Do not let them silence you

The Holy Father addresses young people at Palm Sunday Mass

Reflecting on the day’s Liturgy in Saint Peter’s Square on Palm Sunday, 25 March, which coincided with the celebration at the diocesan level of World Youth Day, Pope Francis noted that “the joy Jesus awakened”, particularly among the youth, can be “a source of anger and even irritation to some”, accompanied by “the temptation to silence young people”. He thus called upon young people to “cry out”, to resist being silenced and rendered invisible, to avoid keeping quiet: “if the whole world keeps quiet and loses its joy”, he challenged them, “will you cry out?”. The Liturgy expresses “the contradictory feelings” that we too experience: “the capacity for great love... but also for great hatred; the capacity for courageous self-sacrifice, but also the ability to ‘wash our hands’ at the right moment; the capacity for loyalty, but also for great abandonment and betrayal”. Along with the many people who rejoiced as Jesus entered Jerusalem there were also those who wished to twist reality, invent stories, seeking to gain power in order to disfigure the face of Jesus and turn him into a “criminal”. The Pope said. The “best remedy” to such behaviour, he said, is “to look at Christ’s cross and let ourselves be challenged by his final cry”, and thus “opt for Sunday’s ‘Hosanna!’”, so as not to fall into Friday’s ‘Crucify him!’.

Meditations for the Via Crucis

Seeing, encountering, praying

The meditations for the 14 Stations of the Cross, presided by the Holy Father at the Colosseum in the evening of Good Friday, 30 March, were written by a group of young people. This year the 15 young men and women, nine of whom are students at the Pilo Albertelli secondary school in Rome, ranged from 16 to 27 years of age. The group was coordinated by Andrea Monda, a writer who teaches religion at the school. It was Pope Francis’ idea to entrust the meditations to young people especially in view of the upcoming Synod on youth.
The Holy Father visits the Secretariat of State

On Tuesday morning, 27 March, at the offices of the Secretariat of State, Pope Francis spoke with the Superiors and, accompanied by Assessor Mgr Paolo Borghia, visited all the offices. The Pope began his visit by blessing the offices of the Third Section — established last November for the diplomatic staff of the Holy See. He then personally greeted all the officials and employees, to whom he expressed his Easter wishes, thanking them for their work.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop John McAreavey of Dromore, Ireland (26 Mar.).

The Holy Father appointed as bishop Julio Murat, titular Archbishop of San Francisco, USA, and titular Bishop of Giru di Marzelo. Until now he has served as Apostolic Master of the Western Dominican Province (28 Mar.).

Bishop-elect Christian, 69, was born in San Francisco, USA. He was ordained a priest on 4 June 1976. He holds a Bachelor's degree in English Literature and a Doctorate in Theology. He has served in parish ministry and as: lecturer and then vice dean at the Pontifical University of Saint Thomas Aquinas, Rome, Italy; Vicar and Administrator of the Western Dominican Province; Dean of the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, USA; member of the Clergy Education Board of the Archdiocese of San Francisco; and, finally, the Roman Catholic International Commission and consultant for the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity.

The Holy Father appointed Archbishop Paulo Mendes Peixoto of Uberaba, as Apostolic Administrator sede plena et ad nutum Sanctae Sedis of the Diocese of Formosa, Brazil (21 Mar.).

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The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Henrique Moraes Brandão, titular Archbishop of Luanda, Angola (25 Mar.).

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Jerónimo (27 Mar.).

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Emmanuel Nwosu, titular Bishop of Nguru, Nigeria (25 Mar.).

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Pio Vittorio Righini, O.S.B.A., as Bishop of Manfredonia, Italy (21 Mar.).

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Gervais Sansimone, titular Bishop of Bujumbura. Until now he has served as Bishop of Ngozi (24 Mar.).

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Raimundo de Abreu, as Bishop of Guarapari, Brazil (25 Mar.).

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Leopoldo I. Gómez, titular Bishop of San Antonio, USA (28 Mar.).

The Holy Father appointed Archbishop Giovanni Pietro Dal 2012, subsequent to his appointment as bishop of Caxito. Until now he has served as Bishop of Caxito.

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Mario Monteiro da Silva, as Bishop of Quessua, Angola. He was ordained a priest on 29 September 1990. He was ordained a bishop on 16 September 2000, subsequent to his appointment as Coadjutor Bishop of Ngozi. He succeeded as Bishop of the said diocese on 14 December 2002.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Eugenio Dal Corso, P.D.D., of Benaulreland, Angola (25 Mar.).

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Antônio Francisco Joca, SVD, as Bishop of Benguela. Until now he has served as Bishop of Caxito, Angola (25 Mar.).

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Beto Mendes da Silva, as Bishop of Quessua, Angola. He was ordained a priest on 29 September 1990. He was ordained a bishop on 16 September 2000, subsequent to his appointment as Coadjutor Bishop of Ngozi. He succeeded as Bishop of the said diocese on 14 December 2002.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Eugenio Dal Corso, P.D.D., of Benguela, Angola (25 Mar.).

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Ulisses Montoya, as Bishop of Macapa, Brazil (25 Mar.).

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Josep Maria Ràfols, S.M.M., as Bishop of Mataró, Spain (25 Mar.).

The Holy Father appointed BishopImported Bishop of San José do Rio Preto, Brazil. On 7 March 2002 he was appointed Archbishop of Uberaba. The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Archbishop Eduardo Gómez García, titular Archbishop of Cellor, Colombia, and as: formator at the Major Seminary of San Jerónimo, diocesan director of the Schoenstatt Movement; undersecretary for pastoral care at the Episcopal Conference of Bolivia.

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Skiper Leandro Calvachi as Bishop of Babahoyo, Ecuador. Until now he has served as Bishop of Guaranda, Ecuador (25 Mar.).

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Jerónimo of Bujumbura, Burundi (24 Mar.).

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Gervais Sansimone, as Bishop of Caxito. Until now he has served as Bishop of Caxito.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop John McAreavey of Dromore, Ireland (26 Mar.).

The Holy Father appointed as titular Bishop of Mitucu and Auxiliary of El Alto, Bolivia, Fr Giovanni Edgar Araujo from the clergy of the Archdiocese of La Paz. Until now he has served as vicar rector and then rector of the Major Seminary of San Jerónimo (27 Mar.).

The Holy Father appointed Bishop-elect Arana, 43, was born in La Paz, Bolivia. He was ordained a priest on 8 December 2004. He holds a diploma in priestly formation. He has served in parish ministry and as: formator at the Major Seminary of San Jerónimo, diocesan director of the Schoenstatt Movement; undersecretary for pastoral care at the Episcopal Conference of Bolivia.

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Giacomo Morandi, titular Bishop of Cerveteri, Secretary of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity.

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Giuseppe Incalzi, O.M.V.F., as the Apostolic Administrator of Namur, Belgium (25 Mar.).

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Pablo Mora, as Bishop of Babahoyo, Ecuador. Until now he has served as Bishop of Guaranda, Ecuador (25 Mar.).

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Roberto Calvachi as Bishop of Babahoyo, Ecuador. Until now he has served as Bishop of Guaranda, Ecuador (25 Mar.).

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Gaetano Ferrari, as Bishop of Caxito. Until now he has served as Bishop of Caxito.

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Let us walk in a new life

At the General Audience the Pope reflects on the Easter Triduum

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Today I would like to pause to meditate on the Easter Triduum, which begins tomorrow, in order to examine a bit what the most important liturgical days of the year represent for us believers. I would like to ask you a question: which is the most important celebration of our faith? Christmas or Easter? Easter, because it is the celebration of our salvation, the celebration of God’s love for us, the feast, the celebration of his death and Resurrection. And for this reason I would like to reflect with you on this feast, on these days, which are days of Easter, until the Resurrection of the Lord. These days constitute the celebratory remembrance of a great unique mystery: the death and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus. The Triduum begins tomorrow, with the Mass of the Lord’s Supper and concludes with Vespers of the Sunday of the Resurrection. Then comes “Easter Monday” to celebrate this great feast: an extra day. But this is post-liturgical: it is the family celebration, society’s celebration. It signals the fundamental event of our faith and of our vocation as a people in the world, and all Christians are called to experience the three Holy Days – Thursday, Friday, Saturday – as a hallmark of their life, but the Sabbath is the Resurrection – the three Holy Days as, so to speak, the “matrix” of their personal, of their community life, as our Jewish brothers and sisters experienced the Exodus from Egypt.

These three Days reintroduce to the Christian people the great events of salvation performed by Christ, and thus they are projected into the horizon of their future and reinforced in their commitment to witness in history.

On Easter morning, retracing the steps experienced in the Triduum, the singing of the Sequence, which is a hymn or type of Psalm, will make solemnly and prayerfully the announcement of the Resurrection; and it goes like this: “Christ, my hope has risen. He goes before you into Galilee. This is the great affirmation: Christ has risen. And in many communities of the world, especially in Eastern Europe, people greet each other during these days of Easter not with “good day”, “good evening”, but with “Christ has risen”, to affirm the great Paschal greeting. “Christ has risen”. In these words – “Christ has risen” – of moving exultation, the Triduum culminates. They contain not only an announcement of joy and hope, but also an appeal to responsibility and mission. And it does not end with colonba [traditional Easter cake], eggs, celebrations – even if this is beautiful because it is the family celebration – but it does not end this way. This is where the journey begins, that of the mission, of the announcement. Christ has risen. And this announcement, which the Triduum leads, preparing us to welcome him, is the centre of our faith and of our hope. It is the good news that the message; it is a difficult word, but it says it all – it is the kerygma which continually evangelizes the Church and which in her turn is invited to evangelize the world. Saint Paul summarizes the Paschal event in this expression: “Christ, our paschal lamb, has been sacrificed” (1 Cor 5:7). As a lamb. He has been sacrificed. Therefore “belecantes” – the old has passed away and the new has come” (cf. 2 Cor 5:17). Reborn. And this is why, from the beginning, people have been baptized on Easter Day, things that are above, not things that are on earth” (cf. Col 3:1). Look on high, on the horizon, broaden the horizons: this is our faith; this is our justification; this is our state of grace! Through Baptism, indeed, we have risen with Jesus and we have died to the things and logic of the world, we are reborn as new creatures: a reality that seeks to become true life day by day.

If a Christian truly allows himself to be cleansed by Christ, if he truly lets himself be stripped by Him of the “old man” in order to walk in a new life, although he remains a sinner – because we are all sinners – he can no longer be corrupted – he can no longer be a corrupt life. And these false Christians will meet in the end, there is blight in their heart. Jesus gives us new life. A Christian cannot live with death in his soul, nor can he pretend to be honourable people – let us think – to avoid going any farther – let us think at home, let us think about the so-called “Christian mafia”; there is nothing there they claim to be Christian, but carry death in their soul and convey it to others. Let us pray for them, that the Lord may touch their soul.

A neighbour, especially the least and the one who suffers most, becomes the concrete face to whom we must give the love which Jesus has given us. And the world becomes the place of our new life as risen ones. We have risen with Jesus: on our feet, with heads held high, and we can show humanity and who tells us that we are in need, that we are lonely, we are dying, as we are to become, thanks to Him and with Him, instruments of ransom and of hope, signs of life and of resurrection.

In many countries – here in Italy and also in my homeland – there is the custom on Easter day when one hears, one heeds the bells, mothers, grandmothers take the children to rinse their eyes with the water, with the water of life, as a sign of being able to see the things of Jesus, new things. This Easter let us abandon ourselves to cleansing our soul, cleansing the eyes of our soul, so as to see beautiful things and do beautiful things. This is wonderful! This is precisely the Resurrection of Jesus after his death, which was the price paid to save us all.

Dear brothers and sisters, let us be willing to properly experience this now imminent Holy Tri- dumum beginning tomorrow – in order to be even more deeply immersed in the Mystery of Christ, who died and rose for us. May we be accompanied on this spiritual journey by the Most Holy Virgin, who followed Jesus in his Passion – she was there, watching, suffering – she was present and united to Him under his Cross, but was not ashamed of her Son. A mother is never ashamed of her child! She was there, and received in her Mother’s heart the immense joy of the Re- surrection. May she obtain for us the grace to be interiorly engaged by the celebrations of the com- ing days, so our heart and our life may be truly transformed. As I leave you with these thoughts, I express to all of you my most heartfelt wishes for a happy and holy Easter, along with your communities and your loved ones.

And my advice to you: on Easter morning take your children to the font and have them rinse their eyes. It will be a sign of how to see the Risen Jesus.

SPECIAL GREETINGS

I greet the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today’s Audience, particularly those from England, Ireland, Finland, the Netherlands, Ghana, South Africa, Australia, Japan, Indonesia, the Philippines and the United States of America. I offer a special greeting to the delega- tates taking part in the Seminar organized by the Vatican Observatory in preparation for the forth- coming UNISPACE+50 Conference. May this Holy Week lead all of us to celebrate the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus with hearts purified and re- newed by the grace of the Holy Spirit. God bless you!

I offer a special thought to young people, to the elderly, to the sick and to prisoners. I greet the newlyweds and to young people from the United States who begins the Easter Triduum, fulcrum of the liturgical year. May you reflect on the price the Lord paid in blood for salvation. May Good Friday teach us the path of the Cross, and may the Risen Lord may the Sunday of the Resurrection fill you with the joyful victory Christ won over all things that oppose life and good in the world.
The confessor according to the Pontiff

An instrument of mercy

Confessors are not “masters of consciences” but “only instruments” of mercy and reconciliation. Pope Francis recalled this in the Paul VI Hall on Friday morning, 9 March, in an audience with participants in the 29th Course on the Internal Forum sponsored by the Apostolic Penitentiary. The following is a translation of the Pope’s address, which he delivered in Italian.

Dear Brothers,

Good morning!

I greet you all cordially, beginning with Cardinal Mauro Piacenza, whom I thank for his words. I greet the entire family of the Apostolic Penitentiary and the participants in the Course on the Internal Forum which this year, looking towards the upcoming Synod on young people, has addressed the relationship between sacramental Confession and vocational discernment. It is a theme more timely than ever, which merits some reflections that I would like to share with you.

You confessors, especially you future confessors, have the advantage — so to speak — of being young, and therefore of being able to experience the Sacrament of Reconciliation as “young people among young people”; and often, closeness in age favours even the sacramental dialogue, through a natural affinity of languages. This can create facilitation and a situation to be lived fittingly, in order to build authentic Christian character. However, it is a condition not lacking in limitations and even risks, because you are at the beginning of your ministry and therefore you still have to acquire all that knowledge and experience that a “consummate confessor” has, after decades of listening and discerning.

So, how does one live this situation? What consideration should one give in hearing sacramental confessions, especially of young people, also in relation to a possible vocational discernment?

First and foremost I would say that it is always necessary to rediscover, as Saint Thomas Aquinas states, the instrumental dimension of our ministry. The confessor priest is neither the source of Mercy nor of Grace; he is certainly an indispensable instrument of them, but always only an instrument! And when the priest holds onto them, he prevents God from taking action within the wrong approach. The confessor is called to be a man of listening, human listening to the penitent, and divine listening to the Holy Spirit. By truly listening to a brother or sister in the sacramental dialogue, we listen to Jesus himself, poor and humble; by listening to the Holy Spirit we place ourselves in attentive and dear Penitentiaries, may you be very open to listening to God’s will, dismissing young people’s questions and, where necessary, without trying to elicit authentic questions, would be exclusively instrumental dimension. A vocation is the very reality of listening to the Holy Spirit, who guarantees a sincere effort of discernment. Being in the dialogue of sacramental Confession thus becomes a privileged occasion of encounter, in order for both penitent and confessor to be open to listening to God’s will, discovering what his or her project may be, independently from the vocation. Indeed, the vocation does not correspond, nor can it ever correspond, to a form! This would lead to formalism! A vocation is the very relationship with Jesus: a vital and essential relationship. The categories by which the confessor is defined — “physician and judge”, “pastor and father”, “teacher and educator” — correspond to reality. But, especially for the youngest, the confessor is called above all to be a witness. Witness in the sense of “martyr”, called to have “compassion” for the sins of his brothers and sisters, like the Lord Jesus; and then a witness to mercy, to the heart of the Gospel which is the Father’s embrace of the prodigal son who returns home. The confessor-witness renders the experience of mercy more effective, opening up to the faithful a new and great horizon, which God alone can give to mankind.

Dear young priests, future priests and dear Penitentiaries, may you be witnesses to mercy; may you be humble listeners to the young and to God’s will for them; may you always be respectful of the conscience and of the freedom of those who approach the confession; and may you be witnesses of God alone to whom he gives his love. And may you entrust the penitents to who he is the Refuge of Sinners and Mother of Mercy — Fr Bruno Esposito, O P, pro- vate of Canon Law at the Pontifical University of St Thomas Aquinas and referendary of the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signature; — Fr Robert Leżohupski, OFM Conv., official of the Apostolic Penitentiary.

With a Delegation of the Council of Churches of South Sudan

On Friday morning, 23 March, in the presence of the Holy Father, Fr Raniero Cantalamessa, OFM Cap., Preacher of the Papal Household, the Holy Father addressed the relationship with Jesus: a vital and essential relationship. Indeed, the vocation does not correspond, nor can it ever correspond, to a form! This would lead to formalism! A vocation is the very relationship with Jesus: a vital and essential relationship. The categories by which the confessor is defined — “physician and judge”, “pastor and father”, “teacher and educator” — correspond to reality. But, especially for the youngest, the confessor is called above all to be a witness. Witness in the sense of “martyr”, called to have “compassion” for the sins of his brothers and sisters, like the Lord Jesus; and then a witness to mercy, to the heart of the Gospel which is the Father’s embrace of the prodigal son who returns home. The confessor-witness renders the experience of mercy more effective, opening up to the faithful a new and great horizon, which God alone can give to mankind.

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The Holy Father meets a Delegation of the Council of Churches of South Sudan on Friday morning, 23 March

VATICAN BULLETIN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

Vatican Bulletin

Lenten Sermon

On Friday morning, 23 March, in the presence of the Holy Father, Fr Raniero Cantalamessa, OFM Cap., Preacher of the Papal Household, the fifth Lenten Sermon in the Vatican’s Redemptoris Mater Chapel.

Lenten Sermon

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NECROLOGY

Bishop Lino Bortolo Belotti, CMP titular Bishop of Tabla and Auxiliary emeritus of Bergamo, Italy, at age 87 (25 Mar).

Bishop Arthur Nicholas Tafoya, Bishop emeritus of Pueblo, USA, at age 85 (24 Mar).

Bishop António dos Santos, Bishop emeritus of Guarda, Portugal, at age 85 (26 Mar).

Bishop José Hugo Garaycoa Hawkins, Bishop emeritus of Tacna y Moquegua, Peru, at age 87 (26 Mar).

The Holy Father meets a Delegation of the Council of Churches of South Sudan on Friday morning, 23 March.
Seeing, encountering, praying

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

The meditations for the 14 Stations of the Cross, presided by Pope Francis at the Colosseum in the evening of Good Friday, 30 March, were written by a young group of young people, as in 2015, when the task was assigned to several Lebanese youth, under the guidance of Cardinal Bechara Boutros Raai, Patriarch of Antioch for Maronites. This year the group of 15 young men and women, ranging from 16 to 17 years of age, include students from the Pio Alberelli secondary school in Rome. The group was coordinated by Andrea Moneta, a writer who teaches religion at the school. Images accompanying the Meditations are reproductions of the work of Ukrainian artist Ivan Kolomosko (“Via Crucis”, 2015) found in the chapel of the Apostolic Nunciature in Cuba. The following is the English text of the Meditations, published by the Vatican Publishing House (LEB).

FIRST STATION

Jesus is condemned to death

From the Gospel according to Luke

A third time he said to them, “Why, what evil has he done? I have found in him no ground for the sentence of death; I will therefore have him flogged and then release him. But they kept urging him to pass sentence of death; I will therefore have him flogged and then release him. So Pilate gave his verdict that their demand should be granted. He released the man they asked for, the one who had been put in prison for the sentence of death; I will therefore have him flogged and then release him. He released Jesus over as they wished (Luke 23:23-25).

I see you, Jesus, standing before the governor, who tries three times to oppose the will of the people, and finally decides not to decide. I see you standing before the crowd; they are asked three times and each time they decide against you. The crowd, in other words, everyone and no one. Hidden in the throne, we lose our individuality; we become the voice of a thousand other voices. Even before we deny you, we deny ourselves, diluting our own responsibility in the weightless tide of a faceless crowd. And yet we are responsible. Mislaid by the rabble-rousers, by the voice that sustains itself with a deceitful and deafening voice, it is we, all humanity, who condemn you.

You accept it, as you always accept. You accept it up and begin to walk, carrying it with many persons all around her. In that crowded square, it would have been enough for a single heart to hesitate, for a single voice to be raised against the thousand voices of evil. Whenever life sets before us a decision to be made, let us be reminded of that square and that mistake. Let us allow our hearts to hesitate and command our voices to speak out.

I ask you, Lord, keep watch over our decisions, bring back clarity by your light, and lead us to ask the right questions. Evil alone never doubts. Trees that sink their roots in the ground, within, if watered by evil, but you have set our roots in heaven, and our branches on earth, so know and follow you.

Second Station

Jesus receives his cross

From the Gospel according to Mark

[Jesus] called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the Gospel, will save it (Mark 8:34-35).

I see you, Jesus, crowned with thorns as you receive your cross. You accept it, as you always accept everything and everyone. They burden you with its wood, heavy and rough, yet you do not rebel, you do not reject that unjust and humiliating instrument of torture. You take it up and begin to walk, carrying it on your shoulders. How many times have I rebelled in anger against burdens I have received, viewing them as heavy or un-just. That is not your way. You are only a few years older than I — nowadays we would consider you still young — but you are accepting. You take seriously what life offers you, every opportunity it presents, as if you wanted to go to the very heart of things, to discover that there is always something beyond appearances, something remarkable and meaningful. Thanks to you, I understand that this is a cross of salvation and liberation, a cross that bears me up whenever I stumble, a yoke that is easy, a burden that is light.

The scandal of the death of God’s Son, a sinner’s death, a criminal’s death, grants us the grace to discover amid sorrow your resurrection, amid suffering your glory, amid anguish your salvation. And the cross itself, which speaks to us of humiliation and pain, is now revealed, thanks to your sacrifice, as a promise of everything and everyone. They burden you with its wood, heavy and rough, yet you do not rebel, you do not reject that unjust and humiliating instrument of torture. You take it up and begin to walk, carrying it on your shoulders.


THIRD STATION

Jesus falls for the first time

From the book of the prophet Isaiah

Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted (Isa 53:4).

I see you, Jesus, making your way to Calvary bearing our sins. I see you fall, hands and knees on the ground, in that great humility did you fall! And what great humiliation you now endure! Your humanity, with your true man-hood, is clearly seen in this fragment of your life. The cross you carry is a heavy one. You need help to carry it, but when you fall to the ground, no one helps you. Instead, people make fun of you, they laugh at the sight of a God who falls. Perhaps they are disappointed, perhaps they had a mistaken idea of who you are. Sometimes we think that having faith in you means never falling in life. Together with you, I also fall, and my ideas with me, those ideas I had about you. How fragile they were!

I see you Jesus, as you grit your teeth and, in complete surrender to the love of the Father, you get up and resume your journey. With these, your first, faltering steps be-neath the cross, Jesus, you remind me of a child taking his first steps in life. Losing his balance, he falls and cries, but then keeps going. He trusts in the hands of his parents and does not give up. He is afraid but he keeps walking, because trust is stronger than fear.

By your courage, you teach us that our failures and falls must never halt our journey, that we who have a choice: to give up or to get up, to be in union with you.

I ask you, Lord, give us young people the courage to get up after every fall, as you did on the way to Calvary. Grant that we may always appreciate the great and precious gift of life, and that our failures and falls may never be a reason for throwing it away.

We know that if we trust in you, we will be able to understand that in the story of our lives and to rediscover in them your love for us.

FOURTH STATION

Jesus meets his mother

From the Gospel according to Luke

Simon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed, so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed — and a sword will pierce even your own soul too” (Luke 2:34-35).

I see you, Jesus, as you meet your mother. Mary is the victim of her way through the crowded street, with many persons all around her. The only thing that makes her different from the others is the fact that she is there to accompany her son. Something we see every day: mothers accompanying their son to school or to the doctor, or bringing...
to them. Yet Mary is different: she does it alone: At your moment of greatest need, you are not forlorn and abandoned, but you do not despair. Your eyes are undimmed; you are not a mere passerby, who perhaps had only heard about you, with someone unknown, a mere acquaintance. You walk, faltering, to your death on the cross. We see our friends, crushed by a heavy burden, which no one will ever be able to erase. Even in our pain we must remember to love, to see the best in our neighbors, to approach every person, young or old, poor or rich, and fall beside us, to be like Simon of Cyrene, a Simon of Cyrene.

I ask you, Lord, to give each of us the courage of Simon of Cyrene, who takes up your cross and follows in your steps. May each of us be sufficiently humble and strong to follow you, faith unimpaired before the harsh realities of life. May each of us seek the strength to take up the cross of those around us. I see you, Jesus: now you seem to be experiencing a bit of relief, a momentary, to catch a breath, now that you are no longer alone. I also see Simon. Who knew if he had realized that your yoke is light, and if he appreciated the meaning of this unexpected event in his life?

I ask you, Lord, to remind us of the courage of Simon of Cyrene, who will help and hear our cry. Grant that we may see the best in everyone, and be open to all different kinds of people. I ask each of us individually to find herself or himself walking at your side. Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus to carry the cross.

Meditations for the Way of the Cross

FIFTH STATION

Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus to carry the cross.

From the book of the prophet Isaiah

Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus to carry the cross. He was despised and rejected by others, a man of suffering, familiar with pain. Upon us he was despised, and we held him of no account (.Is 53:1). We see him as a great mystery of salvation. He is the one who takes up your cross and follows in your steps. May each of us be sufficiently humble and strong to follow you, faith unimpaired before the harsh realities of life. May each of us seek the strength to take up the cross of those around us.

I ask you, Lord, to give each of us the courage of Simon of Cyrene, who takes up your cross and follows in your steps. May each of us be sufficiently humble and strong to follow you, faith unimpaired before the harsh realities of life. May each of us seek the strength to take up the cross of those around us.

I see you, Jesus: now you seem to be experiencing a bit of relief, a momentary, to catch a breath, now that you are no longer alone. I also see Simon. Who knew if he had realized that your yoke is light, and if he appreciated the meaning of this unexpected event in his life?

I ask you, Lord, to remind us of the courage of Simon of Cyrene, who will help and hear our cry. Grant that we may see the best in everyone, and be open to all different kinds of people. I ask each of us individually to find herself or himself walking at your side. Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus to carry the cross.

ELEVENTH STATION

Jesus is nailed to the cross.

From the Gospel according to Luke

When they came to the place that is called the Skull, there they crucified Jesus. And the name of the place is called Calvary (Lk 23:33).

And they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall. But he did not take it. They crucify him. And the rest of the people, with the women, also mocked him. They spoke insulting comments, as if every word was meant to be a insult. They mocked him in his suffering, his physical agony, his pain. Theydid not let her pass, there was no room for compassion in their hearts. By a perversion of justice he was sentenced to death, he was crucified. They also took his tunic; now the last shred of your remaining dignity, your life on earth, your humanity, is taken away . Who could have imagined what they would do to him? What I understand is that it makes no difference at all, whether you are rich or poor, whether you are famous or not, whether you are loved or not, whether your life is long or short. Perhaps love will be the last shred of your remaining dignity, the last thing to be taken away from you. How few of us are aware of this? How few of us acknowledge this? What I see is that love is the last that we will be able to give, the last that we will be able to receive. It is the last that we will be able to receive, the last that we will be able to give.

And now, on this hill, before all those who are with you, and in front of all the world, you are crucified. You are crucified, just like Simon of Cyrene. You are crucified. You are crucified.

I ask you, Lord, grant that all of us may understand the dignity belonging to every life, even when we ourselves do not have the strength to even try to defend it. Grant that we may always see our brothers and sisters as a mystery of love, as a mystery of beauty, as a mystery of truth.

We ask you to grant us the courage needed to understand ourselves as more than the clothing we wear. It reminds us of our purity, our nakedness, even to giving your life for us.
Meditations for the Way of the Cross

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

I may be ready to recognize it, that in the face of injustice I may find the courage to take my life in my hands and to act differently. Grant that I may be set free from all the fear that, like nails, immobilize me and keep me far from the life you have desired and prepared for us.

TWELFTH STATION
Jesus dies on the cross

From the Gospel according to Luke 23:44-49

This is a great mystery, Jesus. You were beautiful to behold when you spoke to the crowds, but now all that has come to an end. I do not want to see that end; all too often I have averted my gaze, I have become almost accustomed to flee pain and death. I have become numb to them.

Your cry on the cross is loud and heartrending. We were not prepared for all that pain; we are not nor will we ever be. Instinctively, we flee, in panic, before death and suffering. We reject them, we prefer to look away or to close our eyes. Instead, you remain there, on the cross; you await us with open arms. You open our eyes.

This is a great mystery, Jesus. You love us by dying, by suffering abandonment, by bestowing your spirit, by doing the Father’s will, by withdrawing. You remain on the cross, and that is all. You do not try to explain the mystery of death, the destruction of all things. You do more: you cross over it completely in body and spirit. A great mystery. One that continues to question us and to unsettle us. It challenges us and it invites us to open our eyes and to see your love even in death, indeed even starting from death itself. It is there that you loved us as we really are, truly and inevitably. It is there that we grasp, however imperfectly, your living and authentic presence. We will always thirst for this: for your closeness, for your being God-with-us.

I ask you, Lord, open my eyes to see you also in suffering, in death, in the ending which is not the real ending. Upset my complacency by your cross: shake off my drowsiness. Challenge me always by your disturbing mystery, that overcomes death and grants life.

THIRTEENTH STATION
Jesus is taken down from the cross

From the Gospel according to John 19:31-42

I see you, Jesus, remaining there, on the cross. A man of flesh and bones, with all his frailty, all his fears. How greatly did you suffer! It is an unbearable scene, perhaps because it is so drenched in humanity. This word is the key, the cypher of the word of which you faced suffering; the one thing that resists and remains unbroken by death: love. You are here with us at every moment, at every step, in every uncertainty, in every shadow. While the shadow of the tomb lengths on your body, held in the arms of your mother, I see you and I am afraid, yet I do not despair. I trust that the light, your light, will shine once again.

I ask you, Lord, keep hope ever alive in us, and faith in your unconditional love.

Grant that we may continue, our hearts inflamed, to fix our gaze on eternal salvation, and thus find refreshment and peace on our journey.

FOURTEENTH STATION
Jesus is laid in the tomb

From the Gospel according to John 19:41-42

No longer do I see you, Jesus, now all is dark. Long shadows fall from the hills, and the Shabbat lamps light up Jerusalem, outside homes and within. They beat against the gates of heaven, closed and impenetrable: for whom is all this solitude? Who can sleep on a night like this? The cry is filled with the sound of children crying, mothers singing, soldiers making their rounds. The day is dying and you alone are sleeping. Are you sleeping? And on what bed? What blanket hides you from the world?

From afar, Joseph of Arimathea followed your steps, and now, with quiet steps, accompanies you in your sleep, withdraws you from the states of the indignant and malicious. A sheet enfolds you in the chill of death and dries your blood, sweat and tears. From the cross you descend, but lightly. Joseph carries you on his shoulders, but you are light: you no longer bear the burden of death, of hatred and anger. You sleep as you did on the warm straw when you were wrapped in swaddling clothes and another Joseph held you in his arms. Just as there was no room for you then, so now you have nowhere to lay your head. Yet on Calvary, on the stiff neck of the world, there grows a garden in which no one had yet been buried.

Where have you gone off to, Jesus? Where have you descended, if not into the depths? Where if not in a place still untouched, in an even tighter cell? You are caught in our snares, imprisoned in our sadness. Like us, you were there, under the earth, you make room for yourself. I would like to run far away, but you are there within me. I need not to go out to seek you, because you are knocking at my door.

I ask you, Lord, who revealed yourself not in glory but in the quiet of the cross, who reveals himself as one who suffers, who weeps, who is without a place? Reveal yourself to us. You who see not the surface, but in secret, entering into the depths. From the depths, hear our voice: grant that, in our weariness, we may find rest in you, seeing in you our nature, and in the love of your sleeping face, the beauty we have lost.
To the Vatican’s Inspectorate for Public Security

Valuable collaboration in the Pope’s ministry

The Vatican’s security forces offer “valuable collaboration in the pastoral ministry of the Bishop of Rome.” Pope Francis thus expressed his appreciation in a discourse on Monday morning, 26 March, to authorities and personnel of the Vatican’s Inspectorate for Public Security whom he had received in an audience in the Clementine Hall. The following is a translation of the Pontiff’s address, which he delivered in Italian.

Mr Chief of Police, Mr Prefect, Dear Officers and Agents!

Welcome to this traditional appointment, which gives me the opportunity to express my gratitude to you for the service you render to the Apostolic See and Vatican City. I thank the Chief of Police for the kind words he addressed to me on your behalf. I greet each one of you, offering my sincere wishes for an Easter enlivened by faith and enlivened by the most beautiful and true affections and values.

This Inspectorate of Public Security offers valuable collaboration in the pastoral ministry of the Bishop of Rome. I am grateful for your vigilant presence and for the assistance you provide during the celebration of the liturgical rites and the numerous events that involve Saint Peter’s Basilica and the entire Vatican City. The Pope and his co-workers also know that they can count on your cooperation during pastoral visits to the parishes and to the civil and ecclesial institutions of Rome, as well as during pastoral visits in Italy.

Thanks to your discreet and effective surveillance work, pilgrims from all over the world who come to visit the tomb of the Apostle Peter have the opportunity to peacefully enjoy this important experience of faith. You carry out your daily task in renewing my appreciation for your cooperation, therefore, I entrust each of you to the protection of the Mother of God. May she support you and receive your intentions, presenting them to her Son. I address a special thought to your families, especially to your children and, as I ask you to pray for me, I wish you a happy Easter and I heartily impart to you and all those dear to you the Apostolic Blessing.

Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Mother of the Church

Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments issues notification

Following the inscription of the Obligatory Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church into the Roman Calendar, which must already be celebrated by everyone this year on the Monday after Pentecost, it seemed opportune to offer the following directions.

The rubric found in the Roman Missal after the formulas for the Mass of Pentecost — “Where the Mass of Pentecost Sunday may be repeated, or a Votive Mass of the Holy Spirit, may be said” (Missale Romanum, p. 448) — is still valid as it does not derogate precedence between liturgical days whose celebration are solely regulated by the Table of Liturgical Days (cf. Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year and the Calendar, n. 59). Likewise, precedence is regulated by the norms on Votive Masses: “Votive Masses are in principle forbidden on the days on which occurs an Obligatory Memorial, on a weekday of Advent up to and including 16 December, on a weekday of Christmas Time from 1 January, or on a weekday of Easter Time after the Octave of Easter. However, for pastoral reasons, as determined by the rector of the church or the Priest Celebrant himself, an appropriately corresponding Votive Mass may be used in a celebration of Mass with the people” (Missale Romanum, p. 1176; cf. General Introduction of the Roman Missal, n. 376).

Nevertheless, all else being equal, the Obligatory Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church is to be preferred. The texts of the Memorial were attached to the Decree along with indications for the readings, which are to be held as proper because they illuminate the mystery of Spiritual Motherhood. In a future edition of the Ordo lectionium Missae the rubric at n. 572 will expressly indicate that the readings are proper and, even though it is a Memorial, are to be adopted in place of the readings of the day, (cf. Lectionary, General Introduction, n. 83).

In the case where this Memorial coincides with another Memorial the principles of the Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year and the Calendar are to be followed (cf. Table of Liturgical Days, n. 60). Given that the Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church is linked to Pentecost, as the Memorial of the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary is similarly linked to the celebration of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, then, in the case where it coincides with another Memorial of a Saint or Blessed, and following the liturgical tradition of pre-emience amongst persons, the Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary is to prevail.

From the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, 14 March 2018.

Cardinal Robert Sarah
Prefect
Archbishop Arthur Roche
Secretary
The young Church

The concluding document of the Pre-Synodal Meeting, which was held on 19-24 March in preparation for this October’s 11th Ordinary General Assembly of Bishops on the theme “Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment,” was presented on Saturday, 24 March, in the Vatican Press Office. Cardinal Lorenzo Baldisseri, General Secretary of the Synod, joined by several young people who participated in the Meeting, presented the document which was written in English and translated into various languages.

The three-part document includes an introduction and is subdivided into 17 points. The first part deals with the challenges and opportunities facing young people around the world today; the second part focuses on faith and Church life; the third part deals with the Church’s response in the world, and the challenges it faces. The important work is available both bound, in a three-volume boxed set, and in Kindle e-Book format. Given the importance of the Instrumentum Laboris project, it also has a dedicated Internet portal which can be found at: www.orienteattolico.com.

The Prefect of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches has expressed the hope that dioceses, parishes, educational institutes, universities and schools around the world will offer opportunities for reflection and exchange on the document. Members of the Eastern Churches’ very rich patrimony of faith and culture, as well as on their immense suffering, so that the Christian East may be increasingly known and appreciated.

The new edition of ‘Oriente Cattolico’


Oriente Cattolico brings together useful information on the Oriental Catholic Churches in a systematic way. Compared to the previous edition (1974), this work offers a re-evaluation of the formulation of the ecclesiological categories and updates the historical profile. It also presents bibliographic appendices for further research, and cartoon sections illustrating the presence of Oriental Catholics on every continent. It is thus offered as a tool to shed light on Eastern Christianity in the world, and the challenges it faces. The important work is available both bound, in a three-volume boxed set, and in Kindle e-Book format. Given the importance of the Instrumentum Laboris project, it also has a dedicated Internet portal which can be found at: www.orienteattolico.com.

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The new edition of Oriente Cattolico will be available shortly after Easter.
A fruitful encounter
Christianity and China

PAUL RICHARD GALLAGHER

A the international level, today more than ever, Mainland China is at the centre of political, economic and cultural interest. China sees itself as a crossroad of development, thanks to such important projects as the New Silk Road ("One belt, one road"). In foreign policy, it is clearly adopting a new approach to the existing balances in international relations and is also consolidating its presence in developing countries. In domestic policy, China is promoting long-term programmes aimed at giving a considerable number of citizens the possibility of overcoming poverty. At the same time, the Chinese cultural system is committed to a strong drive in the areas of scientific and technological research.

It should also be noted that China is tackling the global challenge by insisting on its own identity, by means of an economic, political and cultural model which seeks to give "Chinese characteristics" to globalization. In this way, the Middle Kingdom seeks to regain a central position in the world, in accordance with what was already Matteo Ricci's way of seeing things, when he drew a complete geographical map of all the world's countries for the Chinese. This was the first great map of the world in the Chinese language; its sixth edition was commissioned by the Emperor himself in 1608. In this context, and also at the religious level, the key word which is constantly repeated and put forward for general consideration is the term "Sinicization".

Given that we are here in the Pontifical Gregorian University, I would like to mention another consideration. In this place it is natural to recall, with deep admiration, the extraordinary contribution which many Jesuits down through the centuries made to the rediscovery of an authentic Christian culture, thus enabling us to move from the initial impact with a world which is so far away to an encounter with the scientific, technical, philosophical and moral patrimony of the West. This was an extraordinary human and ecclesial adventure, driven by a deeply missionary spirit, which inspired many members of the Society of Jesus, as well as other religious orders, to set out for the Asian continent and, in particular, China.

At this point, I wish to refer to the dynamism of discernment in connection with the task of evangelization. Discernment allows us not only to gain an ever deeper understanding of the world, but also to proclaim it, while at the same time avoiding two rather common dangers. The first is proselytism, which measures the success of mission in terms of numbers rather than by the quality of the choice of the one who comes into contact with Christian experience. The second danger is that of an abstract proclamation of the faith, one which does not take account of the complex religious and cultural nature of the human context to which the message of the Gospel is addressed.

Both of these attitudes merely scratch the surface of an authentic missionary task, because they cannot grasp the spatio-temporal coordinates that make a fruitful inculcation of the faith possible. However, it should be possible to discern an even greater horizon in the mission "ad gentes", namely the vertical one of the primacy of God's grace, which precedes human action and animates the history of peoples from within. In China too, God is already present and active in the culture and life of the Chinese people.

In the light of these brief considerations, it seems clear that the mission of the Church in China today is of being "fully Catholic and genuinely Chinese", making the Gospel of Jesus available to all and placing it at the service of the common good. Furthermore, over time, relations between China and the Catholic Church have gone through different phases, alternating between moments of fruitful cooperation and ones of great misunderstanding and hostility, leading, at times, to situations in which the community of the faithful experienced great suffering.

Looking at matters carefully, however, the method which in the past made possible a fruitful encounter between the "Christian world" and the "Chinese world" was that of inculcation of faith through the concrete experience of knowledge, artistic culture and friendship with the Chinese people. In this regard, still exemplary is the undertaking of missionaries like Alessandro Valignano, Matteo Ricci, Giuseppe Castiglione and many others, who wished to open the way to a Catholicism with "Chinese forms", sedulously grounded in the very heart of the Middle Kingdom in order to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ from a fully Chinese perspective.

Thus, when considering mission and theological reflection, two expressions or, more precisely, two principles stand out, which should interact with each other, namely "Sinicization" and "inculcation". I am convinced that an important intellectual and pastoral challenge arises in an almost natural way from the bringing together of these two terms, which indicate two real visions of the world. From these two visions, it should be possible to work out the coordinates of an authentic Christian presence in China, which could present the special nature and the uniqueness of the Gospel in a textual depth rooted in the specific identity of the age-old Chinese culture. In this dialogue on friendship, Fr. Matteo Ricci had this to say: "Before engaging in friendship, one must observe; after engaging, one must trust."

The universality of the Catholic Church, with its natural openness to all peoples, can make a contribution in terms of moral and spiritual inspiration to the great effort at dialogue between China and the contemporary world, doing so precisely through the Chinese Catholic community, which is fully integrated into the historical and current dynamism of the land of Confucius.

The Pope's household

Because "every moment, every aspect of our life surrounds us with a radiance, which can be beneficial, if faithful to that which Christ wants from us; harmful, if unfaithful", the Pontiff recalled.

After the second period of the Council had elapsed, on 14 January 1964 Paul VI met the aristocrats and nobility of Rome. This was one of the last audiences linking the aristocracy to the papacy. Pope Montini presented himself with simplicity, no longer as "temporal sovereign", and said: "We are no longer what we were for you in the past", because "history marches on" and the Pope "can only but to exercise the authority of his spiritual keys". Therefore "we are now empty-handed; we are no longer able to offer you offices, benefits, privileges or advantages deriving from the ordaining of a temporal State, nor are we able to accept your services relevant to a civil administration", he concluded.

These are the premises of the Motu Proprio with which, 50 years ago, Paul VI transformed the obsolete Pontifical Court into the Pope's Household, already familiarly called by Pius XI the "father's household". Thus the duties and titles which no longer reflected "the reality of things" were suppressed, in order to emphasize instead "the essentially spiritual mission of the Roman Pontiff", according to a process of simplification and essentiality developed by Francis today.
Do not let them silence you

The Pope addresses young people at Palm Sunday Mass

As he celebrated Mass in Saint Peter’s Square on Palm Sunday, Pope Francis told the young people that “the joy Jesus awakens”, particularly among the youth, can be “a source of anger and even irritation to some”, accompanied by “the temptation to silence young people”. He thus called upon young people to “cry out”, to resist being silenced and rendered invisible, to avoid keeping quiet: “If the whole world keeps quiet and loses its joy, he challenged them, “will you cry out?” The following is the English text of the Pope’s homily.

Jesus enters Jerusalem. The liturgy invites us to share in the joy and celebration of the people who cry out in praise of their Lord; a joy that will fade and leaves a bitter and sorrowful taste by the end of the account of the Passion. This celebration seems to combine stories of joy and suffering, mistakes and successes, which are part of our daily lives as disciples. It somehow expresses the contradictory feelings that we too, the men and women of today, experience: the capacity for great love... but also for great hatred; the capacity for courageous self-sacrifice, but also the ability to “whisper our words” at the right moment; the capacity for loyalty, but also for great abandonment and betrayal.

We also see clearly throughout the Gospel accounts of the joy Jesus awakens is, for some, a source of anger and irritation. Jesus enters the city surrounded by his people and with a cacophony of singing and shouting. We may imagine that amid the outcry we hear, all at the same time, the voice of the forgiver son, the healed leper, or the bleating of the lost sheep. Then too, the song of the publican and the unclean man, the cry of those living on the edges of the city. And the cry of those whom Jesus had followed Jesus because they felt his compassion for their pain and misery... That outcry is the song and the spontaneous joy of all those left behind and overlooked, who, having been touched by Jesus, now can shout: “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord”. How could they not praise the one who had restored their dignity and hope? Theirs is the joy of so many forgiven sinners who are able to trust and hope once again. And they cry out. They rejoice. This is joy.

All this joy and praise is a source of unease, scandal and upset for those who consider themselves righteous and “faithful” to the law and its ritual precepts.1 A joy intolerable for those hardened against pain, suffering and misery. Many of these think to themselves: “Such ill-mannered people!” A joy intolerable to some, the temptation to silence young people. “If these were silent, the very stones would cry out” (Lk 19:40).

Dear young people, you have it in you to shout. It is up to you to opt for Sunday’s “Hosanna!”... It is up to you not to keep quiet. Even if others keep quiet, if we older people and leaders — so often corrupt — keep quiet, if the whole world keeps quiet and loses its joy, I ask you: Will you cry out?

Please, make that choice, before the stones themselves cry out.

2 Cf. Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium, 94.

At the Angelus in Saint Peter’s Square

Before reciting the Angelus, the Pope greeted young representatives who had participated in the Pre-Synodal Meeting for Young People. After joining them for a “selfie”, he offered the following remarks:

You’ve seen it: today it’s unimaginable that a young person not take a “selfie”... and they’ve just taken one. They were great!

Before concluding this Celebration, I wish to greet all of you, people of Rome and pilgrims, who have taken part, especially the young people who have come from diverse parts of the world, and those too — some 15 thousand — who participated by linking up virtually: I greet everyone! Thinking gratefully of my recent journey to Peru, I affectionately greet the Peruvian community present in Italy.

Today’s World Youth Day, which is being celebrated at the diocesan level, is an important step on the journey towards the Synod of Bishops on Young People, the Faith and Discernment in October, as is the preparatory phase of the International Day which will be held in Panama in January 2019. We are accompanied on this journey by the example and intercession of Mary, the maiden from Nazareth whom God chose as Mother of his Son. She journeys with us and guides the new generations on their pilgrimage of faith and fraternity.

May Mary help us to experience Holy Week in a good way. May we learn from her: inner silence, the heart’s gaze and the loving faith to follow Jesus on the Way of the Cross that leads to the joyous light of the Resurrection.

Before reciting the Angelus, I would very much like to thank Cardinal Baldacchini, Msgr Fabene and the entire Secretariat of the Synod and all the collaborators who helped so much this week. Many thanks!