

L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO

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Friday, 2 November 2018

YOUNG PEOPLE, THE FAITH AND VOCATIONAL DISCERNMENT



In communion and with frankness

Final days of the Synod PAGES 9-12



Listening to reality

GIOVANNI MARIA VIAN

The Third Synod of Francis' pontificate has ended. It has been the 28th Assembly (taking into account ordinary, extraordinary and special assemblies) in little more than half a century since Paul VI created the Synod of Bishops several weeks before the conclusion of the Council, and the first meeting of the new entity, two years later. These facts serve to demonstrate how, amid light and shadows, this institution has already entered into the normality of post-Council Catholicism. The synodal approach is notably linked to the very origins of Christianity and to its formation in late antiquity, so as to influence, over the course of the centuries and in various ways, the life and development of its diverse confessions.

Pope Bergoglio has emphasized the importance of synodality many times, and he intermingled plaudits for this method as he concluded the Assembly dedicated to young people. Francis spoke immediately after the landslide endorsement – an hours-long, point by point process – of the lengthy document that sprang from it. Speaking off-the-cuff, the Pontiff again emphasized that the Synod “is not a Parliament”, but rather, “a protected space” enabling the Holy Spirit to act. And he promptly added: “the purpose of the Synod is not a document, as I said at the outset. We are laden with documents. I do not know if this document will be effective outside, I do not know. But I know for certain that it must have an effect on us; it must work in us”. For two reasons, he stressed: because “we are the intended recipients of the document, not the people outside” and because “it is the Spirit who did all this, and it depends on us”.

Then, commenting on the Gospel passage in the concluding Mass of the Assembly that had gathered in the Vatican for over three weeks, the Pope outlined “the journey of faith” (and the approach of the Synod itself, which in Greek means precisely ‘to journey together’): a “way” – as Christianity itself is defined in the *Acts of the Apostles* – facilitated first and foremost by listen-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

VATICAN BULLETIN



Section for General Affairs of the Secretariat of State.

PONTIFICAL ACADEMY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

AUDIENCES

Wednesday, 24 October

H.H. Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, with his entourage

Thursday, 25 October

Cardinal Luis Francisco Ladaria Ferrer, SJ, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith

Archbishop Luis Mariano Montemayor, titular Archbishop of Illici, Apostolic Nuncio in Colombia

Bishop Stefano Russo of Fabriano-Matelica, Italy, Secretary General of the Italian Episcopal Conference

Friday, 26 October

Cardinal Peter Kodwo Appiah Turkson, Prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development

Msgr Maurizio Bravi, Permanent Observer to the World Tourism Organization

Cardinal Antonio Maria Vegliò, President emeritus of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People

H.E. Mr Dennis A. Savoie, Ambassador of Canada, on a farewell visit

Monday, 29 October

H.E. Mr Seyyed Taha Hashemi, Ambassador of the Islamic

Republic of Iran, for the presentation of his Letters of Credence

H.E. Ms Maria Fernanda Espinosa Garcés, President of the United Nations General Assembly, with her entourage

CHANGES IN EPISCOPATE

The Holy Father has removed from the pastoral care of the Diocese of Memphis, USA, Bishop Martin David Holley, and has appointed as Apostolic Administrator *sede vacante et ad nutum Sanctae Sedis* of the same Diocese, Archbishop Joseph Edward Kurtz of Louisville, USA (24 Oct.).

The Holy Father appointed Fr Guillermo Caride, as Auxiliary Bishop of San Isidro, Argentina, assigning him the titular episcopal See of Iomnium. Until now he has served as vicar general of the same Diocese and parish priest of San Gabriel de la Dolorosa Parish (26 Oct.).

Bishop-elect Caride, 56, was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He was ordained a priest on 5 December 1986. He has served in parish ministry and as: formator at the San Agustín Diocesan Seminary.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop António Maria Bessa Taipa

of Porto, Portugal, titular Bishop of Tabora (27 Oct.).

The Holy Father appointed Fr Armando Esteves Domingues as Auxiliary Bishop of Porto, assigning him the titular episcopal See of Centenaria. Until now he has served as vicar general of the Diocese of Viseu (27 Oct.).

Bishop-elect Domingues, 61, was born in Oleiros, Portugal. He was ordained a priest on 13 January 1982. He has served in parish ministry and as: military chaplain; professor of Catholic moral and religious education; diocesan treasurer; regional assistant to Catholic Scouts and first parish priest of Nossa Senhora do Viso.

The Holy Father appointed Fr Rui Manuel Sousa Valério, SMM, as Military Ordinary for Portugal. Until now he has served as parish priest of Póvoa de Santo Adrião in the Patriarchate of Lisbon and vicar forane (27 Oct.).

Bishop-elect Valério, 53, was born in Vila Nova de Ourém, Portugal. He made his perpetual vows for the Society of Mary (Missionary Fathers) on 6 October 1990 and was ordained a priest on 23 March 1991. He has served in parish ministry and as: military chaplain in the Naval Hospital in Lisbon; formator of postulants in Lisbon; chaplain at the Naval School in Alfaiete. He was appointed as a 'Missionary of Mercy' by Pope Francis in 2016. In the Congregation of the Montfort Missionaries in Portugal he has served as advisor to the major superior of the delegation for three terms and as superior of the Community of Castro Verde in the Diocese of Beja.

The Holy Father appointed Fr Francisco Jesús Orozco Mengibar as Bishop of Guadix, Spain. Until now he has served as vicar general of Córdoba, Spain (30 Oct.).

Bishop-elect Orozco Mengibar, 48, was born in Villafraanca de Córdoba, Spain. He holds a degree in theology and a doctorate in fun-

damental theology. He was ordained a priest on 9 July 1995. He has served in parish ministry and as: professor of liturgy; diocesan delegate for youth pastoral care; vice rector of the Minor Seminary of Córdoba and chaplain to the Sagrado Corazón Monastery; rector of the Shrine of María Santísima de Araceli; member of the presbyteral council; secretary and member of the College of Consultors; professor of fundamental theology and Canon of the Cathedral.

COUNCIL OF CARDINALS

The Holy Father appointed as Adjunct Secretary of the Council of Cardinals to assist him in the governance of the Universal Church and to draw up a plan for the revision of the Apostolic Constitution *Pastor Bonus* on the Roman Curia and as member of the Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts Msgr Marco Mellino, at the same time raising him to the dignity of bishop and assigning him the titular episcopal See of Cresima. Until now he has served as vicar general of the Diocese of Alba (27 Oct.).

Bishop-elect Mellino, 52, was born in Canale, Italy. He was ordained a priest in 1991. He holds a doctorate in canon law. He has served in parish ministry and as: prosecuting judge at the Piedmont Regional Ecclesiastical Tribunal; external judge at the Court of Appeals of the Vicariate of Rome. He has served in the

The Holy Father appointed as Ordinary Member of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences Mr Marcelo Suárez-Orozco, B.A., M.A.; Ph.D., dean of UCLA GSE&IS and distinguished professor of education in Los Angeles, USA (27 Oct.).

SPECIAL ENVOY

The Holy Father appointed Cardinal John Njue, Archbishop of Nairobi, Kenya, as his Special Envoy to the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the evangelization of Tanzania, to be held in Dar-es-Salaam, from 2 to 4 November (23 Oct.).

The Holy Father appointed Cardinal Thomas Aquino Manyo Maeda, Archbishop of Osaka, Japan, as his Special Envoy at the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the rebuilding of the Cathedral of Manila, the Philippines, to take place on 8 December 2018 in the same Metropolitan Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception (27 Oct.).

NECROLOGY

Bishop Friedrich Ostermann, titular Bishop of Dolia and Auxiliary emeritus of Münster, Germany, at age 86 (22 Oct.)

Bishop Pellegrino Tomaso Ronchi, OFM Cap., Bishop emeritus of Città di Castello, Italy, at age 88 (24 Oct.)

Bishop Valentin Masengò Nkinda of Kabinda, Democratic Republic of Congo, at age 77 (22 Oct.)

Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians



On Wednesday morning, 24 October, the Holy Father met with H.H. Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians.

Cardinal takes Possession



On Wednesday, 24 October, Cardinal Konrad Krajewski, Almoner of His Holiness, took possession of the Deaconry of Santa Maria Immacolata all'Esquilino, Rome.

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General Audience

In the Letter to the Ephesians, the marital fidelity that Saint Paul recommended was, in those times, "the most revolutionary thing that had been said about marriage". Pope Francis highlighted this during the General Audience in Saint Peter's Square on Wednesday, 31 October. Continuing the series of reflections on the Decalogue, he completed the catechesis on the Sixth Commandment, which he had begun the week before. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's catechesis, which he delivered in Italian.



The revolution of fidelity

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Good morning!

Today I would like to complete the catechesis on the Sixth Word of the Decalogue, "You shall not commit adultery", highlighting that the faithful love of Christ is the light by which to live the beauty of human affection. Indeed, our sentimental dimension is a *call to love* that is manifested in fidelity, in welcoming, and in mercy. This is very important. How is love manifested? In fidelity, in welcoming, and in mercy.

It must not be forgotten however, that this Commandment refers explicitly to marital fidelity and therefore it is fitting that we reflect more deeply on its *spousal* significance. This Scripture passage, this passage from the Letter of Saint Paul is revolutionary! Considering the anthropology of that age, it is saying that a husband must love his wife as Christ loves the Church: it is a revolution! Perhaps in those times it was the most revolutionary thing that had been said about marriage. Always on the path of love. We can ask: to whom is this command of fidelity addressed? Only to spouses? In reality, this command is for everyone; it is a paternal Word of God addressed to every man and woman.

Let us remember that the journey of human maturation is the same path of love that goes from *receiving care* to being able to *offer care*, from *receiving life* to being able to *give life*. Becoming adult men and women means developing the *spousal* and *parental* aptitude which is expressed in life's various situations, such as the ability to take someone else's burden upon oneself, and to love him or her unambiguously. It is therefore the overall ability of a person who accepts reality and is ready to enter into a profound relationship with others.

Who then is the adulterer, the lustful, the unfaithful? It is an immature person who keeps his life to himself and interprets situations on the basis of his own wellbeing and his own gratification. Therefore, in order to *get married*, the wedding ceremony does not suffice! We must make the journey from *I to we*, from thinking alone to thinking together, from living alone to living together: it is a good journey; it is a beautiful journey. Once we succeed at decentralizing ourselves, all action is *spousal*: we work, we speak, we decide, we meet others with a welcoming and oblatinal attitude.

In this sense every Christian vocation – we can now expand the perspective further and

say that in this sense every Christian vocation – is *spousal*. The *priesthood* is such because it is a call in Christ and in the Church, to serve the community with all the affection, the tangible care and the wisdom that the Lord gives us. The Church does not need people who aspire to the *role* of priests – no, we do not need them, it is better if they stay home –, rather we need men whose hearts are touched by the Holy Spirit with an unreserved love for the Bride of Christ. The priestly ministry means loving the People of God with all the paternal care, the tenderness and strength of a spouse and a father. Thus *virginity consecrated* in Christ is also lived with fidelity and with joy as a spousal and fruitful relationship of motherhood and fatherhood.

I repeat: every Christian vocation is spousal because it is the fruit of the bond of love in which we are all regenerated, a bond of love with Christ, as we were reminded by the passage from Paul that was read at the beginning. Starting from *his* fidelity, from *his* tenderness, from *his* generosity, we look to marriage and every vocation with faith, and we understand the full meaning of sexuality.

The human creature in his or her inseparable unity to the Spirit and to the body, and in the male and female polarity, is a very good reality which is destined to love and to be loved. The human body is not an instrument of pleasure, but the setting for our call to love, and there is no room for lust or superficiality in authentic love. Men and women deserve more than this!

Thus the Word, "You shall not commit adultery", despite its negative form, directs us to our original call, that is, to the full and faithful spousal love which Jesus Christ revealed and gave to us (cf. Rom 12:1).

SPECIAL GREETINGS

I greet the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today's Audience, especially those from England, Ireland, Denmark, Sweden, Indonesia, Korea, the Philippines, Vietnam and the United States of America. I thank the choirs for their praise of God in song. Upon all of you, and your families, I invoke the Lord's blessings of joy and peace. God bless you!

I extend a special greeting to *young people*, to the *elderly*, to the *sick* and to *newlyweds*. Tomorrow we will celebrate the Solemnity of All Saints and the day after tomorrow the memorial of all the faithful departed. May the witness of faith of those who have preceded us strengthen in us the certainty that God accompanies each of us on life's journey, he never abandons anyone to themselves and he wants all of us to be holy, as he is holy.

With the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran

On Monday morning, 29 October, the Pontiff received in audience H.E. Mr Seyed Tahā Hashemi, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran, for the presentation of the Letters by which he is accredited to the Holy See.

H.E. Mr Hashemi, 59, was born in Zarand, Kerman, on 23 November 1958. He is married and has five children.

He holds doctorate degrees in medicine and Islamic Law, and specializations in behavioural psychology and general psychology.

He has served as: deputy director of the Coordination Council of Islamic Propaganda and Director of the Dahe-ye Fajr Corps of the Islamic Revolution (1980-1992); director of the Computer Research Center of Islamic Sciences (1992-2018); member of the Board of Directors and of the Council of Guarantors of the Office for Islamic Propaganda at the Qom Theological Seminary (1994-2004); Member of Parliament representing Qom, and member of the directorate of the Islamic Legislative Assembly (1996-2000); director of the Supervisory Board of the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (1997-2000); editor-in-chief of the national newspaper "Entekhab" (1998-2004); deputy legal and international director of the Cultural Heritage and



Tourism Organization (2004-2005); director of the Cultural and Natural Heritage Committee – UNESCO National Commission (2004-2007); member of the Culture and Civilization Committee of the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution (2004-2017); director of the Institute of Research on Cultural Heritage and Tourism (2005-2007); cultural and social vice-rector of the Free Islamic University (2013-2016); member of the General Culture Council (2013-2017); medical advisor to the Rector of the Free Islamic University (2016-2017); member of the Scientific Council of the Institute of Research on Cultural Heritage and Tourism, and advisor to the executive director of the Institute for Social Security.



Both honey and sword

To the American Bible Society the Pope shares his thought on the Word of God

“Scripture constantly challenges us to redirect our path to God”, and by “letting ourselves ‘be read’ by the word of God”, we can “become in turn ‘open books’, living reflections of the saving word”. Pope Francis shared this thought with a Delegation of the American Bible Society in an audience on Wednesday, 31 October, in the Paul VI Hall. The following is the English text of the Holy Father’s discourse.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I greet you cordially and I thank you for your visit. In expressing gratitude for the work of the American Bible Society, I encourage you to pursue and even intensify your commitment, as stated in your mission statement, “to transform lives through God’s word”. Truly the word of God has the power to transform lives, for it is “living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword ... to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (*Heb 4:12*). Recalling these words of the Letter to the Hebrews, I offer my prayerful good wishes to all of you who have come to Rome this year for your annual retreat, centred precisely on the power of God’s word.

That word is *living and active*. At the very beginning of creation, God spoke and the

world came to be (cf. *Gen 1:6-7*). In the fullness of time, Jesus gave us words that are “spirit and life” (*Jn 6:63*). By his word, he restored broken hearts, as in the case of Zacchaeus and the tax collector Matthew, to whom “he said, ‘Follow me’. And he got up and followed him” (*Mt 9:9*). In these coming days, praying with the Scriptures, you will be able to experience anew the effectiveness of that word: it does not return empty, but accomplishes the purpose for which it was given (cf. *Is 55:10-11*). It is my hope that you will always receive the Bible in its precious uniqueness: as a word that, imbued with the Holy Spirit the Giver of life, communicates to us Jesus, who is life (cf. *Jn 14:6*), and thus makes our lives fruitful. No other book has the same power. In its word, we recognize the Spirit who inspired it: for only in the Spirit can Scripture truly be received, lived and proclaimed, for the Spirit teaches all things and reminds us of all that Jesus said (cf. *Jn 14:26*).

God’s word is *sharp*. It is honey, offering the comforting sweetness of the Lord, but also a sword bringing a salutary unrest to our hearts (cf. *Rev 10:10*). For it penetrates to the depths and brings to light the dark recesses of the soul. As it penetrates, it puri-

fies. The double edge of this “sword” may at first wound, but it proves beneficial, for it cuts away everything that distances us from God and his love. I pray that, through the Bible, you will taste and feel deep within yourselves the Lord’s tender love and his healing presence, which searches us and knows us (cf. *Ps 139:1*).

Finally, God’s word *judges thoughts and intentions*. The word of life is also truth (cf. *Jn 14:6*), and his word “creates” truth in us, dissipating every form of falsehood and duplicity. Scripture constantly challenges us to redirect our path to God. Letting ourselves “be read” by the word of God thus enables us to become in turn “open books”, living reflections of the saving word, witnesses of Jesus and proclaimers of his newness. For the word of God always brings newness; it is elusive and often breaks through our own plans and preconceptions.

Dear friends, I offer you my prayerful good wishes that at the conclusion of these days you can renew your dedication to the service of the Bible for the benefit of so many brothers and sisters. I thank you and I ask you to remember me in your prayers. Thank you.

Message to Hindus for the Feast of Deepavali

Christians and Hindus: in defence of the vulnerable of society

“Christians and Hindus: in defence of the vulnerable of society” is the theme of a message sent by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue to Hindus, for the 2018 Feast of Deepavali on 7 November. The following is the English text of the message, which was signed by Bishop Miguel Angel Ayuso Guixot, MCCJ, Secretary of the Council.

Dear Hindu Friends,

The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue sends you most cordial greetings and prayerful good wishes as you celebrate Deepavali on 7 November this year. May the celebrations surrounding this festival strengthen the spirit of friendship and fraternity among you and enhance peace and joy in your families and communities!

We know from news bulletins and web portals, as well as from direct experience, the daily hardships endured by the vulnerable members of our society: the poor, infirm, elderly, disabled, destitute, abandoned, migrants; those socially, religiously, culturally and linguistically marginal-

ized and excluded; and the victims of abuse and violence, especially women and children. Largely helpless and defenceless, discarded and ignored by a society increasingly indifferent and even callous in the face of human needs and sufferings, the vulnerable everywhere in our time suffer greatly. It is in this troubling context that we wish to share with you a reflection on how we, Hindus and Christians alike, can engage in efforts to defend, protect and assist them.

The moral duty to care for the vulnerable springs from our shared belief that we are all God’s creatures and, as a result, brothers and sisters, equal in dignity, with responsibility for one another. It also stems from the realization that we too at times feel vulnerable, looking for someone to offer us a helping hand. A healthy awareness of our common human condition and our moral duty towards others inspires us to promote their cause by doing all that we can to alleviate their sufferings, defend their rights and restore their dignity.

There is no doubt that, in this regard, many praiseworthy efforts are being made by individuals, groups and communities in different parts of the world. Yet given the great numbers of the vulnerable, and the complexities often involved in meeting their needs, those efforts can appear no more than a few drops in a great ocean. Still, opportunities for service are all around us, since the vulnerable can be found in every community and society. Greater efforts, inspired by a sense of solidarity, are needed so that they can feel “the presence of brothers and sisters who are concerned for them, and, by opening the doors of their hearts and lives, make them feel like friends and family” (Pope Francis, *Message for the Second World Day of the Poor*, 18 November, 2018) In the end, the true measure of civilization of any society is the way it treats its most vulnerable members.

Attentiveness and cooperation are needed, not only to defend the legitimate place and rights of the vulnerable in society, but also to cultivate a culture of care and concern in

their regard. In our families too, every effort should be made to ensure that no one feels unwanted, unloved, ignored or left out. Every level of society – especially political and government leaders, and those best equipped to provide practical assistance – needs to display a human face and heart to the vulnerable of our society and to reach out to all those suffering marginalization and oppression. Such generosity should not appear as a token gesture, but as one divinely inspired and aimed at the true emancipation and welfare of the vulnerable and the defence of their cause.

As believers grounded in our own respective spiritual traditions, and as individuals with shared concerns for the wellbeing of all, may we join hands with the adherents of other religious traditions and all people of good will, and make collective and concerted efforts to secure a joyful present and a hopeful future for our vulnerable brothers and sisters!

We wish all of you a happy Deepavali!

On Wednesday afternoon, 17 October, at the Altar of the Chair in the Vatican Basilica, the Cardinal Secretary of State celebrated a 'Mass for peace' on the Korean Peninsula. Mr Moon Jae-in, President of the Republic of Korea, was among those in attendance. The following are translations of the Cardinal's homily and of the address delivered by President Moon at the end of the Mass.



Cardinal Parolin celebrates Mass in Saint Peter's Basilica

Peace on the Korean Peninsula

PIETRO PAROLIN

John the Evangelist recounts that the Lord Jesus, appearing to his disciples for the first time after the Resurrection, addressed them with this greeting: "Peace be with you" (Jn 20:19). The disciples had already heard similar words resonate on the evening of the Last Supper, before the Lord surrendered himself into the hands of his persecutors, fully accepting the sacrifice of the Cross for the salvation of the world. Indeed, in bidding farewell to his companions Jesus said: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid" (Jn 14:27).

The peace that the Lord offers to the heart of mankind in search of true life and complete joy is that spiritual mystery that unifies the sacrifice of the Cross with the renewing power of the Resurrection: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you!"

This evening, we wish to humbly lift our gaze to God, to the One who undergirds the history and destiny of humanity, and once more implores the gift of peace for all the world. Let us do so by praying in particular that on the Korean Peninsula too, after so many years of tension and division, the word 'peace' may fully resonate at last.

In the first reading of this celebration we heard the author of Deuteronomy recall the twofold experience of the people of Israel, that of the 'blessing' and that of the 'curse': "when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the Lord your God has driven you, ... then the Lord your God will restore your fortunes, and have compassion upon you, and

he will gather you again from all the peoples ..." (Deut 30:1, 3).

The wisdom of Scripture helps us to understand that only those who have experienced the unfathomable mystery of God's seeming absence in the face of suffering, defeat and hatred, can wholly understand what it means to hear the word 'peace' resonate anew.

Of course, as people of good will, we all know that peace is built with everyday choices, with a serious commitment to justice and solidarity, with the promotion of the rights and dignity of the human person, and especially through the care of the weakest. But, for those who believe, peace is first and foremost a gift that comes from on High, from God himself. Indeed it is the full manifestation of the presence of God, of the One whom the prophets proclaimed the Prince of Peace.

Moreover, we well know that the peace that comes from God is not an abstract and remote idea, but an experience lived concretely in the daily journey of life. It is, as Pope Francis has recalled many times, "a peace amid tribulations". Thus, when Jesus promises peace to the disciples, he also adds: "not as the world gives do I give to you".

In fact, as the Pope also emphasizes, the world often "anaesthetizes us so as to keep us from seeing another reality of life: the Cross". This is why the peace that God offers us goes beyond merely earthly expectations; it is not the fruit of a simple compromise, but a new reality, which involves all of life's dimensions, even those mysterious dimensions of the Cross and of the inevitable suffering of our earthly pilgrimage. For this reason, the Christian faith teaches us that "peace without the Cross is not the peace of Jesus".

Pope Paul VI – whom we had the joy of seeing canonized last Sunday, on a radiant day of celebration – in announcing for the first time the World Day of Peace, 1 January 1968, recalling several expressions already dear to Saint John XXIII, thus addressed the Catholic faithful and all people of good will: "Men must always speak of Peace. The world must be educated to love Peace, to build it up and defend it. Against the resurgent preludes to war ... we must arouse in the men of our time and of future generations the sense and love of Peace founded upon truth, justice, freedom and love".

Dear brothers and sisters, let us ask the Lord for the grace to make peace an authentic mission in today's world, having trust in the mysterious power of Christ's Cross and his Resurrection. With the grace of God, the way of forgiveness becomes possible, the choice of fraternity among peoples a concrete fact, peace a shared horizon even in the diversity of the subjects that make up the international community. "Thus our prayers for peace and reconciliation will rise to God from ever more pure hearts and, by his gracious gift, obtain that precious good for which we all long" (Pope Francis, *Holy Mass for Peace and Reconciliation*, Myeong-dong Cathedral, Seoul, 18 August 2014).

The peaceful path

MOON JAE-IN*

I am pleased to meet the Holy Father on the 55th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the Republic of Korea and the Holy See. Together with the people of the Republic of Korea I express my profound sentiment of gratitude for the steadfast and firm support shown by Pope Francis in favour of peace on the Korean Peninsula. Democracy finds its true spirit in the life and teachings of Jesus, who deigned to humble himself from on High to us. He lived among the poor, the marginalized, the powerless and the sick. For Jesus all people enjoyed the same dignity, independent of their social position or their status: rich and poor, men and women.

Catholicism was affirmed in Korea with the teaching that all people were equal in dignity, as they were created in God's image. This anthropology of the Catholic Church reawakened Korea, whose social system was then based on the caste system. Faithfully upholding this belief, many Koreans were mar-

tyred. Even if Catholicism was not the State religion, from Sacred Scripture the Korean people understood the direction that true democracy must travel and they had the courage to confront injustice. During the period of military dictatorship the Catholic churches in Korea were also sanctuaries and havens of democracy.

Many priests were involved in pro-democracy movements, in conformity with the Social Doctrine of the Church. Lay faithful, in their turn as men and women of the Church in the world, inspired by Jesus' example, dedicated themselves to the realization of justice, peace and love. This is one of the reasons that the Catholic Church enjoys respect in Korea. While she confronted the violence perpetrated by the State, the Church in Korea was able to preserve peace and, in this way, continued to remind us that democracy is essentially the way to recover human dignity and that this path must be peaceful. This teaching was the spirit of the beautiful and peaceful "candlelight

revolution", which took place in the cold of winter 2017.

In recent months the prayers and blessing of the Holy Father have given great encouragement and hope to the Korean people on their journey toward peace. I have always remembered the papal messages that highlighted the diplomacy of encounter for reconciliation, with the very aim of opening a new era of peace and prosperity on the Korean Peninsula.

Last month, Kim Jong-un, Chairman of the State Affairs Commission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and I jointly announced the historic "Pyongyang Joint Declaration of September". South and North Korea decided to put an end to the military confrontation. The United States of America and North Korea sat down face to face, ending 70 years of hostilities. North Korea has stopped nuclear and missile testing. Moreover, South Korea and the United States of America have suspended large scale military exercises. These are

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

Symbols of an ancient dialogue

The Cross and the Lotus

The accompanying text was adapted from the article "The Cross and the Lotus" by Professor Philip Jenkins, Distinguished Professor of History at the Institute for Studies of Religion, Baylor University, and Emeritus Edwin Erle Sparks Professor of Humanities at Pennsylvania State University.

PHILIP JENKINS

When he visited Myanmar [in late 2017], Pope Francis made every effort to show respect and affection for Buddhism and its traditions. He addressed Buddhist monks, he quoted from the ancient scripture of the *Dhammapada*, and he drew an effective comparison between Buddhist and Christian teachings, as represented by St. Francis of Assisi. He wanted there to be no doubt whatever that the Catholic Church stood ready for dialogue with Buddhism. Such evident warmth might surprise some Western observers who know the often bitter relations between Christianity and other world faiths. It is not long since some missionaries were quite willing to dismiss the Buddha as an evil demon. But in his current approach to Buddhism, Pope Francis is in fact reverting to a far more ancient Christian tradition – in fact, he harks back to a time when the two faiths walked closely together. Once, the Lotus and the Cross were intertwined.

Dialogue between religions is always a sensitive matter, because any religion claiming exclusive access to truth has real difficulties reconciling other great faiths into its cosmic scheme. Most Christian churches hold that Jesus alone is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and many also feel an obligation to carry that message to the world's unbelievers. But this creates a fundamental conflict with the followers of famous spiritual figures like Muhammad or Buddha, who preached radically different messages. Drawing on a strict interpretation of the Bible, some Christians see these rival faiths as not merely false, but as

deliberate traps set by the forces of evil.

Over the past forty years, the Roman Catholic Church has faced repeated battles over this question of Christ's uniqueness, and has cracked down on thinkers who have made daring efforts to accommodate other world religions. While the Christian dialogue with Islam has attracted most of the headlines, it is the encounters with Hinduism – and especially Buddhism that have stirred the most controversy within the church. Over the years, Sri Lankan theologians Aloysius Pieris and Tissa Balasuriya had many run-ins with Vatican critics, and the Vatican ordered an investigation of US theologian Peter Phan, who apparently treated the Buddhism of his Vietnamese homeland as a parallel path to salvation. [The Catholic Church] has long feared the prospect of syncretism, the dilution of Christian truth in an unholy mixture with other faiths.

[This view rests] in a strong tradition of Christianity as it has developed in Europe since Roman times. But there is another, ancient tradition, which suggests a very different course. Europe's is not the only version of the Christian faith, nor is it necessarily the oldest heir of the ancient church. For more than 1,000 years, other quite separate branches of the church established thriving communities across Asia, and in their sheer numbers, these churches were comparable to anything Europe could muster at the time. These Christian bodies traced their ancestry back not through Rome, but directly to the original Jesus movement of ancient Palestine. They moved across In-

dia, Central Asia, and China, showing no hesitation to share – and learn from – the other great religions of the East.

Just how far these Christians were prepared to go is suggested by a startling symbol that appeared on memorials and stone carvings in both southern India and coastal China during the early Middle Ages. We can easily see that the image depicts a cross, but it takes a moment to realize that the base of the picture – the root from which the cross is growing – is a lotus flower, the symbol of Buddhist enlightenment.

In modern times, most mainstream churches would condemn such an amalgam as a betrayal of the Christian faith, an example of multiculturalism run wild. Yet concerns about syncretism did not bother these early Asian Christians, who called themselves Nasiray, Nazarenes, like Jesus's earliest followers. They were comfortable associating themselves with the other great monastic and mystical religion of the time, and moreover, they believed that both lotus and cross carried similar messages about the quest for light and salvation. If these Nazarenes could find meaning in the lotus-cross, then why should not modern Catholics, or other inheritors of the faith Jesus inspired?

Many Christians are coming to terms with just how thoroughly so many of their fundamental assumptions will have to be rethought as their faith today becomes a global religion. Even modern church leaders who know how rapidly the church is expanding in the global South tend to see European values and traditions as the indispensable norm, in mat-



ters of liturgy and theology as much as music and architecture.

Yet the reality is that Christianity has from its earliest days been an intercontinental faith, as firmly established in Asia and Africa as in Europe itself. When we broaden our scope to look at the faith that by 800 or so stretched from Ireland to Korea, we see the many different ways in which Christians interacted with other believers, in encounters that reshaped both sides. At their best, these meetings allowed the traditions not just to exchange ideas but to intertwine in productive and enriching ways, in an awe-inspiring chapter of Christian history that the Western churches have all but forgotten.

To understand this story, we need to reconfigure our mental maps. When we think of the growth of Christianity, we think above all of Europe. We visualize a movement growing west from Palestine and Syria and spreading into Greece and Italy, and gradually into northern regions. Europe is still the center of the Catholic Church, of course, but it was also the birthplace of the Protestant denominations that split from it.

For most of us, even speaking of the "Eastern Church" refers to another group of Europeans, namely the Orthodox believers who stem from the eastern parts of the continent. English Catholic thinker Hilaire Belloc once proclaimed that "Europe is the Faith; and the Faith is Europe".

But in the early centuries other Christians expanded east into Asia and south into Africa, and those other churches survived for the first 1,200 years or so of Christian history. Far from being fringe sects, these forgotten churches were firmly rooted in the oldest traditions of the apostolic church. Throughout their history, these Nazarenes used Syriac, which is close to Jesus' own language of Aramaic, and they followed Yeshua, not Jesus. No other church – not Roman Catholics, not Eastern Orthodox – has a stronger claim to a direct inheritance from the earliest Jesus movement.

The most stunningly successful of these eastern Christian bodies was the Church of the East, often called the Nestorian church. While the Western churches were expanding their influence within the framework of the Roman Em-

pire, the Syriac-speaking churches colonized the vast Persian kingdom that ruled from Syria to Pakistan and the borders of China. From their bases in Mesopotamia – modern Iraq – Nestorian Christians carried out their vast missionary efforts along the Silk Route that crossed Central Asia. By the eighth century, the Church of the East had an extensive structure across most of central Asia and China, and in southern India. The church had senior clergy – metropolitans – in Samarkand and Bokhara, in Herat in Afghanistan. A bishop had his seat in Chang'an, the imperial capital of China, which was then the world's superpower.

When Nestorian Christians were pressing across Central Asia during the sixth and seventh centuries, they met the missionaries and saints of an equally confident and expansionist religion: Mahayana Buddhism. Buddhists too wanted to take their saving message to the world, and launched great missions from India's monasteries and temples. In this diverse world, Buddhist and Christian monasteries were likely to stand side by side, as neighbors and even, some-

times, as collaborators. Some historians believe that Nestorian missionaries influenced the religious practices of the Buddhist religion then developing in Tibet. Monks spoke to monks.

In presenting their faith, Christians naturally used the cultural forms that would be familiar to Asians. They told their stories in the forms of sutras, verse patterns already made famous by Buddhist missionaries and teachers. A stunning collection of Jesus Sutras was found in caves at Dunhuang, in northwest China. Some Nestorian writings draw heavily on Buddhist ideas, as they translate prayers and Christian services in ways that would make sense to Asian readers. In some texts, the Christian phrase "angels and archangels and hosts of heaven" is translated into the language of buddhas and devas.

One story in particular suggests an almost shocking degree of collaboration between the faiths. In 782, the Indian Buddhist missionary Prajna arrived in Chang'an, bearing rich treasures of sutras and other scriptures. Unfortunately, these were written in Indian languages. He consulted the local Nestorian bishop, Adam, who had already translated parts of the Bible into Chinese. Together, Buddhist and Christian scholars worked amiably together for some years to translate seven copious volumes of Buddhist wisdom. Probably, Adam did this as much from intellectual curiosity as from ecumenical good will, and we can only guess about the conversations that would have ensued: Do you really care more about relieving suffering than atoning for sin? And your monks meditate like ours do?

These efforts bore fruit far beyond China. Other residents of Chang'an at this very time included Japanese monks, who took these very translations back with them to their homeland. In Japan, these works became the founding texts of the great Buddhist schools of the Middle Ages. All the famous movements of later Japanese history, including Zen, can be traced to one of those ancient schools and, ultimately – incredibly – to the work of a Christian bishop.

By the 12th century, flourishing churches in China and southern India were using the lotus-cross. The lotus is a superbly beautiful flower that grows out of muck and slime. No symbol could better represent the rise of the soul from the material, the victory of enlightenment over ignorance, desire, and attachment. For 2,000 years, Buddhist artists have used the lotus to convey these messages in countless paintings and sculptures. The Christian cross, meanwhile, teaches a comparable lesson, of divine victory over sin and injustice, of the defeat of the world. Somewhere in Asia, Ye-

shua's forgotten followers made the daring decision to integrate the two emblems, which still today forces us to think about the parallels between the kinds of liberation and redemption offered by each faith.

Christianity, for much of its history, was just as much an Asian religion as Buddhism. Asia's Christian churches survived for more than a millennium, and not until the 10th century, halfway through Christian history, did the number of Christians in Europe exceed that in Asia.

What ultimately obliterated the Asian Christians were the Mongol invasions, which spread across Central Asia and the Middle East from the 1220s onward. From the late 13th century, too, the world entered a terrifying era of climate change, of global cooling, which severely cut food supplies and contributed to mass famine. The collapse of trade and commerce crippled cities, leaving the world much poorer and more vulnerable. Intolerant nationalism wiped out Christian communities in China, while a surging militant Islam destroyed the churches of Central Asia.

But awareness of this deep Christian history contributes powerfully to understanding the future of the religion, as much as its past. For long centuries, Asian Christians kept up neighborly relations with other faiths, which they saw not as deadly rivals but as fellow travelers on the road to enlightenment. Their worldview differed enormously from the norms that developed in Europe.

To take one example, we are used to the idea of Christianity operating as the official religion of powerful states, which were only too willing to impose a particular orthodoxy upon their subjects. Yet when we look at the African and Asian experience, we find millions of Christians whose normal experience was as minorities or even majorities within nations dominated by some other religion. Struggling to win hearts and minds, leading churches had no option but to frame the Christian message in the context of non-European intellectual traditions. Christian thinkers did present their message in the categories of Buddhism – and Taoism, and Confucianism – and there is no reason why they could not do so again. When modern scholars like Peter Phan try to place Christianity in an Asian and Buddhist context, they are resuming a task begun at least 1,500 years ago.

Perhaps, in fact, we are looking at our history upside down. Some day, future historians might look at the last few hundred years of Euro-American dominance within Christianity and regard it as an unnatural interlude in a much longer story of fruitful interchange between the great religions.

Recognizing at last the feminine genius

Not just an act of justice

LUCETTA SCARAFFIA

Queen Elizabeth II conferred the prestigious title of Member of the Order of the British Empire to Sister Imelda Poole for her commitment to fighting modern forms of slavery. The Catholic Mary Ward religious was also recently honoured at the British embassy to the Holy See.

Her luminous example reminds us all that, throughout the world, nuns are the people most committed to opposing human trafficking, and living and working conditions that hark back to the dark times of slavery and that, sadly, are still very widespread; perhaps even on the rise.

The fact that it is mostly women and minors who suffer from these tragedies only partly explains this feminine vocation within the Church. In reality, this happens because women are the most determined and courageous in the fight against exploitation. And they are also the ones who remain close to the victims, sharing with them their inhuman conditions, when the scourge cannot be eradicated from the social standpoint. Because they know that only silent and steady love can heal horrendous wounds and bring back hope, or at least the courage to move forward.

In an entirely different context, a similar case was reported in an article printed in the journal "Acta Paediatrica". It indicated that a great majority of parents of terminally ill children receiving constant palliative care, even through complicated, technical life-saving support, nevertheless prefer to care for them at home. The advantages are obvious: they avoid infections to which they are fatally exposed in hospital, the children continue to be a part of family life, and are better supported psychologically. This choice, however, means that, after receiving the appropriate training, the parents

themselves must care for their sick child all day. And it is evident that day after day, caregivers encounter increasing difficulties, including physical exhaustion, sleep deprivation, social isolation and withering financial resources.

No one would be surprised to know that it is mostly mothers who take charge of this caregiving. And today, we can no longer say it is "because fathers work to support the family", since mothers could also do the same, go out, meet people and, in the most fortunate situations, enjoy professional success. This happens because women, more than men, know how to shoulder the caregiving, the sacrifice, the daily outpouring of love and, above all, how to erase their own identity for the sake of someone else.

This is undoubtedly what John Paul II called "the feminine genius", recognizing its greatness and importance. But today we ask ourselves whether this recognition is sufficient. Whether the Church, particularly at a time of internal and external crisis, can afford to continue to ignore these women, continue not to listen to their voices and their thoughts. Whether the Church can continue to think that women are not truly the most credible and convincing witnesses to the Gospel, above all because they are rich in the spiritual and human experiences that today are particularly necessary for evangelization, and indispensable for an institution in difficulty. As Anne-Marie Pelletier writes, the request is that women be seen and listened to, not simply because they demand this act of justice, but so that everyone can recognize and come to know, in what many women experience, the true face of a poor, servant and maternal Church, a face less naturally embodied in the reality of what is invoked in public discourse.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

the results of encounter and dialogue.

Jesus sacrificed himself to eliminate hatred, engendering reconciliation, and rose again in peace. After his Resurrection, he said to his disciples "peace be with you" (Jn 20:19). In the course of history up to now there have been many sacrifices, when meetings were held between South and North Korea and when the dialogue opened between the latter and the United States of America. But now the moment has come in which we can transform separation and confrontation into prosperity, through peace.

On the occasion of my visit to Pyongyang last September, Msgr Hyginus Kim Hee-jong, Archbishop of Gwangju, was also there as rep-

resentative of the Catholic Church in Korea, to facilitate relations between the Church in the South and that in the North. In this regard, I am grateful to the Holy See for the special attention and for the support pledged so that these relations might continue to develop. Additionally, I hope that relations between the Holy See and North Korea may also be revitalized.

To achieve true reconciliation and cooperation, as well as lasting peace between South and North Korea, there is need for something that goes above and beyond the changes made through politics and by the system. It is also necessary to have a heart that keeps us, one another, united as brothers, not merely to share economic profits.

Last September I declared, on the basis of my governing philosophy, which places the good of the person at the centre, that the Republic of Korea must become a 'nation of inclusion'. In this regard I deeply agree with the words spoken by Pope Francis on 14 August 2014, on meeting the authorities during his visit in the Republic of Korea: "the common good, ... progress and development, must ultimately be in human and not merely economic terms". The Catholic Church was and is committed to overcoming violence and hatred, discrimination and exploitation, indifference and intolerance, inequality and marginalization. Furthermore, she has the strength and wisdom that can soothe the pain of time, like a ray of sunshine in the dark society of material-

ism and unlimited competition. She reflects seriously upon what type of society Jesus would desire and she strives to realize it. I believe that the Catholic Church always firmly supports a policy of inclusion on the Korean Peninsula.

The Korean people and I cherish in our hearts the words that Pope Francis spoke at the Angelus on 1 September 2013: "a culture of encounter and a culture of dialogue; this is the only way to peace". We will resolutely pursue the realization of democracy, lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula and the construction of a country of inclusion. I hope that the blessing of the Holy Father and the prayers of his collaborators may always accompany the journey of the Korean people.

Holy Father's condolences

Plane Crash in Indonesia

The Holy Father has expressed his condolences to those mourning the victims of a devastating plane crash in Indonesia on Monday, 29 October, which killed all of the 182 passengers and seven crew members on board. In a telegram on behalf of the Pontiff to Archbishop Pietro Pioppo, Apostolic Nuncio in Indonesia, Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin stated: "having learned with sadness of the recent plane crash in Jakarta, His Holiness Pope Francis conveys his condolences to all those affected by this tragedy". Offering "the assurance of his prayers for all who have died and for those who mourn their loss", Pope Francis invoked "the strength and peace of Almighty God" upon Indonesia and "all involved in the rescue and recovery efforts".

The Lion Air Boeing 737 MAX8 had departed from Jakarta at 6:30 AM local time, headed for Pangkal Pinang but shortly after takeoff, the crew reported a technical problem and requested permission to return to Jakarta's Soekarno-Hatta Airport. The aircraft crashed into the Java Sea. Rescue workers are conducting an intense search operation in the deep waters west of Java in an attempt to recover the victims' remains. An investigation into the cause of the crash continues.

Natural disasters in Trinidad and Tobago

In a telegram signed by Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin and published by the Holy See Press Office on Tuesday, 23 October, Pope Francis expressed his solidarity and closeness to the people of Trinidad and Tobago after a series of earthquakes and flooding wrought extensive damage and left many people displaced in the Caribbean nation. "Having learned of the injury and destruction of property", the Holy Father shared his "prayerful solidarity with all those affected by these natural disasters". Moreover, he offered "encouragement to the civil authorities and emergency personnel as they assist in the recovery, and he willingly invokes upon all divine blessings of grace and strength".

The island nation had been inundated by torrential rains on 18 and 19 October. On the 23rd it was struck by an earthquake, the first of eight to strike in less than two weeks.

The peaceful path

With the Pope before Peter's tomb

After the pilgrimage of Synod Fathers and young people

Synod2018

A special pilgrimage comprised of cardinals, bishops, priests, men and women religious, and many young people arrived at Saint Peter's Basilica singing and praying together as they walked – and raised the curiosity of a large crowd. Many faithful crowded behind the barriers around Saint Peter's Square and subsequently inside the Basilica on Thursday morning, 25 October, to bear witness as the pilgrimage to the Tomb of Saint Peter culminated with the Profession of Faith led by Pope Francis.

Several hundred – including some 200 Fathers, 80 young Auditors and lay experts, and 100 young people from the Diocese of Rome – participated in the pilgrimage on foot that covered six kilometres from Via Camilluccia through Rome's Monte Mario nature reserve and along Viale Angelico, to its destination in Saint Peter's Basilica. The event, which coincided with the Synod on young people, was promoted by the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization.

The pilgrims traversed a small portion of the "Via Francigena", an ancient trail that, beginning at the portico of Canterbury Cathedral in the UK, passes through France and Switzerland and eventually leads to Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome before continuing on to Jerusalem. At an altitude of 139 metres, Monte Mario is the highest mount in Rome. In the Middle Ages it offered wayfarers their first glimpse of the dome of Saint Peter's.

Thursday's pilgrimage was divided into three *statio*, wherein the reading of a psalm was preceded by an exhortation and a reflection inspired by Scripture and the martyrdom of the Apostle Peter. There was also space to pray the Rosary, according to the intentions of Pope Francis who, on 29 September, had invited all the faithful to recite the Marian prayers each day throughout the month of October, and to thus join in communion and penance as the People of God in asking the Mother of God and Saint Michael the Archangel to protect the Church from the devil who always aims to separate her from God.

Once in the Basilica, the participants paused before the Altar of the Confession

where, led by Pope Francis, they recited the Profession of Faith. Then, at the Altar of the Chair, the Pontiff was present for a Mass presided by Cardinal Lorenzo Baldisseri, General Secretary of the Synod of Bishops. The homily was delivered by Archbishop Rino Fisichella, President of the aforementioned Pontifical Council, who explained the significance of the just completed pilgrimage in the light of Peter's life and vocation. Archbishop Fisichella recalled that in the fifth chapter of Luke's Gospel, the Evangelist recounts Peter's vocation. He has fished all night but caught nothing. Jesus approaches and tells him to put out into the deep and cast his nets. Peter does not know Jesus, the Archbishop noted, but surely is fascinated by this first encounter with Him. Peter is tired and discouraged, but says: "at your word I will let down the nets". Essentially, Peter trusts Jesus, even though he has never seen Him before, even though he does not know Him. Here then, the prelate observed, is a first lesson, which the Evangel-

ist John repeats in chapter 15 of his Gospel: "apart from me you can do nothing. He who abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit". Peter, the Archbishop emphasized, slowly understands that he must trust, that he needs the grace of God. But as soon as the Apostle sees that trusting in Jesus bears fruit, he realizes that He is Lord, and says: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man: Stay away, Jesus, for I am not worthy to be near you". But, Archbishop Fisichella added, Jesus has another plan and we see that Peter has a generous character, typical of youth. In fact he leaves everything and follows Jesus, with no doubt or hesitation. And this generosity is also found in the years he then spends with Christ. He climbs Mt Tabor with Him, makes his profession of faith, and in the Garden of Olives, cuts off Malchus' ear in an attempt to prevent Jesus' arrest. Thus one step at a time, Peter understands that it is not he who saves himself, but it is Jesus, it is God who saves him.



20th and 21st General Congregations

Toward the final vote

Amid music, poetry and dance performances by young Auditors and even a piano performance by Cardinal Lorenzo Baldisseri, young people at the 20th Congregation on Friday afternoon, 26 October, thanked Pope Francis for giving them the opportunity to make history together, assuring him of their full support and daily prayers. In a letter to the Pontiff, they said "we want to affirm that we share your dream: an outgoing Church, open to all, especially the weakest, a field hospital Church". Read by two young Auditors on behalf of their peers, the letter continued: "We are already an active part of this Church and we want to continue to make a concrete commitment to improve our cities and schools, and the social and political world and work environments, by spreading a culture of peace and solidarity and by putting the poor at the centre".

Earlier, in the presence of the Pope and the President Delegate Cardinal Bo, the Synod Fathers elected 16 members of the 15th Ordinary Council of the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops. They include an Eparch for the Eastern rite Catholic Churches, three prelates for Africa, three for Latin America, two for North America, three for Asia, three for Europe and one for Oceania. They will be joined by a Dicastery head, on the basis of the theme of the next Synod Assembly and by four members appointed by the Pope.

On Saturday, 27 October, the 21st Congregation opened with a warm round of applause from participants, expressing their approval of the brief Letter from the Synod Fathers to Young People, which was read aloud the following morning at the end of the closing Mass of the Synod.

As a reminder of their involvement in the Synod on young people, Cardinal Baldisseri presented a personal gift from Pope Francis to all Synod participants: a bronze bas relief depicting Jesus and his beloved young disciple. Italian artist Gino Giannetti designed the piece, 460 copies of which were forged by the Vatican City State Mint. The Pope's gift was received with warm applause and joyful cheers from the group of Auditors.

In the presence of President Delegate Cardinal Sako, the draft of the Final Document was read and consigned to the Assembly for a vote on each of the 167 points in the 12 chapters of the three-part text.

General Relator Cardinal Sérgio da Rocha explained that "this Final Document is the result of real team-

work" and much effort on the part of the Synod Fathers, other Synod participants and "young people in a particular way", especially considering time limitations. He thanked everyone involved in the collection of material, analysis and drafting of the Document, including the special secretaries, experts and the staff of the Synod Secretariat. The Cardinal also expressed his gratitude to Pope Francis who in turn, personally thanked one by one, everyone involved. Cardinal da Rocha reminded those present that in accordance with the Constitution *Episcopalis Communio*, the document "is presented to the Roman Pontiff" and that the Pope is "its primary recipient". Accordingly, the Document was delivered to Francis that afternoon.

The Holy Father's new appeal at the conclusion of the Synod

Prayer and penance to protect the Church

The Church "is defended against the Great Accuser with prayer and penance". Pope Francis again emphasized this message in his discourse at the conclusion of the final General Congregation of the Synod of Bishops on Saturday afternoon, 27 October. The following is a translation of the Pontiff's address, which he delivered in Italian.



Letter to young people

The following is the English text of the letter addressed by the Synod Fathers to young people throughout the world, and read during the celebration of Mass on Sunday morning, 28 October.

We the Synod Fathers now address you, young people of the world, with a word of hope, trust and consolation. In these days, we have gathered together to hear the voice of Jesus, "the eternally young Christ", and to recognize in Him your many voices, your shouts of exultation, your cries, and your moments of silence.

We are familiar with your inner searching, the joys and hopes, the pain and anguish that make up your longings. Now we want you to hear a word from us: we wish to be sharers in your joy, so that your expectations may come to life. We are certain that with your enthusiasm for life, you will be ready to get involved so that your dreams may be realized and take shape in your history.

Our weaknesses should not deter you; our frailties and sins must not be an obstacle for your trust. The Church is your mother; she does not abandon you; she is ready to accompany you on new roads, on higher paths where the winds of the Spirit blow stronger – sweeping away the mists of indifference, superficiality and discouragement.

When the world that God so loved, that he gave us his only Son, Jesus, is focused on material things, on short-term successes, on pleasures, and when the world crushes the weakest, you must help it to rise up again and to turn its gaze towards love, beauty, truth and justice once more.

For a month, we have walked together with some of you and with many others who have been united to us through prayer and affection. We wish to continue the journey now in every part of the earth where the Lord Jesus sends us as missionary disciples.

The Church and the world urgently need your enthusiasm. Be sure to make the most fragile people, the poor and those wounded by life your traveling companions.

You are the present; be a brighter future.

I too must say 'thank you' to everyone. To Cardinal Baldisseri, to Bishop Fabene, to the Presidents Delegate, to the Relator, to the Special Secretaries – I said that they had left their 'pound of flesh' in the preparatory document; now I think they are leaving their bones to us, because they have lost everything! – thanks to the experts: we have seen how one goes from a wrenching text to a martyr commission, that of drafting, which drew this up with such effort and hardship; thank you. Thanks to all of you, to the Auditors and among the Auditors especially the young people, who brought their music to us here in the Hall – 'music' is the diplomatic word for saying 'clamour', but so be it.... Thank you.

I have two little concerns at heart.

First: to re-emphasize once more that the Synod is not a Parliament. It is a protected space so the Holy Spirit may act. For this reason, general information is given and not particular details, names, figures of speech, with which the Holy Spirit works in us. And this was a protected space. Let us not forget this: it was the Spirit at work here. The second thing is that the purpose of the Synod is not a document, as I said at the outset. We are laden with documents. I do not know if this document will be effective outside, I do not know. But I know for certain that it must have an effect on us; it must work in us. We, the commission, have drawn up the document; we have studied it; we have approved it. Now the Spirit gives us the document so that it may work in our heart. We are the intended recipients of the document, not the people outside. May this document be effective; and it is important to pray with the document, to study it, to ask for light.... The document is mainly for us. Yes, it will help many others, but we are the primary recipients: it is the Spirit who did all this, and it depends on us. It must not be forgotten, please.

And a third thing: I think of our Mother, the Holy Mother Church. [In the document], the last three items on holiness show what the Church is: our Mother is Holy, but we children are sinners. We are all sinners. Let us not forget that expression of the Fathers, the *'casta meretrix'*, the holy Church, the holy Mother with her sinful children. And because of our sins, the Great Accuser always exploits them, as the first chapter of Job says: he goes to and fro upon the Earth, looking for one to trap. At this moment he is accusing us vehemently, and this accusation even becomes persecution; today's President [Patriarch Sako] can say it: his people [the Church in Iraq] are persecuted as are so many others in the East and elsewhere. And it also becomes a different type of persecution: continuous accusa-

tions to tarnish the Church. But the Church must not be tarnished; her children, yes; we are all tarnished, but not our Mother. And for this reason it is time to defend our Mother; and our Mother is defended against the Great Accuser with prayer and penance. This is why I have asked everyone, in this month that ends in just a few days, to say the Rosary, to pray to Saint Michael the Archangel, to pray to Our Lady to always shield Mother Church. Let us continue to do so. It is a difficult time, because by attacking us, the Accuser attacks our Mother, but our Mother is not to be touched. I wanted to say this from my heart at the end of the Synod.

And now, the Holy Spirit gives this document to all of us, even to me, in order to reflect on what he wants to say to us. Many thanks to everyone, thank you all!

Listening to reality

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ing. "How important it is for us to listen to life", namely, to "the needs of ... neighbours", he exclaimed. And addressing young people, he said: "forgive us if often we have not listened to you, if, instead of opening our hearts, we have filled your ears".

The self-criticism that is found in the lengthy document approved by the Synod also echoed repeatedly in these weeks, in the Hall and in the *Circuli Minores*, in regard to the extremely inadequate appreciation of women's role in the Church. "Faith passes through life", the Pope again emphasized: thus it should not be concentrated only on "doctrinal formulae" which fail to touch the heart, nor on "activity alone", which "risks turning into mere moralizing and social work", but must "carry out God's work in God's own way: in *closeness*".

On the evangelical dimension of closeness represented by the "ancient story of the Samaritan woman", as Pope Montini had stated in closing the Council, at the Angelus Francis spoke once more of the "synodal style" and of listening, which must take reality into account. Because "it is important to promote a way of being and working together, young and old, in listening and in discernment, in order to arrive at pastoral choices that respond to reality".



In communion and with frankness

At the closing Mass an accounting of the Synod

During the homily for the Mass celebrated in Saint Peter's Basilica on Sunday morning, 28 October, for the closing of the Synod on Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment, Pope Francis recalled the weeks-long gathering as an opportunity to work "in communion, with frankness and the desire to serve God's people". The following is the English text of the Holy Father's homily, which he delivered in Italian.

The account we have just heard is the last of those that the evangelist Mark relates about the itinerant ministry of Jesus, who is about to enter Jerusalem to die and to rise. Bartimaeus is thus the last of those who follow Jesus along the way: from a beggar along the road to Jericho, he becomes a disciple who walks alongside the others on the way to Jerusalem. We too have walked alongside one another; we have been a "synod". This Gospel seals three fundamental steps on the journey of faith.

First, let us consider Bartimaeus. His name means "son of Timaeus". That is how the Gospel describes him: "Bartimaeus son of Timaeus" (Mk 10:46). Yet, oddly, his father is nowhere to be found. Bartimaeus lies alone on the roadside, far from home and fatherless. He is not loved, but abandoned. He is blind and no one listens to him; when he tried to speak, everyone told him to keep quiet. Jesus hears his plea. When he goes to him, he lets him speak. It was not hard to guess what Bartimaeus wanted: clearly, a blind person wants to see or regain his sight. But Jesus takes his time; he takes time to listen. This is the first step in helping the journey of faith: *listening*. It is the apostolate of the ear: listening before speaking.

Instead, many of those with Jesus ordered Bartimaeus to be quiet (cf. v. 48). For such disciples, a person in need was a nuisance along the way, an obstacle unexpected and unforeseen. They preferred their own timetable above that of the Master, their own talking over listening to others. They were following Jesus, but they had their own plans in mind. This is a risk constantly to guard against. Yet, for Jesus, the cry of those pleading for help is not a nuisance but a challenge. How important it is for us to listen to life! The children of the heavenly Father are concerned with their brothers and sisters, not with useless chatter, but with the needs of their neighbours. They listen patiently and lovingly, just as God does to us and to our prayers, however repetitive they may be. God never grows tired; he is always happy when we seek him. May we too ask for the grace of a heart that listens. I would like to say to the young people, in the name of all of us adults: forgive us if often we have not listened to you, if, instead of opening our hearts, we have filled your ears. As Christ's Church, we want to listen to you with love, certain of two things: that your lives are precious in God's eyes, because God is young and loves young people, and that your lives are precious in our eyes too, and indeed necessary for moving forward.

After listening, a second step on the journey of faith is *to be a neighbour*. Let us look at Jesus: he does not delegate someone from the "large crowd" following him, but goes personally to meet Bartimaeus. He asks him, "What do you want me to do for you?" (v. 51). *What do you want ...* - Jesus is completely taken up with Bartimaeus; he does not try to sidestep him ... *me to do* - not simply to speak, but to do something. ... *for you* - not

according to my own preconceived ideas, but for you, in your particular situation. That is how God operates. He gets personally involved with preferential love for every person. By his actions, he already communicates his message. Faith thus flowers in life.

Faith passes through life. When faith is concerned purely with doctrinal formulae, it risks speaking only to the head without touching the heart. And when it is concerned with activity alone, it risks turning into mere moralizing and social work. Faith, instead, is *life*: it is living in the love of God who has changed our lives. We cannot choose between *doctrine* and *activism*. We are called to carry out God's work in God's own way: in *closeness*, by cleaving to him, in communion with one another, alongside our brothers and sisters. Closeness: that is the secret to communicating the heart of the faith, and not a secondary aspect.

Being a neighbour means bringing the newness of God into the lives of our brothers and sisters. It serves as an antidote to the temptation of easy answers and fast fixes. Let us ask ourselves whether, as Christians, we are capable of becoming neighbours, stepping out of our circles and embracing those who are not "one of us", those whom God ardently seeks. A temptation so often found in the Scriptures will always be there: the temptation to wash our hands. That is what the crowd does in today's Gospel. It is what Cain did with Abel, and Pilate with Jesus: they washed their hands. But we want to imitate Jesus and, like him, to dirty our hands. He is the way (cf. Jn 14:6), who stopped on the road for Bartimaeus. He is the light of the world (cf. Jn 9:5), who bent down to help a blind man. Let us realize that the Lord has dirtied his hands for each one of us. Let us look at the cross, start from there and remember that God became my neighbour in sin and death. He became my neighbour: it all starts from there. And when, out of love of him, we too become neighbours, we become *bringers of new life*. Not teachers of everyone, not specialists in the sacred, but witnesses of the love that saves.

The third step is *to bear witness*.

Let us consider the disciples who, at Jesus' request, called out to Bartimaeus. They do not approach a beggar with a coin to shut him up, or to dispense advice. They go in Jesus' name. Indeed, they say only three words to him, and all three are words of Jesus: "Take heart; get up, he is calling you" (v. 49). Everywhere else in the Gospel, Jesus alone says, "Take heart", for he alone "heartens" those who heed him. In the Gospel, Jesus alone says, "Get up", and heals in spirit and body. Jesus alone *calls*, transforming the lives of those who follow him, helping raise up the fallen, bringing God's light to the darkness of life. So many children, so many young people, like Bartimaeus, are looking for light in their lives. They are looking for true love. And like Bartimaeus who in the midst of that large crowd called out to Jesus alone, they too seek life, but often find only empty promises and few people who really care.

It is not Christian to expect that our brothers and sisters who are seekers should have to

knock on our doors; we ought to go out to them, bringing not ourselves but Jesus. He sends us, like those disciples, to encourage others and to raise them up in his name. He sends us forth to say to each person: "God is asking you to let yourself be loved by him". How often, instead of this liberating message of salvation, have we brought ourselves, our own "recipes" and "labels" into the Church! How often, instead of making the Lord's words our own, have we peddled our own ideas as his word! How often do people feel the weight of our institutions more than the friendly presence of Jesus! In these cases, we act more like an NGO, a state-controlled agency, and not the community of the saved who dwell in the joy of the Lord.

To listen, to be a neighbour, to bear witness. The journey of faith in today's Gospel ends



in a beautiful and surprising way when Jesus says "Go; your faith has made you well" (v. 52). Yet Bartimaeus had made no profession of faith or done any good work; he had only begged for mercy. To feel oneself in need of salvation is the beginning of faith. It is the direct path to encountering Jesus. The faith that saved Bartimaeus did not have to do with his having clear ideas about God, but in his seeking him and longing to encounter him. Faith has to do with encounter, not theory. In encounter, Jesus passes by; in encounter, the heart of the Church beats. Then, not our preaching, but our witness of life will prove effective.

To all of you who have taken part in this "journey together", I say "thank you" for your witness. We have worked in communion, with frankness and the desire to serve God's people. May the Lord bless our steps, so that we can listen to young people, be their neighbours, and bear witness before them to Jesus, the joy of our lives.

Women embrace outside the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania USA on 28 October (AFP)



Following the Mass in Saint Peter's Square on Sunday, 28 October, the Pontiff spoke about the experiences that had been shared during the Synod of Bishops over the preceding weeks. Then, after reciting the Angelus with the faithful, Pope Francis expressed his sorrow and closeness to the families of the victims of a deadly mass shooting in a synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania USA. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's reflection, which he delivered in Italian.

After the Angelus the Pope expresses sorrow at the inhuman act of violence in a Pittsburgh synagogue

To end the outbreaks of hatred

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Good morning! But it does not seem so good! [*amid wind and rain*]

This morning, in Saint Peter's Basilica, we celebrated the closing Mass of the Assembly of the Synod of Bishops dedicated to young people. The first Reading, from the prophet Jeremiah (31:7-9), was particularly in tune with this moment, because it is a *word of hope* that God gives to his people. A word of consolation, based on the fact that *God is a father for his people*; he loves them and consoles them as his children (cf. v. 9); he opens before them a future horizon, a straight, practicable path, on which even "the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her who is in travail" will be able to walk (v. 8), that is, people in difficulty. Because God's hope is not a mirage – like certain advertisements where all are healthy and beautiful – but is a promise for real people, with merits and faults, potential and frailty, like all of us: God's hope is a promise for people like us.

This Word of God expresses well the experience that we have lived in the weeks of the Synod: it was a time of *comfort and of hope*. Above all it was a moment of *listening*: indeed, listening requires time, attention, openness of mind and heart. But this task was transformed each day into consolation, first and fore-

most because we had among us the lively and invigorating presence of young people, with their stories and their contributions. Through the testimonies of the Synod Fathers, the manifold reality of the new generations entered the Synod, so to speak, from all sides: from every continent and from many diverse human and social situations.

With this fundamental approach of listening, we sought to interpret reality, to grasp the signs of these times of ours. A *communal discernment*, carried out in the light of the Word of God and of the Holy Spirit. This is one of the most beautiful gifts that the Lord gives to the Catholic Church, namely that of gathering voices and faces from the most varied realities and thus being able to attempt an interpretation that takes into account the wealth and complexity of the phenomena, always in the light of the Gospel. In these days, we thus discussed among ourselves how to walk together through many challenges, those of the digital world, the phenomenon of migration, the significance of the body and of sexuality, the tragedy of wars and violence.

The results of this labour are already 'fermenting', as grape juice does in the barrels after the harvest. The Synod of young people was a good harvest and promises good wine. But I would like to say that the first fruit of this Synod Assembly should be seen in the very method that was sought to be followed, beginning with the preparatory phase. A *synodal style* that does not have as its primary purpose the writing of a document, which is also valuable and useful. More than the document, however, it is important to promote a way of being and working together, young and old, in listening and in discernment, in order to arrive at pastoral choices that respond to reality.

For this let us invoke the intercession of the Virgin Mary. Let us entrust to her, who is Mother of the Church, gratitude to God for the gift of this Synod Assembly. And may she help us now to carry forward what we have experienced, without fear, in the ordinary life of the communities. May the Holy Spirit cultivate, with his wise creativity, the fruits of our labour, in order to walk together with the young people of the entire world.

After the Angelus the Holy Father added:

Dear brothers and sisters, I express my closeness to the city of Pittsburgh, in the United States of America, and in particular to the Jewish community, struck yesterday by a terrible attack in the synagogue.

May the Most High welcome the deceased into his peace, comfort their families and sustain the wounded. In reality, we are all wounded by this inhuman act of violence. May the Lord help us to extinguish the hotbeds of hatred that develop in our societies, reinforcing a sense of humanity, respect for life, moral and civil values, and a holy fear of God, who is Love and Father of all.

Yesterday, José Tullio Maruzzo, a religious of the Friars Minor, and Luis Obdulio Arroyo Navarro – killed in hatred of the faith in the last century, during the persecution against the Church engaged in promoting justice and peace – were proclaimed Blessed in Morales, Guatemala. Let us praise the Lord and entrust to their intercession the Church in Guatemala and all the brothers and sisters who sadly, still today, in various parts of the world, are persecuted for being witnesses to the Gospel. Everyone, a round of applause for the two Blessed!

I greet you with affection, dear pilgrims from Italy and from different countries, in particular the young people from Maribor, Slovenia, the Spanish foundation *Centro Académico Romano* and the parishioners of Bishop *San Siro* in Cannobbio, Switzerland. I greet the volunteers from the Saint John XXIII Shrine in Sotto il Monte, 60 years since the election of the beloved Bergamascan Pope; as well as the faithful from Cesena and Thiene, the altar servers and the young people of Catholic Action in the Diocese of Padua.

Today the Feast of *Señor de los Milagros* (Our Lord of Miracles) is celebrated wholeheartedly in Lima and throughout Peru. I address a grateful thought to the people of Peru and to the Peruvian community of Rome.

Last Sunday you were here with the icon of *Señor de los Milagros*, and I was unaware of it. Best wishes on the feast day! And I greet with affection the Venezuelan community in Italy, gathered here with the image of Our Lady of Chiquinquirá, *la Chinita*.

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

