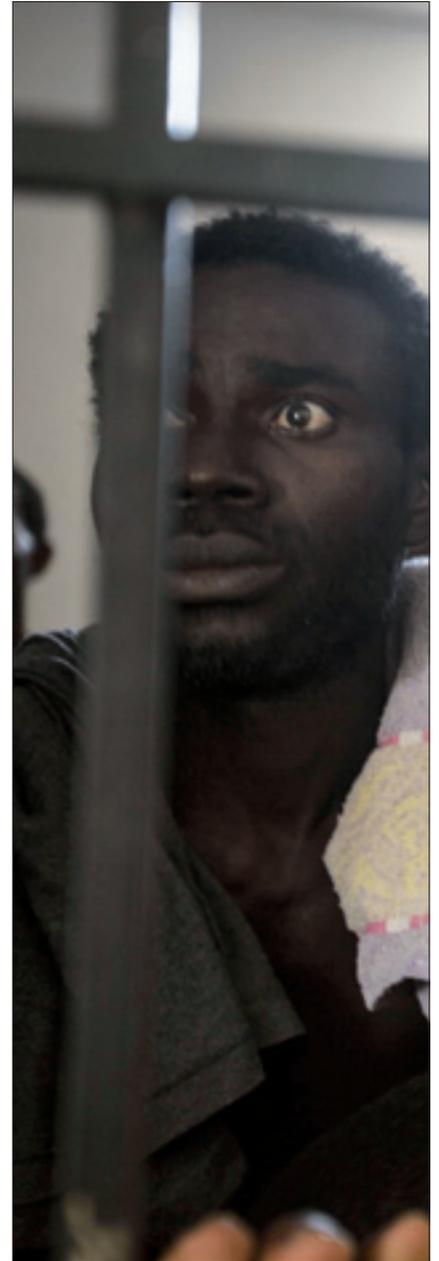
God's cry to Cain, found in the first pages of the Bible – "Where is your brother?" – challenges us to examine seriously the various forms of complicity by which society tolerates, and encourages, particularly with regard to the sex trade, the exploitation of vulnerable men, women and children (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, 211). Initiatives to combat human trafficking, while concretely aimed at dismantling criminal structures, must increasingly consider broader issues associated, for example, with the responsible use of technology and the communications media, to say nothing of exploring the ethical implications of models of economic growth that privilege profit over persons.

I trust that your discussions in these days will also help to raise awareness of the growing need to support victims of these crimes by accompanying them on a path of reintegration into society and the recovery of their human dignity. The Church is grateful for every effort made to bring the balm of God's mercy to the suffering, for this also represents an essential step in the healing and renewal of society as a whole.

Dear friends, with gratitude for your commitment and cooperation in this vital area, I offer my prayerful best wishes for your continued work. Upon you and your families, and upon all those whom you serve, I invoke the Lord's blessings of wisdom, strength and peace. And I ask you, please, to pray for me.



Victims of labour trafficking have been found among migrant and seasonal farm workers in the USA, including men, women, families, or children as young as 5 or 6 years old.



## Break the chains of slavery

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

African women arrive on our shores hoping to start a better life, thinking they will earn an honest living, and instead are enslaved, forced into prostitution.

It is fundamental for young people to build their own identity step by step and to have a point of reference, a guiding light. The Church has always sought to stand beside people who suffer, in particular children and young people, protecting them and promoting their integral human development.

Minors are often "invisible", subjected to dangers and threats, isolated and easy to manipulate; we want, even in the most precarious situations, to be your beacon of hope and support, because God is always with you.

"Courage and hope are qualities that everyone has, but they are most befitting in young people: courage and hope. The future is surely in the hands of God, the hands of a provident Father. This does not mean denying difficulties and problems, but seeing them, yes, as temporary and surmountable. Difficulties, crises, can with God's help and the good will of all, be overcome, defeated, transformed".<sup>4</sup>

*[Antonio Maria Rossi, Via Dalmazia High School, Rome] We young Italians are confronted with a context marked more each day by the plurality of cultures and religions. It is an open challenge. Often the lack of respect for the diverse, the throw-away culture and corruption – from which trafficking arises – seem normal. Pope Francis, please continue to encourage our government leaders to fight corruption, the arms trade and the throw-away culture; also encourage all religious leaders to guarantee spaces where different cultures and religions can get to know one another and appreciate each other, so that all can share the same spirituality of hospitality. I would like to ask you: what can we do here so that the scourge of trafficking disappears definitively?*

When countries fall prey to extreme poverty, violence and corruption, the economy, the regulatory framework and the basic infrastructures are inefficient and are unable to guarantee security, goods and essential rights. In such contexts, the perpetrators of these crimes act with impunity. Organized crime and the illegal trafficking of drugs and of human beings choose their prey from among the people who have the most inadequate means of subsistence and even less hope for the future.

The response therefore, is to create opportunities for an integral human development, starting with a quality education in early childhood, creating subsequent opportunities for growth through employment. These two modalities of growth, in the various phases of life, are antidotes to vulnerability and to trafficking.

What I have defined many times as "the throw-away culture" is at the foundation of behaviours which, in the market and in the globalized world, lead to the exploitation of

human beings, on all levels. "Poverty, the needs and dramas of so many people end up being considered normal".<sup>5</sup>

Some states promote, within the international community, a particularly harsh policy in seeking to defeat human trafficking; this attitude is in itself misleading because, due to behind-the-scenes economic interests, it does not seek to address the underlying causes. Furthermore, the position on the international level is not always coherent with internal policies. I truly hope that you may send a message to the leaders at every level of government, of the business world and of society, asking for access to a quality education and then, to fair and sustainable employment.

One strategy which includes a greater awareness of the theme of trafficking, beginning with a clear terminology and with the concrete testimonies of protagonists, can certainly be of help. Real awareness about the topic, however, devotes attention to the "demand for trafficking" that is behind the offer (chain of consumption); we are all called to reject hypocrisy and to face the idea of being part of the problem, rather than turn away proclaiming our innocence.

Allow me to say, if there are so many young women victims of trafficking who end up on the streets of our cities, it is because many men here – young, middle-aged, elderly – demand these services and are willing to pay for their pleasure. I wonder then, is the principal cause of trafficking really the traffickers? I believe the principal cause is the unscrupulous selfishness of the many hypocrites in our world. Of course, arresting traffickers is an obligation of justice. But the true solution is the conversion of hearts, cutting off demand in order to dry out the market.

*[Maria Magdalene Savini] Pope Francis, in one of your messages to the mayors of large cities meeting in the Vatican, you said that in order to be truly effective, the common commitment to raising ecological awareness and to combat modern forms of slavery – trafficking of human beings and of organs, prostitution, illegal labour – must start at the peripheries.<sup>6</sup> We young people also often find ourselves in the periphery and we suffer from exclusion, the uncertainty of not having work or access to quality education, living in situations of war, of violence, being forced to leave our lands, belonging to ethnic and religious minorities. We women, especially, are penalized and are the primary victims. What space will be given in the Synod on Young People to the young women and young men who come from the peripheries of marginalization caused by an outdated develop-*

*ment model which continues to cause human degradation? How can we ensure that these young men and women may be protagonists of change in society and in the Church?*

I would like – for those who are real witnesses to the risks of trafficking in their countries of origin – that they may find in the Synod a place to express themselves, from which to call the Church to action.



Therefore, it is my great hope that young people representing the "peripheries" may be protagonists of this Synod. I hope they may see the Synod as a place to launch a message to the governing leaders of countries of origin and arrival in order to demand protection and support. I hope that these young people may launch a global message for a worldwide mobilization of youth, so as to build together an inclusive and welcoming common home. I hope they may be examples of hope for those who are experiencing the existential tragedy of discouragement.

The Catholic Church intends to intervene in every phase of the traf-

ficking of human beings: she wants to protect them from deception and solicitation; she wants to find them and free them when they are transported and reduced to slavery; she wants to assist them once they are freed. Often the people who are trapped and mistreated lose the ability to trust others, and the Church often proves to be the last lifeline.

It is absolutely essential to respond in a concrete way to the vulnerability of those who are at risk, so as to then guide the process of liberation beginning with saving their lives. Ecclesial groups can open safe havens where necessary, in places of recruitment, on trafficking routes and in countries of arrival. My hope is that the Synod may be an opportunity for the local Churches to learn to work together and become "a safety net".

Lastly I would like to conclude by quoting Saint Josephine Bakhita. This great Sudanese woman "is even today an exemplary witness of hope for the many victims of slavery; she can support the efforts of all those committed to fighting against this 'open wound on the body of contemporary society, a scourge upon the body of Christ'.<sup>7</sup> May she inspire us to extend gestures of brotherhood to those who find themselves in a state of submission. May she enable us to engage, to be called to the encounter.

Let us pray:

*Saint Josephine Bakhita, you were sold into slavery as a child and endured unspeakable hardship and suffering. Once liberated from your physical enslavement, you found true redemption in your encounter with Christ and his Church.*

*O Saint Josephine Bakhita, assist all those who are entrapped in slavery;*

*Intercede on their behalf with the God of Mercy so that the chains of their captivity will be broken.*

*May God himself free all those who have been threatened, wounded or mistreated by the trade and trafficking of human beings.*

*Bring comfort to survivors of this slavery and teach them to look to Jesus as an example of hope and faith so that they may find healing from their wounds.*

*We ask you to pray for us and to intercede on behalf of us all: that we may not fall into indifference, that we may open our eyes and be able to see the misery and wounds of our many brothers and sisters deprived of their dignity and their freedom, and may we hear their cry for help.*

*Amen.*

<sup>1</sup> *Message for the 48th World Day of Peace 2015, "No longer slaves, but brothers and sisters", n. 6.*

<sup>2</sup> *Address to the New Ambassadors accredited to the Holy See on the occasion of the presentation of the letters of credence, 12 December 2013.*

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

<sup>4</sup> *Meeting with the young people of the Dioceses of Abruzzo and Molise, 5 July 2014.*

<sup>5</sup> *Catechesis, General Audience, 5 June 2013.*

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Address to participants in the Workshop "Modern slavery and climate change: the commitment of the cities", promoted by the Pontifical Academies of Sciences and of Social Sciences, 21 July 2015.*

<sup>7</sup> *Message for the 48th World Day of Peace 2015, "No longer slaves, but brothers and sisters", n. 6.*

# Francis' prayer intentions for 2018

Entrusted to the Apostleship of Prayer

*The following are the Prayer Intentions for 2018 – universal and for evangelization – which the Holy Father entrusted to the Worldwide Prayer Network, Apostleship of Prayer.*

## JANUARY

Evangelization: *Religious Minorities in Asia*

That Christians, and other religious minorities in Asian countries, may be able to practise their faith in full freedom.

## FEBRUARY

Universal: *Say "No" to Corruption*

That those who have material, political or spiritual power may resist any lure of corruption.

## MARCH

Evangelization: *Formation in Spiritual Discernment*

That the Church may appreciate the urgency of formation in spiritual discernment, both on the personal and communitarian levels.

## APRIL

Universal: *For Those who have Responsibility in Economic Matters*

That economists may have the courage to reject any economy of exclusion and know how to open new paths.

## MAY

Evangelization: *The Mission of the Laity*

That the lay faithful may fulfil their specific mission, by responding with creativity to the challenges that face the world today.

## JUNE

Universal: *Social Networks*

That social networks may work towards that inclusiveness which respects others for their differences.

## JULY

Evangelization: *Priests and their Pastoral Ministry*

That priests, who experience fatigue and loneliness in their pastoral work, may find help and comfort in their intimacy with the Lord and in their friendship with their brother priests.

## AUGUST

Universal: *The Treasure of Families*

That any far-reaching decisions of economists and politicians may protect the family as one of the treasures of humanity.

## SEPTEMBER

Universal: *Young People in Africa*

That young people in Africa may have access to education and work in their own countries.

## OCTOBER

Evangelization: *The Mission of Religious*

That consecrated men and women religious may bestir themselves, and be present among the poor, the marginalized, and those who have no voice.

## NOVEMBER

Universal: *In the Service of Peace*

That the language of love and dialogue may always prevail over the language of conflict.

## DECEMBER

Evangelization: *In the Service of the Transmission of Faith*

That people, who are involved in the service and transmission of faith, may find, in their dialogue with culture, a language suited to the conditions of the present time.



Nearly 200 people killed last year for defending the environment

## Martyred for the earth

GAETANO VALLINI

Some have already defined them as martyrs of the earth, killed in the name of *Laudato Si'*. They are the victims of a silent war being fought in various corners of the world and which claimed 197 victims in 2017, according to Global Witness, an NGO that tracks the tragic toll each year.

A blood-soaked war, ignored for the most part – its victims almost always farmers and indigenous people, simple activists opposed to the indiscriminate exploitation of the territory – but which resurfaces from time to time when a well-known person is slain. Such as Esmond Bradley Martin, the 76-year-old American geographer, former UN Special Envoy for the conservation of rhinoceros, who lived in Kenya some 30 years and many times risked his life at the hands of poachers. He was assassinated in his home in Nairobi on Sunday, 4 February – a failed robbery attempt, according to police, but there are those who have doubts.

Martin's name doesn't appear in the latest report compiled by Global Witness in collaboration with *The Guardian*. We will probably read it



in the next one. Past reports have included other notable figures such as Honduran activist Berta Cáceres, the 2015 winner of the prestigious Goldman Environmental Prize, considered the Nobel for the environment. She was at the Vatican in 2014 to participate in the meeting of Popular Movements and at that time was able to hear the Pope's words, those "three Ls" – land, lodging and labour (in Spanish the three *Ts* – *tierra, techo y trabajo*) – which con-

firmed her commitment and that of other activists, and in some way foresaw the Encyclical on the care of creation. Cáceres was assassinated on 3 March 2016.

Whether the economic interests are of traffickers, private or governmental entities, they do not appear to tolerate obstacles, wiping out whoever opposes them. Global Witness reports two deaths per week since 2002. But last year the average doubled, as in 2016, reaching the tragic record of 200 victims. A veritable slaughter that affects mostly Latin America and, in particular, the Amazon region, where interests are more strongly linked to the agricultural and mining sectors (60% of the killings). The heaviest hit are the indigenous populations, whose fundamental role in environmental protection the Pope has attested to many times, including during his recent visit to Chile and Peru. The most re-

cent figures are striking: 46 dead in Brazil, 32 in Colombia, 15 in Mexico, but even other countries, such as Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras and Peru, have had their share of victims.

Even Asia and Africa are paying a high price. For example, in the Philippines, one of the most dangerous countries for activists, 41 people have been killed. In the Democratic Republic of Congo there have been 13 murders – in this case involving guardians of protected areas.

With its reporting, Global Witness continues to shine a light on the phenomenon, which is growing at an alarming rate and difficult to contend with. Colossal interests, often fueled by corruption, find too many willing conspirators. The assassins almost always go unpunished. And those who fight on the front lines are often alone and defenceless. "Until companies, investors and governments genuinely include communities in decisions around the use of their land and natural resources", emphasized Rachel Cox of Global Witness, "the people who dare to speak out will continue to face violence, imprisonment and loss of life".

# Custodians of brotherhood

Speaking to Stigmatines the Pontiff stresses the importance of community life

*"The life of fraternity", Pope Francis said, "is difficult because there are human problems, jealousy, competition, misunderstandings". Thus, "it is very important to be aware of this in order to be understanding in community life. And to reach the point of being able to speak as brothers". In the Clementine Hall on Saturday morning, 10 February, Pope Francis set aside his prepared remarks to emphasize the importance of fraternity during an audience with members of the Congregation of the Sacred Stigmata, or the Stigmatine Fathers, who had gathered in Rome to participate in their General Chapter. The following is a translation of the Pontiff's extemporaneous address, which he delivered in Italian.*

I liked what the "outgoing" [departing Superior] General said. I prepared this speech for you, but as he was speaking I felt something within me and I would like to speak to you off-the-cuff. And Archbishop Gänswein will give you the official copy of the [prepared] address. We will speak here about what has come to my mind, is that okay?

One thing that hit me is *fraternity*: the Father General spoke of fraternity, which perhaps has weakened a bit.... It is not easy to live in fraternity. Religious fraternity, life in common.... Even our Saint John Berchmans said that "*mea maxima poenitentia, vita communis*".

Life in community, the life of fraternity, is difficult because there are human problems, jealousy, competition, misunderstandings: we have so many issues, all of us, myself first and foremost. Everyone. It is very important to be aware of this in order to be understanding in community life. And to reach the point of being able to speak as brothers. Very well. And at times, when we speak as brothers, things are said that are not pleasant. But they are said as *brothers*, that is, with charity, with gentleness, with humility, and not by hiding things, no. One clear matter – the clearest in community life – is being able to speak as brothers. Perhaps a brother tells you something that you do not like, but without holding a grudge: "You did this to me; you will pay for it!". This does not work. But fraternity is a grace, and if there is no prayer this grace does not come. "Yes, I pray the offices; I pray; I meditate on the Gospel...". Yes, yes, but do you pray for this brother, for the other, for the other, for the Superior? Concrete prayer for your brother. Concrete prayer for your brother. This creates the miracle of fraternity. At times in community meetings there are quarrels, but even in good families, in good marriages, there are quarrels. It is not a sin to quarrel. Rancour is a sin; the resentment left in your heart after having quarreled. But quarreling is saying the things that you think, breathing the air of freedom as brothers. Do not be afraid. Without offending, but say things as they are. And then have the courage to speak as the Gospel teaches us: if you have an issue with your brother, or if

you know that he has an issue with you, talk to him. Talk to him on the side. And then, if things don't work, speak in community, but talk. Do not swallow what is indigestible; these problems are not digested.

I exhort you in community life to go along this path of truth, of freedom, with much charity and prayer, but proceed in this way, without fear. Do not be afraid. It would be bad should I, a religious man, not have the courage to say what I think to my brother's face, but go behind [his back] and say it to another. This is gossip. Allow me the phrase: it is the idle chatter of "old bachelors". We took the vow of chastity, not of "old bachelorhood", no; of chastity: it is another thing. And instead of being chaste we become "old bachelors". What is worse than being old bachelors or spinsters? Giving up fatherhood, motherhood. It is interesting: when one does not give up spiritual fatherhood, he seeks to fully experience it; and he better experiences fraternity in the community. But idle chatter is an alibi: with it you believe you have resolved the problem, but you resolve nothing. You vent a bit, but you vent as an "old bachelor". So often, perhaps you have heard, as I call gossip: one who gossips is a "terrorist". Because gossip is an act of terrorism; gossiping about another, because I go with a bomb in hand; I drop the bomb, destroy my brother, and I go away trouble free. And then, who will rehabilitate my brother's reputation? I do evil behind [his back]. It is a little calumny or defamation. At times I may be right, but I defame: I take away his good reputation. And Saint Philip Neri's anecdote about the hen comes to mind: that woman who went to confession for gossiping, and as a penance she was told to pluck a hen – do you know it? And then she returned: "And now try to collect the feathers". You can't. That is how it is. Once you have sown the seeds of calumny or gossip, defamation, you have destroyed. The devil is cunning; he uses this, which is one of our weaknesses. He is cunning.

Fraternity. Please safeguard fraternity. This does not mean that everyone has to be close friends. No, brothers. With respect, the rules of respect, the rules of freedom, esteem and

prayer for one another. And I ask you to examine your conscience about this. In these days, before the elections, perform an examination of conscience, both of the community and of your own. About this too: fraternity.

The second dimension is your name, which comes from the *Stigmata*. I really like this. Saint Bernard says that the Word of God made flesh "abounds in mercy" which in the Passion, with the Stigmata, is poured out upon us. The Lord's Stigmata, the Lord's wounds, are the very door through which mercy comes. That "abundance of mercy", which is Jesus Christ. And Saint Bernard continues – surely you have read this – if I am depressed, if I have sinned too much, if I have done this, this, that..., I go and take refuge in the Lord's wounds. You are aware that you are "wounded". Each one of us is "wounded", and resolves his life if he unites it with the Lord's wounds. Only

Do not be ashamed of devotion to the Lord's wounds. It is your path of sanctification. Teach people that we are all "wounded". A "wounded" sinner finds forgiveness, peace and consolation only in the wounds of the Lord, not elsewhere. This is the second thing that came to my mind as the General was speaking.

And the third is the *Holy Family*. Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Ever docile to doing God's will. Mary, the woman "of haste". I really like that passage of Luke, when he says that Mary went "with haste" to her cousin to help her (cf. 1:39). In the Litanies it would be nice to insert this: "Our Lady of haste, pray for us". Always with haste, to help. And Joseph is a gentle man, who received revelations in his dreams. Maligners would say that, already being old, Joseph suffered insomnia; he could not sleep. But there was a psychological problem: he was frightened, because every time



awareness of a "wounded" Church, of a "wounded" Congregation, of a "wounded" soul or heart leads us to knock at the merciful door of the Lord's wounds. One who knows he is "wounded" seeks the wounds. Look for this text: contemplating the wounds of the Lord is entering his wounds. By Saint Bernard. It is a beautiful image; I really like it! The "abundance of mercy" that opens for all of us in the wounds of the Lord. This is interesting too: people who do not feel they are "wounded" by sin, do not understand Jesus' wounds. Sometimes we hear: "But this devotion to Jesus' wounds is rather mediaeval...". That person does not feel "wounded". "By his wounds we have been healed" (cf. 1 Pt 2:24). Precisely there: the Lord's wounds. And as that prayer says: "Within your wounds conceal me" (*Anima Christi*). Conceal me from shame. Conceal me from the Father's ire. Conceal me from my misery. But in your wounds.

he went to sleep his plans were changed! He is the man open to the Lord's revelations. And with gentleness, labour.... But united, together: Mary's haste, Joseph's strong, patient gentleness – strong! He knew how to educate the Son. The devotion of Mary and Joseph. Do not leave these devotions aside. Someone could say: "But they are for children". Yes, but we are children before God. If only, if only we could become children before God! Say to our Mother who makes haste: "help me". And go to her in difficult moments. Russian mystics say that in moments of spiritual turbulence we must take cover under the mantle of the Holy Mother of God, and it is from there that the first Western Marian Antiphon comes: "*Sub tuum praesidium confugimus, Sancta Dei Genitrix...*". The mantle of the Holy Mother of God. And Joseph: the gentle man, the just man, a man of silence, man of patience,

Prepared discourse consigned to the Congregation of the Sacred Stigmata

## With the good fire of charity

*On Saturday, 10 February, the Holy Father received in audience members of the Congregation of the Sacred Stigmata on the occasion of their general chapter. He set aside his prepared discourse in favour of an extemporaneous address. The following is a translation of the prepared text, which was later consigned to the members.*

Dear Brothers,

Welcome, on the occasion of your elective General Chapter. I cordially greet you all, starting with the Superior General whom I thank for his kind words. You come from 15 countries where you are committed to spreading the message of the Word of God in all its forms, paying particular attention to the young generations and in fraternal cooperation with the diocesan clergy. I thank you

In the Gospel Jesus announces: "I came to cast fire upon the earth; and would that it were already kindled!" (Lk 12:49). Imitating the divine Master, you too are called to bring fire into the world. But there is a wrong fire and a good, holy fire. The Evangelist Luke recounts that while he was on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus once sent ahead some messengers who entered a village of Samaritans who did not want to receive him. The two disciples and brothers, James and John thus said, "Lord, do you want us to bid fire come down from heaven and consume them?" (Lk 9:54). But Jesus turned and rebuked them and they went on to another village. This is misguided fire. God does not like this. In the Bible God is likened to fire but it is a fire of love which wins people's hearts, not through violence, but by respecting each person's freedom and his or her own time.

The Gospel should be proclaimed with meekness and joy as your Founder, Saint Gaspar Bertoni did. This is the style of evangelization of Jesus, our Master. He welcomed and ap-

proached everyone and won people over with kindness, mercy and with the penetrating word of Truth. In this way you, missionary disciples, who are evangelizers, can bring people to conversion, to communion with Christ through the joy of your life and with meekness. Those who pro-

claim the Gospel are not always welcomed and applauded. Sometimes they are rejected, hindered, persecuted, even imprisoned or killed. You know this well! So we must persevere, be patient, but we must not be afraid of anything in bearing witness to Jesus and his word of Truth.

The good fire is the fire of Jesus, of the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit and in fire: "I came to cast fire upon the earth" (Lk 12:49). It is the fire of charity that purifies hearts and which burst forth on Christ's cross. It is the fire of the Holy Spirit who descended powerfully at Pentecost; the fire that separates gold from other metals, that is, which helps to distinguish what is of eternal worth from what has little value. "Every one", says Jesus, "will be salted with fire" (Mk 9:49). It is the fire of trials and difficulties which tempers us, makes us strong and wise. It is also the fire of fraternal charity. Evangelizers are born and formed in a community gathered in the name of the Lord, and are sent forth by it. "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Mt 18:20). The testimony of love of a fraternal community of missionaries is confirmation of the Gospel message; it is the "trial by fire". If good fire is lacking in a community, there is coldness, darkness and loneliness. If the fire of fraternal charity is there, then there is heat, light and the strength to go forward; and new vocations are attracted to the gentle mission of evangelizing.

Dear Stigmatine missionaries, bring this fire to Christian communities where the faith of many people needs to be rekindled, to find the strength to be contagious. At the same time, go, go out to proclaim the Gospel to the poor, to those who do not feel loved by anyone, to those who live in sadness and despair, to prisoners, to the homeless and those without shelter, to immigrants and those fleeing from war. Saint Gaspar Bertoni transmitted to you the love of the Holy spouses, Mary and Joseph. Therefore, pay particular attention to the family. Together with the laity, proclaim the joy of love. Take the fire of Christ to the young who need someone to listen to them and to help them find meaning in life. If you proclaim Jesus, they will be attracted to him. Lead them to him with patience and perseverance. Be joyful and gentle missionaries, well prepared to meet each person.

Saint Gaspar Bertoni conceived of your Congregation to prepare apostolic missionaries to help bishops in the proclamation of the Gospel. Being missionaries sent by the Church, is first of all,



Su Yeon Shim Lee, "Fire"

not doing something, an activity, but rather it is an identity. When God chooses and calls for a particular mission, he is at the same time, giving a new name, creating an ever new reality. Jesus called you to be with him as missionary disciples. Therefore, you should first of all nurture and safeguard your communion with him, the Lord, to contemplate his countenance in prayer, to recognize him and serve him with love in the faces of your brothers.

May your faithful bond to Christ and his Gospel shine forth in the various fields of your ecclesial service. May the Virgin Mary and Saint Gaspar protect you and be sure guides on the journey of your religious Family so that it may fulfil all its beneficial projects. With these wishes, as I ask you to pray for me; I invoke the blessing of the Lord upon you, the whole Institute and on all those you encounter in your daily apostolate. May the Lord always inflame your mission with the fire of the Holy Spirit!

## Brotherhood

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

man of labour. But everyone together, as a family. This devotion will help you so much, and what I tell you is not advice for old men, no, no. It is for men, for men who must be strong in proclaiming the Gospel. Go to the Mother and go to that man who acted as father and raised the Lord. And learn there, as a family.

I thank you. May you have a good election. Do not forget the wounds of the Lord. Do not forget brotherhood among you. And do not forget Our Lady ever with haste and Joseph always at the ready, in obedience and gentleness. And pray for me too. Now I shall give you the blessing.

## At the service of Bishops

During his greetings to the Holy Father at the start of the audience, the Superior General of the Stigmatine Fathers, Fr Maurizio Baldessari recounted the three tasks entrusted to the Congregation by its Founder, Saint Gaspar Bertoni, in 1816: Evangelization, special attention to young people and particular closeness to the diocesan clergy. Speaking on behalf of the 450 Stigmatines spread throughout 15 countries, he also reminded those present that the Founder "wished that we be at the service of bishops" and he had two devotions: the Stigmata of Jesus, in the hands of whom he saw the Saviour's infinite merciful love for mankind; and to Mary and Joseph whom he chose as Patrons of the Institute, to be role models of complete submission to God.

for what you do at the service of the Gospel and of the peoples entrusted to you, and I urge you to rekindle the fire of the Word of God within yourselves and your communities. It must also "inflammate" the hearts of those on the peripheries of urban and ecclesial contexts.

## VATICAN BULLETIN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

### HOLY SEE

The Holy Father appointed as Pontifical Master of Ceremonies Msgr Krzysztof Marcjanowicz, from the clergy of the Archdiocese of Krakow and Official at the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization (9 Feb.).

### START OF MISSION

On 9 January, Archbishop Emil Paul Tscherrig, titular Archbishop of Voli, began his mission as Apostolic Nuncio in the Republic

of San Marino with the presentation of his Letters of Credence to H.E. Mr Matteo Fiorini and H.E. Mr Enrico Carattoni, Captains Regent of San Marino.

### NECROLOGY

Bishop Herman Ferdinandus Maria Münnighoff, OFM, Bishop emeritus of Jayapura, Indonesia, at age 96 (7 Feb.).

Bishop Agenor Girardi, MSC, of Uniaõ da Vitória, Brazil, at age 66 (8 Feb.).

Archbishop Joseph Neil MacNeil, Archbishop emeritus of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, at age 93 (11 Feb.).

Before the Angelus the Pope recalls that sins of selfishness, arrogance and corruption make man unclean

## The audacity of Jesus

Registration begins for World Youth Day in Panama

*What makes man unclean is not bodily illness but sins, such as selfishness, arrogance and corruption, which are "diseases of the heart". This message was at the heart of Pope Francis' reflection at the Angelus in Saint Peter's Square on Sunday, 11 February, Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes and World Day of the Sick. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's reflection, which he shared in Italian.*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,  
Good morning!

On these Sundays, the Gospel according to Mark presents to us Jesus who heals sick people of every kind. In this context, the World Day of the Sick fits well. It is observed today, 11 February, Feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Lourdes. For this reason, with our heart's gaze directed toward the Grotto of Massabielle, let us contemplate Jesus as the true physician of bodies and souls, whom God the Father sent into the world to heal humanity, marked by sin and by its consequences.

Today's Gospel passage (cf. Mk 1:40-45) presents to us the healing of a man afflicted with leprosy, a disease that in the Old Testament was considered a grave impurity and required the leper to be separated from the community: they lived in isolation. His condition was truly pitiful, because the mind-set of the time made him feel unclean even before God, and not only before mankind. Even before God. Therefore the leper of the Gospel beseeches Jesus with these words: "If you will, you can make me clean" (v. 40).

Upon hearing this, Jesus feels pity (cf. v. 41). It is very important to pay attention to this inner resonance of Jesus, as we did at length during the Jubilee of Mercy. We cannot understand the works of Christ, we cannot understand Christ himself, if we do not enter his compassionate and merciful heart. And this is what spurs him to stretch out his hand to that man afflicted with leprosy, to touch him and say to him: "I will; be clean" (v. 40). The most shocking fact is that Jesus *touches* the leper, because that was absolutely prohibited by Mosaic law. Touching a leper meant being infected even inside, in the spirit, that is, becoming unclean. But in this case the influence flows not from the leper to Jesus so as to transfer the contagion, but actually from Jesus to the leper so as to grant him purification. In this healing, apart from Jesus' compassion and

mercy, we admire his audacity. He is concerned neither about the contagion nor about the rules, but is moved only by the will to free that man from the curse that burdens him.

Brothers and sisters, no disease is a cause of impurity: disease certainly involves the whole person, but in no way does it impair or impede his or her relationship with God. On the contrary, a sick person can be even more united with God. Instead, sin: that yes, is what makes us unclean! Selfishness, arrogance, entering the world of corruption: these are diseases of the heart from which we need to be purified by turning to Jesus like the leper: "If you will, you can make me clean!".

And now, let us observe a moment of silence, and each of us – all of you, me, everyone – can think about our own heart, look within ourselves, and see our own impurities, our own sins. And may each of us, in silence, but with the voice of our heart, say to Jesus: "If you will, you can make me clean". Let us all do so in silence.

"If you will, you can make me clean".

"If you will, you can make me clean".

And each time we approach the Sacrament of Reconciliation with a contrite heart, the Lord also repeats to us: "I will; be clean!". How much joy there is in this! In this way the leprosy of sin is overcome; we return to joyfully experience our filial relationship with God and we are fully readmitted into the community.

Through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, our Immaculate Mother, let us ask the Lord, who brought wellbeing to the sick, to heal even our inner wounds with his infinite mercy, and thus give us back hope and peace of heart.

*After the Marian prayer, flanked by a Paraguayan boy and an Italian girl, the Holy*



*Father used a tablet to register for World Youth Day, and shared these thoughts and greetings:*

Dear brothers and sisters, today is the opening of registration for World Youth Day, which will take place in Panama in January 2019. I too, in the presence of two young people, will now register on the internet [*he clicks on the tablet*]. There. I have registered as a pilgrim to World Youth Day. We must prepare ourselves! I invite all the young people of the world to live with faith and enthusiasm this event of grace and fraternity whether by going to Panama or by participating in their own communities.

On 15 February, in the Far East and in various parts of the world, millions of men and women will celebrate the *Lunar New Year*. I convey my cordial greeting to all their families, with the hope that they may always experience more solidarity, fraternity and the desire for good, by contributing to creating a society in which every person is welcomed, protected, promoted and integrated. I invite you to pray for the gift of peace, a precious treasure to seek with compassion, foresight and courage. I accompany and bless everyone.

I greet the families, parishes, associations and all those who have come from Italy and from so many parts of the world; in particular, the pilgrims from Murcia, Spain and the children from Guimarães, Portugal.

I greet the Congolese community of Rome and I join in their prayer for peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo. I remind you that this intention will be particularly present on the Day of Prayer and Fasting that I announced for 23 February.

Present today are many Italian parishes and many young people who have made their confirmation, profession of faith and catechism. It is not possible for me to name every group, but I thank you all for coming and I encourage you to proceed with joy and with generosity, witnessing everywhere to the goodness and mercy of the Lord.

I address a special thought to sick people who, in every part of the world, in addition to poor health, often suffer from isolation and marginalization. May the Blessed Virgin, *Salus Infirmorum*, help each one to find comfort in body and soul, thanks to proper health care and to the fraternal charity that is able to offer concrete and supportive attention.

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



Bill Hoover, "Ten lepers"