

L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO

WEEKLY EDITION  IN ENGLISH

Unicuique suum Non praevalent

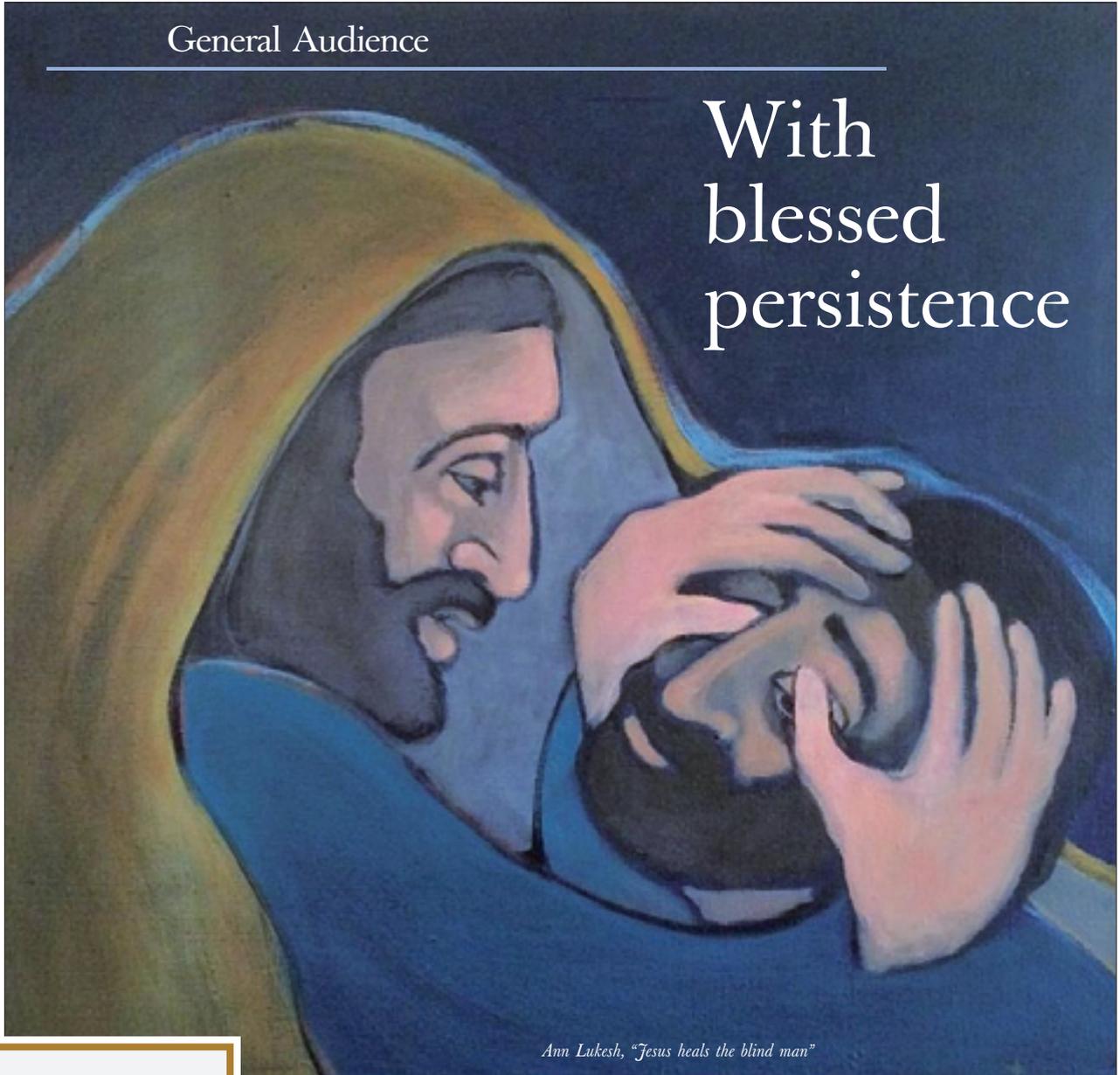
Fifty-first year, number 50 (2576)

Vatican City

Friday, 14 December 2018

General Audience

With
blessed
persistence



Ann Lukesh, "Jesus heals the blind man"

Birthday wishes for Pope Francis

Pope Francis will celebrate his 82nd birthday on Monday, 17 December. The entire staff at *L'Osservatore Romano's* weekly edition in English wishes you, dearest Holy Father, an abundance of the Lord's blessings for a very Happy Birthday, and many more – *ad multos annos!*

At the General Audience on Wednesday, 12 December, the Pontiff recalled the Gospel episode of Bartimaeus, the blind man who, "with blessed persistence", prayed for Jesus to heal him. With the faithful who had gathered in the Paul VI Hall, the Pope continued the series of catecheses on the Lord's Prayer, which he had begun the previous week. 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 on the path of catecheses on the Lord's Prayer, which we began last week. Jesus places on the lips of his disciples a short, audacious prayer, made up of seven requests – a number that, in the Bible, is not random, but in-

dicates fullness. I say audacious because, had Christ not suggested it, probably none of us – indeed, none of the most well-known theologians – would dare pray to God in this way.

In fact Jesus invites his disciples to approach God and to confidently address several requests to

him: first in regard to him and then in regard to us. There is no preamble to the 'Our Father'. Jesus does not teach formulas for one to 'ingratiate oneself' to the Lord, but instead invites us to pray to Him by knocking down the barriers of awe and fear. He does not tell us we should address God by calling him 'Almighty', 'Most High', [by saying,] 'You, who are so distant from us, I am a wretched man'; no, he does not say this, but simply 'Father', with total simplicity, as children address their father. And this word, "Father", expresses confidence and filial trust.

VATICAN BULLETIN



AUDIENCES

Thursday, 6 December

H.E. Mrs María del Carmen de la Peña Corcuera, Ambassador of Spain, for the presentation of her Letters of Credence

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

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

Bishop Lionel Gendron, PSS, of Saint-Jean-Longueuil, Canada, President of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, with Archbishop Richard Joseph Gagnon of Winnipeg, Vice President, and Msgr Frank Leo, Jr, CSS, General Secretary

Friday, 7 December

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

Archbishop Giacomo Guido Ottonello, titular Archbishop of Sasabe, Apostolic Nuncio in Slovakia

Archbishop Michael W. Banach, titular Archbishop of Memphis, Apostolic Nuncio in Senegal, Cape

Verde, Guinea-Bissau and Mauritania

Bishop Enrico dal Covolo, SDB, titular Bishop of Eraclea

Mr Olivier Duval, President of BICE (International Catholic Child Bureau) of Geneva with his entourage

CHANGES IN EPISCOPATE

The Holy Father appointed as Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Maputo, Mozambique Fr António Juliasse Ferreira Sandramo from the clergy of Chimoio, Mozambique, assigning him the titular episcopal See of Arsennaria. Until now he has served as parish priest of Maputo Cathedral (7 Dec.).

Bishop-elect Ferreira Sandramo, 50, was born in Soalpo, Mozambique. He was ordained a priest on 28 June 1998. He holds a licence in dogmatic theology, a licence in anthropology and a Master's in African Studies. He has served in parish ministry and as: coordinator of the diocesan commission for the liturgy, and of the diocesan commission for youth; director and co-founder of two non-profit organizations, *Kimat-sirama* (works toward HIV prevention and provides assistance to affected

young people) and *Cadeia de Solidariedade* (helps young people in situations of poverty and neglect); coordinator of diocesan pastoral care; dean for diocesan priests of Chimoio; episcopal vicar for the central area; member of the diocesan presbyteral council; secretary of the Episcopal Conference of the Episcopal Commission for Culture, and professor of Anthropology at the Catholic University of Mozambique.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Thomas Kaboré of Kaya, Burkina Faso (7 Dec.).

The Holy Father appointed as Bishop of Kaya, Fr Théophile Nare from the clergy of Koupéla, Burkina Faso. Until now he has served as rector of the Major Theological Seminary of St Pierre Claver in Koumi, Bobo-Dioulasso (7 Dec.).

Bishop-elect Nare, 52, was born in Yargo, Burkina Faso. He was ordained a priest on 8 July 1995. He holds a licence in Sacred Scripture and a certificate in Formation for Educators of the Clergy. He has served in parish ministry and lecturer in exegesis.

The Holy Father appointed as Bishop of Tunduru-Masasi, Tanzania, Fr Filbert Felician Mhasi from the clergy of Mahenge, Tanzania. Until now he has served as parish priest of the Cathedral in Kwirowi (8 Dec.).

Bishop-elect Mhasi, 48, was born in Biro, Tanzania. He holds a diploma in education, a Master's in philosophy. He was ordained a priest on 3 July 2001. He has served in parish ministry and as: vice-rector, treasurer, and professor at the Minor Seminary of St Francis in Kasita, Tanzania; principal of St Joseph secondary school; president of UMAWATA association of diocesan priests.

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Glandas Marie Erick Toussaint as Bishop of Jacmel, Haiti. Until now he has served as titular Bishop of Senez and Auxiliary of Port-au-Prince, Haiti (8 Dec.).

Bishop Toussaint, 53, was born in Grande Savane, Haiti. He was ordained a priest on 13 November 1994. He was ordained a bishop on 26 March 2011, subsequent to his appointment as titular Bishop of Senez and Auxiliary of Port-au-Prince.

The Holy Father appointed as Bishop of Clogher, Ireland, Fr Lawrence Duffy from the clergy of the said Diocese. Until now he has served as parish priest and Dean of the Can-

ons of the Cathedral Chapter (8 Dec.).

Bishop-elect Duffy, 67, was born in Magheracloone, Ireland. He was ordained a priest on 13 June 1976. He has served in parish ministry and as: a *fidei donum* priest in the Diocese of Kitui in Kenya. On his return to Ireland he served in parish ministry and as vicar general of the diocese.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Archbishop Anicetus Bongsu Antonius Sinaga, OFM Cap., of Medan, Indonesia (8 Dec.).

The Holy Father appointed Fr Kornelius Sipayung, OFM Cap., as Archbishop of Medan. Until now he has served as provincial minister of Medan (8 Dec.).

Archbishop-elect Sipayung, 48, was born in Bandar Hinalang-Kabanjaha, Indonesia. He made his perpetual vows for the Order of Friars Minor Capuchin on 22 August 1998 and was ordained a priest on 11 December 1999. He holds a licence in dogmatic theology from the Pontifical Gregoriana University in Rome. He has served in parish ministry and as: formator; professor; custodian in Pematangsiantar; provincial vice-minister of Medan; provincial superior for two terms; member of the Indonesian Capuchin collaboration group for the Provinces of Medan and Pontianak; custodian of Sibolga and Nias; member of the theological commission of the Episcopal Conference of Indonesia, and of the Asia-Pacific Capuchin Conference; member of the Presbyterian Council and administrator of the Harapan Jaya Foundation and of *Caritas*.

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Abel Gabuza as coadjutor Archbishop of Durban, South Africa. Until now he has served as Bishop of Kimberley, South Africa (9 Dec.).

Archbishop Gabuza, 63, was born in Alexandra, South Africa. He was ordained a priest on 15 December 1984. He was ordained a bishop on 19 March 2011, subsequent to his appointment as Bishop of Kimberley.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Prasad Gallela of Cuddapah, India (10 Dec.).

ORIENTAL CHURCHES

The Holy Father raised the Apostolic Exarchate for Catholic faithful of Byzantine rite resident in Serbia to the status of Eparchy, assigning to the new circumscription the title of "Saint Nicholas of Ruski Krstur". The Holy Father appointed Bishop

With the President of Palestine

On Monday, 3 December, the Holy Father received in audience H.E. Mr Mahmoud Abbas, President of the State of Palestine, who subsequently met with Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher, Secretary for Relations with States.

During the cordial discussions, the good relations between the Holy See and Palestine were noted, as were the positive role of Christians and the activity of the Church in Palestinian society, enshrined in the Comprehensive Agreement of 2015. Attention then turned to the path of reconciliation among the Palestinian people, as well as to efforts to resume the peace process between Israelis and Palestinians, and to reach a two-state solution. In this regard, hopes were expressed for a renewed commitment on the part of the international community to meet the legitimate aspirations of



both peoples. Particular attention was reserved to the status of Jerusalem, underlining the importance of recognizing and preserving its identity and the universal value of the Holy City for the three Abrahamic religions.

Finally, mention was made of the other conflicts afflicting the Middle East and the urgency of promoting paths of peace and dialogue, with the contribution of the religious communities, to combat every form of extremism and fundamentalism.

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The Holy Father with members of the Saint Peter's Cricket club

With blessed persistence

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The 'Our Father' prayer sinks its roots in the concrete reality of mankind. For example, it has us ask for bread, daily bread: a simple but essential request, which indicates that faith is not a matter of an 'adornment', detached from life, which arises when all other needs have been satisfied. If anything, prayer begins with life itself. Prayer, Jesus teaches us, does not begin in human life after the stomach is full: rather, it settles in wherever a person is, anyone who is hungry, who weeps, who struggles, who suffers and who wonders 'why?'. Our first prayer, in a certain sense, was the wail that accompanied the first breath. In that newborn's cry the fate of our whole life was announced: our constant hunger, our constant thirst, our search for happiness.

In prayer, Jesus does not seek to extinguish the person; he does not seek to anaesthetize him or her. He does not want us to tone down the demands and requests, learning to bear all things. Instead, he wants all suffering, all distress to soar heavenward and become dialogue.

Having faith, someone said, is a habit of crying out.

We all need to be like Bartimaeus in the Gospel (cf. Mk 10:46-52) – let us recall that passage of the Gospel: Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus – that blind man who was begging at the gates of Jericho. He had so many good people around him telling him to keep quiet: 'Be quiet! The Lord is passing by. Be quiet. Do not disturb. The

Master has much to do; do not disturb him. You are annoying with your cries. Do not disturb'. But he did not heed those suggestions: with blessed persistence, he insisted that his wretched condition might finally encounter Jesus. And he cried louder! And the polite people said: 'No, he is the Master, please! You are making a bad impression!'. And he cried out because he wanted to see; he wanted to be healed. "Jesus, have mercy on me!" (cf. v. 47). Jesus heals his sight and says: "your faith has made you well" (v. 52), as if to explain that the decisive element of his healing was that prayer, that *invocation shouted out* with faith, stronger than the 'common sense' of many people who wanted him to keep quiet. Prayer not only precedes salvation, but in some way already contains it, because it frees one from the despair of those who do not believe in a way out of many unbearable situations.

Of course, then, believers also feel the need to praise God. The Gospels offer us the jubilant exclamation that gushes forth from Jesus' heart, full of wonder, grateful to the Father (cf. Mt 11:25-27). The first Christians even felt the need to add a doxology to the text of the Lord's Prayer (cf. Mt 11:25-27): "for thine is the power and the glory for ever" (*Didache*, 8:2).

But none of us is obliged to embrace the theory that someone advanced in the past, namely, that the prayer of supplication may be a weak form of faith, while the more authentic prayer would be pure praise, that which seeks God without the burden of any request. No, this is not true. The prayer of

supplication is authentic; it is spontaneous; it is an act of faith in God who is Father, who is good, who is almighty. It is an act of faith in me, who am small, sinful, needy. And for this reason prayer, in order to ask for something, is quite noble. God is the Father who has immense compassion for us, and wants his children to speak to him without fear, directly calling him 'Father'; or amid difficulties saying: 'Lord, what have you done to me?'. For this reason we can tell him everything, even the things that are distorted and incomprehensible in our life. And he promised us that he would be with us for ever, until the last day we shall spend on this earth. Let us pray the 'Our Father', beginning this way, simply: 'Father', or 'Dad'. And he understands us and loves us very much.

SPECIAL GREETINGS

I greet the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today's Audience, especially those from the United States of America. Upon all of you, and your families, I invoke the Lord's blessings of joy and peace. God bless you!

I address a particular thought to *young people, to the elderly, to the sick and to newlyweds*.

Today in celebrating the liturgical memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Guadalupe, let us ask Our Lady to accompany us to Christmas and rekindle in us the desire to welcome with joy the light of her Son Jesus, to make it shine ever more brightly in the world's darkness.

Solidarity with victims of attack in Brazil Cathedral

Pope Francis was "deeply moved by the tragic attack that took place during the celebration of Holy Mass in the Cathedral of the Archdiocese of Campinas" in Brazil on Tuesday, 11 December. In a telegram signed by Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Pontiff addressed his heartfelt condolences to Fr José Eduardo Meschiatti, diocesan administrator of the Archdiocese where a gunman killed four people before committing suicide in front of the altar.

The Holy Father, the telegram continues, "entrusts to God's mercy the victims of the massacre and assures his closeness and his spiritual comfort to the families who have lost loved ones and to the entire archdiocesan community". Francis further invokes "prompt healing for the wounded" and invites everyone to pray that "forgiveness and love may prevail over hatred and revenge".

Condolences after attack on Christmas market in France

Following an attack carried out at a famous Christmas market in Strasbourg, France, Pope Francis expressed his condolences in a telegram addressed to Archbishop Luc Ravel of Strasbourg. The telegram, signed by Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin, conveys the "sorrow and concern" of the Pontiff who emphasizes "once again, his firm condemnation against such acts and his compassion especially for the families involved and all people affected by this attack", while "assuring them of his prayers".

"The Holy Father", the message continues, "entrusts the departed to the mercy of God and addresses a special thought to the professionals and volunteers who are caring for the wounded. As a sign of consolation, he implores an abundance of blessings on the victims, on those assisting them, and on all the people of France".

The attacker, armed with a gun and knife, killed three people and seriously wounded some 14 others before escaping. The suspected killer was found and fatally shot by police after a two-day manhunt.

Beatification of Algerian martyrs

Sign of fraternity for the world

Message of the Holy Father

In Oran, Algeria, on Saturday, 8 December, Bishop Pierre Claverie, along with 18 men and women religious and lay people were beatified by Cardinal Angelo Becciu, Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. During the celebration, the Prefect read a Message from Pope Francis, which is translated below from the original French.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This Saturday, 8 December, the Church in Algeria is joyfully celebrating the Beatification of 18 men and women religious martyrs. I join in your action of thanksgiving for these lives wholly given for love of God, of the country and of all of its citizens whose humble everyday life you share in a spirit of fraternity, of friendship, of service.

May you receive here my fraternal encouragement so that this celebration may help to heal the wounds of the past and create a new dynamic of encounter and of living together after the example of our Blessed.

No greater love

GIOVANNI MARIA VIAN

The Beatification of the Algerian martyrs is not only a religious event. For the exemplary nature of these men and women who, despite being aware of the risk to their lives, did not abandon the country where they had chosen to live and a people they considered their own. They rendered true the words of Jesus transmitted by the Gospel of John, that there is no greater love than to give one's life for one's friends. As did Mohammed Bouchikhi, the young Muslim killed along with Pierre Claverie, OP, Bishop of Oran, at a time when the country was devastated by terror and violence.

Since the Pontificate of Benedict XVI, Beatifications are no longer primarily celebrated in Rome, as they had been previously, but in different dioceses so as to express more clearly the incarnation of Catholicism in various parts of the world, and therefore her plurality. At the celebration of the martyrs of Algeria, the Pope not only wished to be represented by the Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints as his envoy, but in a Message he declared with certainty that "this unprecedented event" would "leave a mark in the Algerian sky, a great sign of fraternity addressed to the entire world".

Indeed, fraternity is the key to understanding this Beatification which, as the Papal Envoy, Cardinal Angelo Becciu, said, shows that "the Church wants nothing but to serve the people of Algeria, witnessing love toward all". Hence, a Gospel presence in the wake of those who, over time, have made this journey, according to the logic lived by the "universal brother" Charles de Foucauld, whose great biography by Pierre Sourisseau was recently published in its Italian translation (Effatà).

On 1 December 1916, just a few hours before being assassinated in the heart of the desert, the "ascetic of the Sahara", as Pope Montini described him in a 1953 text, unknowingly left his last will and testament in a letter. "One must never hesitate to ask for postings where danger, struggle, self-denial are greatest: let us leave honour to those who would want it, but danger, struggle, let us always claim them", he wrote to Louis Massignon, a pioneer of friendship between Christians and Muslims, summing up his own life, so similar to the martyrs of Algeria.

In a time of misunderstandings and brutality, the Beatification of these martyrs, celebrated by Christians and Muslims together, is thus a sign for everyone. As witness to a willingness to encounter each other and to proceed together in peace, awaiting the end of human history. As written in a prayer by Bishop Pierre Claverie's Muslim friend who was assassinated with him on 1 August 1966: "In the name of God, the benevolent, the merciful One. I say to you: Peace be with you. I thank those who will read my memoirs. And I say to each one of those whom I met in my life that I thank them. I say that they will be rewarded on the last day. I ask forgiveness of those I may have harmed, forgiveness of the One who will forgive me on judgment day, forgiveness of those who may have heard an unkind word from my mouth. I remember the good I have done in my life. May God in his omnipotence allow me to submit to him and may he grant me his tenderness".

I am very grateful to the President of the Democratic Republic of Algeria, H.E. Mr Abdelaziz Bouteflika, and to his collaborators, for having facilitated the celebration, on Algerian soil, of the Beatification of Bishop Pierre Claverie and his 18 men and women Companions, martyrs of the greatest love. Thus, I wish to express all my affection to the people of Algeria who have known great suffering during the social crisis to which it fell victim in the final years of the last century.

Commemorating the death in Algeria of these 19 Christian victims, the Catholics of Algeria and of the world wish to celebrate the faithfulness of these martyrs to the plan of Peace that God inspires in all mankind. At the same time, they wish to include in their prayers all the sons and daughters of Algeria who, likewise, were victims of the same violence by having observed, with fidelity and respect for the other, their duties as believers and citizens in this blessed land. For them too we raise our prayers and express our grateful homage.

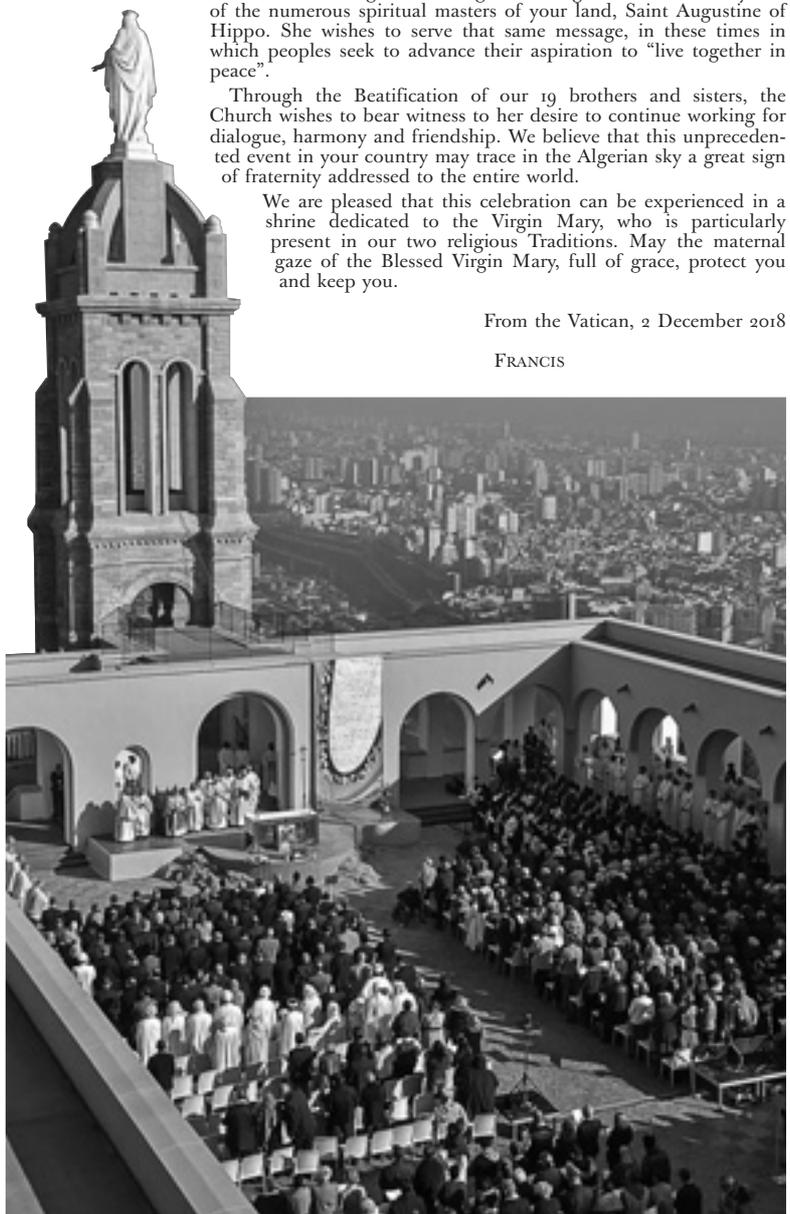
The Catholic Church in Algeria knows she is the heir, with the entire nation of Algeria, of the great message of love offered by one of the numerous spiritual masters of your land, Saint Augustine of Hippo. She wishes to serve that same message, in these times in which peoples seek to advance their aspiration to "live together in peace".

Through the Beatification of our 19 brothers and sisters, the Church wishes to bear witness to her desire to continue working for dialogue, harmony and friendship. We believe that this unprecedented event in your country may trace in the Algerian sky a great sign of fraternity addressed to the entire world.

We are pleased that this celebration can be experienced in a shrine dedicated to the Virgin Mary, who is particularly present in our two religious Traditions. May the maternal gaze of the Blessed Virgin Mary, full of grace, protect you and keep you.

From the Vatican, 2 December 2018

FRANCIS



Beatification Mass celebrated in the Santa Cruz Chapel, Oran

On the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Grave injustices remain

“Place human rights at the centre of all policies ... even when this means going against the current”. Pope Francis addressed this “heartfelt appeal to those who have institutional responsibilities” in a Message sent to participants in the international conference “Human Rights in the Contemporary World: Achievements, Omissions, Negations”, which began on Monday, 10 December, at the Pontifical Gregorian University. The conference, sponsored by the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development and by the University, was held on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 25th anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. The following is a translation of Pope Francis’ Message, which was read aloud at the Conference by Cardinal Peter Kodwo Appiah Turkson, Prefect of the above-mentioned Dicastery.



Photo: United Nations

scorned or trampled upon, and its fundamental rights disregarded or violated.

I think, among other things, of the unborn, who are denied the right to come into the world; of those who do not have access to the indispensable means for a dignified life;³ of those who are excluded from an appropriate education; of those who are unjustly deprived of work or compelled to work as slaves; of those who are detained in inhumane conditions, who suffer torture or who are denied the opportunity for redemption;⁶ of the victims of forced disappearances and of their families.

My thought also goes to all those who are living in a climate dominated by suspicion and scorn, who are the object of acts of intolerance, discrimination and violence due to their race, ethnicity, nationality or religion.⁷

Lastly, I cannot fail to recall those who endure a multitude of violations of their fundamental rights in the tragic context of armed conflicts, while unscrupulous dealers of death⁸ enrich themselves at the cost of their brothers’ and sisters’ blood.

Faced with these grave phenomena, we are all accountable. Indeed, when fundamental rights are violated, or when some are favoured to the detriment of others, or when they are guaranteed only to specified groups, then serious injustices occur, which in their turn feed conflicts with heavy consequences both within single Nations and in relations among them.

Therefore, each person is called to contribute with courage and determination, in line with the specificity of his or her proper role, to the respect of the fundamental rights of every person, especially of those who are ‘invisible’: of the many who are hungry and thirsty, who are naked, sick, strangers or prisoners (cf. Mt 25:35-35), who live at the margins of society or who are discarded from it.

This demand for justice and solidarity assumes a special significance for us Christians, because the Gospel itself invites us to direct our gaze toward the least of our brothers and sisters, to be moved with compassion (cf. Mt 14:14) and to commit ourselves concretely in order to alleviate their suffering.

I would like, on this occasion, to address a heartfelt appeal to those who have institutional responsibilities, asking them to place human rights at the centre of all policies, including those of cooperating in development, even when this means going against the current.

With the hope that these days of reflection may awaken consciences and inspire initiatives aimed at protecting and promoting human dignity, I entrust each of you, your families and your peoples to the intercession of Mary Most Holy, Queen of Peace, and I invoke upon all of you an abundance of divine blessings.

From the Vatican, 10 December 2018

Franciscus



Dear Cardinal,

Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate and in the Priesthood,

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am pleased to send my cordial greeting to all of you, Representatives of States to the Holy Sec, of the Institutions of the United Nations, of the Council of Europe, of the Episcopal Commissions for Justice and Peace and of those for social ministry, of the academic world and of organizations of civil society, convened in Rome for the International Conference on the theme “Human Rights in the Contemporary World: Achievements, Omissions, Negations”, promoted by the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development and by the Pontifical Gregorian University, on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and of the 25th anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action.

Through these two documents, the family of Nations sought to recognize the equal dignity of every human being,¹ from which derive the fundamental rights and liberties that, as they are rooted in human nature – the inseparable unity of body and soul – are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interconnected.² At the same time, the 1948 Declaration recognizes that “Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible”.³

In the year in which significant anniversaries of these international juridical instruments are being celebrated, an in-depth reflection on the foundation and the respect for human rights in the contemporary world seems timely, a reflection which I hope may herald a renewed commitment in favour of the defence of human dignity, with special attention to the most vulnerable members of the community.

Indeed, by closely observing our contemporary societies, one observes numerous contradictions that lead one to wonder whether the equal dignity of all human beings, solemnly proclaimed 70 years ago, is truly recognized, respected, protected and promoted in every circumstance. In the world today numerous forms of injustice persist, fed by reductive anthropological visions and by a profit-based economic model, which does not hesitate to exploit, discard and even kill human beings.⁴ While one part of humanity lives in opulence, another part sees its own dignity denied,

¹ Cf. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 10 December 1948, Preamble and Article 1.

² Cf. *Vienna Declaration*, 25 June 1993, n. 5.

³ *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, art. 29.1.

⁴ Cf. Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 53.

⁵ Cf. JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris*, 11 April, 1963.

⁶ Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 2267.

⁷ Cf. *Address to Participants at the World Conference on “Xenophobia, Racism and Populist Nationalism in the Context of Global Migration”*, 20 September 2018.

⁸ Cf. General Audience, Saint Peter’s Square, 11 June 2014.

VATICAN BULLETIN

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Djura Džudžar, as the first eparchial bishop. Until now he has served as titular Bishop of Acrassus and Apostolic Exarch of the same circumscription (6 Dec.).

Bishop Džudžar, 64, was born in Djurdjevo, Serbia. He was ordained a priest on 7 September 1980. He was ordained a bishop on 19 March 2001, subsequent to his appointment as titular Bishop of Acrassus and Auxiliary of Mukachevo, Ukraine. On 28 August 2003 he was appointed the first Exarch of Serbia and Montenegro. On 19 January 2013, the circumscription was limited to the faithful of Serbia alone.

SECRETARIAT FOR THE ECONOMY

The Holy Father appointed as Office Head of the Secretariat for the Economy Mr Francesco Nunzio, official of the said Dicastery (7 Dec.).

SPECIAL ENVOY

The Holy Father has appointed Cardinal Patrick D’Rozario, CSC, Archbishop of Dhaka, Bangladesh, as his Special Envoy to the celebration of the 27th World Day of the Sick, to take place in Calcutta, India, from 9 to 11 February 2019 (11 Dec.).

ADVENT SERMON

On Friday morning, 7 December, in the presence of the Holy Father, Fr Raniero Cantalamessa, OFM Cap., Preacher of the Papal Household, delivered the first Advent Sermon in the Vatican’s Redemptoris Mater Chapel.

Celebrating the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception

Empowered by trust in God

Mary's "here I am" in response to the Angel must become a Christian's "key phrase for life". The Pontiff made this recommendation at the Angelus in Saint Peter's Square on Saturday morning, 8 December, Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's reflection, which he offered in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Good morning and happy Feast Day!

Today the Word of God presents us with an alternative. In the first reading there is the man who, at the origin, says *no* to God, and in the Gospel there is Mary who, at the Annunciation, says *yes* to God. In both readings it is God who seeks mankind. But in the first case God goes to Adam, after the sin, and asks him: "Where are you?" (Gen 3:9), and Adam responds: "I hid myself" (v. 10). In the second

peat it now, together. *Here I am, Lord, today let your will be done in me!*

Mary adds: "Let it be to me according to your word". She does not say "let it be done as I want", but "as You will". She does not place any limitations on God. She does not think: "I will dedicate myself partly to him, I will deal with it and then I will do what I want". No, Mary does not love the Lord when she feels like it, off and on. She lives by entrusting herself to God in all things and for all things. This is the secret of life. One who trusts God in everything can do everything. However, the Lord, dear brothers and sisters, suffers when we respond to him as Adam did: "I was afraid, and I hid myself". God is Father, the most tender of fathers, and desires his children's trust.

How often, instead, do we mistrust him; we mistrust God! We think that he might send us some trial, deprive us of freedom, abandon us. But this is a great mistake; it is the temptation of the origins, the temptation of the devil: weaving mistrust in God. Mary overcomes this first temptation with her *here I am*. And today we look at the beauty of Our Lady, born and lived without sin, ever docile and transparent to God.

This does not mean that life was easy for her, no. Being with God does not magically resolve problems. The conclusion of today's Gospel passage recalls it: "the angel departed from her" (v. 38). He departed: it is a strong verb. The Angel left the Virgin alone in a difficult situation. She knew the special way in which she would become the Mother of God – the Angel had said so – but the Angel had not explained it to others, only to her. And problems began immediately: let us imagine the irregular situation according to law, to Saint Joseph's torment, the life plan tossed aside, what the people would have said... But faced with problems, Mary places her trust in God. She is left by the Angel, but believes that God remains with her, in her. And she trusts. She trusts in God. She is certain that with the Lord, even if in an unexpected way, everything will be fine. This is the wise approach: not to live depending on problems – when one ends, another appears! – but by trusting God and entrusting every day to him: *here I am!* "Here I am" is the

phrase. "Here I am" is the prayer. Let us ask the Immaculate for the grace to live this way.

After reciting the Angelus, Pope Francis added:

Dear brothers and sisters, today Bishop Pietro Claverie and 18 men and women religious Companions, killed in hatred of the faith, were beatified at the Notre Dame de Santa Cruz Chapel in Oran, Algeria. Nineteen new Blessed! These martyrs of our time were faithful proclaimers of the Gospel, humble peace builders and heroic witnesses to Christian charity: a bishop, priests, men and women religious and lay people. Their courageous witness is a source of hope for the Catholic community of Algeria and the seed of dialogue for the entire society. May this Beatification be for everyone an inspiration to build together a world of fraternity and solidarity. Let us offer a round of applause for the new Blessed, everyone together!

I assure remembrance in my prayers of the young people and mother who died last night in a nightclub in Corinaldo, near Ancona, as well as the many injured. I ask Our Lady's intercession for all.

I offer an affectionate greeting to you, pilgrims from Italy and from other countries, especially families, parish groups and associations. On this Feast of the Immaculate Conception, in Italian parishes membership is being renewed in Catholic Action, an association that for 150 years has been a gift and a resource for the journey of the Church in Italy. I encourage its diocesan and parish divisions to commit themselves to the formation of lay people capable of witnessing to the Gospel, becoming leaven for a more just and solidary society.

I wholeheartedly bless the faithful of Rocca di Papa and the flame with which they will light the great star on the Fortress of their beautiful town, in honour of Mary Immaculate.

This afternoon I will go to Saint Mary Major to pray to Our Lady, and afterwards I will go to Piazza di Spagna to renew the traditional act of homage and prayer at the foot of the monument to the Immaculate. I ask you to join me spiritually in this gesture, which expresses filial devotion to our heavenly Mother.

I wish everyone a happy Feast Day and a good Advent journey guided by the Virgin Mary. Please, do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch. *Arriuerdici!*



Strength to overcome resignation and indifference

In honour of the Blessed Virgin, on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, Pope Francis placed flowers at the foot of the monument to Our Lady in Rome's Piazza di Spagna, for the traditional Act of Veneration, where he also recited a prayer. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's prayer, which he recited in Italian.

Immaculate Mother, on the day of your celebration, so dear to the Christian people, I come to pay you homage in the heart of Rome. In my soul I carry the faithful of this Church and all those who live in this city, especially the sick and those who due to various circumstances struggle harder to go on. First and foremost we wish to thank you for the motherly care with which you accompany our journey: how often we hear those who have experienced your intercession describe with teary eyes the graces that you request for us from your Son Jesus! I also think of an ordinary grace that you give to the people who live in Rome: that of patiently facing the discomforts of daily life. For this we ask you for the strength not to give in, but rather, to each do our part each day to improve things, so that each one's care may make Rome more beautiful and livable for every one; so that each one's duty properly fulfilled may ensure the rights of every one.

And thinking of the common good of this city, we pray to you for those who play roles of great responsibility: may you obtain for them wisdom, foresight, the spirit of service and cooperation.

Blessed Virgin,

I wish to entrust to you in a particular way the priests of this Diocese: pastors, assistant pastors, elderly priests who, with a shepherd's heart, continue to work at the service of the People of God, the many student priests from every part of the world who cooperate in the parishes. For all of them I ask you for the gentle joy of evangelizing and the gift of being fathers, close to the people, merciful. To you, Lady wholly consecrated to God, I entrust the consecrated women in religious and in secular life who, thank God, are more numerous in Rome than in any other city in the world, and who form a marvelous mosaic of nationalities and cultures.

For them I ask you for the joy to be, like you, spouses and mothers, fruitful in prayer, in charity, in compassion.

O Mother of Jesus,

I ask of you one last thing in this Season of Advent, reflecting on the days in which you and Joseph were in distress for the then imminent birth of your child, concerned because there was the census and you too had to leave your town, Nazareth, and go to Bethlehem... You know, Mother, what it means to carry life in your womb and to feel indifference, rejection, at times scorn around you. For this reason I ask you to be close to families that today in Rome, in Italy, in the entire world, are experiencing similar situations, so that they not be abandoned to themselves, but protected in their rights, human rights which come before any other justifiable need.

O Mary Immaculate,

dawn of hope at the horizon of humanity, watch over this city, over its houses, over its schools, over its offices, over its shops, over its factories, over its hospitals, over its prisons; may no place lack the most valuable thing that Rome has, and which it preserves for the entire world, the testament of Jesus: "Love one another, as I have loved you" (cf. Jn 13:34). Amen.



What is the secret of Mary's beauty, "tota pulchra"? Not appearances, or that which passes, but a heart totally centred on God.

(Pontifex)

case, however, God goes to Mary, without sin, who responds: "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord" (Lk 1:38). *Here I am* is the opposite of *I hid myself*. *Here I am* opens one to God, while sin closes, isolates, causes one to be alone with oneself.

Here I am is the key phrase for life. It marks the passage from a horizontal life, centred on oneself and one's own needs, to a vertical life, ascending toward God. *Here I am* is being available to the Lord; it is the cure for selfishness, the antidote to a dissatisfied life, which is always lacking something. *Here I am* is the remedy against the aging of sin; it is the therapy for staying young within. *Here I am* is believing that God counts more than my 'me'. It is choosing to bet on the Lord, docile to his surprises. This is why saying *here I am* to him is the highest praise we can offer him. Why not begin our days with a 'here I am, Lord'? It would be beautiful to say each morning: "*Here I am, Lord, today let your will be done in me*". We will say it in praying the *Angelus*, but we can re-

To donors of the tree and Nativity scene

The light and tenderness of God

The humility of the Nativity scene enables us to contemplate Jesus, the "Child God who emanates light", so that "we too become witnesses to humility, tenderness and goodness". Pope Francis stressed this message in the Clementine Hall on Friday morning, 7 December, as he addressed the donors of the Christmas tree and Nativity scene that were unveiled later that afternoon in Saint Peter's Square. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's greeting, which he gave in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Thank you for coming! I offer you my welcome and with much appreciation I welcome the gifts you have come to present to me: the Christmas tree and the Nativity scene, which have already been arranged in Saint Peter's Square and will be admired by numerous pilgrims coming from every part of the world. I address my warm greeting to each of you, beginning with the Patriarch of Venice and the Bishop of Concordia-Pordenone, whom I thank for their fraternal words. I offer a courteous greeting to the civil authorities, and extend my affectionate thoughts to all the citizens of Jesolo, Pordenone, Veneto and Friuli-Venezia Giulia, whom you are representing here. I thank those who cooperated in creating these Christmas symbols, in a special way the four sculptors, from different countries, who sculpted the Nativity, and the technicians and staff of the Governorate.

The tree and Nativity scene are two symbols that never cease to fascinate us; they speak to us about Christmas and help us to contemplate the mystery of God who became man to be close to each of us. The Christmas tree with its lights reminds us that Jesus is the light of the world. He is the light of the spirit that drives away the darkness of hostility and makes room for forgiveness. The red spruce that stands in Saint Peter's Square this year, which came from the Forest of Cansiglio, inspires us to further reflection. With its height of over 20 metres, it symbolizes God who, with the Birth of his Son Jesus, lowered himself down to mankind in order to raise humanity up to him and elevate it from the haze of selfishness and sin. The Son of God assumes the human condition in order to draw people to him and make them become participants in his divine and incorruptible nature.

The Nativity scene, placed in the centre of the Square, was created from Jesolo sand, originating from the Dolomites. The sand, a poor material, recalls the simplicity, the smallness and also the fragility – as the Patriarch said – with which God revealed himself through the Birth of Jesus in the precariousness of Bethlehem.

It might seem to us that this smallness is in contradiction with divinity, such that someone, from the very beginning, has considered it merely an appearance, a facade. But it is not. Because smallness is freedom. One who is small – in the Gospel sense – is not only light, but is also free from any urge to show off, and from any pretense of success; like children who express themselves and move freely. We are all called to be free before God, to have the freedom of a child before his father. The Child Jesus, Son of God and our Saviour, whom we lay

down in the Nativity scene, is Holy in poverty, smallness, simplicity, humility.

May the Nativity scene and tree, captivating symbols of Christmas, bring into families and meeting places a reflection of the light and tenderness of God, in order to help everyone to experience the celebration of Jesus' Birth. By contemplating the Child God who emanates light in the humility of the Nativity scene, may we too become witnesses to humility, tenderness and goodness.

Dear friends, I renew my gratitude to all of you and I offer you best wishes for a happy Christmas. A happy and holy Christmas! I ask you to pray for me and I wholeheartedly bless you, your family members and your fellow citizens. Thank you.



Christmas display in Saint Peter's Square

This year's Nativity scene and Christmas tree on display in Saint Peter's Square came from, respectively, the town of Jesolo and the province of Pordenone, Italy. The Nativity scene was created according to Jesolo's ancient tradition of sand sculpting. The sculpture stands 5 metres tall, and occupies a surface area of 25 square metres.

With a height of 21 metres, the tree, a red spruce from the Cansiglio Forest, was donated by the Diocese of Concordia-Pordenone and felled by the local forestry service. Decorations

and lighting are under the direction of the Governorate's technical service staff in cooperation with OSRAM, which has provided a state-of-the-art system of decorative and colourful illumination, designed to limit environmental impact and energy consumption.

The tree and unveiling of the Nativity scene took place on Friday evening, 7 December, with a greeting delivered by the Holy Father. The display will continue throughout the Christmas Season, until the Solemnity of the Baptism of the Lord, Sunday, 13 January.

Cardinal Secretary of State to the Vatican School of Library Science

A window on the world

The Vatican Apostolic Library's School of Library Science, now in its 83rd year, has quite a challenge, recalled Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State, on the occasion of the inauguration of the Pope Francis Chair for Advanced Studies in Library Science, and of the establishment and consignment of two annual scholarships named after Saint Gregory the Illuminator.

Founded within a centuries-old institution such as the Vatican, the School of Library Science has from its very beginning sought to pass on to its students "a complex of cultural knowledge and techniques drawn directly" from

its own ancient tradition, Cardinal Parolin noted. The School is well aware of the importance of being guardian of those values that the Christian tradition shares with culture and scholarship. On these values the School has formed generations of librarians, at the service of the Church, but also of many libraries and study centres at the international level.

Enhancing the value of the cultural patrimony preserved within the Vatican, the projects – the Pope Francis Chair and the two Saint Gregory the Illuminator scholarships – have been realized

thanks to a donation from the Sanctuary of Culture Foundation. The Foundation owes its origins to an idea of Benedict XVI and Cardinal Raffaele Farina, librarian and archivist emeritus. The Foundation's Board is headquartered in the United States, and is comprised of clergy and lay residents in the country, with a CEO and chaplain who is a US citizen that works in the Holy See.

In his greeting to Cardinal Parolin, Archbishop José Tolentino de Mendonça, librarian and archivist of the Holy Roman Church, emphasized that the first

visit of a Secretary of State to the Institution represented an important day for the school, and also offered the Library "an open window on the world".

Msgr Cesare Pasini, Prefect of the Vatican Apostolic Library and Director of the Vatican School of Library Science, donated to Cardinal Parolin the facsimile edition of two sheets of the Hanna Papyrus 1 (Bodmer XIV-XV, also known as P 75), dated circa 175-225. The papyrus – discovered in 1952 and donated by Frank Hanna to Benedict XVI in 2007, and hence to the Vatican Library – contains the Gospels according to Luke and John.

Message to the Pontifical Academies

Eternity and the other face of life

On Tuesday, 4 December, the 23rd Public Session of the Pontifical Academies was held at the Palazzo della Cancelleria in Rome, on the theme "Eternity, the other face of life". The work was introduced by Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi, President of the Pontifical Council for Culture and of the Coordination Council of the Pontifical Academies. Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State, after offering his greeting to those present, read a Message from Pope Francis and consigned the Award of the Pontifical Academies, which the Pontiff confers upon young scholars, artists or institutions who have distinguished themselves in the promotion of Christian humanism. This year the Holy Father awarded the prize to Stefano Abbate and to Francisco Javier Pueyo Velasco, and awarded the Medal of the Pontificate to Guillermo Contín Aylón. The following is a translation of the Pope's Message, which was written in Italian.



To my Venerable Brother
Cardinal GIANFRANCO RAVASI
President of the Pontifical Council
for Culture and of the Coordination
Council of the Pontifical Academies

I address you on the occasion of the 23rd Solemn Public Session of the Pontifical Academies, an initiative, begun in 1995 following the reform of the Pontifical Academies, willed by Saint John Paul II. It is now an important and customary step on the journey of the seven Academies brought together in the Coordination Council, over which you preside. Coinciding with the Annual Assembly, the conferral of the Award is organized in turn by one of the Academies, according to the sector of competence. An Award I am pleased to present in order to encourage and support the efforts of those, particularly young people or institutions that work with young people, who have distinguished themselves in their respective fields by their contribution to the promotion of a new Christian humanism. Thus, I extend my cordial greeting to all those present, Cardinals, Bishops, Ambassadors, Academicians and friends who are attending the Solemn Public Session, with the profound hope that this now customary moment of encounter may represent for all, beginning with the Award winners, an encouragement to research and to deepen the fundamental themes for a humanistic Christian vision.

The 23rd session was organized by the *Pontifical Academy of Theology* and the *Pontifical Academy of Saint Thomas Aquinas*. I offer a particular greeting to the President of these two Academies, the Rev. Fr Réal Tremblay, CSSR, and the Rev. Fr Serge-Thomas Bonino, OP, and to the respective Academicians, thanking them first and foremost for their commitment, attested to above all by *Path*, the journal published by the Academy of Theology, which

serves to suggest to readers, in keeping with the title, an itinerary, a path of research and in-depth theological study.

I congratulate you on the choice of the theme of this Public Session: "Eternity, the other face of life", which inspires us to reflect anew and more deeply on an area that is not only theological and that, despite being essential and central in the Christian experience, tends to be rather neglected, both in the theological research of recent years and, above all, in proclamation and in the formation of believers.

"We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come", we profess every Sunday, reciting the last article of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. And the *Symbolum Apostolorum* concludes with these words: "I believe in ... the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting". Thus, it is the essential core of the Christian faith, of a reality closely linked to the profession of faith in Christ dead and Risen. Nevertheless, eschatological reflection on eternal life and on the resurrection, in the Catechesis and in the celebration, is given neither the space nor the attention it deserves. At times one has the impression that this theme is deliberately forgotten and overlooked because it is seemingly remote, extraneous to daily life and to contemporary sensitivity.

This is not very surprising: one phenomenon that characterizes the present culture, in fact, is precisely closure to transcendental horizons, the withdrawal into self, the almost exclusive attachment to the present, forgetting or censoring the dimensions of the past and especially of the future, perceived, particularly by young people, as dark and full of uncertainty. The future beyond death seems, in this context, inevitably even more remote, unfathomable or completely nonexistent.

But the scant attention given to the theme of eternity, to the Christian hope that proclaims the resurrection and eternal life in God and with God, can also depend on other factors: for example, the traditional language used in preaching or in the catechesis to proclaim this truth of faith, can appear today almost incomprehensible and at times hardly conveys a positive and 'attractive' image of Eternal Life. Thus, the other face of life may be perceived as monotonous and repetitive, tedious,



Stanley Spencer, "Resurrection" (1946)

even sad or completely insignificant and irrelevant to the present.

This is not how the great Father of the Church, Gregory of Nyssa thought; the one who, in a Homily on the Canticle of Canticles (VIII) – which appropriately will be re-proposed during the Session – offered quite a different vision of eternity: eternal life was, in fact, understood by him as an existential condition, not static but dynamic and lively. The human desire for life and happiness, closely connected to the desire to see and know God, constantly grows and is renewed by passing from one stage to the next without ever reaching its end or fulfillment. The experience of the encounter with God in fact transcends any and every human achievement and constitutes the infinite and ever new aim.

Saint Thomas Aquinas also emphasized this aspect, affirming that in eternal life man's union with God is fulfilled, that "God Himself is the reward and the end of all our labours", and this union consists in a "perfect vision" of Him. In this state, Saint Thomas continues, "every blessed soul will have to overflowing what he hoped for and desired" and God alone "satisfies and infinitely exceeds man's desires". Moreover, he continues, eternal life consists in "the happy society of all the blessed". Quoting Saint Augustine, Thomas states: "Complete joy will not enter into those who rejoice, but all those who rejoice will enter into joy", and in contemplating your Face, "I shall be satisfied when your glory shall appear" eternally renewed in youthfulness (*On the Apostles' Creed*, 12).

Therefore, the reflection of the Fathers of the Church and of great theologians should help us and encourage us to propose anew, effectively and zealously, both with a language suited to our daily life and with the appropriate depth, the

heart of our faith, the hope that animates us and that gives strength to Christian testimony in the world: the beauty of Eternity.

I hope that, both at the theological level and at the level of proclamation, of catechesis and of Christian formation, there may be renewed interest and reflection on eternity, without which the dimension of the present becomes devoid of its ultimate significance, of the capacity for renewal, of hope in the future.

Therefore, wishing to promote and encourage theological research, and particularly that research aimed at deepening eschatological themes, I am pleased to present the Award of the Pontifical Academies, *ex aequo*, to two young scholars: Dr Stefano Abbate, for his doctoral thesis entitled *La secularización de la esperanza cristiana a través de la gnosis y el ebionismo. Estudio sobre el mesianismo moderno*; and Dr Francisco Javier Pueyo Velasco, for his work *La plenitud terrena del Reino de Dios en la historia de la teología*.

In addition, I am happy to confer the Medal of the Pontificate to Dr Guillermo Contín Aylón, for his thesis "Vado ad Patrem. *La Ascension de Cristo en el Comentario a Juan de santo Tomás de Aquino*".

Lastly, I wish the Academicians and all those participating in the event an ever fruitful commitment in your respective fields of research, and I entrust each and every one of you to the Virgin Mary, who already enjoys the joyful vision of God in eternal life and intercedes for us, pilgrims in history, on the journey toward eternity.

I wholeheartedly impart to all of you and your families a special Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, 4 December 2018

Franciscus

A special responsibility regarding children

Meeting between the Chief Rabbinate of Israel and the Holy See

The 16th Bilateral Commission Meeting of the Delegations of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel and the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews was held in Rome from 18-20 November with the theme "The Dignity of the Human Being, Children in Jewish and Catholic Teaching". The following is the English Text of the Joint Statement dated 20 November – Kislev 12th, 5779, received by Pope Francis on Monday evening, 19 November. The document was signed by the Presidents of the Delegations, Rabbi Rasson Arusi and Cardinal Peter Turkson; by Jewish representatives Rabbi David Rosen, Rabbi Prof. Daniel Sperber, Rabbi Prof. Avraham Steinberg, and Mr Oded Wiener; and by Catholic representatives Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa OFM, Archbishop Bruno Forte, Bishop Giacinto-Boulos Marcuzzo, Msgr Pier Francesco Fumagalli and Fr Norbert J. Hofmann, SDB.

1. Cardinal Peter Turkson as chair of the Catholic delegation welcomed the Jewish partners to Rome invoking Divine blessing on the deliberations. Rabbi Rasson Arusi responded expressing the joy and satisfaction of the Jewish delegation to be reunited in this joint holy endeavour and quoted in prayer Psalm 90:17, "may the favour of the Lord our God rest on us and establish the work of our hands for us".

2. The Bilateral Commission convened on the occasion of the United Nations' Universal Children's Day and accordingly devoted its deliberations to the subject of human dignity with special reference to the child.

3. The Commission noted the significant advance in modern society regarding the subject of human rights as evidenced in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and in particular the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child. These principles of the inviolab-

velop their reflective and operative capacities. Not only is it necessary that children perceive themselves to be the object of appropriate and loving attention, but also that they be dynamically engaged in such a way that their cognitive and practical capabilities are stimulated. In order for this development to take place in consonance with the aforementioned values, it is necessary to nurture authentic and stable loving relationships, and provide for adequate nutrition, healthcare and protection, as well as the necessary religious education, schooling, informal learning and creativity.

6. Society as a whole, but in particular parents, teachers and religious guides, have a special responsibility regarding the moral and

spiritual growth of the child. In their deliberations on the rights of the child to autonomy and liberty, the members of the Bilateral Commission highlighted the tension between guaranteeing maximal freedom of choice and ensuring protection and disciplined guidance. All of this demands that we refrain from any instrumentalization of another person, whose dignity should always be seen as a goal in and of itself.

7. The members of the Bilateral Commission were hosted by Pope Francis at a special audience where he affirmed his own commitment to their work and the advancement of Catholic-Jewish relations: "We are brothers and the children of One God, and we must work together for peace hand in hand", he said. At this meeting the Pope welcomed the information provided to him regarding a draft interreligious position paper on end-of-life matters with particular reference to the dangers of legalizing euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide instead of providing palliative care and maximal respect for God given life.

8. Concluding their deliberations, the members of the

Bilateral Commission gave thanks to the Almighty for His blessings upon their lives and work; and for His gifts, not least of these being children themselves, who are described thus in Psalm 127:3: "Children are a gift from the Lord, the reward of the fruit of the womb". To ensure their healthy spiritual development, it is particularly important to familiarize them with the Biblical patrimony that both Jews and Catholics share.

9. Furthermore the Commission urges that these texts of Holy Scripture should be studied throughout their respective communities. In addition, the teaching of *Nostra aetate* (n. 4) and subsequent documents pertaining to Jewish-Christian relations should be widely known and disseminated throughout both communities, providing impetus for the ongoing blessed reconciliation and cooperation between Jews and Catholics for the betterment of their faithful and society as a whole.

Toward the conference on the protection of minors

"As a woman, lay person and mother I cannot fail to perceive the co-responsibility to which we are all called and the horror of what has emerged with regard to those who could be our children". Gabriella Gambino, Undersecretary of the life section of the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life, minces no words in reiterating the commitment to face the abuse crisis.

In an interview with Alessandro Gisotti for Vatican News, Gambino – who is part of the organizing committee for the conference on the protection of minors to be held in the Vatican from 21-24 February – emphasized a need for "competent and formed lay people", who can "bring their own experiential contribution also as parents and educators who deal with human frailties every day". But in order to "translate into action the intentions of co-responsibility and transparency it is essential that we all, religious and lay people, be involved: only in this way will the Church be effective, especially in preventing these grave forms of violence from now on". Gambino also emphasized the fact that "as lay people we must also create alliances between the various educational spheres in which our children grow: school, parish and family". However, she said, "in many ways this alliance is no longer there today; it is artificial, and as parents we often feel powerless".

The Undersecretary did not skirt the burning issues. Seeking to recover the trust of many people who feel betrayed by the scandals, she expressed her hope that the February conference may "bring out an intelligent approach and the active willingness to understand the problem", as well as "inner conversion, openness to the truth and to good". And, she said, "it is time to act so that the Church of love may also be the sphere in which justice and truth can meet".

Essentially, she concluded, "creating conditions and structures that make intervention for victim protection immediate and possible is not only an act of justice but of charity, also with regard to those responsible. Only in this way can the Church become credible on this point again".



Mitra Shadfar, "Mother and child"

ility of human life and the inalienability of human dignity find their full expression in relationships between the individual and the Divine and the individual and his/her neighbour; with responsibility to provide for such expression throughout society. We have a special obligation towards the more vulnerable members of our communities and in particular towards children, the guarantors of posterity, who are not yet able to express their full potential and to protect themselves.

4. The importance of identifying the ethical foundation for such affirmations was discussed in depth, noting that these ideals are already rooted with transcendent validity in our shared biblical patrimony that declares that the human being is created in the Divine Image (cf. Gen 1:26-27; 5:1-2).

5. Respect for the personal dignity of children must also take the form of offering the widest range of stimuli and instruments to de-

Secretary of State on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration

A shared response is needed

Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin headed the Holy See Delegation to the 'Intergovernmental Conference to Adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration' held in Marrakech, Morocco on 10 and 11 December. The following is an excerpt from the English text of the address he delivered at the General Debate on Monday, 10 December.

The adoption of the Global Compact on Migration comes at a critical moment in history.

Migration has always been a natural response to crises and to the innate desire for greater opportunities, for a fuller life with greater freedom, peace and security. More people are on the move than ever before. While the majority of migration remains regular, ever more people are being constrained by adverse factors to leave their homes. This often leads to involuntary, unsafe, and irregular journeys that place migrants and their families in vulnerable situations, presenting significant challenges for countries of origin, transit, and destination.

As we have seen in recent years, when these challenges are not managed well, crises can form, rhetoric can eclipse reason, and migrants can be seen more as threats than as brothers and sisters in need of solidarity and basic services. The Global Compact on Migration attempts to assist the international community to prevent crises and tragedies. At the same time, it also seeks to improve the governance of migration, which is bound to increase as the international community grows more economically, socially and politically interconnected.

To achieve these goals, the Global Compact for Migration, although not legally binding, includes a comprehensive framework of best practices and policy instruments to increase international co-operation and sharing of responsibility in the governance of migration in all of its dimensions. It does this while giving countries the space to respond to their national circumstances and priorities, in full respect of international law and of the human rights of all migrants, regardless of their status. Its implementation will help all Governments, as well as non-governmental entities, including faith-based organizations, collectively to manage migration in a more safe, orderly and regular manner, something no State can achieve alone.

Pope Francis has dedicated much of his pontificate to raising awareness about the plight of migrants, as well as the moral urgency to care for those who have been displaced and to respond to



the root causes of their displacement. In particular, he has focused on the situation of those in the most vulnerable situations, including migrant children and youth. His vision for international migration can be summarized by the four verbs: to welcome, to protect, to promote, and to integrate, four actions that we find pervading the best practices and commitments that comprise the Global Compact on Migration.

He has also underlined that a dignified response to migration must be reasonable, with Governments prudently determining their actual capacity for meaningful integration. Integration is a two-way process in which migrants should respect the local laws, culture and customs of the country receiving them, while host countries should respect the traditions and cultures of migrants. Through mutual welcoming and prudence, rising xenophobia and racism can be effectively addressed.

Pope Francis has also emphasized that, while migration is a natural phenomenon, there is the prior right to live in dignity and safety in the country of origin. The Holy See appeals to Governments and the international community as a whole, to foster those conditions that might allow communities and individuals to live in safety and dignity in their own countries.

The right not to migrate can only be enjoyed if the adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their country of origin are effectively controlled and minimized. Conflicts, wars, climate change, extreme poverty and its

train of miseries will inevitably compel many people into unsafe, disorderly and irregular migration, making it not a choice but an act of desperation. By finding sustainable solutions to conflicts and underdevelopment, we would greatly diminish forced, unsafe, disorderly and irregular migration. Mr. President,

The Holy See has already launched the process to find the most effective ways with which institutions of the Catholic Church and Catholic-inspired organizations throughout the world can make use of the Global Compact's compendium of best practices and recommendations that exemplify welcoming, protecting, promoting and integrating migrants. In this sense, it is worth recognizing the role and the contributions that religions and faith-based organizations offer in this context, giving support to efforts of the international community, as expressed in the Global Compact on Migration, while receiving the due respect for their autonomy as religious institutions.

While some States have decided not to participate in the process or in this Intergovernmental Conference, the Holy See is convinced that the enormous challenges that migration poses are best faced through multilateral processes rather than isolationist policies.

The Holy See, while voting in conformity with its nature and particular mission for the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, will present its reservations in due time, specifically on those documents in the Compact that contain terminology, principles and guidelines that are not agreed language, including certain ideological interpretations of human rights that do not recognize the inherent value and dignity of human life at every stage of its beginning, development and end.

Through its prudent, "360-degree" approach, considering all of the factors involved in migration governance, the Global Compact, without ignoring the many challenges and opportunities that every State and migrants face in their shared journey, gives States the opportunity to improve their respective migration policies and, together, the international management of migration.

For these reasons, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration is a significant advance in the international community's shared responsibility to act in solidarity with people on the move, especially those who find themselves in very precarious situations.

The Holy See at the COP24 in Katowice

Protect local communities

At a press conference held on Wednesday, 12 December, in Katowice, Poland – where the 24th session of the UN Climate Change Conference of Parties (COP24) is taking place from 3 to 15 December – Msgr Bruno-Marie Duffé, Secretary of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development and coordinator of the Holy See Delegation led by Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State, explicitly expressed the Holy See's urgent call for ambition, action and true solidarity. Msgr Duffé reiterated the messages expressed in Pope Francis' Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* that this is in fact a crisis, with economic, social and financial aspects. *Laudato Si'* encourages

nations to listen attentively to the cry of the earth, which, as Pope Francis says, is groaning out in travail (cf. *LS* 2).

During the Conference, the Vatican Delegation stressed the importance of the need to listen to scientists, especially to the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report, which echoes the cry of the earth and shows clearly the devastating impact of climate change on communities around the world.

With only two days remaining of the COP24 Msgr Duffé called for "urgent action and urgent decisions made in true mutual global solidarity". The Holy See has repeatedly emphasized the need for a just

transition, creating dignified work combined with respect for human rights, social protection and the eradication of poverty, with particular attention given to those people most vulnerable to climate extremes.

At the end of the press conference Msgr Duffé observed that a great deal of action on climate change is happening in communities. "It is really important to remember all the progress in our history which is not only at the level of political decision makers. We need them", said Msgr Duffé. "We need international authority, but we have to see and consider all commitments of all peoples, all communities".

Pope's prayer intention for December

In the video message for the month of December Pope Francis requests prayers for those "involved in the service and transmission of faith", that they may find a suitable language "in their dialogue with culture". The Pontiff identifies two fundamental characteristics for proclaiming the Gospel in today's world which faces serious problems with true communication. First, the Pope says, "if you want to share your faith through the word, you have to listen much and carefully". And thus, we must "imitate the style of Jesus, who adapted himself to the people He had in front of Him so as to bring God's love to them".

The video, which has been translated into nine languages, was prepared for the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network (www.thepope-video.org) by La Machi Agency, which handled the production and distribution, in cooperation with Vatican Media, which recorded it.

ANGELUS

"The believer is someone who, by being close to his brothers or sisters, opens pathways in the desert". Recalling John the Baptist, Pope Francis spoke of the journey of conversion in his reflection at the Angelus in Saint Peter's Square on the Second Sunday of Advent, 9 December. The following is a translation of the message he shared with the faithful in Italian.

Domenico Ghirlandaio,
"Preaching of St John the Baptist"



Pathways in the desert

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Good morning!

Last Sunday, the liturgy invited us to experience the Season of Advent and of anticipation of the Lord with an attitude of vigilance and also of prayer: "be mindful" and "pray". Today, the Second Sunday of Advent, we are shown *how to give substance to this anticipation*: by undertaking a *journey of conversion*, how to make this anticipation concrete. As a guide on this journey, the Gospel presents the figure of John the Baptist who "went into all the region about the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" (Lk 3:3). To describe the Baptist's mission, the Evangelist Luke refers to the ancient prophecy of Isaiah which says: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill shall be brought low" (vv. 4-5).

To prepare the way of the Lord's coming, it is necessary to take note of the re-

quirements of conversion to which the Baptist invites us. What are these requirements for conversion? First of all we are called to fill the 'valleys' caused by coldness and indifference, opening ourselves to others with the same sentiments as Jesus, that is, with affection and fraternal attention which takes on the needs of our neighbours. To fill the valleys caused by coldness. One cannot have a relationship of love, charity and fraternity with one's neighbours if there are 'gaps' just as one cannot travel a road with many potholes. This requires a change of attitude. And all this should also be done with special attention to the neediest. Then there is the need to curtail the indifference caused by pride and arrogance. How many people, perhaps without realizing it, are proud, are indifferent, lack that kindly relationship. It is necessary to overcome this by making concrete gestures of reconciliation with our brothers and sisters, asking for forgiveness for our faults. It is not easy to reconcile with another. One always thinks: "who will

take the first step?". The Lord helps us in this if we are of good will. Indeed, conversion is complete if it leads us to humbly recognize our errors, our infidelity and failings.

The believer is someone who, by being close to his brothers and sisters, like John the Baptist, opens pathways in the desert, that is, he indicates perspectives of hope, even in those existential contexts that are arduous, marked by failure and defeat. We cannot give up in the face of negative situations of closure and rejection: we must not allow ourselves to succumb to the mentality of the world, because the centre of our life is Jesus and his word of light, love and solace. It is He! The Baptist invited the people of his time to conversion, with force, with vigour and with firmness. Nevertheless, he knew how to listen, he knew how to perform gestures of tenderness, gestures of forgiveness toward the multitude of men and women who went to him to confess their sins and to be baptized with the baptism of repentance.

The witness of John the Baptist helps us to go forward in our witness of life. The purity of his proclamation, his courage in proclaiming the truth were able to reawaken the expectation and hope in the Messiah that had long been dormant. Today too, Jesus' disciples are called to be his humble but courageous witnesses in order to rekindle hope, to make it understood that, despite everything, the Kingdom of God continues to be built day by day with the power of the Holy Spirit. Let each of us ask ourselves: how can I change something in my attitude, in order to prepare the way of the Lord?

May the Virgin Mary help us prepare the way of the Lord day by day, beginning with ourselves; and to scatter around us with steadfast patience, seeds of peace, justice and fraternity.

After reciting the Angelus, the Holy Father continued:

Dear brothers and sisters, I warmly greet you all, pilgrims from Rome, Italy and from various parts of the world. I greet in particular the many young people from the Diocese of Orvieto-Todi. Thank you and have a good Advent journey! I greet the faithful from Trapani, Caltagirone and Bronte and the confirmands from Almè, Bergamo. I wish everyone a Happy Sunday. And please do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch. *Arrivederci!*

With the new Ambassador of Spain

On Thursday, 6 December, the Holy Father received in audience H.E. Ms María del Carmen de la Peña Corcuera of Spain, for the presentation of the Letters by which she is accredited to the Holy See.

H.E. Mrs María del Carmen de la Peña Corcuera, 66, was born in Madrid. She is married and has two daughters. She holds a degree in Law.

She entered the diplomatic service on 1 June 1979, and has held the following positions: embassy secretary in Beijing (1979-1980); senior director of the Section for Nuclear Energy and New Energy Sources in the Directorate General for International Cooperation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) (1980-1982); director of Foreign Diplomatic and Consular Personnel and International Organisms, in the Protocol, Chancellery and Orders Services of the MFA (1980-1982); cultural attaché at the Embassy in Brasilia (1983-1987); UN technical advisor for the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (1987-1991); head of the Foreign Policy Area for North Africa at the MFA (1991); deputy director general of the Cooperative Action of the Development Cooperation Institute at the Ministry of Economic Affairs (1991-1993); National



Commission Expert in the Delegation of the EEC Commission in Beijing (1993-1994); deputy director general for Sub-Saharan Africa at the MFA (1994-1996); advisor at the Embassy in London (1996-2001), minister advisor at the Embassy in Tel Aviv (2001-2004); Ambassador to Addis Ababa with accreditation for the Seychelles and Djibouti; Permanent Observer of Spain to the African Union (2004-2005); director general of Foreign Policy for Africa at the MFA (2005-2008); Ambassador to Doha (2011-2015); supervisor in the Subdirector General of Sub-Saharan Africa, for Legal Affairs and Consular Affairs (2016); and consul general in Bern (2017-2018).