

L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO

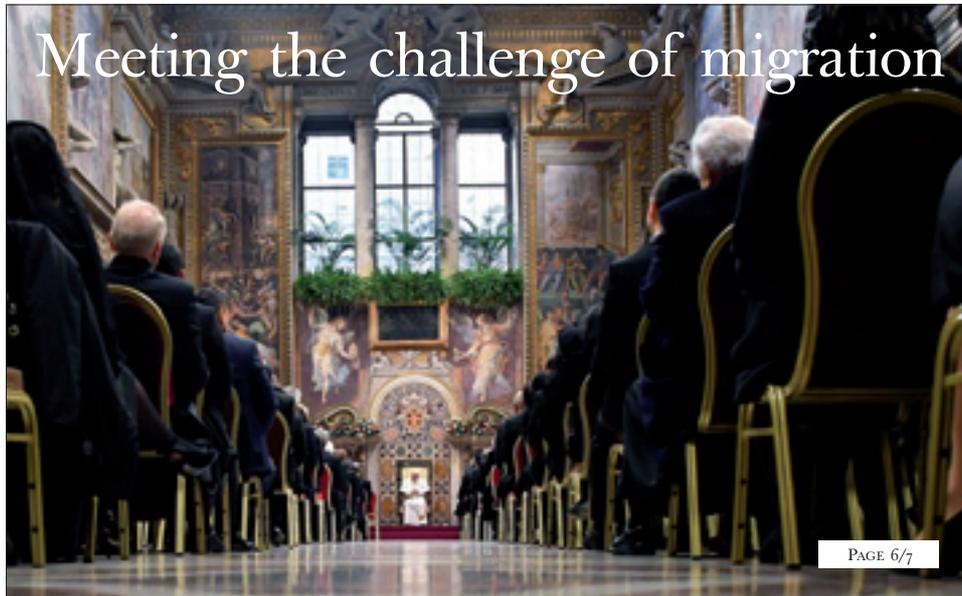
WEEKLY EDITION  IN ENGLISH*Unicuique suum Non praevalent*

Fifty-second year, number 2 (2579)

Vatican City

Friday, 11 January 2019

Holy Father addresses the Diplomatic Corps



Meeting the challenge of migration

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No prayer remains unheard

At the General Audience the Pontiff's catechesis on the 'Our Father'

No prayer will remain unheard: Pope Francis made this reassuring affirmation during the General Audience in the Paul VI Hall on Wednesday, 9 January, continuing his catechesis on the 'Our Father'. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's catechesis, which he gave in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Good morning!

Today's catechesis refers to the Gospel of Luke. In fact, it is especially this Gospel, beginning with the

Childhood narratives, which describe the figure of Christ in an atmosphere dense with prayer. In it are the contents of three hymns which each day articulate the Church's prayer: the *Benedictus*, the *Magnificat* and the *Nunc Dimittis*.

And we are moving forward in this catechesis on the 'Our Father': we see Jesus as a *prayerful* man. Jesus prays. In Luke's narrative, for example, the episode of the Transfiguration springs from a moment of prayer. It says this: "And as he was praying, the appearance of his countenance was altered, and his raiment became dazzling white" (9:29). But each step in Jesus' life is as if gently propelled by the breath of the Holy Spirit who guides him in every action. Jesus prays in the baptism on the Jordan; he dialogues with the Father before taking the most important decisions; he often withdraws in solitude to pray; he intercedes for Peter who will soon deny him. He says: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail" (22:31-32). This is comforting: to know that Jesus prays for us, prays for me, for each one of us so that our faith will not fail. And this is true. 'But Father, does he still do

so?' He still does so before the Father. Jesus prays for me. Each one of us can say so. And we can also say to Jesus: 'You are praying for me; continue to pray because I am in need of it'. In this way: courageous.

Even the Messiah's death is immersed in a climate of prayer, such that the hours of the Passion seem characterized by a surprising calm:



Jesus consoles the women, prays for his crucifiers, promises heaven to the good thief and he breathes his last breath, saying: "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit!" (23:46). Jesus' prayer seems to allay the most violent emotions, the desire

Readiness is all (if we let ourselves be surprised)

ANDREA MONDA

The important thing is to always be ready. Possibly to be ready for anything. In these days filled with uncertainties and agitation, political leaders flail about to show they are ready and, simply to reach the objectives they repeatedly promise and pledge to their constituents, they declare that they will not hesitate for even one moment and will go, straight and sure, to the very end, to the point of the most extreme consequences.

All this should reassure us, also because readiness is indeed important, in fact even more: "the readiness is all", (*la prontezza è tutto*) as good Hamlet says to Horatio (Act 5, scene 2). But what readiness are we talking about? The one spoken about in contemporary political debate is often tantamount to looking ahead, a prediction, but only to affirm oneself by imposing one's own position, as if to say: it has to be done this way, and in order to achieve this objective I place no limitations on my will; others are advised to do the same; no one should place any limitations on me. Readiness here is a deterrent, a warning that falls directly on others.

But there is another readiness, more reflexive, even in the literal sense of the term, which is reflected onto the subject without falling back onto others. It is the readiness not of one who has operational command, who takes the first step, but of one who finds himself having to respond (in fact "with readiness") to life's demands and requests. This is the readiness Hamlet speaks about and it is the same one that Scripture is filled with. Consider Abraham: he does not have great virtues yet he is ready to respond to the Lord's exigent demand. Likewise Moses, the prophets, likewise the apostles: they respond to the words "follow me" by leaving their work and immediately setting out to follow. None of them foresaw what was about to happen to them; the response is made with a paradoxically reluctant readiness; surely none of them had taken an earlier preparatory course in order to be ready. When faced with those tangles, life's real ones, one is never ready. Martin Buber expresses it well: "I understand what God asks of me at the moment it happens, and not before it happens". This inherent inadequacy of human

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VATICAN BULLETIN



AUDIENCES

Thursday, 3 January

Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State, with: Cardinal Giuseppe Bertello, President of the Governorate of Vatican City State; Archbishop Edgar Peña Parra, titular Archbishop of Thelepte, Substitute for General Affairs of the Secretariat of State; Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher, titular Archbishop of Hodelm, Secretary for Relations with States; Archbishop Jan Romeo Pawłowski, titular Archbishop of Sejny, Delegate for the Papal Representations

Cardinal Gualtiero Bassetti, Archbishop of Perugia-Città della Pieve, Italy, President of the Italian Episcopal Conference

Fr Frédéric Fornos, SJ, International Director of the Popc's Worldwide Prayer Network

Archbishop Armando Dini, Archbishop emeritus of Campobasso-Boiano, Italy

Saturday, 5 January

Bishop Pietro Santoro of Avezzano, Italy

Bishop Lucio Angelo Renna, O. Carm., Bishop emeritus of San Severo, Italy

Prof. Andrea Riccardi, Founder of the Community of Sant'Egidio

Sr Carmen Sammut, Superior General of the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa, (known as the White Sisters), President of the International Union of Superiors General (UISG)

CHANGES IN EPISCOPATE

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Robert A. Llanos, titular Bishop of Casae nigrae, as Bishop of Saint John's Bassetterre, Antigua and Barbuda. Until now he has served as Auxiliary Bishop of Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, and Apostolic Administrator of Saint John's Bassetterre (18 Dec.).

Bishop Llanos, 60, was born in Port of Spain. He was ordained a priest on 23 June 1991. He was ordained a bishop on 14 September 2013, subsequent to his appointment as titular Bishop of Casae nigrae and as Auxiliary Bishop of Port of Spain.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Segismundo Mar-

tínez Álvarez, SDB, of Corumbá, Brazil (19 Dec.).

The Holy Father appointed Fr João Aparecido Bergamasco, SAC, as Bishop of Corumbá, Brazil. Until now he has served as parish priest of "Nossa Senhora de Fátima" in Fátima do Sul, State of Mato Grosso do Sul (19 Dec.).

Bishop-elect Bergamasco, 51, was born in Tunciras do Oeste, in the State of Paraná, Brazil. He made his religious profession for the Society of the Catholic Apostolate (Pallottines) on 25 March 1993 and was ordained a priest on 26 December 1993. He studied philosophy and theology. He has served in parish ministry and as: director of "Rádio Vicente Pallotti"; vocational animator; rector of the "São Vicente Pallotti" Minor Seminary; auxiliary administrator of "Gráfica Editora Pallotti"; director of the "São Vicente Pallotti" postulate.

The Holy Father appointed as Bishop of Palmeira dos Índios, Brazil Fr Manoel de Oliveira Soares Filho, from the clergy of Bragança do Pará. Until now he has served as parish priest of "Nossa Senhora Aparecida" in Dom Eliseu (19 Dec.).

Bishop-elect de Oliveira Soares Filho, 53, was born in São Domingos do Capim, in the State of Pará, Brazil. He holds a degree in philosophy and theology, and attended courses in religious sciences and sociology. He was ordained a priest on 26 September 1993. He has served in parish ministry and as: diocesan coordinator of pastoral care; member of the presbyteral council and of the college of consultors.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Alexander Salazar, titular Bishop of Nesqually, from his office as Auxiliary of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, USA (19 Dec.).

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Jesús Alfonso Guerrero Contreras, OFM cap., as Bishop of Barinas, Venezuela. Until now he has served as Bishop of Machiques (21 Dec.).

Bishop Guerrero Contreras, 67, was born in La Pedregosa, Venezuela. He was ordained a priest on 10 December 1977. He was ordained a bishop on 20 January 1996, subsequent to his appointment as titular Bishop of Leptiminus and Vicar Apostolic of Caroní.

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Johannes Willibrordus Maria Hen-

driks, titular Bishop of Arsal and Auxiliary of Haarlem-Amsterdam, as Coadjutor Archbishop of Haarlem-Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Until now he has served as Auxiliary of Haarlem-Amsterdam (22 Dec.).

Archbishop Hendriks, 64, was born in Leidschendam, The Netherlands. He was ordained a priest on 29 September 1979. He was ordained a bishop on 10 December 2011, subsequent to his appointment as titular Bishop of Arsal and Auxiliary of Haarlem-Amsterdam.

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Alphonse Nguyễn Huu Long, PSS, titular Bishop of Gummi in Byzacena, as Bishop of Vinh, Vietnam. Until now he has served as Auxiliary of Hung Hoá (22 Dec.).

Bishop Huu Long, 65, was born in Hanoi, Vietnam. He was ordained a priest on 29 December 1990. He was ordained a bishop on 6 September 2013, subsequent to his appointment as titular Bishop of Gummi in Byzacena and Auxiliary of Hung Hoá.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Ghislain de Rasilly, SM, of Wallis et Futuna, Oceania (24 Dec.).

The Holy Father appointed Fr Sutinio Sionepoe, SM, as Bishop of Wallis et Futuna. Until now he has served as Provincial Vicar of the Society of Mary for Oceania. (28 Dec.).

Bishop-elect Sionepoe, 54, was born in Vaitupu, Pacific Islands. He studied philosophy and theology. He entered the Society of Mary (Marists) and was ordained a priest on 28 November 1993. He has served in parish ministry and as: vicar provincial of Suva, Fiji, and Religious Superior of the Marists in Wallis et Futuna; and worked in pastoral ministry with the Marist community in Yalé, New Caledonia.

The Holy Father appointed as Auxiliary Bishops of the Archdiocese of Cochabamba, Bolivia:

Fr Juan Gómez from the clergy of the Archdiocese of Santa Cruz de la Sierra, assigning him the titular episcopal See of Semta. Until now he has served as rector of the San Lorenzo Major Seminary (27 Dec.).

Bishop-elect Gómez, 56, was born in Comarapa, Brazil. He holds a degree in theology, a diploma in missiology and a licence in pastoral theology. He was ordained a priest on 27 August 1999. He has served in parish ministry and as: rector of a pro-

paedutic seminary; member of the College of Consultors; episcopal vicar;

Fr Carlos Enrique Curiel Herrera, Sch. P., assigning him the titular episcopal See of Carinola. Until now he has served as vicar general of the Archdiocese of Cochabamba (27 Dec.).

Bishop-elect Curiel Herrera, 58, was born in Carora, Venezuela. Before entering the seminary he was a doctor. He made his religious profession for the Poor Clerics Regular of the Mother of God of the Pious Schools (Piarists) on 2 August 1993 and was ordained a priest on 27 December 1997. Within his Congregation he has served as: director of the San José de Calasanz School in Valencia, Venezuela; rector of various communities in Valencia; chaplain to juvenile penitentiaries in Valencia; rector of formation houses in the Province of Valencia and in Barquisimeto. He was sent to Bolivia where he served in parish ministry and as: rector of the religious community of *Virgen de las Escuelas Pias*, Anzaldo; headmaster; consultor to the Vicar Superior of the Vicariate of Bolivia.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Philip Leo O'Reilly of Kilmore, Ireland (31 Dec.).

The Holy Father appointed as Bishop of Daet, the Philippines Fr Rex Andrew C. Alarcon from the clergy of the Archdiocese of Caceres. Until now he has served as superintendent of the parish schools of the said Archdiocese (2 Jan.).

Bishop-elect Alarcon, 48, was born in Daet, the Philippines. He studied philosophy and theology, and subsequently obtained a licence in Church history. He was ordained a priest on 9 November 1996. He has served in parish ministry and as: educator at the minor seminary; private secretary to the Archbishop; director of the stewardship programme of the Archdiocese of Caceres; president of the Catholic Educational Association; member of the college of consultors; president of the Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines.

The Holy Father appointed Bishop John Bonaventure Kwofie, CSSp, as Archbishop of Accra, Ghana. Until now he has served as Bishop of Sekondi-Takoradi (2 Jan.).

Archbishop Kwofie, 60, was born in Apowa, Ghana. He was ordained a priest on 23 July 1988. He was ordained a bishop on 13 September 2014, subsequent to his appointment as Bishop of Sekondi-Takoradi.

The Holy Father appointed as Bishop of Torit, South Sudan Fr Stephen Ameyu Martin Mulla from the

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Holy Father's Message for World Day of the Sick

Rediscover self-giving for more humane health care

A culture of "self-giving, generosity and solidarity in response to the mentality of profit at any price". This is the central theme of Pope Francis' Message for the 27th World Day of the Sick which will be celebrated this year on 11 February in Calcutta, India. The following is the English text of the Holy Father's Message.



"You received without payment; give without payment" (Mt 10:8)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

"You received without payment; give without payment" (Mt 10:8). These are the words spoken by Jesus when sending forth his apostles to spread the Gospel, so that his Kingdom might grow through acts of gratuitous love.

On the XXVII World Day of the Sick, to be solemnly celebrated on 11 February 2019 in Calcutta, India, the Church – as a Mother to all her children, especially the infirm – reminds us that generous gestures like that of the Good Samaritan are the most credible means of evangelization. Caring for the sick requires professionalism, tenderness, straightforward and simple gestures freely given, like a caress that makes others feel loved.

Life is a gift from God. Saint Paul asks: "What do you have

that you did not receive?" (1 Cor 4:7). Precisely because it is a gift, human life cannot be reduced to a personal possession or private property, especially in the light of medical and biotechnological advances that could tempt us to manipulate the "tree of life" (cf. Gen 3:24).

Amid today's culture of waste and indifference, I would point out that "gift" is the category best suited to challenging today's individualism and social fragmentation, while at the same time promoting new relationships and means of cooperation between peoples and cultures. Dialogue – the premise of gift – creates possibilities for human growth and development capable of breaking through established ways of exercising power in society. "Gift" means more than simply giving presents: it involves the giving of oneself, and not simply a transfer of property or objects. "Gift" differs from gift-giving because it entails the free gift of self and the desire to build a relationship. It is the acknowledgement of others, which is the basis of society. "Gift" is a reflection of God's love, which culminates in the incarnation

of the Son and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Each of us is poor, needy and destitute. When we are born, we require the care of our parents to survive, and at every stage of life we remain in some way dependent on the help of others. We will always be conscious of our limitations, as "creatures", before other individuals and situations. A frank acknowledgement of this truth keeps us humble and spurs us to practice solidarity as an essential virtue in life.

Such an acknowledgement leads us to act responsibly to promote a good that is both person-

al and communal. Only if we see ourselves, not as a world apart, but in a fraternal relationship with others, can we develop a social practice of solidarity aimed at the common good. We should not be afraid to regard ourselves as needy or reliant on others, because individually and by our own efforts we cannot overcome our limitations. So we should not fear, then, to acknowledge those limitations, for God himself, in Jesus, has humbly stooped down to us (cf. Phil 2:8) and continues to do so; in our poverty, he comes to our aid and grants us gifts beyond our imagining.

In light of the solemn celebration in India, I would like to recall, with joy and admiration, the figure of Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta – a model of charity who made visible God's love for the poor and sick. As I noted at her canonization, "Mother Teresa, in all aspects of her life, was a generous dispenser of divine mercy, making herself available for everyone through her welcome and defence of human life, of those unborn and those abandoned and discarded ... She bowed down before those who were spent, left to die on the side of the road, seeing in



Mother Teresa of Calcutta

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No prayer remains unheard

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for vendetta and revenge; it reconciles man with his fierce enemy, reconciles man with this enemy, which is death.

It is also in the Gospel of Luke that we find the request, expressed by one of the disciples, to be able to be taught to pray by Jesus himself: And it says this: "Lord, teach us to pray" (Lk 11:1). They saw him praying. Teach us – we too can say to the Lord – Lord, you are praying for me, I know, but teach me how to pray so that I too can pray'.

This request, "Lord, teach us to pray" generates a rather lengthy lesson, through which Jesus explains to his followers with which words and which sentiments they must address God.

The first part of this lesson is precisely the *Our Father*. Pray thus: 'Father, Who art in Heaven'. 'Father': that word which is so beautiful to say. We can always remain in prayer with that word alone: 'Father'. And to feel that we have a father: not a master nor a step-father. No: a father. A Christian addresses

God first of all by calling Him "Father".

In this teaching that Jesus gives his disciples, it is interesting to pause on a few instructions that crown the text of the prayer. To give us confidence, Jesus explains several things. These focus on the *attitudes* of the believer who prays. For example, there is the parable of the importunate friend, who goes to disturb an entire family that is sleeping, because a person suddenly arrived from a journey and he has no bread to offer him. What does Jesus say to this man who knocks on the door and wakes his friend?: "I tell you" – Jesus explains – "though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him whatever he needs" (Lk 11:8). With this, he wants to teach us to pray and to persevere in prayer. And immediately afterwards he gives the example of a father who has a hungry son. All of you, fathers and grandfathers who are here: when a son or grandson asks for something, is hungry, and asks and asks, then cries, shouts that he's hungry:

"What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent...?" (v. 11). And all of you have experienced this: when the son asks, you give him what he wants to eat for his own good.

With these words Jesus makes it understood that God always responds, that no prayer will remain unheard; why? Because He is Father, and does not forget his suffering children.

Of course, these affirmations disconcert us, because many of our prayers seem not to obtain any results. How often have we asked and not received – we have all experienced this – how many times have we knocked and found a closed door? Jesus advises us, in those moments, to *persist and to not give up*. Prayer always transforms reality, always. If things around us do not change, at least we change; our heart changes. Jesus promised the gift of the Holy Spirit to each man and to each woman who prays.

We can be certain that God will respond. The only uncertainty is due

to time, but let us not doubt that he will respond. Perhaps we will have to persist for our whole life, but he will respond. He promised us this: he is not like a father who gives a serpent instead of a fish. There is nothing more certain: the desire for happiness which we all carry in our heart will one day be fulfilled. Jesus asks: "will God not vindicate his elect, who cry to him day and night?" (Lk 18:7). Yes, he will mete out justice; he will hear us. What a day of glory and resurrection that day will be! Henceforth, praying is victory over solitude and desperation. Praying. Prayer transforms reality; let us not forget this. It either changes things or changes our heart, but it always transforms. Henceforth, praying is victory over solitude and desperation. It is like seeing every fragment of creation teeming amid the listlessness of a history whose meaning we sometimes fail to grasp. But it is in motion, it is on a journey, and at the end of every road, what is there at the end of our road? At the end of

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On Francis' letter to US Bishops

Flavour of the Gospel

The response to the "abuse of power, conscience, and sexuality against minors and vulnerable adults" must have the "flavour of the Gospel", to avoid the risk of turning it into an "organizational problem" and confiding too much in actions that appear "helpful, good and necessary" and even "correct". In his first editorial published on 3 January by "Vatican News", Andrea Tornielli thus singled out the central issue of the letter sent by Pope Francis "as a sign of his personal closeness to the American Bishops, gathered in spiritual retreat in Chicago", a letter Tornielli described as offering "a key to understanding" the Holy Father's "perspective on the abuse crisis, with a view also to the February meeting in the Vatican".

Tornielli, the new Editorial Director of the Dicastery for Communication, recalled that "in his speech to the Roman Curia on 21 December, the Pope expressed himself in a wide ranging, determined, and powerful way on this subject". And "now, in his message to the Bishops of the United States", Tornielli continued, the Pope "does not dwell on examining the phenomenon ... but goes to the root of the problem by indicating a way forward".

"The Church's credibility", the Pontiff wrote, "has been seriously undercut and diminished by these sins and crimes, but even more by the efforts made to deny or conceal them" and to reduce the response to a mere organizational problem.

A Church that is transformed into a "department of human resources" as the Pontiff's letter states, does not always have "the 'flavour' of the Gospel", said Tornielli, noting Francis' words. "Such a Church simply puts its faith in strategies, organizational charts and best practices instead of trusting above all, in the presence of the One who has guided it for two thousand years, in the saving power of grace, in the silent day-to-day workings of the Holy Spirit".

The Editorial Director pointed out that for "several years now, the Popes have introduced more fitting and stricter rules to combat the phenomenon of abuse: further guidelines will come from the collegial gathering of the Bishops of the whole world united with Peter". However, as the Pontiff warned, the remedy could prove ineffective if it is not accompanied "by a change in our mind-set (*metanoia*), our way of praying, our handling of power and money, our exercise of authority and our way of relating to one another and to the world around us".

Credibility, Tornielli concluded, "is not rebuilt with marketing strategies". Rather, it "must be the fruit of a Church that knows how to overcome divisions and internal conflicts; a Church whose action springs from her reflection of a light that is not her own, but that is continually given to her; a Church that does not proclaim herself and her own abilities; a Church composed of pastors and faithful who, as the Pope says, recognize themselves as sinners and are called to conversion, precisely because they have experienced, and continue to experience within themselves, forgiveness and mercy".

Martyrs offer an example of faith

Video message to the Coptic Orthodox Church of Egypt

As the Coptic Orthodox Church of Egypt celebrated the Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord as well as the dedication of the Cathedral of the Nativity in Egypt's New Administrative Capital near Cairo on Sunday, 6 January, Pope Francis offered his best wishes to the country's Coptic faithful in a video message. The newly inaugurated Cathedral for Egypt's Coptic community, which accounts for 10 percent of the country's population, is the largest Christian Church in the region, and can accommodate more than 8,000 worshippers. The following is a translation of the Pope's video message, which he delivered in Italian.



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I wish you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year!

With joy I greet you all on the happy occasion of the dedication of the new Cathedral of the Nativity, built in the New Administrative Capital.

May the Prince of Peace give Egypt, the Middle East and the whole world the gift of peace and prosperity.

I address a special greeting to my dear Brother, His Holiness Pope Tawadros II, and to the dear Coptic Orthodox Church, which has been able to bear a true testimony of faith and love even in the most difficult moments.

Dear brothers and sisters, you have martyrs who give strength to your faith. Thank you for your example.

I address a respectful greeting to the Egyptian government and to Mr President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi.

In the new Cathedral may the worship of God on high always be welcome, and may there descend His blessing and peace on earth for all men, whom God loves.

Merry Christmas!

World Day of the Sick

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them their God-given dignity; she made her voice heard before the powers of this world, so that they might recognize their guilt for the crime – the crimes! – of poverty they created. For Mother Teresa, mercy was the 'salt' which gave flavour to her work; it was the 'light' that shone in the darkness of the many who no longer had tears to shed for their poverty and suffering. Her mission to the urban and existential peripheries remains for us today an eloquent witness to God's closeness to the poorest of the poor" (*Homily*, 4 September 2016).

Saint Mother Teresa helps us understand that our only criterion of action must be selfless love for every human being, without distinction of language, culture, ethnicity or religion. Her example continues to guide us by opening up horizons of joy and hope for all those in need of understanding and tender love, and especially for those who suffer.

Generosity inspires and sustains the work of the many volunteers who are so important in health care and who eloquently embody the spirituality of the Good Samaritan. I express my gratitude and offer my encouragement to all those associations of volunteers committed to the transport and assistance of patients, and all those that organize the donation of blood, tissues and organs. One particular area in which your presence expresses the Church's care and concern is that of advocacy for the rights of the sick, especially those affected by pathologies requiring special assistance. I would also mention the many efforts made to raise awareness and encourage prevention. Your volunteer work in medical facilities and in homes, which ranges from providing health care to offering spiritual support, is of primary importance. Countless persons who are ill, alone, elderly or frail in mind or body benefit from these services. I urge you to continue to be a sign of the Church's presence in a secularized world. A volunteer is a good friend with whom one can share personal thoughts and emotions; by their patient listening, volunteers make it possible for the sick to

pass from being passive recipients of care to being active participants in a relationship that can restore hope and inspire openness to further treatment. Volunteer work passes on values, behaviours and ways of living born of a deep desire to be generous. It is also a means of making health care more humane.

A spirit of generosity ought especially to inspire Catholic healthcare institutions, whether in the more developed or the poorer areas of our world, since they carry out their activity in the light of the Gospel. Catholic facilities are called to give an example of self-giving, generosity and solidarity in response to the mentality of profit at any price, of giving for the sake of getting, and of exploitation over concern for people.

I urge everyone, at every level, to promote the culture of generosity and of gift, which is indispensable for overcoming the culture of profit and waste. Catholic healthcare institutions must not fall into the trap of simply running a business; they must be concerned with personal care more than profit. We know that health is relational, dependent on interaction with others, and requiring trust, friendship and solidarity. It is a treasure that can be enjoyed fully only when it is shared. The joy of generous giving is a barometer of the health of a Christian.

I entrust all of you to Mary, *Salus Infirmorum*. May she help us to share the gifts we have received in the spirit of dialogue and mutual acceptance, to live as brothers and sisters attentive to each other's needs, to give from a generous heart, and to learn the joy of selfless service to others. With great affection, I assure you of my closeness in prayer, and to all I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing.

Vatican City, 25 November 2018
Solemnity of our Lord Jesus Christ
King of the Universe

Franciscus

Homily on the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord

Let us not shine with our own light

On Sunday morning, 6 January, Pope Francis celebrated Mass in the Vatican Basilica for the Solemnity of the Epiphany. Rather than follow the star to the Lord, as the Magi did, the Pope said, too often, we, as a Church, attempt "to shine with our own light!". However, the Pontiff pointed out, "we are not the sun of humanity. We are the moon that, despite its shadows, reflects the true light, which is the Lord. The Church is the 'mysterium lunae' and the Lord is the light of the world (cf. *Jn* 9:5). Him, not us". The following is the English text of the Holy Father's reflection, which he delivered in Italian.

Epiphany: this word indicates the manifestation of the Lord, who, as Saint Paul tells us in the second reading (cf. *Eph* 3:6), makes himself known to all the nations, today represented by the Magi. In this way, we see revealed the glory of a God who has come for everyone: every nation, language and people is welcomed and loved by him. It is symbolized by the light, which penetrates and illumines all things.

Yet if our God makes himself known for everyone, it is even more surprising *how* he does so. The Gospel speaks of a hum of activity around the palace of King Herod once Jesus appears as a king. The Magi ask: "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews?" (*Mt* 2:2). They will find him, but not where they thought: not in the royal palace of Jerusalem, but in a humble abode in Bethlehem. We saw this same paradox at Christmas. The Gospel spoke of the census of the entire world taken in the days of the Emperor Augustus, when Quirinius was governor (cf. *Lk* 2:2). But none of the great men of that time realized that the King of history was being born in their own time. Again, when Jesus, some thirty years of age, made himself known publicly, preceded by John the Baptist, the Gospel once more solemnly situates the event, listing all the "magnates" of the time, the great secular and spiritual powers: Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate, Herod, Philip, Lysanias, the high priests Annas and Caiaphas. And it concludes by saying that, at that time, "the word of God came to John, the son of Zechariah, in the wilderness" (*Lk* 3:2). To none of the magnates, but to a man who had withdrawn to the desert. Here is the surprise: God does not need the spotlights of the world to make himself known.

When we listen to that list of distinguished personages, we might be tempted to turn the spotlight on them. We might think that it would have been better had the star of Jesus appeared in Rome, on the Palatine Hill, where Augustus ruled over the world; then the whole empire would immediately have become Christian. Or if it had shone on the palace of Herod, he might have done good rather than evil. But God's light does not shine on those who shine with their own light. God "proposes" himself; he does not "impose" himself. He illumines; he does not blind. It is always very tempting to confuse God's light with the lights of the world. How many

times have we pursued the seductive lights of power and celebrity, convinced that we are rendering good service to the Gospel! But by doing so, have we not turned the spotlight on the wrong place, because God was not there. His kindly light shines forth in humble love. How many times too, have we, as a Church, attempted to shine with our own light! Yet we are not the *sun* of humanity. We are the *moon* that, despite its shadows, reflects the true light, which is the Lord. The Church is the *mysterium lunae* and the Lord is the light of the world (cf. *Jn* 9:5). Him, not us.

The light of God shines on those who receive it. Isaiah, in the first reading (cf. 60:2), tells us that that light does not prevent the darkness and the thick clouds from covering the earth, but shines forth on those prepared to accept it. And so, the prophet addresses a challenging summons to everyone: "Arise, shine" (60:1). We need to *arise*, to get up from our sedentary lives and prepare for a journey. Otherwise, we stand still, like the scribes that Herod consulted; they knew very well where the Messiah was born, but they did not move. We also need to *shine*, to be clothed in God who is light, day by day, until we are fully clothed in Jesus. Yet to be clothed in God, who like the light is simple, we must first put aside our pretentious robes. Otherwise, we will be like Herod, who preferred the earthly lights of success and power to the divine light. The Magi, instead, fulfil the prophecy. They arise and shine, and are clothed in light. They alone see the star in the heavens: not the scribes, nor Herod, nor any of the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

In order to find Jesus, we also need to take a different route, to follow a different path, his path, the path of humble love. And we have to persevere. Today's Gospel ends by saying that the Magi, after encountering Jesus, "left for their own country *by another road*" (*Mt* 2:12). Another road, different from that of Herod. An alternative route than that of the world, like the road taken by those who surround Jesus at Christmas: Mary and Joseph, the shepherds. Like the Magi, they left home and became pilgrims on the paths of God. For only those who leave behind their worldly attachments and undertake a journey find the mystery of God.

This holds true for us too. It is not enough to know *where* Jesus was born, as the scribes did, if we do not go there. It is not enough

to know *that* Jesus was born, like Herod, if we do not encounter him. When his place becomes our place, when his time becomes our time, when his person becomes our life, then the prophecies come to fulfillment in us. Then Jesus is born within us. He becomes *the living God for me*. Today we are asked to imitate the Magi. They do not debate; they set out. They do not stop to look, but enter the house of Jesus. They do not put themselves at the centre, but bow down before the One who *is* the centre. They do not remain glued to their plans, but are prepared to take other routes. Their actions reveal a close contact with the Lord, a radical openness to him, a total engagement with him. With him, they use the language

place; he has to be worshiped. But to do that, we need to remove ourselves from the first place and to recognize our neediness, the fact that we are not self-sufficient. Then there is *frankincense*, which symbolizes a relationship with the Lord, prayer, which like incense rises up to God (cf. *Ps* 141:2). Just as incense must burn in order to yield its fragrance, so too, in prayer, we need to "burn" a little of our time, to spend it with the Lord. Not just in words, but also by our actions. We see this in the *myrrh*, the ointment that would be lovingly used to wrap the body of Jesus taken down from the cross (cf. *Jn* 19:39). The Lord is pleased when we care for bodies racked by suffering, the flesh of the vulnerable,



of love, the same language that Jesus, though an infant, already speaks. Indeed, the Magi go to the Lord not to receive, but to give. Let us ask ourselves this question: at Christmas did we bring gifts to Jesus for his party, or did we only exchange gifts among ourselves?

If we went to the Lord empty-handed, today we can remedy that. The Gospel, in some sense, gives us a little "gift list": gold, frankincense and myrrh. *Gold*, the most precious of metals, reminds us God has to be granted first

of those left behind, of those who can only receive without being able to give anything material in return. Precious in the eyes of God is mercy shown to those who have nothing to give back. Gratuitousness! Gratuitousness is precious in God's eyes.

In this Christmas season now drawing to its close, let us not miss the opportunity to offer a precious gift to our King, who came to us not in worldly pomp, but in the luminous poverty of Bethlehem. If we can do this, his light will shine upon us.

Readiness is all

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

nature makes even more resonant the paradoxicality of the exhortation that Jesus often repeats in the Gospel: *es-tote parati*, be ready.

It is a paradox that can be summed up by the fact that the secret of life seems to reside in the ability to be ready to be surprised, surprised by joy, as C.S. Lewis would say.

"Our God is the God of surprises", the Pope has repeated many times, and this thought cannot but return to mind in these days of Christmas, the greatest joyful surprise inscribed in

the Christian faith, a God who becomes flesh and is born a child (overcome only by the other surprise, this time painful: a God who dies). Precisely by virtue of the incarnation, the Christmas surprise is not limited to that night in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago, but rather, it is what takes place each day in all the places of the world when a human being is born, as the Polish poetess Wisława Szymborska understood, with the intuition typical of great artists: "the world is never ready for the birth of a child".

A.M.

The challenge of migration cannot be met with a mind-set of indifference

In his discourse to the Diplomatic Corps the Pontiff denounces populism and nationalism which weaken the multilateral political system

The "challenge of migration cannot be met with a mind-set of violence and indifference, nor by offering merely partial solutions", Pope Francis said on Monday morning, 7 January, in the Vatican's Sala Regia, during his traditional New Year audience with members of the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See. The following is the English text of his discourse which he delivered in Italian.

Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The beginning of a new year allows us to interrupt for a few moments the frenetic pace of our daily activities in order to review the events of past months and to reflect on the challenges facing us in the near future. I thank you for your numerous presence at this annual gathering, which provides a welcome opportunity for us to exchange cordial greetings and good wishes with one another. Through you, I would like to convey to the peoples whom you represent my closeness and my prayerful hope that the year just begun will bring peace and well-being to each member of the human family.

I am most grateful to the Ambassador of Cyprus, His Excellency Mr George Poulides, for the gracious words of greeting he addressed to me in your name for the first time as Dean of the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See. To each of you I would like to express my special appreciation for your daily efforts to consolidate relations between your respective Countries and Organizations and the Holy See, all the more so through the signing or ratification of new accords.

I think in particular of the ratification of the *Framework Agreement between the Holy See and the Republic of Benin relating to the Legal Status of the Catholic Church in Benin*, and the signing and the ratification of the *Agreement between the Holy See and the Republic of San Marino regarding the Teaching of Catholic Religion in Public Schools*.

In the multilateral sphere, the Holy See has also ratified the *UNESCO Asia-Pacific Regional Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education*. Last March it adhered to the *Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe*, an initiative aimed at showing how culture can be at the service of peace and a means of unification between different European societies, thus fostering concord among peoples. This is a token of particular esteem for an Organization that this year celebrates the seventieth anniversary of its foundation. The Holy See has cooperated with the Council of Europe for many decades and recognizes its specific role in the promotion of human rights, democracy and legality in an area that would embrace Europe as a whole. Finally, on 30 November last,

the Vatican City State was admitted to the Single Euro Payments Area (SEPA).

Fidelity to the spiritual mission based on the command that the Lord Jesus gave to the Apostle Peter, "Feed my lambs" (Jn 21:15), impels the Pope – and consequently the Holy See – to show concern for the whole human family and its needs, including those of the material and social order. Nonetheless, the Holy See has no intention of interfering in the life of States; it seeks instead to be an attentive listener, sensitive to issues involving humanity, out of a sincere and humble desire to be at the service of every man and woman.

That concern is evident in our gathering today and inspires my encounters with the many pilgrims who visit the Vatican from throughout the world, as well as with the peoples and communities that I had the pleasure of visiting this past year during my Apostolic Journeys to Chile, Peru, Switzerland, Ireland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

That same concern leads the Church everywhere to work for the growth of peaceful and reconciled societies. Here I think in particular of beloved Nicaragua, whose situation I follow closely in prayerful hope that the various political and social groups may find in dialogue the royal road to an exchange beneficial to the entire nation.

This has also been the context for the consolidation of relations between the Holy See and Vietnam, with a view to the appointment, in the near future, of a resident Papal Representative, whose presence would serve above all as a sign of the solicitude of the Successor of Peter for that local Church.

So too with the signing of the *Provisional Agreement between the Holy See and the People's Republic of China on the Appointment of Bishops in China*, which took place on 22 September last. As you know, that Agreement is the result of a lengthy and thoughtful institutional dialogue that led to the determination of certain stable elements of cooperation between the Apostolic See and the civil authorities. As I noted in my Message to the Catholics of China and to the universal Church, I had already readmitted to full ecclesial communion the remaining official bishops ordained without pontifical mandate, and urged them to work generously for the reconciliation of Chinese Catho-

lics and for a renewed effort of evangelization. I thank the Lord because, for the first time after so many years, all the bishops in China are in full communion with the Successor of Peter and with the universal Church. And a visible sign of this was the participation of two bishops from Continental China in the recent Synod on young people. It is to be hoped that further contacts regarding the application of the signed Provisional Agreement will help resolve questions that remain open and make needed room for an effective enjoyment of religious freedom.

Dear Ambassadors,

The year just begun contains a number of significant anniversaries, in addition to that of the Council of Europe, which I mentioned above. Among these, I would like to bring up one in particular: the hundredth anniversary of the League of Nations, established by the Treaty of Versailles, signed on 28 June 1919. Why do I mention an organization that today no longer exists? Because it represents the beginning of modern multilateral diplomacy, whereby states attempt to distance their reciprocal relations from the mentality of domination that leads to war. The experiment of the League of Nations quickly met with those well-known difficulties that exactly twenty years after its birth led to a new and more devastating conflict, the Second World War. Nevertheless, that experiment paved the way for the establishment in 1945 of the United Na-

tions Organization. Certainly, that way remains full of difficulties and obstacles, nor is it always effective, since conflicts persist even today, yet it cannot be denied that it provides an opportunity for nations to meet and seek common solutions.

An indispensable condition for the success of multilateral diplomacy is the good will and good faith of the parties, their readiness to deal with one another fairly and honestly, and their openness to accepting the inevitable compromises arising from disputes. Whenever even one of these elements is missing, the result is a search for unilateral solutions and, in the end, the domination of the powerful over the weak. The League of Nations failed for these very reasons, and one notes with regret that the same attitudes are presently threatening the stability of the major international organizations.

To my mind, it is important that today too there should be no lessening of the desire for serene and constructive discussions between states.

It is clear, though, that relationships within the international community, and the multilateral system as a whole, are experiencing a period of difficulty, with the resurgence of nationalistic tendencies at odds with the vocation of the international Organizations to be a setting for dialogue and encounter for all countries. This is partly due to a certain inability of the multilateral system to offer effective solutions to a number of long unresolved situations, like cer-

tain protracted conflicts, or to confront present challenges in a way satisfactory to all. It is also in part the result of the development of national policies determined more by the search for a quick partisan consensus than by the patient pursuit of the common good by providing long-term answers. It is likewise partially the outcome of the growing influence within the international Organizations of powers and interest groups that impose their own visions and ideas, sparking new forms of ideological colonization, often in disregard for the identity, dignity and sensitivities of peoples. In part too, it is a consequence of the reaction in some parts of the world to a globalization that has in some respects developed in too rapid and disorderly a manner, resulting in a tension between globalization and local realities. The global dimension has to be considered without ever losing sight of the local. As a reaction to a "spherical" notion of globalization, one that levels differences and smooths out particularities, it is easy for forms of nationalism to re-emerge. Yet globalization can prove promising to the extent that it can be "polyhedric", favouring a positive interplay between the identity of individual peoples and countries and globalization itself, in accordance with the principle that the whole is greater than the part.²

Some of these attitudes go back to the period between the two World Wars, when populist and nationalist demands proved more forceful than the activity of the League of Nations.

The reappearance of these impulses today is progressively weakening the multilateral system, resulting in a general lack of trust, a crisis of credibility in international political life, and a gradual marginalization of the most vulnerable members of the family of nations.

In his memorable Address to the United Nations – the first time a Pope addressed that Assembly – Saint Paul VI, whom I had the joy of canonizing this past year, spoke of the purpose of multilateral diplomacy, its characteristics and its responsibilities in the contemporary context, but also of its points of contact with the spiritual mission of the Pope and thus of the Holy See.

The primacy of justice and law

The first point of contact that I would mention is the primacy of justice and law. As Pope Paul told the Assembly: "You sanction the great principle that relationships between nations must be regulated by reason, justice, law, by negotiation, not by force, nor by violence, force, war, nor indeed by fear and deceit".³

At present it is troubling to see the reemergence of tendencies to impose and pursue individual national interests without having recourse to the instruments provided by international law for resolving controversies, and ensuring that justice is respected, also through international Courts. Such an attitude is at times the result of a reaction on the part of government leaders to growing unease among the citizens of not a few countries, who perceive the procedures and rules governing the international community as slow, abstract and ultimately far removed from their own real needs. It is fitting that political leaders listen to the voices of their constituencies and seek concrete solutions to promote their greater good. Yet this demands respect for law and justice both within their national communities and within the international community, since reactive, emotional and hasty solutions may well be able to garner short-term consensus, but they will certainly not help the solution of deeper problems; indeed, they will aggravate them.

In light of this concern, I chose to devote my Message for this year's World Day of Peace, celebrated on 1 January, to the theme: *Good Politics at the Service of Peace*. There is a close relationship between good politics and the peaceful coexistence of peoples and nations. Peace is never a partial good, but one that embraces the entire human race. Hence an essential aspect of good politics is the pursuit of the common good of all, insofar as it is "the good of all people and of the whole person"⁴ and a condition of society that en-



ables all individuals and the community as a whole to achieve their proper material and spiritual well-being.

Politics must be farsighted and not limited to seeking short-term solutions. A good politician should not occupy spaces but initiate processes; he or she is called to make unity prevail over conflict, based on "solidarity in its deepest and most challenging sense". Politics thus becomes "a way of making history in a life setting where conflicts, divisions and oppositions can achieve a diversified and life-giving unity".⁵

Such an approach takes account of the transcendent dimension of the human person, created in the image and likeness of God. Respect for the dignity of each human being is thus the indispensable premise for all truly peaceful coexistence, and law becomes the essential instrument for achieving social justice and nurturing fraternal bonds between peoples. In this context, a fundamental role is played by the human rights set forth in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, whose seventieth anniversary we recently celebrated. The universal objective and rational nature of those rights ought rightly to be reaffirmed, lest there prevail partial and subjective visions of humanity that risk leading to new forms of inequality, injustice, discrimination and, in extreme cases, also new forms of violence and oppression.

The defense of those most vulnerable

The second point of contact that I would mention is the defense of those who are vulnerable. In the words of Pope Paul: "We want to speak ... for the poor, the disinherited, the unfortunate, and those who long for justice, a dignified life, liberty, prosperity and progress".⁶

The Church has always been committed to helping those in need, while the Holy See itself has in recent years promoted various projects aimed at assisting the most vulnerable, projects that have also been supported by different actors on the international level. Among these, I would mention the humanitarian initiative in Ukraine on behalf of those suffering, particularly in the eastern areas of the country, from the conflict that has now lasted for almost five years and has recently seen troubling developments in the Black Sea. Thanks to the active response of the Catholic Churches of Europe and of members of the faithful elsewhere to my appeal of May 2016, an effort has been made, in collaboration with

other religious confessions and international Organizations, to respond concretely to the immediate needs of those living in the territories affected. They are in fact the first victims of the war. The Church and her various institutions will pursue this mission, also in the hope of drawing greater attention to other humanitarian questions, including that of the treatment of the numerous prisoners. Through her activities and her closeness to the people involved, the Church strives to encourage, directly and indirectly, peaceful paths to the solution of the conflict, paths that are respectful of justice and law, including international law, which is the basis of security and coexistence in the entire region. To this end, the instruments that guarantee the free exercise of religious rights remain important.

For its part, the international community and its agencies are called to give a voice to those who have none. Among the latter in our own time, I would mention the victims of other ongoing wars, especially that in Syria with its high death toll. Once more, I appeal to the international community to promote a political solution to a conflict that will ultimately see only a series of defeats. It is vital to put an end to violations of humanitarian law, which cause untold suffering to the civil population, especially women and children, and strike at essential structures such as hospitals, schools and refugee camps, as well as religious edifices.

Nor can we forget the many displaced persons resulting from the conflict; this has created great hardship for neighbouring countries. Once more, I express my gratitude to Jordan and Lebanon for receiving in a spirit of fraternity, and not without considerable sacrifice, great numbers of people. At the same time, I express my hope that the refugees will be able to return to their homelands in safe and dignified living conditions. My thoughts also go to the various European countries that have generously offered hospitality to those in difficulty and danger.

Among those affected by the instability that for years has marked the Middle East are especially the Christian communities that have dwelt in those lands from apostolic times, and down the centuries have contributed to their growth and development. It is extremely important that Christians have a place in the future of the region, and so I encourage all those who have sought refuge



Joanne Goodman, "The refugees"

Holy Father's address to the Diplomatic Corps

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in other places to do everything possible to return to their homes and in any event to maintain and strengthen their ties to their communities of origin. At the same time, I express my hope that political authorities will not fail to ensure their security and all else needed for them to continue to dwell in the countries of which they are full citizens, and to contribute to their growth.

Sadly, in these years Syria and more generally the whole Middle East have become a battleground for many conflicting interests. In addition to those of a chiefly political and military nature, we should not overlook attempts to foment hostility between Muslims and Christians. Even though "over the centuries many quarrels and dissensions have arisen between Christians and Muslims",⁷ in different areas of the Middle East they have long lived together in peace. In the near future, I will have occasion to visit two predominantly Muslim countries, Morocco and the United Arab Emirates. These represent two important opportunities to advance interreligious dialogue and mutual understanding between the followers of both religions, in this year that marks the eight-hundredth anniversary of the historic meeting between Saint Francis of Assisi and Sultan al-Malik al-Kâmil.

Among the vulnerable of our time that the international community is called to defend are not only refugees but also migrants. Once again, I appeal to governments to provide assistance to all those forced to emigrate on account of the scourge of poverty and various forms of violence and persecution, as well as natural catastrophes and climatic disturbances, and to facilitate measures aimed at permitting their social integration in the receiving countries. Efforts also need to be made to prevent individuals from being constrained to abandon their families and countries, and to allow them to return safely and with full respect for their dignity and human rights. All human beings long for a better and more prosperous life, and the challenge of migration cannot be met with a mindset of violence and indifference, nor by offering merely partial solutions.

Consequently, I cannot fail to express my appreciation for the efforts of all those governments and institutions that, moved by a generous sense of solidarity and Christian charity, cooperate in a spirit of fraternity for the benefit of migrants. Among these, I would like to mention Colombia which, together with other countries of the continent, has welcomed in recent months a vast influx of people coming from Venezuela. At the same time, I realize that the waves of migration in recent years have caused diffidence and concern among people in many countries, particularly in Europe and North America, and this has led various governments to severely restrict the number of new entries, even of those in transit. Nonetheless, I do not believe that partial solutions can exist for so universal an is-

ssue. Recent events have shown the need for a common, concerted response by all countries, without exception and with respect for every legitimate aspiration, whether of states or of migrants and refugees themselves.

In this regard, the Holy See has actively participated in the negotiations and supported the adoption of the two *Global Compacts on Refugees* and on *Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration*. In particular, the migration Compact represents an important step forward for the international community, which now, in the context of the United Nations is for the first time dealing on a multilateral level with this theme in a document of such importance. Despite the fact that they are not legally binding, and that some governments were absent from the recent United Nations Conference in Marrakesh, these two Compacts will serve as important points of reference for political commitment and concrete action on the part of international organizations, legislators and politicians, as well as all those working for a more responsible, coordinated and safe management of situations involving refugees and migrants of various kinds. In the case of both Compacts, the Holy See appreciates their intention and their character, which facilitates their implementation; at the same time, it has expressed reservations regarding the documents appealed to by the Compact on migration that contain terminology and guidelines inconsistent with its own principles on life and on the rights of persons.

Among others who are vulnerable, Paul VI went on to say that: "We speak for ... the younger generation of today, who are moving ahead trustfully, with every right to expect a better mankind".⁸ Young people, who often feel bewildered and uncertain about the future, were the subject of the fifteenth Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops. They will also be at the forefront of the Apostolic Journey that I will make to Panama in a few days for the thirty-fourth World Youth Day. Young people are our future, and the task of politics is to pave the way for the future. For this reason, it is urgently necessary to invest in initiatives that can enable coming generations to shape their future, with the possibility of finding employment, forming a family and raising children.

Together with young people, particular attention needs to be paid to children, especially in this year that marks the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. This is a good occasion for serious reflection on the steps taken to protect the welfare of our little ones and their social and intellectual development, as well as their physical, psychological and spiritual growth. Here I cannot refrain from speaking of one of the plagues of our time, which sadly has also involved some members of the clergy: The abuse of minors is one of the vilest and most heinous crimes conceivable. Such abuse inexorably sweeps away the best of what human life holds out for innocent

children, and causes irreparable and lifelong damage. The Holy See and the Church as a whole are working to combat and prevent these crimes and their concealment, in order to ascertain the truth of the facts involving ecclesiastics and to render justice to minors who have suffered sexual violence aggravated by the abuse of power and conscience. My meeting with the episcopates of the entire world next February is meant to be a further step in the Church's efforts to shed full light on the facts and to alleviate the wounds caused by such crimes.

It is painful to note that in our societies, so often marked by fragile family situations, we see an increase of violence also with regard to women, whose dignity was emphasized by the Apostolic Letter *Mulieris Dignitatem*, published thirty years ago by Pope Saint John Paul II. Faced with the bane of physical and psychological abuse of women, there is an urgent need to recover correct and balanced forms of relationship, based on respect and mutual recognition, wherein each person can express in an authentic way his or her own identity. At the same time, the promotion of certain forms of non-differentiation between the genders risks distorting the very essence of manhood and womanhood.

Concern for those who are most vulnerable impels us also to reflect on another serious problem of our time, namely the condition of workers. Unless adequately protected, work ceases to be a means of human self-realization and becomes a modern form of slavery. A hundred years ago saw the establishment of the International Labour Organization, which has sought to promote suitable working conditions and to increase the dignity of workers themselves. Faced with the challenges of our own time, first of all increased technological growth, which eliminates jobs, and the weakening of economic and social guarantees for workers, I express my hope that the International Labour Organization will continue to be, beyond partisan interests, an example of dialogue and concerted effort to achieve its lofty objectives. In this mission, it too is called, together with other agencies of the international community, to confront the evil of child labour and new forms of slavery, as well as a progressive decrease in the value of wages, especially in developed countries, and continued discrimination against women in the workplace.

To be a bridge between peoples and builders of peace

In his address before the United Nations, Saint Paul VI clearly indicated the primary goal of that international Organization. In his words: "You are working to unite nations, to associate states ... to bring them together. You are a bridge between peoples... It is enough to recall that



Salam Noah, "Just another refugee"

the blood of millions, countless unheard-of sufferings, useless massacres and frightening ruins have sanctioned the agreement that unites you with an oath that ought to change the future history of the world: never again war! Never again war! It is peace, peace, that has to guide the destiny of the nations of all mankind! [And] as you well know, peace is not built merely by means of politics and a balance of power and interests. It is built with the mind, with ideas, with works of peace".⁹

In the course of the past year, there have been some significant signs of peace, starting with the historic agreement between Ethiopia and Eritrea, which puts an end to twenty years of conflict and restores diplomatic relations between the two countries. Also, the agreement signed by the leaders of South Sudan, enabling the resumption of civil coexistence and the renewed functioning of national institutions, represents a sign of hope for the African continent, where grave tensions and widespread poverty persist. I follow with special concern the developing situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and I express

my hope that the country can regain the reconciliation it has long awaited and undertake a decisive journey towards development, thus ending the ongoing state of insecurity affecting millions of people, including many children. To that end, respect for the result of the electoral process is a determining factor for a sustainable peace. I likewise express my closeness to all those suffering from fundamentalist violence, especially in Mali, Niger and Nigeria, and from continued internal tensions in Cameroon, which not rarely sow death even among civilians.

Overall, we should note that Africa, beyond such dramatic situations, also shows great positive potential, grounded in its ancient culture and its traditional spirit of hospitality. An example of practical solidarity between nations is seen in the opening of their frontiers by different countries, in order generously to receive refugees and displaced persons. Appreciation should be shown for the fact that in many states we see the growth of peaceful coexistence between the followers of different religions and the promotion of joint initiatives of solidarity. In addition, the implementation of inclusive policies and the progress of democratic processes are proving effective in many regions for combating absolute poverty and promoting social justice. As a result, the support of the international community becomes all the more urgent for favouring the development of infrastructures, the growth of prospects for future generations, and the emancipation of the most vulnerable sectors of society.

Positive signs are arriving from the Korean Peninsula. The Holy See regards favourably the dialogues in course and expresses the hope that they can also deal with the more complex issues in a constructive attitude and thus lead to shared and lasting solutions capable of ensuring a future of development and cooperation for the whole Korean people and for the entire region.

No prayer remains unheard

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prayer, at the end of the time in which we are praying, at life's end: what is there? There is a Father who awaits everything and everyone with arms wide open. Let us look to this Father.

SPECIAL GREETINGS

I welcome the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today's Audience, especially the groups coming from the United States of America. Upon all of you, and your families, I invoke the joy and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ. God bless you!

I extend a special greeting to young people, the elderly, the sick and newlyweds – there are many today! Next Sunday we will celebrate the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. This celebration which ends the liturgical period of Christmas, invites us to rediscover the grace of

I express a similar hope for beloved Venezuela, that peaceful institutional means can be found to provide solutions to the political, social and economic crisis, means that can make it possible to help all those suffering from the tensions of recent years, and to offer all the Venezuelan people a horizon of hope and peace.

The Holy See expresses the hope too that dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians will resume, so that an agreement at last can be reached and a response given to the legitimate aspirations of both peoples by ensuring the coexistence of two states and the attainment of a long awaited and desired peace. A united commitment on the part of the international community is extremely important and necessary for attaining this goal, as also for promoting peace in the entire region, particularly in Yemen and Iraq, while at the same time ensuring that necessary humanitarian assistance is provided to all those in need.

Rethinking our common destiny

Finally, I would mention a fourth feature of multilateral diplomacy: it invites us to rethink our common destiny. Paul VI put it in these terms: "We have to get used to a new way of thinking ... about man's community life and about the pathways of history and the destinies of the world... The hour has come ... to think back over our common origin, our history, our common destiny. The appeal to the moral conscience of man has never been as necessary as it is today, in an age marked by such great human progress. For the danger comes neither from progress nor from science... The real danger comes from man, who has at his disposal ever more powerful instruments that are as well fitted to bring about ruin as they are to achieve lofty conquests".¹⁰

In the context of that time, the Pope was referring essentially to the proliferation of nuclear weapons. "Arms, especially the terrible arms that modern science has provided

the Sacrament of our Baptism. Baptism made us Christians, incorporating us into Christ and into his Church. We all know the date of our birth, but not everyone knows the date of his or her Baptism, which is birth into the life of the Church, when the Holy Spirit comes to the heart. For this reason, I ask you – today for example – in order to prepare ourselves for next Sunday's Feast Day, to ask those who know it to remember it, and those who do not know the date of their Baptism to ask their family members, their godparents, their parents, their grandparents: "When was I born into the life of the faith?". That is: "When was I baptised?". And to forever secure in the heart the date of their Baptism. Will you do this? It is very important to celebrate the date of Baptism. Let us thank the Lord for the gift of faith and let us ask the Holy Spirit for the strength to be courageous witnesses to Jesus.

you, engender bad dreams, feed evil sentiments, create nightmares, hostilities and dark resolutions, even before they cause any victims and ruins. They call for enormous expenses. They interrupt projects of solidarity and of useful labour. They warp the outlook of nations".¹¹

It is painful to note that not only does the arms trade seem unstoppable, but that there is in fact a widespread and growing resort to arms, on the part both of individuals and states. Of particular concern is the fact that nuclear disarmament, generally called for and partially pursued in recent decades is now yielding to the search for new and increasingly sophisticated and destructive weapons. Here I want to reiterate firmly that "we cannot fail to be genuinely concerned by the catastrophic humanitarian and environmental effects of any employment of nuclear devices. If we also take into account the risk of an accidental detonation as a result of error of any kind, the threat of their use – I should say the immorality of their use – as well as their very possession, is to be firmly condemned. For they exist in the service of a mentality of fear that affects not only the parties in conflict but the entire human race. International relations cannot be held captive to military force, mutual intimidation, and the parading of stockpiles of arms. Weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, create nothing but a false sense of security. They cannot constitute the basis for peaceful coexistence between members of the human family, which must rather be inspired by an ethics of solidarity".¹²

Rethinking our common destiny in the present context also involves rethinking our relationship with our planet. This year too, immense distress and suffering caused by heavy rains, flooding, fires, earthquakes and drought have struck the inhabitants of different regions of the Americas and Southeast Asia. Hence, among the issues urgently calling for an agreement within the international community are care for the environment and climate change. In this regard, also in the light of the consensus reached at the recent international Conference on Climate Change (COP24) held in Katowice, I express my hope for a more decisive commitment on the part of states to strengthening cooperation for urgently combating the worrisome phenomenon of global warming. The earth belongs to everyone, and the consequences of its exploitation affect all the peoples of the world, even if certain regions feel those consequences more dramatically. Among the latter is the Amazon region, which will be at the centre of the forthcoming Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops to be held in the Vatican next October. While chiefly discussing paths of evangelization for the people of God, it will certainly deal with environmental issues in the context of their social repercussions.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On 9 November 1989 the Berlin Wall fell. Within a few months, an end would come to the last legacy of the Second World War: the painful

division of Europe decided at Yalta and the Cold War. The countries east of the Iron Curtain recovered freedom after decades of oppression, and many of them set out on the path that would lead to membership in the European Union. In the present climate, marked by new centrifugal tendencies and the temptation to erect new curtains, may Europe not lose its awareness of the benefits – the first of which is peace – ushered in by the journey of friendship and rapprochement between peoples begun in the postwar period.

Finally, I would like to mention yet another anniversary. On 11 February ninety years ago, the Vatican City State came into being as a result of the signing of the Lateran Pacts between the Holy See and Italy. This concluded the lengthy period of the "Roman Question" that followed the taking of Rome and the end of the Papal States. With the Lateran Treaty, the Holy See was able to have at its use "that small portion of material territory indispensable for the exercise of the spiritual power entrusted to men for the sake of mankind",¹³ as Pius XI stated. With the Concordat, the Church was once more able to contribute fully to the spiritual and material growth of Rome and Italy as a whole, a country rich in history, art and culture, which Christianity had contributed to building. On this anniversary, I assure the Italian people of a special prayer, so that, in fidelity to their proper traditions, they may keep alive the spirit of fraternal solidarity that has long distinguished them.

To you, dear Ambassadors and distinguished guests here present, and to your countries, I offer cordial good wishes that the New Year will see a strengthening of the bonds of friendship uniting us and renewed efforts to promote that peace to which our world aspires.

Thank you!

¹ Cf. *Message to the Catholics of China and to the Universal Church*, 26 September 2018, No. 3.

² Cf. Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (24 November 2013), 234.

³ PAUL VI, *Address to the United Nations* (4 October 1965), 2.

⁴ *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, No. 165.

⁵ Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (24 November 2013), 228.

⁶ *Address to the United Nations*, 1.

⁷ SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Decree on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions *Nostra Aetate* (28 October 1965), 3.

⁸ *Address to the United Nations*, 1.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 3; 5.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹² *Address to Participants in the International Symposium on Disarmament sponsored by the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development*, 10 November 2017.

¹³ PIUS XI, *Address "Il nostro più cordiale" to the Parish Priests of Rome and the Lenten Preachers on the occasion of the signing of the Treaty and Concordat in the Lateran Palace*, 1 February 1929.

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith

Response to a question on the liceity of hysterectomy in certain cases

On 31 July 1993, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith published *Responses to Questions Proposed Concerning "Uterine Isolation" and Related Matters*. These responses, which retain all of their validity, consider the removal of the uterus to be morally licit when there is a grave and present danger to the life or health of the mother, and hold as illicit, insofar as they are methods of direct sterilization, the removal of the uterus and tubal ligation (*uterine isolation*) with the intention of making impossible an eventual pregnancy which can pose some risk for the mother.

In recent years some very specific cases have been submitted to the Holy See also concerning the hysterectomy, which, however, present a different issue from that which was examined in 1993, because they regard situations in which procreation is no longer possible. The question and the response, accompanied by an Illustrative Note, that are now being published, refer to this new particular case and complete the responses given in 1993.

Question: When the uterus is found to be irreversibly in such a state that it is no longer suitable for procreation and medical experts have reached the certainty that an

eventual pregnancy will bring about a spontaneous abortion before the fetus is able to arrive at a viable state, is it licit to remove it (*hysterectomy*)?

Response: Yes, because it does not regard sterilization.

Illustrative Note

The question regards some extreme cases, recently submitted to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, that constitute a different issue from that which was given a negative response on 31 July 1993. The element that renders the present question essentially different is the certainty reached by medical experts that in the case of a pregnancy, it would be spontaneously interrupted before the fetus arrives at a state of viability. Here it is not a question of difficulty, or of risks of greater or lesser importance, but of a couple for which it is not possible to procreate.

The precise object of sterilization is to impede the functioning of the reproductive organs, and the malice of sterilization consists in the refusal of children: it is an act against the *bonum proles*. On the contrary, in the case considered in the question, it is

known that the reproductive organs are not capable of protecting a conceived child up to viability, namely, they are not capable of fulfilling their natural procreative function. The objective of the procreative process is to bring a baby into the world, but here the birth of a living fetus is not biologically possible. Therefore, we are not dealing with a defective, or risky, functioning of the reproductive organs, but we are faced here with a situation in which the natural end of bringing a living child into the world is not attainable.

The medical procedure should not be judged as being against procreation, because we find ourselves within an objective context in which neither procreation, nor as a consequence, an anti-procreative action, are possible. Removing a reproductive organ incapable of bringing a pregnancy to term should not therefore be qualified as direct sterilization, which is and remains intrinsically illicit as an end and as a means.

The problem of the criteria to evaluate if the pregnancy could, or could not, continue on to the state of viability is a medical question. From the moral point of view, one must ask if the highest degree of certainty that medicine can reach

has been reached, and in this sense the response given is valid for the question, as it has been proposed in good faith.

Furthermore, the response to the question does not state that the decision to undergo a hysterectomy is always the best one, but that only in the above-mentioned conditions is such a decision morally licit, without, therefore, excluding other options (for example, recourse to infertile periods or total abstinence). It is the decision of the spouses, in dialogue with doctors and their spiritual guide, to choose the path to follow, applying the general criteria of the gradualness of medical intervention to their case and to their circumstances.

The Sovereign Pontiff Francis, in the Audience granted to the undersigned Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, has approved the above response and ordered its publication.

Rome, from the Offices of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 10 December 2018

LUIS F. CARD. LADARIA, SJ
Prefect

GIACOMO MORANDI
Titular Archbishop of Cerveteri,
Secretary

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

clergy of Torit. Until now he has served as professor and dean at the Saint Paul National Major Seminary in Juba (3 Jan.).

Bishop-elect Mulla, 54, was born in Ido, South Sudan. He was ordained a priest on 21 April 1991. He holds a doctorate in dogmatic theology. He has served in parish ministry and as: head of three pastoral areas in South Sudan; lecturer and consultant to the local Sudanese Organization for Non-Violence and Democracy; founder of, consultant and counselor to local humanitarian NGOs; consultant and chaplain to Women's Group and to Women Advancement Organization at Gudelle (WAO) in Juba; assistant vice chancellor for administration and finance of the Catholic University of South Sudan; deputy director of the Institute of Applied Research and Community Outreach, Catholic University of South Sudan (IARCO).

ORIENTAL CHURCHES

The Holy Father has raised the Apostolic Exarchate for Syro-Malabar faithful in Canada to the rank of Eparchy, under the name of "Mississauga", maintaining the same territorial configuration, and appointing Bishop Jose Kalluveilil, Apostolic Eparch for Syro-Malabars, as its first eparchial Bishop. Until now he has served as titular Bishop of Tabalta (22 Dec.).

Bishop Kalluveilil, 63, was born in Thottuva, India. He was ordained a priest on 18 December 1984. He was ordained a bishop on 19 September

2015, subsequent to his appointment as titular Bishop of Tabalta and Apostolic Exarch for Syro-Malabars resident in Canada.

His Beatitude Cardinal Louis Raphaël I Sako, Patriarch of Babylon for Chaldeans, with the consent of the Synod of Bishops of the Chaldean Church and informing the Apostolic See, has transferred Archbishop Ramzi Garmou of Teheran for Chaldeans to the Archiepiscopal See of Diarbekir for Chaldeans, Turkey (22 Dec.).

Archbishop Garmou, 73, was born in Zakho, Iraq. He was ordained a priest on 13 January 1977. He was ordained a bishop on 25 February 1996, subsequent to his appointment as Coadjutor of Teheran for Chaldeans.

The Holy Father granted his consent to the canonical election, by the Synod of Bishops of the Melkite Greek Patriarchal Church of Archimandrite, of Fr Elias El-Debei as Archbishop of Bosra and Hauran, Syria. Until now he has served as patriarchal administrator of the said Metropolitan Eparchy (22 Dec.).

Archbishop-elect El-Debei, 48, was born in Damascus, Syria. He holds a degree in Applied Sciences and studied philosophy and theology. He was ordained a priest in 1998. He has served in parish ministry and as: parish priest of the Melkite Greek Cathedral in Damascus; judge of the Patriarchal Tribunal; protosyncellus.

VATICAN BULLETIN

The Holy Father granted his consent to the canonical election, by the Synod of Bishops of the Chaldean Church, of Fr Robert Jarjis as Auxiliary Bishop of Babylon for Chaldeans, Baghdad, Iraq, assigning him the titular episcopal See of Arsamosata. Until now he has served as parish priest of the Cathedral of Saint Joseph (22 Dec.).

Bishop-elect Jarjis, 45, was born in Baghdad, Iraq. He holds a Master's in veterinary science and a license in biblical theology. He completed his formation at the Pontifical Urbaniana University in Rome. He was ordained a priest on 27 April 2008. He has served in parish ministry and as local assistant in the Apostolic Nunciature.

The Holy Father granted his consent to the canonical election, by the Synod of Bishops of the Chaldean Church in Iraq, of Fr Najib Mikhael Moussa, OP, as Archbishop of Mosul for Chaldeans, Iraq (22 Dec.).

Archbishop-elect Moussa, 63, was born in Mosul, Iraq. He did his civil studies in the field of the petroleum industry and obtained a post graduate degree in practical theology and communication and a Master's and Higher Diploma in Catholic Theology. He was ordained a priest on 16 May 1987. He has served as: founder and director of the Digital Centre for Oriental Manuscripts of Mosul; member of the ecumenical commission of the Bishops of Nineveh; lecturer of pastoral theology and communication at the Chaldean Seminary.

START OF MISSION

On 23 October, Archbishop Michael W. Banach, titular Archbishop of Memphis, began his mission as Apostolic Nuncio in Mauritania with the presentation of his Letters of Credence to H.E. Mr Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania.

On 10 December, Archbishop Dagoberdo Campos Salas, titular Archbishop of Forontonia, began his mission as Apostolic Nuncio in Liberia, with the presentation of his Letters of Credence to H.E. George Manneh Weah, President of the Republic of Liberia.

NECROLOGY

Bishop Rosario Mazzola, Bishop emeritus of Cefalù, Italy, at age 94 (24 Dec.).

Bishop Tadeusz Pieronek, titular Bishop of Cufruta, Auxiliary Bishop emeritus of Sosnowiec, Poland, at age 84 (27 Dec.).

Bishop Attila Miklósházy, SJ, titular Bishop of Castellum minus, at age 87 (28 Dec.).

Bishop Robert Edward Mulvey, Bishop emeritus of Providence, USA, at age 88 (28 Dec.).

Archbishop Santiago García Aracil, Archbishop emeritus of Mérida-Badajoz, Spain, at age 78 (28 Dec.).

Archbishop István Seregély, Archbishop emeritus of Eger, Hungary, at age 87 (31 Dec.).

Bishop Salvador Martínez Pérez, Bishop emeritus of Huejutla, Mexico, at age 85 (2 Jan.).

The tragic situation of Christians persecuted in the Middle East

Holy Father addresses the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre

Pope Francis received in audience members of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem at the conclusion of their quinquennial Consulta. Addressing them in the Clementine Hall on Friday morning, 16 November, he recalled the tragic situation of Christians who are being persecuted and killed in the Middle East. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's address, which he delivered in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I welcome you at the conclusion of the Consulta of the Members of the Grand Magisterium and of the Lieutenants of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem. I greet and thank Cardinal Edwin O'Brien, Grand Master, and the Pro-Grand Prior, Bishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa; I greet the Members of the Grand Magisterium, along with the Lieutenants of the nations and of the places where the Order is present. And with you I greet the whole family of Knights and Dames from all over the world. My gratitude goes to all of you for the many spiritual and charitable activities you carry out for the benefit of the peoples of the Holy Land.

You have gathered for the work of the Consulta, the general assembly that is held every five years at the See of Peter. Here in the Vatican, you are, in a certain way, at home, as you constitute an ancient Pontifical institution under the protection of the Holy See. Since the last Consulta of 2013 the Order has grown in its membership, in its geographical expansion with the creation of new peripheral divisions, in the material assistance that it has offered the Church in the Holy Land, and in the number of pilgrimages made by your members. I thank you for your support of beneficial pastoral and cultural programmes and I encourage you to continue your commitment, alongside the Latin Patriarchate, in addressing the refugee crisis which in the last five years has prompted the Church to provide a

significant humanitarian response throughout the region.

It is a good sign that your initiatives in the field of training and health care are open to all, regardless of the communities they belong to and the religion they profess. In this way you help pave the way to make Christian values known, to the promotion of interreligious dialogue, mutual respect and mutual understanding. In other words, with your commendable commitment, you too offer your contribution to build the path that will lead, as we all hope, to the achievement of peace throughout the region.

I know that this week you have turned your attention to the role of local managers, or lieutenants, present in more than 30 nations and zones of the world in which your Order is active. Certainly, the continuous growth of the Order depends on your unceasing and ever renewed effort. In this regard, it is important not to forget that the principal aim of your Order lies in the spiritual growth of its members. Therefore, any success of your initiatives cannot be separate from appropriate religious formation programmes addressed to every Knight and every Dame, so that they may consolidate their own indispensable relationship with the Lord Jesus, especially in prayer, in meditation on the Sacred Scriptures and in furthering their knowledge of the doctrine of the Church. It is a task, especially for you leaders, to offer the example of an intense spiritual life and true following of the Lord: in this way you



can render a valid service of authority to those under your leadership.

Then, with regard to your mission in the world, do not forget that you are not a philanthropic entity committed to promoting the material and social improvement of recipients. You are called to place the evangelical love of neighbour as the central and final aim of your works, to bear witness everywhere to the goodness and care with which God loves everyone. Admission into your Order of Bishops, Priests and Deacons is not entirely an honour. It is part of their duties of pastoral service to assist those among you who have a role of responsibility by providing opportunities for community and liturgical prayer at every level, continuous spiritual opportunities, and catecheses for ongoing formation and for the growth of all members of the Order.

Before the entire world – which too often averts its gaze – lies the tragic situation of Christians who are persecuted and killed in ever increasing numbers. In addition to their martyrdom of blood, there is

also their 'white martyrdom', such as that which occurs in democratic countries when freedom of religion is limited. And this is the everyday white martyrdom of the Church in those places. I urge you to always associate prayer with the work of material aid to people who are so harshly tried, to constantly invoke Our Lady, whom you venerate with the title of "Our Lady of Palestine". She is the caring Mother and the Help of Christians, for whom she obtains from the Lord strength and comfort in sorrow.

May the icon of Our Lady of Persecuted Christians, which I will soon bless and which you will all receive to take to each of your Lieutenancies, accompany your journey. Together let us invoke Mary's concern for the Church in the Holy Land and, more generally, in the Middle East, along with her special intercession for those whose life and freedom are in danger. I accompany your valuable and tireless work with my Blessing, and I ask you, please, to pray for me. Thank you.

Pope Francis' visit to UAE in February

Instruments of peace



At the invitation of Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, Pope Francis will visit the capital of the United Arab Emirates from 3 to 5 February, where he will participate in an international interfaith conference on human fraternity, to be hosted in the capital city. The visit is also in response to an invitation by the Catholic Church in the United Arab Emirates, as indicated in an announcement on 6 December by the Holy See Press Office. The Holy Father will give a homily and deliver one address during the visit.

The theme of the papal journey is taken from the prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi: "make me a channel of your peace". It expresses the hope that the Pontiff's presence on the Arab Peninsula may help to foster

God's peace in the hearts of all people of good will. The same hope is seen in the logo, which profiles a dove carrying the traditional olive branch. The outline incorporates the colours of the flags of the UAE and the Vatican.

Pope Francis will leave Rome on Sunday afternoon, 3 February, and arrive in Abu Dhabi at 10 PM local time.

A welcome ceremony will take place at midday on Monday, 4 February, at the main entrance to the Presidential Palace, followed by an official visit with the Crown Prince. That afternoon the Pontiff will meet privately with members of the Muslim Council of Elders in the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, and then will participate in the international interfaith conference on human fraternity, which will be hosted at the Founder's Memorial.

On Tuesday morning, 5 February, the Holy Father will visit the Catholic Cathedral, and will then celebrate Mass in the Zayed Sports City Stadium. After the Mass a farewell ceremony will be held at the Presidential Airport prior to his 1:00 PM departure for Rome, where he is expected to arrive at 5:00 PM local time.

World Day for Migrants and Refugees moves to September

At the request of a number of bishops' conferences, Pope Francis has changed the calendar with regard to World Day for Migrants and Refugees, shifting its celebration from the second Sunday after the Epiphany, as previously observed, to the last Sunday of September. In 2019, therefore, the World Day will be held on Sunday, 29 September. In a notice, the Holy See Press Office indicated that the Pontiff's Message will be issued several months prior to the Day's celebrations.

ANGELUS

After celebrating Mass in the Vatican Basilica for the Solemnity of the Epiphany on Sunday, 6 January, Pope Francis recited the Angelus with the faithful gathered in Saint Peter's Square. In his appeal he called attention to the plight of 49 people who, after being rescued in the Mediterranean Sea, "have been aboard two NGO ships, seeking a safe port to disembark". He called on European leaders to "demonstrate concrete solidarity to these people". The following is a translation of Pope Francis' reflection, which he delivered in Italian.



Pope appeals to European leaders for 49 people denied a welcoming port

Solidarity with Migrants in the Mediterranean

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Good morning!

Today, the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord, is the celebration of the manifestation of Jesus, symbolized by light. In the prophetic texts this light is a *promise*: light is promised. Isaiah, in fact, addresses Jerusalem with these words: "Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you" (60:1). The prophet's invitation – to arise because the light has come – seems surprising, because it occurs in the aftermath of the harsh exile and of the numerous oppressions that the people have experienced.

Today this invitation also resonates for us, who have celebrated the Birth of Jesus, and it encourages us to allow ourselves to be reached by the light of Bethlehem. We too are invited not to stop at the outward signs of the event, but to set out from it once again and to undertake anew the experience of our journey as men and women, and as believers.

The light that the Prophet Isaiah had foretold, is *present* and *encountered* in the Gospel. And Jesus, born in Bethlehem, the City of David, has come to bring salvation to those near and far: to everyone. Matthew the Evangelist reveals various ways by which one can encounter Christ and react to his presence. For example, Herod and the scribes of Jerusalem have a hard heart, which obstinately refuses the visit of that Child. This is one possibility: to be closed to the light. They represent those who, even in our day, *fear* Jesus' coming and close their heart to brothers and sisters who need help. Herod is afraid of losing power and

does not consider the true good of the people, but rather his own personal advantage. The scribes and the chief priests of the East, they represent all the faraway peoples of the traditional Hebrew faith. Yet they allow themselves to be guided by the star and face a long and perilous journey just to arrive at the destination and to know the truth of the Messiah. The Magi were *open* to 'novelty', and history's greatest and most surprising novelty is revealed to them: God-made-man. The Magi prostrate themselves before Jesus and offer him symbolic gifts: gold, incense and myrrh, because seeking the Lord entails not only perseverance on the journey but also generosity of heart. And lastly, they returned "to their own country" (v. 12); and the Gospel states that they returned "by another road". Brothers and sisters, each time that a man or woman encounters Jesus, he or she changes paths, returns to life in a different way, returns renewed, "by another road". They returned "to their own country", bearing within them the mystery of that humble and poor King; we can imagine that they told everyone about the experience they had had: the salvation offered by God in Christ is for *all mankind*, near and far. It is not possible to "take possession" of that Child: he is a gift for all.

Let us also have a bit of silence in our heart and allow ourselves to be illuminated by the light of Jesus that comes from Bethlehem. Let us not allow our fears to close our hearts, but let us have the courage to open ourselves to this light that is meek and delicate. Then, like the Magi, we will feel "great joy" (v. 10) that we will be unable to keep to ourselves. May the Virgin Mary – star who guides us to Jesus and Mother who shows Jesus to the Magi and to all those who approach her – support us on this journey.

lehem. Let us not allow our fears to close our hearts, but let us have the courage to open ourselves to this light that is meek and delicate. Then, like the Magi, we will feel "great joy" (v. 10) that we will be unable to keep to ourselves. May the Virgin Mary – star who guides us to Jesus and Mother who shows Jesus to the Magi and to all those who approach her – support us on this journey.

After the Angelus, Pope Francis continued:

Dear brothers and sisters, for quite a few days, 49 people rescued in the Mediterranean Sea have been aboard two NGO ships, seeking a safe port to disembark. I address a heartfelt appeal to European leaders, that they demonstrate concrete solidarity to these people.

Several Oriental Churches, Catholic and Orthodox, who follow the Julian calendar, will celebrate Holy Christmas tomorrow. I extend to them my cordial and fraternal wishes as a sign of communion among all of us Christians who recognize Jesus as Lord and Saviour. Happy Christmas to all of them!

The Epiphany is also Missionary Childhood Day, which this year invites very young missionaries to be "athletes of Jesus", in order to witness to the Gospel in the family, at school and in places of recreation.

I extend my cordial greeting to all of you, individual pilgrims, families, parishes and associations, coming from Italy and from different countries. In particular I greet the faithful from Marsala, Peveragno and San Martino in Rio, the young confirmands from Bonate Sotto, and the 'Fraterna Domus' group.

I offer a special greeting to the historic-folklorist procession that promotes the values of the Epiphany and that this year is dedicated to the territory of Abruzzo. I would also like to remember the procession of the Magi that is taking place in many cities of Poland with the widespread participation of families and associations. And I also greet the musicians from the band I heard playing. Continue to sound the joy of this day of the Epiphany.

I wish a happy Feast Day to you all. And please, do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch. *Arrivederci!*

