

# L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO

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At the General Audience the importance of Baptism and the sign of the Cross

## God is the one true Master of life

Pope Francis launches special appeals on behalf of human dignity

At the General Audience on Wednesday, 18 April, Pope Francis continued his current series of catecheses devoted to the Sacrament of Christian initiation, reminding those present in Saint Peter's Square to teach children "how to make the sign of the Cross properly, because it is repeating what was done in Baptism". The Pontiff followed his reflection with two appeals: one on behalf of two patients on life support and their families, and the other asking consideration of the poor at the Spring Meetings of the World Bank scheduled for this weekend in Washington. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's catechesis, which he delivered in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,  
Good morning!

Let us continue, in this Time of Easter, the catechesis on Baptism. The significance of Baptism stands out clearly in its celebration; thus let us turn our attention to it. By considering the gestures and words of the liturgy we can understand the grace and the promise of this Sacrament, which is always to be rediscovered. We recall it in the sprinkling with holy water that can be done at the beginning of Mass on Sunday, as well as in the renewal of the baptismal promises during the Easter Vigil. In fact, as happens in the celebration of Baptism, a spiritual dynamic arises which passes through the entire life of the baptized; it is the beginning of a process that allows one to live united to Christ in the Church. Therefore, returning to the well-spring of Christian life leads us to better understand the gift received on the day of our Baptism and to renew our commitment to conform to it in the condition in which we find ourselves today. To renew our

commitment, to better understand this gift which is Baptism, and to remember the day of our Baptism. Last Wednesday, as homework I asked that each of us remember the day of our Baptism, the day on which we were baptized. I know that some of you know it, others do not; those who do not know it, ask your family members, ask those people, godfathers, godmothers...: "What is the date of my Baptism?" Because Baptism is a rebirth and it is as if it were a second birthday. Do you understand? Do this homework; ask: "What is the date of my Baptism?"

First and foremost, in the Rite of Reception, the candidate's name is requested, because the name indicates a person's identity. When we introduce ourselves we say our name right away: "My name is ...", so as to emerge from anonymity; an anonymous person is one who has no name. To emerge from anonymity we immediately say our name. Without a name one remains an outsider, without rights and duties. God calls each one by name, loving us individually, in the concreteness of our history. Baptism ignites the personal vocation to live as Christians, which will develop throughout our lifetime. And it entails a personal response, not taken on loan, with a "copy and paste". Christian life in fact is woven with a series of calls and responses: God continues to pronounce our name throughout the years, making his call to become conformed to his Son Jesus resonate in a thousand ways. Thus, one's name is important! It is very important! Parents think about the name to give to a child even before birth: this too is part of expecting a child who, in his own name, will have his original identity, also for the Christian life bound to God.

Of course, becoming Christian is a gift which comes from on high (cf. Jn 3:3-8). One cannot buy faith, but ask for it, yes; and receive it as a gift, yes. "Lord, give me the gift of faith" is a beautiful prayer! "That I may have faith" is a beautiful prayer. Asking for it as a gift, but it cannot be bought; it is asked for. Indeed, Baptism is "the sacra-



ment of that faith by which, enlightened by the grace of the Holy Spirit, we respond to the Gospel of Christ" (*Christian Initiation, General Introduction, n. 3*). The formation of catechumens and the preparation of parents, as listening to the Word of God in the very celebration of Baptism, tend to generate and reawaken a sincere faith in response to the Gospel.

Whereas adult catechumens personally manifest what they wish to receive as a gift from the Church, children are presented by their parents, with the godparents. The dialogue with them allows them to express the wish that the children receive Baptism and allows the Church to express the intention to celebrate it. "These purposes are expressed in action when the parents and the celebrant trace the sign of the cross on the foreheads of the children" (*Rite of Baptism for Children, Introduction, n. 16*). "The sign of the cross ... marks with the imprint of Christ the one who is going to belong to him and signifies the grace of the redemption Christ won for us by his cross"

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

## Prayers for Alfie

At the Casa Santa Marta, before Wednesday's General Audience, Pope Francis met Thomas Evans (above), the father of Alfie, a 2-year-old British boy suffering from an unidentified degenerative neurological disease. Later, after delivering his catechesis in Saint Peter's Square, the Holy Father launched an appeal on behalf of the child and his family and on behalf of Vincent Lambert, a Frenchman who has suffered a severe brain injury. Both patients are on life support and their families are fighting legal battles to ensure that they continue to receive essential medical care. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's appeal, which he delivered in Italian.

I would like to call attention once again to Vincent Lambert and to little Alfie Evans, and I would like to emphasize and clearly confirm that the one Master of life, from the beginning to the natural end, is God! And our obligation, our duty is to do everything to protect life. Let us silently think and pray that the life of all people, and especially that of these two brothers of ours, be respected. Let us pray in silence.

A visit to Corviale

## Sin makes the heart grow old



PAGE 8

## Best wishes to Benedict XVI

Benedict XVI celebrated his 91st birthday in a quiet family gathering with his brother Georg in the Vatican on Monday, 16 April. Pope Francis offered morning Mass for his Predecessor and sent his personal best wishes for the occasion. In the evening, the Pontifical Swiss Guard band played a number of songs for him at his home at the *Mater Ecclesiae* monastery in the Vatican gardens. Thursday, 19 April, marked the 13th anniversary of Benedict XVI's election to the papacy (19 April 2005).

# VATICAN BULLETIN



## AUDIENCES

*Saturday, 14 April*

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

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

Cardinal Angelo Amato, SDB, Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints

*Monday, 16 April*

Bishop Peter Henrici, SJ, titular Bishop of Ossero, Auxiliary of Chur, Switzerland

H.E. Mr Armindo Fernandes do Espírito Santo Vieira, Ambassador of Angola, on a farewell visit

H.E. Mr Pavel Vošalík, Ambassador of the Czech Republic, on a farewell visit

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

– Archbishop Robert Rivas, OP, of Castries, Santa Lucia, with Cardinal Kelvin Edward Felix, Archbishop emeritus

– Bishop Gerard Maximin County, CSSP, of Kingstown, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

– Bishop Gabriel Malzaire of Roseau, Dominica

– Bishop Clyde Martin Harvey of Saint George's in Grenada, Grenada

– Bishop Robert A. Llanos, titular Bishop of Casae nigrae, Diocesan Administrator of Saint John's-Basseterre, Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Kitts and Nevis

– Archbishop David Macaire, OP, of Fort-de-France, Martinique

– Bishop Jean-Yves Riocreux of Basse-Terre, Guadeloupe

– Bishop Emmanuel Lafont of Cayenne, French Guyana

– Archbishop Kenneth David Oswin Richards of Kingston in Jamaica, Jamaica, with Archbishop emeritus Donald James Reece

– Bishop Lawrence Sydney Nicasio of Belize City-Belmopan, Belize

– Archbishop Patrick Christopher Pinder of Nassau, The Bahamas

– Bishop Wieslaw Śpiwak, CR, of Hamilton in Bermuda, Bermuda Islands

– Archbishop Charles Jason Gordon of Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago; Apostolic Administrator *sede vacante et ad nutum Sanctae Sedis* of Bridgetown, Barbados, with Archbishop emeritus Joseph Everard Harris, CSSP

– Bishop Francis Alleyne, OSB, of Georgetown, Cooperative Republic of Guyana

– Bishop Karel Martinus Choenie of Paramaribo, Suriname

– Bishop Luigi Antonio Secco, SDB, of Willemstad, Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten and the municipalities of the Dutch Antilles, Bonaire, Sint Eustatius e Saba (BES Islands)

– Bishop Burchell Alexander McPherson of Montego Bay, Jamaica

## CHANGES IN EPISCOPATE

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Braulio Sáez Gar-

cía, OCD, titular Bishop of Rhasus, from his office as Auxiliary of the Archdiocese of Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia (12 Apr.).

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Archbishop Stefan Soroka of Philadelphia for Ukrainians, USA (16 Apr.).

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Archbishop José María Arancedo of Santa Fe de la Vera Cruz, Argentina (17 Apr.).

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Sergio Alfredo Fenoy as Archbishop of Santa Fe de la Vera Cruz. Until now he has been Bishop of San Miguel, Argentina (17 Apr.).

Archbishop Fenoy, 58, was born in Rosario, Argentina. He was ordained a priest on 2 December 1983. He was ordained a bishop on 21 May 1999, subsequent to his appointment as titular Bishop of Satafis and Auxiliary of Rosario. On 5 December 2006 he was appointed Bishop of San Miguel.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Stanley Roman of Quilon, India (18 Apr.).

The Holy Father appointed Msgr Paul Antony Mullassery from the clergy of Quilon, as Bishop of Quilon. Until now he has served as vicar general of the said circumscription (18 Apr.).

Bishop-elect Mullassery, 58, was born in Kaithakody, India. He holds a doctorate in Canon Law. He was ordained a priest on 22 December 1984. He has served in parish ministry and as: adjunct director of Catechesis and Bible Apostolate; prefect of St Raphael's Minor Seminary in Quilon; judge at the Diocesan Tribunal; chancellor; pro-vicar general of Quilon; Episcopal vicar for pastoral ministry; judicial vicar of Quilon; spiritual director of St Raphael's Seminary in Quilon.

## APOSTOLIC ADMINISTRATOR

The Holy Father appointed as Apostolic Administrator *sede vacante* of the Archeparchy of Philadelphia for Ukrainians, USA, Bishop Andriy Rabyi, titular Bishop of Germaniana, Auxiliary of the said Archeparchy (16 Apr.).

Bishop Rabyi, 42, was born in Lviv, Ukraine. He was ordained a priest on 19 December 2001. He was ordained a bishop on 3 September 2017, subsequent to his appointment as titular Bishop of Germaniana and Auxiliary of Philadelphia.

## EASTERN CHURCHES

The Holy Father granted his assent to the canonical election by the Synod of Bishops of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church of Fr Petro Loza, CSSR, as Auxiliary Bishop of Sokal-Zhovkva for Ukrainians, assigning him the titular episcopal See of Panium. Until now he has served as administrator of Saints Peter and Paul Parish in Chernihiv, Archieparchy of Kyiv (12 Apr.).

Bishop-elect Loza, 38, was born in Kolodyantsi, Ukraine. He made his perpetual vows for the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer in 2003 and was ordained a priest on 26 August 2007. He has served in parish ministry and as: provincial counsellor; chaplain of two prisons in the same city.

## CONGREGATION FOR THE CAUSES OF SAINTS

The Holy Father appointed the following as members of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints: Cardinal Giuseppe Versaldi, Prefect of the Congregation for Catholic Education; Bishop Romano Rossi of Civita Castellana, Italy; Bishop Orazio Francesco Piazza of Sessa Aurunca, Italy; and Bishop Daniele Libanori, SJ, titular Bishop of Buruni and Auxiliary of Rome, Italy (14 Apr.).

## START OF MISSION

On 10 January, Archbishop Francisco Escalante Molina, titular Archbishop of Gratiana, began his mission as Apostolic Nuncio in Gabon with the presentation of his Letters of Credence to H.E. Mr Ali Bongo Ondimba, President of the Republic.

On 23 February, Archbishop James Patrick Green, titular Archbishop of Altinum, began his mission as Apostolic Nuncio in Denmark with the presentation of his Letters of Credence to H.M. Queen Margrethe II.

On 5 March, Archbishop James Patrick Green, titular Archbishop of Altinum, began his mission as Apostolic Nuncio in Iceland with the presentation of his Letters of Credence to H.E. Mr Guðni Thórhannsson, President of the Republic.

## NECROLOGY

Bishop Felipe Tejada García, Msps, titular Bishop of Castabala, Auxiliary Bishop emeritus of México, at age 83 (9 Apr.)

Bishop Rinaldo Fidel Brédice, Bishop emeritus of Santa Rosa, Argentina, at age 85 (14 Apr.)

## With Bishops of the Antilles



*On Monday morning, 16 April, the Holy Father met with members of the Antilles Episcopal Conference on a visit ad limina Apostolorum.*

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# Any wound to the Body of Christ is an affront to God

Pope Francis speaks of Jesus' encounter with the disciples in the Upper Room

*"Any offense or wound or violence to the body of our neighbour is an affront to God the Creator". Drawing on the day's reading from Luke (24:35-48), Pope Francis emphasized this in his remarks to the faithful after reciting the Regina Caeli in Saint Peter's Square on the Third Sunday of Easter, 15 April. The following is a translation of Pope Francis' reflection, which he shared in Italian.*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,  
Good morning!

At the centre of this Third Sunday of Easter there is the encounter with the Risen One experienced by his disciples, all together. This is evidenced especially by the Gospel which introduces us once again to the Upper Room, where Jesus manifests himself to the Apostles, addressing this greeting to them: "Peace to you" (Lk 24:36). It is the greeting of the Risen Christ, who gives us peace: "Peace to you!". It is a matter of both inner peace and the peace that is established in interpersonal relationships. The episode recounted by Luke the Evangelist rests heavily on the realism of the Resurrection. Jesus is not a spirit. Indeed, it is not about an apparition of Jesus' spirit, but of his real presence with his risen body.

Jesus realizes that the Apostles are unsettled in seeing him, that they are bewildered because the reality of the Resurrection is inconceivable to them. They believe they are seeing a spirit; but the Risen Jesus is not a spirit; he is a man with body and soul. This is why, in order to convince them, he says to them: "See my hands and my feet" – he shows them his wounds – "that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see that I have" (v. 39). And since this did not seem enough to overcome the disciples' disbelief – the Gospel says something interesting: there was so much joy they had within that this joy prevented them from believing it: "No, it cannot be! It cannot be so! So much joy is not possible!". And Jesus, in order to convince them, asks them: "Have you anything here to eat?" (v. 41). They offer him some broiled fish; Jesus takes

and eats it in front of them, in order to convince them.

Jesus' insistence on the reality of his Resurrection illuminates the Christian perspective of the body: the body is not an obstacle nor a prison of the soul. The body is created by God, and mankind is not complete if there is no union of body and soul. Jesus, who has triumphed over death and risen in body and soul, helps us to understand that we must have a positive idea of our body. It can become an occasion or instrument of sin, but sin is not provoked by the body, but rather by our moral weakness. The body is a wondrous gift from God, intended, in union with the soul, to express in fullness the image and likeness of Him. Therefore, we are called to have great respect and care for our body and that of others.

Any offense or wound or violence to the body of our neighbour is an affront to God the Creator! My thoughts go, in particular, to the children, the women, the elderly who are physically abused. In the flesh of these people we find the Body of Christ. Christ wounded, mocked, slandered, humiliated, scourged, crucified.... Jesus taught us love. A love that, in his Resurrection, is demonstrated to be more powerful than sin and death, and seeks to redeem all those who experience in their own body the slavery of our time.



Michel Ciry, "Doubting Thomas"

In a world where too often self-importance prevails over the weakest and materialism stifles the spirit, today's Gospel passage calls us to be people capable of looking deeply, full of wonder and great joy at having encountered the Risen Lord. It calls us to be people who know how to welcome and appreciate the novelty of life that He sows in history, in order to direct it toward new heavens and the new land. May we be sustained in this journey by the Virgin Mary, to whose maternal intercession we entrust ourselves with faith.

*After reciting the Regina Caeli, the Holy Father continued:*

Dear brothers and sisters, today in Vohipeno, Madagascar, the martyr Lucien Botovasoa was proclaimed Blessed. He was the father of a family and a coherent witness

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

## God is the one Master of life

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

*(Catechism of the Catholic Church, n. 1235).*

In the ceremony we make the sign of the Cross on the children. But I would like to return to a subject that I have talked to you about. Do our children know how to make the sign of the Cross properly? So often I have seen children who do not know how to make the sign of the Cross. And you, dads, moms, grandpas, grandmas, godfathers, godmothers, must teach them how to make the sign of the Cross properly, because it is repeating what was done in Baptism. Do you understand clearly? Teach children how to make the sign of the Cross. If they learn it as children they will do it well later, as grown-ups.

The Cross is the badge that shows who we are: our words, thoughts, gaze, works are under the sign of the Cross, that is, under the sign of Jesus' love to the very end. Children are marked on the forehead. Adult catechumens are also

marked, on all their senses, with these words: "Receive the sign of the cross on your ears, that you may hear the voice of the Lord"; "Receive the sign of the cross on your eyes, that you may see the glory of God"; "Receive the sign of the cross on your lips, that you may respond to the word of God"; "Receive the sign of the cross over your heart, that Christ may dwell there by faith"; "Receive the sign of the cross on your shoulders, that you may bear the gentle yoke of Christ" (*Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, n. 85). We become Christians in the measure to which the Cross is imprinted on us as a "paschal" mark (cf. Rev 14:1; 22:4), making visible, also outwardly, the Christian way of confronting life. Making the sign of the Cross when we wake, before meals, in facing danger, to protect against evil, in the evening before we sleep, means telling ourselves and others whom we belong to, whom we want to be. This is why it is so important to teach children how to make the sign of the Cross

properly. And as we do upon entering a church, we can also do so at home, by keeping a bit of holy water in a suitable little vase – some families do so: this way, each time we come in or go out, by making the sign of the Cross with that water we remember that *we are baptized*. Do not forget, I repeat: teach the children how to make the sign of the Cross.

### SPECIAL GREETINGS

Next Saturday the Spring Meetings of the World Bank will take place in Washington. I encourage the efforts that, through financial inclusion, seek to promote the lives of the poorest, fostering genuine integral development and respecting human dignity.

I greet the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today's Audience, particularly those from Ireland, The Netherlands, Sweden, Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia and the United States of

America. I offer a special welcome to the group of benefactors from Ireland, with gratitude for their support of the forthcoming World Meeting of Families in Dublin. In the joy of the Risen Christ, I invoke upon you and your families the loving mercy of God our Father. May the Lord bless you all!

I greet the pilgrims of the Order of the Mother of God on the 80th anniversary of the canonization of its Founder: Saint Giovanni Leonardi; the parishes, scholastic institutes, in particular the Highlands Institute of Rome; the flag bearers and musicians of Asti; the *Musica bene comune* Association of Rome.

I offer a special thought to *young people, the elderly, the sick and newlyweds*. I invite all to see in the Risen Jesus, living and present in our midst, the true Master of life; may his intercession obtain for you serenity and peace, and may his teaching be encouragement for you on the daily journey toward holiness.

## On the Apostolic Exhortation 'Gaudete et Exsultate'

*The Pope's Apostolic Exhortation 'Gaudete et Exsultate' on the call to holiness in today's world was presented on Monday morning, 9 April, in the Holy See Press Office. The following texts are translations of discourses given at the presentation by Italian journalist Gianni Valente, addressing the second chapter, and Paola Bignardi, former president of Italian Catholic Action, examining the third and fourth chapters.*

PAOLA BIGNARDI

The first thing that is striking in the Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate* is the determination with which it sustains that holiness pertains to ordinary people, who have an ordinary everyday life made up of the simple things that form the framework of everyone's existence. Hence a holiness that is not meant for a few heroes or exceptional people, but which represents the ordinary way of living the ordinary Christian existence. The result of this is said at the outset: if there is no vocation or existential condition incompatible with the call to holiness, then Christi-

the Gospel, even though it may cause them problems.

The "great criterion" translates the Beatitudes in a concrete way, above all that of mercy. The example that is given at n. 98 is really very concrete and demonstrates the distinction between being and not being Christians. "If I encounter a person sleeping outdoors on a cold night" (n. 98), I can consider him or her an unexpected annoyance or recognize in him a human being with a dignity like my own, like me infinitely loved by the Father: the boundary between being and not being Christian passes through my attitude.

In the Beatitudes we find the portrait of the Lord Jesus and they cannot be lived if not by preserving an intense union with him. But neither on the path of holiness are those who are wary of social engagement "seeing it as superficial, worldly, secular, materialist, communist or populist" (n. 103) and, the text concludes: "we cannot uphold an ideal of holiness that would ignore injustice in [the] world". Because if holiness is to experience love, the gift of self as lived by the Lord Jesus, to the very end, in a radical and total way, then one cannot pass by a brother or sister distracted and indifferent; and to do this the Christian would need the Lord Jesus to make him capable of loving as He loved.

Living holiness means accomplishing in one's own life that unity through which we pass from contemplating the Lord's face to the concrete gesture of charity, and from that gesture to the face.

The fourth chapter outlines five great manifestations of love for God and for neighbour; five current forms, because holiness has different concrete forms at different times. The document is an instrument for seeking out the forms of holiness for today. The five characteristics proposed are meant to be measured with some of the dangers and limitations of today's culture: "a sense of anxiety, sometimes violent, that distracts and debilitates; negativity and sullenness; the self-centred bred by consumerism; individualism and all those forms of ersatz spirituality – having nothing to do with God – that dominate the current religious marketplace" (n. 111).

For this reason, steadfastness and interior solidity are needed in order to resist the aggressiveness within us, the temptation to participate in those modern forms of violence such as those found on the web, in order to avoid being influenced by the evil that subtly nestles into interpersonal relationships and poisons them....

A holy person lives with joy and has a sense of humour; his joy is not carefree and superficial, but is a joy born out of knowing he is infinitely loved and which is expressed in fraternal communion. Holiness moreover, is parhessia, is apostolic courage, is the capacity to dare, to experiment, to

GIANNI VALENTE

In the second chapter of the Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate* the Pope focuses on what he defines as "two false forms of holiness that can lead us astray: gnosticism and pelagianism". Thus, once again, the Pope refers to the names of these "two heresies from early Christian times" which, he determines, "continue to plague us" (n. 35).

## Two false forms

In seeking to convey what gnosticism and pelagianism have to do with a Papal text on the call to holiness, it is helpful to begin with the very nature of holiness, with how holiness is lived and considered in the Church and in her teachings.

In this Exhortation too, the Pope reiterates in many ways and in many passages that holiness comes from God. It is a fruit of the gift of grace in the life of the Church. This means that holiness is not the result of one's own effort; it is not a mountain to be climbed alone. It means that one cannot create strategies or pastoral programmes to "produce" holiness. It means above all that it is Christ himself who initiates and perfects holiness. For this reason holiness is the Church's treasure: because if there are saints it means that Christ is living, and continues to act in them, to caress and to change their lives, and we can see the effects of this. And again because of this it is also true that the "deceptive ideas" that follow in the wake of pelagianism and gnosticism are an obstacle to the universal call to be holy: indeed, they propose once again, in various forms, the age-old deception of pelagianism or that of gnosticism: namely, they conceal or remove the necessity of Christ's grace, or they empty the real and free dynamic of its action.

Saint Augustine wrote that the malicious error of the pelagians of his time was to insist on identifying Christ's grace "in his example, and not in the gift of his presence". According to Pelagius, the fifth-century monk from whom the ancient heresy takes its name, the nature of all human beings was not harmed by Adam's sin, and therefore all were always capable of choosing good and avoiding sin by

simply exercising their own willpower. Pelagius claimed that Christ had come above all to provide a good example, and was to be followed as a Teacher of life in order to learn how to cultivate one's moral virtue. But this aim could be achieved by counting on one's own strengths and by doing without him, his gift and the assistance of his grace.

On this point the Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate* is placed in the midst of the many pronouncements with which the ecclesial Magisterium has insisted always and repeatedly that in the real condition in which all human beings find themselves, one can neither be holy nor live a just life in Jesus' footsteps without the intervention of Christ's grace, without being embraced by his spirit in a mysterious but real way.

Among other things, Pope Francis quotes the second Council of Orange which already in 529 had stated that "Even the desire to be cleansed comes about in us through the outpouring and working of the Holy Spirit". He also cites the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* to remind us that "this is one of the great convictions that the Church has come firmly to hold", given that "it flows from the heart of the Gospel" (CCC, n. 55). However it is important to always confront manifestations of the pelagian attitude which infiltrates even the most ordinary customs of ecclesial life.

The Apostolic Exhortation identifies the pelagian imprint in all those who "ultimately trust only in their own powers", and when they want to show they are faithful to "a particular Catholic style" (EG, n. 49), in reality they believe that "everything depends on human effort" and is even "channelled by ecclesial rules and structures" (n. 59).

The Pope writes that the universal call to holiness is instead addressed directly to those who recognize that in every step of life and faith there is always a need for grace. Because – as the text reads – "in this life human weaknesses are not healed completely and

once for all by grace" (n. 49). And the work of grace does not make me superhuman, but "acts in history; ordinarily it takes hold of us and transforms us progressively" (n. 50).

The other "deceptive idea" identified by the Pope should also be likened to an ancient counterfeiting of Christian newness, that of the ancient gnostic doctrines that often absorbed the words and truths of the Christian faith in their conceptual systems, but in so doing have, from the inside, stripped

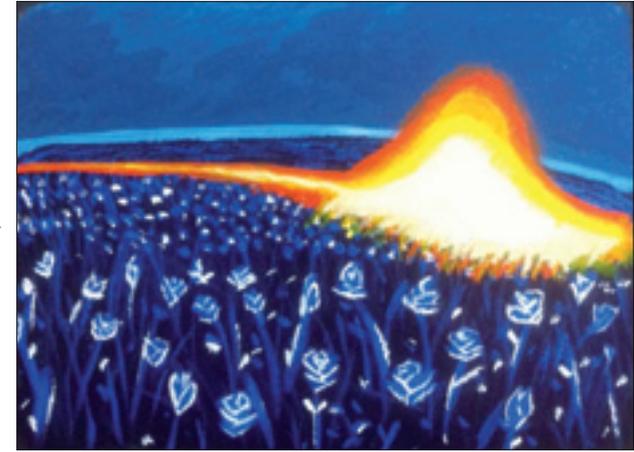
hortation states – they cannot stand the fact that "God infinitely transcends us; he is full of surprises. We are not the ones to determine when and how we will encounter him; the exact times and places of that encounter are not up to us" (n. 41).

The Apostolic Exhortation cautions that today too a gnostic spirit can seep into the life of the Church each time she wants to disregard the concrete and gratuitous features with which grace operates, and takes the way of abstraction, which continues to "disembody the mystery" (cf. n. 37). As, for example, what happens when a prevailing presumption reduces ecclesial membership to "a set of ideas and bits of information" to be mastered (n. 36), or to the "ability to understand the complexity of certain doctrines" (n. 37). And if Christianity were reduced to a set of messages, of ideas, so too would be the idea of Christ or the idea of grace, regardless of its genuine work; so inevitably the Church's mission would be reduced to propaganda, to marketing, that is, to seeking ways to spread those ideas and convince others to support them.

The Apostolic Exhortation also points out other traces of the gnostic mentality that can also be found in ecclesial circles, such as the elitism of those who feel they are superior to the multitudes of the baptized, or scorn for imperfections, for those who fall, for those whom the ancient gnostics would have defined as "carnal".

However, in response to these phenomena of ecclesial self-withdrawal, the Apostolic Exhortation does not initiate cultural battles against neo-gnostics and neo-pelagians. The Pope prays that the Lord himself may free the Church from the new forms of gnosticism and pelagianism that can hinder many "along the path to holiness" (n. 62).

The intent of the entire document is not that of stigmatizing the new forms of pelagianism and gnosticism, but only that of inviting all to seek each day the face of the holy scattered among the People of God, and to recognize them as the authentic and effective sign of the presence of Christ's mercy.



Justin Atlasbot, "Lyline of Sanctity" (2011)

## For ordinary people

take the initiative, to move toward novelty. It is daring to go toward the peripheries and the fringes, to discover that the Lord has preceded us. "Jesus is already there, in the hearts of our brothers and sisters, in their wounded flesh, in their troubles and in their profound desolation. He is already there" (n. 135). Holiness is a journey to undertake as a community, as so many saints give witness, including the Trappist monks of Tibhirine, who prepared as a community for martyrdom. Community life – in the family, in the parish, in the religious community – "is made up of small everyday things" (n. 143). The life of unity that Jesus wished for in his farewell discourse passes through small everyday gestures.

Lastly, holiness is prayer, offered in silence, by allowing oneself to look to the Lord, by allowing the warmth of love and tenderness to be nourished by Him; it is "contemplation of the face of Jesus, died and risen", which "restores our humanity" (n. 153). Holiness is allowing oneself to be transformed by the Lord and by the power of his Spirit.

Thus, today too, the way of holiness is the way of joy.



Carl H. Bloch, "Sermon on the Mount"



The holiness to which the Lord calls you grows through small gestures in everyday life.

#GaudeteetExsultate

(@Pontifex)

an life is not possible outside of this exigent and fascinating context: Christian life cannot be fully realized if not in the perspective of holiness; there is no middle ground or discounted compromise.

This rule is presented in the third and fourth chapters of the document. The Christian identity card stems from the Beatitudes and from what Pope Francis calls "The great criterion" proposed in Chapter 25 in the Gospel of Matthew: concrete mercy toward the poor.

The Beatitudes present the Christian identity card, because in it we find the portrait of the Master, which Christians are called to reflect in their daily lives (n. 63). The word "happy", or "blessed", is a synonym for "holy". Those who live in self-giving because they live in accordance with the word of Jesus are holy and achieve true beatitude.

Pope Francis warns, however, against the temptation to consider the Beatitudes as lovely poetic words: they run counter to the ways of the world and delineate another way of living. Suffice it to read the simple declension made at the end of the description of each of them: holy are they who are poor of heart; holy are they who react with humility and meekness; holy are they who know how to mourn with others; holy are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness; holy are they who see and act with mercy; holy are they who keep their heart free of all that tarnishes love; holy are they who sow peace all around them; holy are they who accept daily the way of

The Pope to a delegation from Villanova University

## Workshop of dialogue and encounter

*Universities "are called to be workshops of dialogue and encounter in the service of truth, justice and the defense of human dignity at every level". Pope Francis shared this observation in an address to a delegation from Villanova University of Pennsylvania, USA, whom he received in audience in the Clementine Hall on Saturday, 14 April. The following is the English text of the Pope's discourse.*

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to welcome you, Father President, the Council and the Board of Trustees of Villanova University, on the occasion of your meeting in Rome. I pray that your time in the Eternal City will be a source of spiritual renewal for each of you.

As an heir to the great Augustinian tradition of learning inspired by the pursuit of divine wisdom, your University was founded to preserve and pass on the richness of the Catholic tradition to new generations of students, who, like the young Augustine, seek true meaning and value in true life. In fidelity to this vision, the University, as a community of research and study, must also address the complex ethical

and cultural challenges raised by the epochal changes affecting our world today. It is my hope that in every aspect of its life and mission, Villanova University will persevere in its efforts to communicate the intellectual, spiritual and moral values that will enable young people to participate wisely and responsibly in the great debates shaping the future of society.

One urgent aspect of this educational task is the development of a universal, "catholic" vision of the unity of our human family and a commitment to the practical solidarity needed to combat the grave inequalities and injustices that mark today's world. Universities, by their very nature, are called to be workshops of dialogue and encounter in the service of truth, justice and the defense of human dignity at every level. This is especially true of Catholic institutions like your own, which contribute to the Church's mission of promoting the authentic and integral growth of the human family towards its definitive fullness in God (cf. Ap. Const. *Veritatis Gaudium*, 1).

No one knew better than Saint Augustine the restlessness of the human heart until

it finds its rest in the God who, in Jesus Christ, reveals to us the deepest truth about our lives and our ultimate destiny. May these days of reflection, discussion and encounter confirm you in your commitment to the University's mission in the service of the truth that

makes us free (cf. *Jn* 8:32). With affection I commend you and your families, and the entire Villanova community, to the prayers of Saints Augustine and Monica, and to all I impart my Apostolic Blessing as a pledge of joy and peace in the Risen Lord Jesus.



### Congregation for the Causes of Saints Promulgation of Decrees

*On Saturday, 14 April, the Holy Father received in audience Cardinal Angelo Amato, SDB, Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. During the audience, the Supreme Pontiff authorized the Congregation to promulgate the Decrees concerning:*

– the heroic virtues of the Servant of God Varghese Payapilly, diocesan priest, Founder of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Destitute, born in Konthuruthy, India on 8 August 1876 and died in Ernakulam, India on 5 October 1929;

– the heroic virtues of the Servant of God Emanuele Nunes Formigão, diocesan priest, Founder of the Congregation of Our Lady of Fatima's Sisters of Reparation, born in Tomar, Portugal on 1 January 1883 and died in Fatima, Portugal on 30 January 1958;

– the heroic virtues of the Servant of God Ludovico Longari, professed priest of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament, born in Montodine, Italy on 20 June 1889 and died in Ponteranica, Italy on 17 June 1963;

– the heroic virtues of the Servant of God Élisabeth Bruyère, Foundress of the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Ottawa, born in L'Assomp-

tion, Canada on 19 March 1818 and died in Ottawa on 5 April 1876;

– the heroic virtues of the Servant of God Margherita Ricci Curbastro (in the world: Costanza), Foundress of the Congregation of the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Agony, born in Lugo di Romagna, Italy on 6 October 1856 and died there on 7 January 1923;

– the heroic virtues of the Servant of God Florenza Giovanna Profilio, Foundress of the Institute of the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of Lipari, born in Pirrera, Italy on 30 December 1873 and died in Rome on 21 February 1956;

– the heroic virtues of the Servant of God Maria Dolores of Christ the King (in the world: Maria Di Majo), Foundress of the Congregation of the Missionary Handmaids of Christ the King, born in Palermo, Italy on 16 December 1888 and died there on 27 June 1967;

– the heroic virtues of the Servant of God Justa Domínguez de Vidaurreta Eidoy, Superior of the Spanish Province of the Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul, born in Azpeitia, Spain on 2 November 1875 and died in Madrid on 18 December 1958.

### At the Regina Caeli

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

to Christ up to the heroic offering of his life. Arrested and put to death for manifesting his will to remain faithful to the Lord and the Church, he represents for all of us an example of charity and of strength in the faith.

I am deeply disturbed by the current world situation, in which, despite the instruments available to the international community, it is difficult to agree upon a common action in favour of peace in Syria and in other regions of the world. While I pray unceasingly for peace, and I invite all people of good will to continue to do likewise, I once again appeal to all accountable politicians that justice and peace may prevail.

I sadly received news of the killing of three men abducted at the end of March on the Ecuador-Colombia border. I pray for them and for their families, and I am close to the dear people of Ecuador, encouraging them to go forward united and in peace, with the help of the Lord and of his Most Holy Mother.

I entrust to your prayers the people, such as Vincent Lambert in France, little Alfie Evans in England, and others in various countries, who live, at times for long periods, in a state of severe infirmity, medically assisted in their basic needs. These are delicate, very painful and complex situations. Let us pray that every sick person may always be respected in his/her dignity, and cared for in a way suited to his/her condition, with the unanimous support of family members, physicians and other healthcare professionals, with great respect for life.

I warmly greet all of you, pilgrims from Italy and from many parts of the world: families, parish groups, schools, associations. In particular I greet the faithful from La California, as well as those from Arluno, Pontelongo, Scandicci, Genoa-Pegli and Vibo Valentia; the children from the "Daughters of Jesus" school in Modena and the "Friends of Paul VI" group of Pescara.

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

# Sorrow and shame for many lives crucified

In a letter to the Bishops of Chile Francis asks forgiveness from victims of abuse

*The Pope feels "sorrow and shame" regarding the "many lives crucified" due to the "serious abuses" committed by priests and consecrated people in Chile. In a letter sent to the country's bishops after the "special mission" undertaken by Archbishop Charles Scicluna and Msgr Jorge Bertomeu Farnós, the Pontiff acknowledges "the serious errors ... made in the assessment and perception of the situation" which were made out of a "lack of reliable and balanced information". He intends to summon the Bishops to Rome "to discuss the conclusions of the aforementioned visit", along with his own. The following is a translation of the Pontiff's letter.*

Dear Bishops of Chile,  
Dear Brothers in the Episcopate,

The receipt last week of the latest documents that complete the report consigned to me by my two Special Envoys to Chile on 20 March 2018, totaling more than 2,300 pages, has moved me to write this letter. I assure you of my prayers and I would like to share with you the conviction that the present difficulties are also an opportunity to re-establish trust in the Church, trust shattered by our errors and sins, and to heal some wounds that continue to bleed in the whole of Chilean society.

Without faith and without prayer, fraternity is impossible. Therefore, on this Second Sunday of Easter, on the day of mercy, I offer you this reflection in the hope that each of you may accompany me on the inner journey that I have been undertaking in recent weeks, so that the Spirit may guide us with his gift and not our interests or, even worse, our wounded pride.

At times, when similar evils have marred our spirit and cast us into the world weak, fearful, shielded in our comfortable "winter palaces", God's love comes to meet us and to cleanse our intentions so that we may love as free, mature and discerning men. When the communications media embarrass us by presenting a Church almost always under a new moon, bereft of the light of the Sun of justice (Saint Ambrose, *Hexameron* IV, 8:32) and we are tempted to doubt the Paschal victory of the Risen One, I believe that as Saint Thomas we must not be afraid of doubt (Jn 20:25), but must fear the insistent longing to see without trusting the witness of those who have heard the most beautiful promise from the Lord's lips (Mt 28:20).



*Pope Francis' 16 January 2018 meeting with Bishops of Chile in Santiago*

Today I ask you to speak not of certainties, but of the one thing that the Lord allows us to experience every day: joy, peace, forgiveness of our sins and the action of his grace.

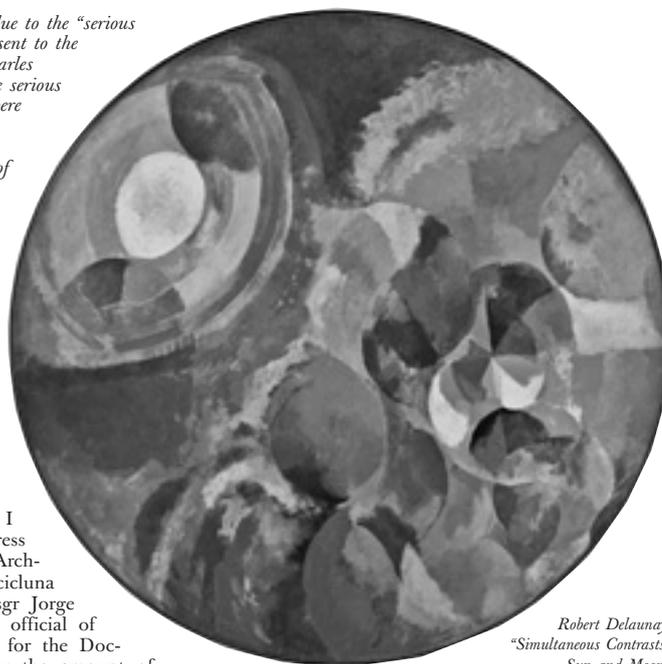
In this regard, I would like to express my gratitude to Archbishop Charles Scicluna of Malta and Msgr Jorge Bertomeu Farnós, official of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, for the amount of work involved in the calm and empathetic listening to the 64 depositions they collected recently both in New York and in Santiago de Chile. I sent them to listen from the heart and with humility. Afterwards, when they delivered the report to me and, especially, in their juridical and pastoral assessment of the information gathered, they acknowledged that they had felt overwhelmed by the pain of so many victims of serious abuses of conscience and of power and, in particular, of sexual abuse committed against minors by various consecrated people in your country, which, denied at the time, robbed them of their innocence.

As pastors we must express heartfelt and cordial gratitude to those who, with honesty, courage and *sensus Ecclesiae*, requested to meet my Envoys and showed them the wounds in their very soul. Archbishop Scicluna and Msgr Bertomeu told me that, with impressive maturity, respect and amiability, several bishops, priests, deacons, laymen and laywomen of Santiago and Osorno went to Holy Name Parish in New York or to Sotero Sanz, in Providencia.

Moreover, in the days following the special mission, there were witnesses to another fact worth keeping in mind for other occasions, since not only was the climate of confidentiality established during the Visit maintained, but at no time did anyone succumb to the temptation to turn that delicate mission into a media circus. In this respect, I would like to thank the various organizations and means of communication for their professionalism in dealing with this most delicate case, respecting the right of citizens to information and the good reputation of the declarants.

Now, after a careful reading of the acts of this "special mission", I believe I can state that all of the collected statements speak in a straightforward manner, without additives or sugarcoating, of many lives crucified, and I confess that this causes me sorrow and shame.

Taking all of this into account, I write to you, gathered in the 115th Plenary Assembly, in order to humbly request your cooperation and assistance in discerning the measures that must be adopted in the short, medium and long term in order to restore ecclesial communion in



*Robert Delaunay,  
"Simultaneous Contrasts:  
Sun and Moon"*

Chile, in order to remedy the scandal to the extent possible, and re-establish justice.

I intend to summon you to Rome in order to discuss the conclusions of the aforementioned visit and my own conclusions. I have envisioned this encounter as a fraternal moment, with neither prejudice nor preconceived ideas, with the sole aim of making the truth shine forth in our lives. As to the date, I ask the Secretary of the Episcopal Conference to suggest a convenient time.

With regard to myself, I recognize, and I would like you to convey this faithfully, that I have made serious errors in the assessment and perception of the situation, in particular through the lack of reliable and balanced information. I now beg the forgiveness of all those whom I have offended and I hope to be able to do so personally, in the coming weeks, in the meetings that I will have with representatives of the people interviewed.

"Abide in me" (Jn 15:4): these words of the Lord continually resonate in these days. They speak of personal relationships, of communion, of fraternity that attracts and summons. United to Christ as branches to the vine, I invite you to instil in your prayers in the coming days a magnanimity that may prepare us for the above-mentioned meeting and allow us then to transform into concrete acts all that we will have reflected upon. Now more than ever we cannot fall back into the temptation of verbosity and maintain "universal" themes. In these days, let us look to Christ. Let us look to his life and his gestures, especially when he shows he is compassionate and merciful to those who have done wrong. Let us love truth; let us ask for wisdom of heart and allow ourselves to convert.

I look forward to hearing from you and, asking Bishop Santiago Silva Retamales, President of the Episcopal Conference of Chile, to publish the present letter as soon as possible, I impart to you my blessing and I ask you, please, to never cease praying for me.

Vatican, 8 April 2018

FRANCIS

# Sin makes the heart grow old

The Pope visits Saint Paul of the Cross Parish on the outskirts of Rome

*On 15 April, the Third Sunday of Easter, the Pope made a pastoral visit to the parish of Saint Paul of the Cross in Corviale, a neighbourhood on the outskirts of Rome. Celebrating an afternoon Mass in the parish church, he commented on the day's passage from the Gospel of Luke (24:35-48). The following is a translation of the homily, which the Holy Father gave in Italian.*



The disciples knew that Jesus had risen because Mary Magdalen had said so that morning; then Peter saw Him; then the disciples who had returned from Emmaus told of their encounter with the

Risen Jesus. They knew it: He is risen and lives. But that truth had not entered the heart. That truth, yes, they knew it, but they were doubtful. They preferred to hold that truth in their mind, perhaps.

It was less dangerous to hold a truth in one's mind than to keep it in one's heart. It is less dangerous.

They were all gathered and the Lord appeared. And at first they were afraid and believed that he was a spirit. But Jesus himself said to them: "look, touch me. See the wounds. A spirit has no body. See, it is I!". But why did they disbelieve? Why were they doubtful? There is a word in the Gospel which gives us the explanation: "they still disbelieved for joy, and wondered...". For joy they could not believe. That joy was so great! If this is the truth, it is an immense joy! "Ah, I do not believe it. I cannot". They could not believe there was so much joy; the joy that leads to Christ.

This also happens to us when we are given good news. Before accepting it in our heart we say: "But is it true? But how do you know? Where did you hear it?". We do so in order to be sure, because, if this is true, it is a great joy. This happens to us in our own small way; imagine the disciples! The joy was so great that

it was better to say: "No, I do not believe it". But he was there! Yes, but they could not. They could not accept it; they could not let the truth they saw pass into their heart. And in the end, naturally, they believed. This is the "renewed youthfulness" that the Lord gives us. In the Collect prayer we said: "renewed youthfulness". We are accustomed to sin aging us... Sin ages the heart, always. It makes your heart hard, old, weary. Sin makes the heart grow weary and we somewhat lose faith in the Risen Christ: "No, I do not think so...". This would be so much joy... Yes, yes, he lives, but in Heaven, for his own affairs". But I am his affair! Each of us! But we are unable to make that connection.

In the [First] Letter the Apostle John says: "if any one does sin, we have an advocate with the Father". Do not be afraid; he forgives. He renews us. Sin ages us, but Jesus, Risen, living, renews us. This is the power of the Risen Jesus. When we approach the Sacrament of Penance it is in order to be renewed, to rejuvenate. And the Risen Jesus does this. It is the Risen Jesus who is in our midst today; he will be here on the altar; he is in the Word... And he will be likewise on the altar: Risen! It is Christ, the Advocate, who wants to defend us when we have sinned, to rejuvenate us.

Brothers and sisters, let us ask for the grace to believe that Christ is alive, is Risen! This is our faith, and if we believe this, other things are secondary. This is our life; this is our true youthfulness. Christ's victory over death, Christ's victory over sin. Christ is alive. "Yes, yes, now I will receive Communion...". But when you receive Communion, are you certain that Christ is alive, there; he is Risen? "Yes, it is a piece of blessed bread...". No, it is Jesus! Christ is alive; he is Risen among us, and if we do not believe this we will never be good Christians. We cannot be.

But "they still disbelieved for joy, and wondered". Let us ask the Lord for the grace that joy not hinder us from believing; the grace to touch the Risen Jesus: to touch him in the encounter through prayer; in the encounter through the sacraments; in the encounter with his forgiveness which is the renewed youthfulness of the Church; in the encounter with the sick, when we go to visit them, with the imprisoned, with those who are most needy, with children, with the elderly. If we feel the wish to do something good, it is the Risen Jesus who spurs us to this. It is always joy, the joy that makes us youthful.

Let us ask for the grace to be a joyful community, because each of us is certain, has faith, has encountered Jesus Christ.

## An afternoon in Corviale

"Reality is best seen from the periphery": with this banner, the residents of the underprivileged neighbourhood of Corviale greeted Pope Francis, who paid a pastoral visit to this suburban neighbourhood on the west side of Rome on Sunday afternoon, 15 April. The Holy Father celebrated Mass at the Parish of *San Paolo della Croce* (Saint Paul of the Cross) and met with children, the elderly, the poor, and detainees participating in a job training programme.

Upon his arrival in Corviale, a neighbourhood marred by neglect and marginalization, the Pope was welcomed by cheering crowds; by the parish priest, Fr Roberto Cassano; Archbishop Angelo De Donatis, Vicar of Rome; and Auxiliary Bishop Paolo Selvadagi.

Francis then met with children and young people on the sports field, where four youngsters attending catechism asked Pope Francis a series of questions. Responding to Leonardo's question about his favourite Gospel passage, the Pope revealed that he likes the one that speaks of Jesus' encounter with Matthew, the tax collector, "a profiteer, a traitor" who "gave money to the army that occupied Palestine at that time, to the Romans. And this is a bad sin. A person attached to money is a bad person". But when Jesus calls to Matthew to follow him, the traitor-turned Evangelist does so: "one sees the power that Jesus has to change a heart ... Jesus is capable of changing the most wicked and making him an evangelist, an apostle and a saint".

Carlotta asked the Pope if unbaptized people are children of God. Francis responded "we are all children of God. Even those who believe in other religions, far away, who have idols" even "*Mafiosi* are children of God" although they "prefer to act like children of the devil". God loves everyone, the Pope said, and has given every heart a "conscience to recognize good and distinguish it from evil" – even those "who do not know Jesus". With Baptism and the power of the Holy Spirit which "reinforces your belonging to God", the Pope said, "you have become 'more' a child of God ... with the power of the Holy Spirit".

Answering Eduardo's question about how he felt when he was elected, Pope Francis said "I felt only that God wished it ... I did not feel anything spectacular: not fear, nor special joy". He added, "when the Lord calls, he gives you peace ... I felt peace".



When it was Emanuele's turn to ask the Pontiff his question, the child burst into tears and the Pope gathered him in a warm embrace, telling him to whisper it in his ear, and asking the boy if he could share it with the others. The crowd erupted in applause as the Pope read out the question Emanuele had prepared, asking if his father, who had recently passed away, might be in heaven. Even though his father was an atheist, the boy had explained, he'd had all of his four children baptized. "That man did not have the gift of faith; he was not a believer", the Pope said, but he baptized his children. He had a good heart" and passed it on to his children. And God, the Pope added, "has the heart of a father". Do you think that "God would be able to leave him far from Him?". God, the Pope told Emanuele, "was surely proud of your father" because "being a non believer", it must not have been an easy decision to have his children baptized. "And this pleased God very much". Thanking Emanuele for his "courage", the Pope invited him to "speak" with his father and to pray for him.