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Friday, 8 March 2019

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VATICAN BULLETIN



AUDIENCES

Thursday, 28 February

Cardinal Manuel Clemente, Patriarch of Lisbon, Portugal

Archbishop Andrés Carrascosa Coso, titular Archbishop of Elo, Apostolic Nuncio in Ecuador

Archbishop Launay Saturné of Cap-Haïtien, Haïti

Prof. Carl Albert Anderson, Supreme Knight of the Knights of Columbus

Participants in a meeting to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the death of Cardinal Augustin Bea Members of St Peter's Circle

Friday, 1 March

Archbishop Franco Coppola, titular Archbishop of Vinda, Apostolic Nuncio in Mexico

Archbishop Rogelio Cabrera López, of Monterrey, Mexico, President of

For Cardinal Parolin

Pell case: shocking and painful

Shocking and painful. These are the words used by Cardinal Pietro Parolin on Thursday morning, 28 February, to describe the events that led to the conviction of Cardinal George Pell on charges of sexual abuse. Speaking on the sidelines of a meeting at the Pontifical Gregorian University, the Secretary of State added that among other things, the Pell case "is a further incentive to continue along the lines of the Pope: to fight this phenomenon and pay attention to the victims". Additionally, in reference to the Meeting on the Protection of Minors in the Church, which was held in the Vatican from 21-24 February, Cardinal Parolin stated that "it was moving to hear the victims", whose testimonies "left no one indifferent". Now, thanks to the Meeting convoked by the Pontiff, the Cardinal concluded, the consciousness of the entire Church has been raised, along with "a call for transparency and for an ever clearer Gospel witness".

the Episcopal Conference of Mexico with: Archbishop Carlos Garfias Merlos, of Morelia, Vice President; Bishop Alfonso Gerardo Miranda Guardiola, titular Bishop of Idicra, Auxiliary of Monterrey, Secretary General; Bishop Ramón Castro Castro, of Cuernavaca, general treasurer

Members of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Kazakhstan, on a visit *ad limina Apostolorum*:

– Archbishop Tomash Bernard Peta of Maria Santissima in Astana with the Auxiliaries: Bishop Athanasius Schneider, ORC, titular Bishop of Celerina; Bishop Adelio Dell'Oro of Karaganda; Bishop José Luis Mumbiela Sierra of Santissima Trinità in Almaty;

– Fr Dariusz Buras, Apostolic Administrator of Atyrau

– Fr Anthony James Corcoran, SJ, Apostolic Administrator of Kyrgyzstan

– Fr Pedro Ramiro López of the Institute of the Incarnate Word, Superior of the Mission *sui iuris* in Tadjikistan

– Bishop Jerzy Maculewicz, OFM conv., titular Bishop of Nara, Apostolic Administrator of Uzbekistan

– Fr Andrzej Madej, OMI, Superior of the Mission *sui iuris* in Turkmenistan

– Fr Vasyl Hovera, Delegate of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches for Greek Catholics in Central Asia

Saturday, 2 March

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

Italian Association against Leukemia, Lymphoma and Myeloma (AIL)

Monday, 4 March

Archbishop Marek Solczyński, titular Archbishop of Caesarea in Mauretania, Apostolic Nuncio in Tanzania

Bishop Vitus Huonder of Chur, Switzerland

Bishop Santiago Olivera, Military Ordinary for Argentina

Group from the Pontifical Commission for Latin America

Officials from the Vatican Secret Archives

Tuesday, 5 March

H.E. Mr Faustin-Archange Touadéra, President of the Central African Republic with his entourage

CHANGES IN EPISCOPATE

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Adair José Guimarães as Bishop of Formosa, Brazil. Until now he has served as Bishop of Rubiataba-Mozarlândia, Brazil (27 Feb.).

Bishop Guimarães, 58, was born in Mara Rosa, Brazil. He was ordained a priest on 21 December 1986. He was ordained a bishop on 17 May 2008, subsequent to his appointment as Bishop of Rubiataba-Mozarlândia.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Archbishop Lionginas Virbalas, SJ, of Kaunas, Lithuania (1 Mar.).

The Holy Father appointed as Auxiliary Bishop of the Patriarchate of Lisbon Rev. Canon Américo Manuel Alves Aguiar from the clergy of the Diocese of Porto, assigning him the titular episcopal See of Dagnum. Until now he has served as director of the National Secretariat of Social Communication of the Church and President of the Council of Administration of *Radio Renascença* (1 Mar.).

Bishop-elect Alves Aguiar, 45, was born in Leça do Balio, Portugal. He holds a Master's in Communication Sciences. He was ordained a priest on 8 July 2001. He has served in parish ministry and as: private secretary to the Bishop of Porto; vicar general and Head of the Episcopal Commission for Culture, Cultural Heritage and Social Communications.

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Oscar Jaime L. Florencio as Military Ordinary of the Philippines. Until now he has served as titular Bishop of Lestrona, Auxiliary of Cebu, the Philippines, and Apostolic Administrator of the said Military Ordinariate (2 Mar.).

Bishop Florencio, 53, was born in Capoccan, the Philippines. He was ordained a priest on 3 April 1990. He was ordained a bishop on 4 September 2015, subsequent to his appointment as titular of Lestrona and Auxiliary of Cebu.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Armando Xavier Ochoa of Fresno, USA (5 Mar.).

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Joseph Vincent Brennan as Bishop

of Fresno. Until now he has served as titular Bishop of Trofimiana and Auxiliary of Los Angeles (5 Mar.).

Bishop Brennan, 64, was born in Van Nuys, USA. He was ordained a priest on 21 June 1980. He was ordained a bishop on 8 September 2015, subsequent to his appointment titular Bishop of Trofimiana and Auxiliary of Los Angeles.

The Holy Father appointed Bishop David Prescott Talley as Bishop of Memphis, USA. Until now he has served as Bishop of Alexandria (5 Mar.).

Bishop Talley, 68, was born in Columbus, USA. He was ordained a priest on 3 June 1989. He was ordained a bishop on 2 April 2013, subsequent to his appointment as titular Bishop of Lambaesis and Auxiliary of Atlanta. On 2 February 2017 he was appointed Bishop of Alexandria.

The Holy Father appointed as Auxiliary Bishop of Los Angeles, USA, Msgr Alejandro D. Aclan, from the clergy of the said archdiocese, assigning him the titular episcopal See of Rusicade (5 Mar.).

Bishop-elect Aclan, 68, was born in Pasay City, the Philippines. He was ordained a priest on 5 June 1993. He holds a bachelor's degree in medical technology. He has served in parish ministry and as: director of Vocational promotion in the San Gabriel Valley pastoral region; assistant vicar and then vicar for the clergy.

RELATIONS WITH STATES

The Holy Father appointed Archbishop Pedro López Quintana, titular Archbishop of Agropoli, as Apostolic Nuncio in Austria. Until now he has served as Apostolic Nuncio in Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia (4 Mar.).

CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH

The Holy Father appointed as Office Head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith Msgr Riccardo Bollati, Official of the said Dicastery (4 Mar.).

PONTIFICAL ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS AND LITERATURE OF THE VIRTUOSI AT THE PANtheon

The Holy Father appointed as Ordinary Members of the Pontifical Academy of Fine Arts and Literature of the Virtuosi at the Pantheon the following: Archbishop Santiago Cal-

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GENERAL AUDIENCE

"Thy kingdom come!". Let us sow this word in the midst of our sins and our shortcomings. Let us give it to the people defeated and bent by life, to those who have tasted hatred more than love, those who have lived aimless days without ever understanding why". The Pope offered this advice to the faithful who had gathered in Saint Peter's Square for the General Audience on Wednesday, 6 March. As he continued his series of reflections on the Lord's Prayer, Francis focused on the second invocation. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's catechesis, which he delivered in Italian.



Continuing catecheses on the Lord's Prayer

The seed of the Kingdom sown in this world

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Good morning!

When we pray the "Our Father", the second request we address to God is "Thy kingdom come" (Mt 6:10). After praying for the sanctification of his name, the believer expresses the desire that His Kingdom may come soon. This desire poured forth, so to speak, from the very heart of Christ who began preaching in Galilee by proclaiming: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel", (Mk 1:15). These words are in no way a threat. On the contrary, they are a blessed proclamation, a joyful message. Jesus does not want to press people to convert by sowing fear of God's imminent judgment or a sense of guilt for the wrongdoing committed. Jesus does not proselytize: he simply proclaims. Rather, what he brings is the Good News of salvation, and, starting from this, he calls us to convert. Each of us is invited to believe in the "Gospel": God's authority is brought close to his children. This is the Gospel: the authority of God drawn near to his children. And Jesus announces this marvelous thing, this grace: God, the Father, loves us, is close to us and teaches us to walk on the path of holiness.

The signs of the coming of this Kingdom are multiple, all of them positive. Jesus begins his ministry by caring for the sick, both in body and in spirit, for those who were socially excluded – lepers, for example – and sinners who were looked upon with scorn by everyone, even by those who were greater sinners than them but who pretended to be just. And what does Jesus call them? "Hypocrites". Jesus himself indicates these signs, the signs of the Kingdom of God: "The blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them" (Mt 11:5).

"Thy kingdom come", Christians persistently repeat when they pray the "Our Father". Jesus has come; but the world is still marked by sin, inhabited by many people who suffer, by people who do not want to reconcile and do not forgive, by war and many forms of exploitation. Let us think

about child trafficking, for example. All these facts are proof that Christ's victory has not yet been completely attained. Many men and women still live with closed hearts. It is above all in these situations that the second request of the "Our Father" emerges on the lips of Christians: "Thy kingdom come!", which is like saying: "We need you, Father! We need you, Jesus. We need you, Lord, to be everywhere and for ever, in our midst!". "Thy kingdom come, may you be in our midst".

We sometimes ask ourselves: why is this Kingdom so slow to come about? Jesus likes to speak of his victory in terms of parables. For example, he says that the Kingdom of God is similar to a field where weeds and good wheat grow together: the biggest mistake would be to immediately intervene, by uprooting from the world what appear to us to be invasive weeds. God is not like us. God is patient. It is not through violence that the Kingdom is established in the world: meekness is its means of propagation (cf. Mt 13:24-30).

The Kingdom of God is certainly a great strength, the greatest one there is, but not according to worldly criteria. This is why it never appears to have the absolute majority. It is like leaven that is kneaded with flour: it apparently disappears and yet, it is what makes the dough rise (cf. Mt 13:33). Or it is like a mustard seed, so small, almost invisible, which, however, carries within it nature's most explosive force, and once fully grown, it becomes the largest tree in the garden (cf. Mt 13:31-32).

In this "destiny" of the Kingdom of God, we can sense the tenor of Jesus' life. He too was a frail sign to his contemporaries, an almost unknown event to the official historians of the time. He described himself as a "grain of wheat" that dies in the earth, but only in this way can it bear "much fruit" (cf. Jn 12:24). The symbol of the seed is eloquent. One day a farmer plants it in the earth (a gesture which resembles a burial), and then, if he "should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he knows not how" (Mk 4:27). A seed that sprouts is more the work of God than of the man who planted it (cf. Mk 4:27). God always precedes us. God always surprises. Thanks

to him, the night of Good Friday is followed by the dawn of the Resurrection, able to illuminate the entire world with hope.

"Thy kingdom come!". Let us sow this word in the midst of our sins and our shortcomings. Let us give it to the people defeated and bent by life, to those who have tasted hatred more than love, those who have lived aimless days without ever understanding why. Let us give it to those who have fought for justice, to all the martyrs in history, to those who have come to the conclusion that they have fought for nothing and that in this world evil always dominates. We will then feel the prayer of the "Our Father" respond. It will repeat those words of hope for the umpteenth time, the same words with which the Spirit sealed all the Sacred Scriptures: "Yes, I am coming soon": this is the Lord's reply: "I am coming soon". Amen. And the Lord's Church responds: "Come, Lord, Jesus" (cf. Acts 2:20). "Thy kingdom come" is like saying "Come Lord Jesus". And Jesus says: "I am coming soon". And Jesus comes, in his way, but every day. We have trust in this. And when we pray the "Our Father", we always say: "Thy kingdom come", in order to feel him say in our heart: "yes, yes, I am coming and I am coming soon". Thank you!

SPECIAL GREETINGS

I greet the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today's Audience, especially those from England, Wales, India, the Philippines and the United States of America. May the Lenten journey we begin today lead us to Easter with hearts purified and renewed by the grace of the Holy Spirit. Upon you, and your families, I invoke joy and peace in Christ our Redeemer!

I extend a special greeting to *young people, the elderly, the sick and newlyweds*.

Today, Ash Wednesday, is the start of the Lenten journey. I hope you will all be able to experience this time in an authentic penitential spirit of conversion, like a return to the Father who awaits everyone with outstretched arms to grant us the most intimate communion with him.

Video message for inauguration of paediatric centre in Bangui

To bring relief to suffering children

In Bangui, Central African Republic, on Saturday, 2 March, Cardinal Konrad Krajewski, the Papal Almoner, inaugurated the 'Complexe Pédiatrique', the newly renovated and expanded paediatric healthcare centre specializing in the treatment of malnourished children. The centre is the only paediatric hospital in the country. The construction work was carried out at the behest of Pope Francis, with support from various initiatives and collections, and was planned and overseen by Rome's 'Bambino Gesù' Hospital. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's video message, which was recorded in Italian for the opening ceremony.

Dear Friends of the Bangui Paediatric Hospital,

I greet all of you with joy on this festive occasion of the inauguration of the new healthcare structure dedicated precisely to the children of the Central African Republic. This site was developed with the support of 'Bambino Gesù' Paediatric Hospital, committed since the spring of 2016 to the formation of medical person-

nel, and more. I hope that it may become a centre of excellence, where children may find responses to and relief from their suffering, with tenderness and love. I do not forget! I hold in my heart the suffering eyes of the many malnourished children whom I met during my brief visit to the hospital on the occasion of my journey to your country.

And I still recall the words of the doctor who was beside me: "Most of these children will die because they have resistant malaria, and are malnourished". I heard it myself. No, this must no longer happen! Children's suffering is without a doubt the hardest to accept. The great Dostoyevsky posed the question: "Why do children suffer?". So often, I ask myself the same thing: why do children suffer? And I find no explanation. I simply look to the Crucifix and invoke the Father's merciful love for so much suffering.

This structure which is being inaugurated today is a tangible sign of mercy, which originated in the Holy Year that I wished to open in advance – on 29 November 2015 – precisely in Bangui. The first cathedral door to be opened was Bangui's, not Saint Peter's. It was a gesture the Lord had inspired. Passing through the Holy Door of the Cathedral, I affirmed: "Bangui now becomes the spiritual capital of prayer for the Father's mercy. Let us all implore peace, mercy, reconciliation, forgiveness and love". I like to think that that Holy Door is still open and that the river of mercy gives



People cheer as the Pope passes the paediatric hospital in Bangui during his November 2015 visit

lifeblood to this Paediatric Hospital and to all those who will work there. May you always remember: "many concrete acts of goodness and tenderness are shown to the weak and the vulnerable, to those most lonely and abandoned. There are true champions of charity who show constant solidarity with the poor and the unhappy" (Apostolic Letter *Misericordia et Misera*, 17).

Thus I encourage all of you to carry out your work of caring for children, inspired by charity, always thinking of the "good Samaritan" of the Gospel: may you be attentive to the needs of your little patients, may you tenderly bend down to their frailty, and may you be able to see the Lord in them. This Hospital reminds all of us that what we are living "is the time of mercy because those who are weak and vulnerable, distant and alone, ought to feel the presence of brothers and sisters who can help them in their need" (*ibid.*, 21).

Dear brothers and sisters, in practicing your medical profession, may you be artisans of mercy!

I address a deferential greeting to President Faustin-Archange Touadéra. I also greet the Apostolic Nuncio, Msgr Santiago De Wit Guzmán and the President of Bambino Gesù Hospital, Ms Mariella Enoc, who worked so hard on this construction project. And a greeting goes to Cardinal Konrad [Krajewski], who renders the Pope's charity present in the world. Those who take care of the little ones are on God's side. Do not forget: those who take care of the little ones are on God's side and overcome the throw-away culture! May this new Hospital become a model and reference point for the entire country. Remember: in the sick there is Christ, and in the love of those who bend down to His wounds lies the way to encounter Him!

I bless you! And please, do not forget to pray for me! Thank you.

With the President of the Central African Republic



On Tuesday afternoon, 5 March, Pope Francis received in audience H.E. Mr Faustin-Archange Touadéra, President of the Central African Republic, who subsequently met with Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Parolin, accompanied by Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher, Secretary for Relations with States.

During the cordial discussions, the existing good bilateral relations were evoked, as well as satisfaction at the ratification of the Framework Agreement between the Holy See and the Central African Republic. In this context, the parties underscored the contribution of the Catholic Church in the construction of the nation, and acknowledged the valuable role of Catholic institutions in the fields of education and healthcare. Particular mention was made of the recent inauguration of the Bangui Paediatric Hospital, for which the President expressed special gratitude to the Pope.

Attention then turned to the current situation of the country, with particular reference to the recent understanding reached by the various political actors, with a view to the resolution of conflicts and the integral development of the Central African people. Commitment was encouraged in promoting peaceful coexistence and national reconciliation, as well as the effort to bring an end to every type of violence, and to make it possible for refugees to return to their homes.

Framework Agreement between the Holy See and the Central African Republic on matters of mutual interest

On Tuesday, 5 March, Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Parolin and H.E. Mr Faustin-Archange Touadéra, President of the Central African Republic, met in the Apostolic Palace in the Vatican.

On this occasion, Cardinal Parolin consigned the Instrument of Ratification of the Framework Agreement between the Holy See and the Central African Republic on matters of mutual interest, which was signed on 6 September 2016 in Bangui.

The aforementioned Act completed the exchange procedure of the Instruments of Ratification of the same Framework Agreement, given that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of Central Africans Abroad had previously conveyed the Instrument of Ratification on the part of the State to the Apostolic Nunciature in Bangui.

The Framework Agreement, which entered into force on 5 March in accordance with its article 2.1 § 1, establishes the legal framework for relations between the Church and the State, which, safeguarding each one's independence and autonomy, undertake to collaborate for the spiritual, moral, social, cultural and material wellbeing of the human person, and in favour of the promotion of the common good.

VATICAN BULLETIN

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atrava Valls for the Section of Architects; Mr Marco Tirelli for the Section of Painters and Filmmakers; Mr Giuseppe Penone and Ms Elisabetta Benassi for the Section of Sculptors; and Fr Antonio Spadaro, SJ, Mr Alessandro D'Avenia and Mr Andrea Moro for the Section of Scholars and Poets (26 Feb.).

CARDINAL TAKES POSSESSION

On Sunday, 3 March, Cardinal Giuseppe Petocchi, Archbishop of L'Aquila, Italy, took possession of the Title of San Giovanni Battista dei Fiorentini, Rome.

NECROLOGY

Bishop Elliott Griffin Thomas, Bishop emeritus of Saint Thomas, Virgin Islands, USA, at age 92 (28 Feb.).

Bishop Rafael Torija de la Fuente, Bishop emeritus of Ciudad Real, Spain, at age 91 (2 Mar.).

In his Ash Wednesday homily Francis explains the meaning of Lent

Time to rediscover the direction of our life

"Lent is the time to rediscover the direction of life". Pope Francis recalled this in his homily at Mass on Ash Wednesday, 6 March, in the Santa Sabina Basilica in Rome, the destination of the penitential procession he led from the Church of Sant'Anselmo all'Aventino. The following is the English text of the Holy Father's Homily.

"Blow the trumpet [...] sanctify a fast" (Joel 2:15), says the prophet in the first reading. Lent opens with a piercing sound, that of a trumpet that does not please the ears, but instead proclaims a fast. It is a loud sound that seeks to slow down our life, which is so fast-paced, yet often directionless. It is a summons

sessions are temporary, power passes, success wanes. The culture of appearance prevalent today, which persuades us to live for passing things, is a great deception. It is like a blaze: once ended, only ash remains. Lent is the time to free ourselves from the illusion of chasing after dust. Lent is for rediscovering that we are created for the inextinguishable flame, not for ashes that immediately disappear; for God, not for the world; for the eternity of heaven, not for earthly deceit; for the freedom of the children of God, not for slavery to things. We should ask ourselves today: Where do I stand? Do I live for fire or for ash?



to stop, to focus on what is essential, to fast from the unnecessary things that distract us. It is a wake-up call for the soul.

This wake-up call is accompanied by the message that the Lord proclaims through the lips of the prophet, a short and heartfelt message: "Return to me" (Is. 55). To return. If we have to return, it means that we have wandered off. Lent is the time to rediscover the direction of life. Because in life's journey, as in every journey, what really matters is not to lose sight of the goal. If what interests us as we travel, however, is looking at the scenery or stopping to eat, we will not get far. We should ask ourselves: On the journey of life, do I seek the way forward? Or am I satisfied with living in the moment and thinking only of feeling good, solving some problems and having fun? What is the path? Is it the search for health, which many today say comes first but which eventually passes? Could it be possessions and wellbeing? But we are not in the world for this. *Return to me*, says the Lord. To me. The Lord is the goal of our journey in this world. The direction must lead to him.

Today we have been offered a sign that will help us find our direction: the head marked by ash. It is a sign that causes us to consider what occupies our mind. Our thoughts often focus on transient things, which come and go. The small mark of ash, which we will receive, is a subtle yet real reminder that of the many things occupying our thoughts, that we chase after and worry about every day, nothing will remain. No matter how hard we work, we will take no wealth with us from this life. Earthly realities fade away like dust in the wind. Pos-

On this Lenten journey, back to what is essential, the Gospel proposes three steps which the Lord invites us to undertake without hypocrisy and pretence: almsgiving, prayer, fasting. What are they for? Almsgiving, prayer and fasting bring us back to the three realities that do not fade away. Prayer reunites us to God; charity, to our neighbour; fasting, to ourselves. God, my neighbour, my life: these are the realities that do not fade away and in

which we must invest. Lent, therefore, invites us to focus, first of all on the Almighty, in prayer, which frees us from that horizontal and mundane life where we find time for *self* but forget God. It then invites us to focus on others, with the charity that frees us from the vanity of acquiring and of thinking that things are only good if they are good for me. Finally, Lent invites us to *look inside our heart*, with fasting, which frees us from attachment to things and from the worldliness that numbs the heart. Prayer, charity, fasting: three investments for a treasure that endures.

Jesus said: "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Mt 6:21). Our heart always points in some direction: it is like a compass seeking its bearings. We can also compare it to a magnet: it needs to attach itself to something. But if it only attaches itself to earthly things, sooner or later it becomes a slave to them: things to be used become things we serve. Outward appearance, money, a career or hobby: if we live for them, they will become idols that enslave us, sirens that charm us and then cast us adrift. Whereas if our heart is attached to what does not pass away, we rediscover ourselves and are set free. Lent is a time of grace that liberates the heart from vanity. It is a time of healing from addictions that seduce us. It is a time to fix our gaze on what abides.

Where can we fix our gaze, then, throughout this Lenten journey? It is simple: upon the Crucified one. Jesus on the cross is life's compass, which directs us to heaven. The poverty of the wood, the silence of the Lord, his loving self-emptying show us the necessity of a simpler life, free from anxiety about things. From the cross, Jesus teaches us the great courage involved in renunciation. We will never move forward if we are heavily weighed down. We need to free ourselves from the clutches of consumerism and the snares of selfishness, from always wanting more, from never being satisfied, and from a heart closed to the needs of the poor. Jesus on the wood of the cross burns with love, and calls us to a life that is passionate for him, which is not lost amid the ashes of the world; to a life that burns with charity and is not extinguished in mediocrity. Is it difficult to live as he asks? Yes, it is difficult, but it leads us to our goal. Lent shows us this. It begins with the ashes, but eventually leads us to the fire of Easter night; to the discovery that, in the tomb, the body of Jesus does not turn to ashes, but rises gloriously. This is true also for us, who are dust. If we, with our weaknesses, return to the Lord, if we take the path of love, then we will embrace the life that never ends. And we will certainly be full of joy.

Pope's sorrow for tornado victims in Alabama

In a telegram addressed to Archbishop Thomas John Rodi of Mobile, USA, and signed by Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Pope Francis conveyed that he had been "deeply saddened to learn of the tragic loss of life and the injuries caused by the tornado which struck Alabama in recent days". The Pontiff expressed his "heartfelt solidarity with all affected by this natural disaster", and prayed "that Almighty God may grant eternal rest to the dead, especially the children, and healing and consolation to the injured and those who grieve". The Holy Father in-

voked "the Lord's blessings of peace and strength" upon all those "who are suffering the effects of this calamity".

The string of tornadoes that struck central Alabama on Sunday, 2 March, killed 23 people and caused extensive damage, most of which occurred in Lee County, 120 km from the state capital. The weather service in Alabama reported that one of the tornadoes measured at least a half-mile wide with wind speeds ranging from 220 to 265 kph, earning it a rating of EF-3 on the Enhanced Fujita Scale. Rescue workers began searching for

survivors immediately, but the tornado had destroyed power lines, forcing them to use flashlights and vehicle headlights. Rita Smith, a spokesperson for the Lee County Emergency Management Agency, reported to "The New York Times" that more than 150 people had joined in the search and rescue operations. East Alabama Medical Center in Opelika admitted more than 70 patients on Sunday night alone.

Tornadoes are very common in the area at this time of year. In 2011 some 60 tornadoes hit Alabama, killing more than 240 people.

INTERVIEW WITH THE PRESIDENT OF MICROSOFT

ANDREA MONDA

Brad Smith, seeming younger than his not-quite-60 years, smiled brightly as he observed the manuscripts of Raimondo Lullo and Galileo, and especially the Gutenberg Bible. The president of Microsoft had just met privately with the Holy Father on the importance of an ethical approach to technology, which has reached the point of creating actual artificial intelligence, that today is seen as a crucial frontier for human destiny. We need a "human voice", Smith said to the Pope, "a human voice, loud and influential, like that of the Church". A voice, the Pope added, that "recovers human words that today are at risk of being dropped from the dictionary, such as tenderness, carress, fraternity". Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, President of the Pontifical Academy for Life (PAL) which promoted the meeting between the Pope and the president of the largest tech giant — explained that the PAL has announced an award in cooperation with Microsoft for the best doctoral dissertation on the topic of artificial intelligence at the service of human life. In an exclusive with *L'Osservatore Romano*, Brad Smith gave an interview inspired by the text of the Message for the World Day of Communications in which the Pope stated that "the use of the social web is complementary to an encounter in the flesh that comes alive through the body, heart, eyes, gaze, breath of the other. If the Net is used as an extension or expectation of such an encounter, then the network concept is not betrayed and remains a resource for communion". Hence the challenge is to move from network communities to the human community, a community that today is suffering from a crisis firstly of mistrust.

Technology is one of the main players in the change that mankind is going through. In this historical moment in which there's a huge crisis of global confidence (and politics is just the most obvious example), on the one hand one sees technology as something to fear; on the other hand, technology is perceived to be what makes us human, something that can distinguish mankind from every other living species. How do you think we have to look at technology? How can we infuse confidence and trust in the impressive potential of technological progress?

Science and technology are essential ingredients of modern life. They transcend local boundaries

Technology needs an alliance of ethics politics and law

and touch the lives of almost everyone on the planet. The evolution of mankind can be seen in terms of technological evolution as well. Like the steam engine that triggered the First Industrial Revolution, new technology, like artificial intelligence, is changing how we work and live. And like the railroads that those steam engines powered, these new inventions will need to be managed and ultimately regulated by societies. Any new technology that has broad societal impact will require new laws.

Technology is a tool that has profoundly impacted humans around the world in both good ways and bad. Even a broom can be used to sweep the floor or hit someone over the head. The more powerful the tool, the greater the benefit or damage it can cause.

Communications technologies from the telephone, to word processing software, to the internet have enabled people to connect with each other, learn about the world and express themselves in new ways. One of the world's ubiquitous tools is our own Microsoft Word. Many days Word is used by dedicated writers to advance the world's highest aspirations. But no doubt there are darker days when less

high-minded actors use it for writings, private sector and civil society. How can we build this alliance? Who is leading this transformation, as well as the huge amount of data being produced? How should private companies relate to politics? What are the mutual limits that business and politics will have to respect? What is the area of influence and participation of civil society?

To ensure that people have confidence and trust in technology, we need to think beyond the technology itself and address the need for strong ethical principles, the evolution of laws, the importance of training people with new skills, and even labor market reforms. If we are to make the most of powerful and promising AI technology, all of this must come together.

AI will impact every sector of society and won't be created or used by the tech sector alone. That's why the world needs to come together to address these issues with a sense of shared responsibility.

Referring to the transformation produced by the cloud, you spoke about this "shared responsibility" and about trust and inclusiveness. To make this transformation "non-inhuman", we need both the coexistence of these requirements as well as the development of an alliance between institu-

As technology evolves so quickly, those of us who create AI, the cloud and other innovations may know more than most about how these technologies work. But that doesn't necessarily mean that we know how best to address the role they should play in society. This requires that people in government, academia, business, civil society, and other interested stakeholders come together to help shape this future. And increasingly we need to do this not just in a single community or country, but on a global basis. Each of us has a responsibility to participate — as well as an important role to play.

For example, the development of more effective AI services requires the use of data — often as much relevant data as possible. And yet access to and the use of data also involves policy issues that range from ensuring the protection of individual privacy and the safeguarding of sensitive and proprietary information to answering a range of new competition law questions. A careful and productive balancing of these objectives will require discussion and cooperation between governments, industry participants, academic researchers and civil society.

On one hand, we believe governments should help accelerate AI advances by promoting common approaches to making data broadly available for machine learning. A large amount of useful data resides in public datasets — data that belongs to the public itself.

At the same time, it will be important for governments to develop and promote effective approaches to privacy protection that take into consideration the type of data and the context in which it is used. To help reduce the risk of privacy intrusions, governments should support and promote the development of techniques that enable systems to use personal data without accessing or knowing the identities of individuals.

At Microsoft we believe that fostering dialogue and the sharing of best practices among governments, businesses, representatives from non-governmental organizations and civil society will be key to maximize the technology's potential to deliver broad-based benefits. Working together we can identify issues that have clear societal or economic consequences and prioritize the development of solutions that protect people without unnecessarily restricting future innovation.

These transformations should tend to achieve a more cohesive world, guarantee democratic stability and ever greater "bottom-up" participation or on the contrary can they create conditions of greater social laceration?

At Microsoft we recognize that we have a moral

obligation not just to continue to innovate, but to build technology to solve big problems and to be a force for good in the world.

We recognize that the bigger a company is, the more responsibility it has to think about the world, its citizens and their long-term opportunities. We approach this goal by focusing on multiple strategies and constituencies; leveraging our core business for positive social impact; improving personal productivity; making sure our business is socially responsible by investing in sustainability, accessibility, privacy and security; and through philanthropy with more than \$1 billion in contributions across a wide variety of causes including teaching digital skills like coding and computer science. Here in Italy with the cooperation of the local NGO Fondazione Mondo Digitale, we'll be able to train 250,000 high school students, particularly those living in disadvantaged areas, and let them discover the power of AI.

Rapidly evolving technology impacting every sector means jobs of the future will require more digital skills, from basic computer literacy to advanced computer science. We at Microsoft feel we have the responsibility to contribute to help provide our youth with equitable access to rigorous and engaging computer science courses. If equitable access is left unaddressed, we will exclude entire populations from full participation in this new world, thus creating that "social laceration" you mentioned before.

In Italy we have a promising plan in place, "Ambizione Italia", to accelerate digital transformation, leverage AI and ensure nobody is left behind. At its core there is a complete program of skilling, upskilling and reskilling training. The program — in collaboration with The Adecco Group, Fondazione

Mondo Digitale and other partners — aims to reach over 2 million young people, students, NEETs and professionals across Italy by 2020, training more than 500,000 people and certifying 50,000 professionals.

Artificial intelligence is always connected with responsibility in your words and you often spoke about the need of regulations to provide tech players with an ethical framework. How can we direct artificial intelligence to the common good?

As computers gain the ability to learn from experience and make decisions, what type of experiences do we want computers to have and what decisions are we comfortable having them make? The ability for a computer to see and recognize faces to recognize people's faces from a photo or through a camera — facial recognition — has brought this into stark relief. This technology can catalog your photos, help reunite families or potentially be misused and abused.

Facial recognition technology raises issues that go to the heart of fundamental human rights protections like privacy and freedom of expression. These issues heighten responsibility for tech companies that create these products.

In our view, they also call for thoughtful government regulation and for the development of norms around acceptable uses. In a democratic republic, there is no substitute for decision making by our elected representatives regarding the issues that require the balancing of public safety with the essence of our democratic freedoms. Facial recognition will require the public and private sectors alike to step up — and to act. Globally, this is an issue that's just getting started.

Unless we act, we risk waking up five years from now to find that facial recognition services have spread



Brad Smith (centre) on his visit to the Vatican Library

in ways that exacerbate societal issues. By that time, these challenges will be much more difficult to bottle back up.

In particular, we don't believe that the world will be best served by a commercial race to the bottom, with tech companies forced to choose between social responsibility and market success. We believe that the only way to protect against this race to the bottom is to build a floor of responsibility that supports healthy market competition. And a solid floor requires that we ensure this technology, and the organizations that develop and use it, are governed by the rule of law.

Business leaders, policymakers, researchers, academics, and representatives of nongovernmental groups must work together to ensure that AI-based technologies are designed and deployed in a manner that will earn the trust of the people who use them and the individuals whose data is being collected.

Let us return to the Pope's Message for the World Day of Communications. Social network usage is complementary to face to face meetings. If the web is perceived as an expansion of the opportunities to meet with other people and share experiences, it clearly represents a great resource for everybody. Yet unfortunately social network does not automatically mean cohesion and inclusiveness. Sometimes they represent the basis for violent discussion and even social laceration: what can be the antidote to these risks?

At Microsoft we have a responsibility to create online services and communities where people feel safe. Last Feb 5th, on Safer Internet Day, the international day of action to promote safer and more responsible use of technology, particularly among children and young people, we developed a "Digital Youth Index" to demonstrate that online risks have real-world consequences.

We are deeply committed to the need to further educate teens, young adults, parents, educators, and policymakers about the real-world consequences of negative online interactions, which can include a loss of trust in others, increased stress, sleep deprivation, and even thoughts of suicide. We hope these findings will further serve as an evidentiary base for a global drive toward "digital civility".

The Digital Youth Challenge is also an awareness-raising opportunity that encourages consumers to be accountable for their online behavior and to serve as a role model and/or champion for others. The goal of the Challenge is to support Microsoft's long-term commitment to fostering safe, inclusive interactions online and to raise awareness about the need for "digital civility".



Pope's appeal to the World Congress in Brussels

For the total abolition of the death penalty

On Wednesday morning, 27 February, Pope Francis sent a video message to the Seventh World Congress Against the Death Penalty, organized by the 'Ensemble Contre la Peine de Mort' (Together against the Death Penalty) and the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty. In his video to the participants, who met in Brussels from 26 February to 1 March, the Pope expressed his hope that the "necessary steps" be taken to achieve the "total abolition of the death penalty". The following is a translation of the message, which was recorded in Spanish.

I greet the organizers and participants in the Seventh World Congress Against the Death Penalty, being held in Brussels.

Human life is a gift we have received, the most important and primary gift, the source of all the other gifts and of all the other rights. And, as such, it needs to be protected. Moreover, for a believer, the human being was created in the image and likeness of God. However, both for believers and non-believers, each life is good and its dignity must be protected without exceptions.

Hence, capital punishment implies a grave violation of the right to life that every person has. While it is true that human societies and communities must often face very grave crimes committed against the common good and the security of people, it is equally true that today there are other means to expiate the harm caused, and detention systems are increasingly effective at protecting society from the evil that some individuals can cause. On the other hand, we must never abandon the conviction to offer even those who are guilty of crimes the opportunity to repent.

For this reason, it never ceases to be a positive sign that there are increasingly more countries that focus on life and that



Joan Miró, "Hope of a condemned man III"

no longer employ the death penalty, or have eliminated it completely from their criminal legislation.

The Church has always defended life, and her view on the death penalty has matured. Hence, I wished that that this point be modified in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. The death penalty was long considered an appropriate response to the gravity of certain crimes and also to protect the common good. However, the dignity of a person is not lost even when he or she has committed the worst of crimes. No one's life may be taken away, nor may one be deprived of the opportunity to embrace once again the community that he or she has wounded and caused to suffer.

The aim of the worldwide abolishment of the death penalty is a courageous affirma-

tion of the principle of the dignity of the human person and of the conviction that the human race can address crime, and likewise reject evil, by offering the convict the opportunity and the time to mend the damage caused, to consider the act committed, and thus be able to change his or her life, at least interiorly.

I accompany you with my prayer and I encourage you in your works and deliberations, as well as the governments and all those who have responsibilities in their countries, so that the necessary steps may be taken towards the total abolition of the death penalty. It is in our power to recognize the dignity of each person and to work so that other lives not be eliminated, but won for the good of all society.

Thank you.

On Sunday, 3 March, Pope Francis made a pastoral visit to 'San Crispino da Viterbo', a parish on the outskirts of Rome. Looking ahead to the start of Lent, he described it as a season of prayer, both for the Church and for "one another ... always looking to the Lord who gives us the strength to go forward".

Evening had already fallen when, at 6:40 PM, after spending three hours with the community, the Bishop of Rome bid farewell from the sacristy of the parish church. "Thank you very much for your welcome!", he said, inviting the faithful to recite a 'Hail Mary' and offering a blessing to the many people who, finding the church completely full, followed the Mass on the jumbo screen outside.

The Pontiff arrived by car at approximately 15:45 on the sunny afternoon, and was welcomed by Cardinal Angelo De Donatis, Vicar General of Rome, Bishop Guerino Di Tora, Auxiliary for the northern sector of Rome, Fr Luciano Cacciamani, parish priest, and his associate pastor, Fr Andrea Lamonaca.

A banner behind the barrier read "The school of peace loves you", as a welcome from the Sant'Egidio Community, which is actively involved with San Crispino's *Caritas*. A yellow poster read "Benvenuto Papa Francesco" (Welcome Pope Francis), and was accompanied by a festive chorus of the faithful. Escort-

ed by Msgr Leonardo Sapienza, Regent of the Prefecture of the Papal Household; Pier Giorgio Zanetti, the Pope's personal Valet; and Alessandro Gisotti, interim Director of the Holy See Press Office, the Pope met with a number of young people. The littlest children performed a song for him, and older kids asked him questions and sought his advice. At the end of the encounter they gave the Holy Father two white roses and several rolls of paper bound up as parchment in which they shared their thoughts and drawings.



Holy Father on a pastoral visit in Rome

Season of prayer

In an adjacent room, Francis then met briefly with the families of infants who had received or were about to receive Baptism. Privately, away from the cameras, the Pope then had a personal encounter with two groups, first a group of homeless and indigent people who receive assistance from the parish *Caritas* and the Saint'Egidio Community, and then with a group of sick, disabled and elderly people, accompanied by volunteers. In both encounters Francis embraced each person individually, offering a caress, encouragement and comforting words.

Thereafter, the Pope met with a dozen local priests, who later celebrated the Liturgy with him, and heard confessions of five faithful of various ages.

During the Mass which followed, the prayer intentions included an invocation for the San Crispino community, "that it may grow in faith, hope and charity". Speaking off the cuff, the Holy Father delivered his homily on the day's Gospel passage from Luke (6:39-45) in which, "with parables", Pope Francis said, "Jesus explains Christian wisdom to the people". In particular, the Pontiff cautioned against looking for "the flaws of others"; instead, he said, "first look at your own".

Afterwards, Fr Cacciamani explained that the Pope's visit represented "a sign of encouragement and hope. We need to be supported in faith", he said, "helped to live those Gospel choices that we have already made but which, if not renewed each day with the vital sap of Christ, dry out".

In an exchange of gifts, the parishioners gave Pope Francis a painting dedicated to the theme of immigration: the work, created by the acolyte Meo Carbone, depicts Jorge Mario Bergoglio's father and grandparents in the glory of Saint Francis Xavier Cabrini. According to tradition, the Pontiff presented the parish with the gift of a chalice.

A 'bridge' between two eras

ANDREA TORNIELLI

Certain members of the press described him as the last representative of a Church that was anchored to the past, emphasizing only the discontinuity with his holy Successor. Yet Pius XII, in the world Eugenio Pacelli, remains a figure to be studied in depth, and this will be made even easier when the Vatican Archives pertaining to his Pontificate are opened. Pope Pacelli knew up close the dark pages of the 20th century; he was hostage to the Bolshevik revolutionaries and saw the birth of Nazism, a danger which he had ascertained at the very start of his service as a young Apostolic Nuncio in Munich, and which had led him to write in a letter to Cardinal Pietro Gasparri "that nationalism may be perhaps the most dangerous heresy of our time".

As Secretary of State he was the faithful collaborator of Pius XI, sharing his aversion to totalitarian ideologies but also sharing his attempt to find with the most hostile States a *modus vivendi* that could guarantee a minimum of freedom to Christians. He became Pope [on 2 March,] exactly 80 years ago, on the eve of a war that would count more than 50 million deaths, and culminate in the abyss of the Shoah, the genocide of six million Jews committed by the Nazis.

He was an admired and deeply beloved Pope throughout his lifetime and was known by the title, *defensor civitatis*, the protagonist of a great work of charity in favour of all the persecuted. He reigned in the difficult postwar years, indicating democracy as the way to rebuild all the good that had been wiped out by the conflict. He was a protagonist in crucial Italian political events. A certain historiographical debate, less heated today, presented him as the 'silent Pope', due to the stance he held during the Holocaust.

But a deeper and more measured appraisal of his Pontificate helps one to understand how Pope Pacelli, with his decisions and his Magisterium, was a bridge between one era and another, even in the ecclesial sphere. In 1952, during the Cold War, he was the first to modernize, precisely with regard to communism, the traditional Christian distinction between error and errant.

Pope Pacelli published doctrinal documents of the utmost importance and contributed to the developments consecrated by the Second Vatican Council, thus becoming the most quoted Pope: he introduced the application of the historical-critical method to Bible study, supported the liturgical movement and renewed the rites of Holy Week. He took into consideration the hypothesis of evolution, was open to natural methods for responsible maternity and paternity, internationalized the College of Cardinals, and in 1946 carried out what would remain for 55 years the most numerous 'creation' of new Cardinals in history. By percentage of ceremonies presided, he canonized the highest number of women, more than all of his Predecessors and Successors.



From 2 March 2020

Pope Francis to open Vatican Archives files on Pontificate of Pius XII

The Holy Father has decided to "open to the consultation of researchers the archival documentation pertaining to the Pontificate of Pius XII up to his death". Pope Francis announced the initiative – which will begin on 2 March 2020 – during an

audience with the staff of the Vatican Secret Archive, whom he received in audience in the Clementine Hall on Monday morning, 4 March. The following is a translation of Pope Francis' address, which he delivered in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I welcome you; I am pleased to receive you. I thank Msgr José Tolentino de Mendonça for the courteous greeting he addressed to me on behalf of all of you. I greet Msgr Sergio Pagano, Prof. Paolo Vian, the new Vice-Prefect, and you archivists, writers, assistants and employees of the Vatican Secret Archive, as well as the professors of the Vatican School of Paleography, Diplomacy and Archives Administration.

The occasion of your visit – at such a short time since my meeting with you and with the Apostolic Library last 4 December – is part of the joyful occasion, which was

with some prejudice or exaggeration). Today he is appropriately being reexamined and indeed placed in the proper light for his multifaceted qualities: pastoral, first and foremost, but also theological, ascetic, diplomatic.

At the behest of Pope Benedict XVI, you Superiors and Officials of the Vatican Secret Archive, as well as of the Historical Archives of the Holy See and of Vatican City State, from 2006 to today have been working on a joint project of cataloguing and preparing the voluminous documentation produced during the Pontificate of Pius XII, a part of which has already been made available for consultation by my venerated Predecessors Saint Paul VI and Saint John Paul II.

Therefore I thank you, and through you the other Vatican archivists as well, for the patient and scrupulous work you have done in these last 12 years, and which in part you are still carrying out, in order to complete the aforementioned preparation.

Yours is a work carried out in silence and far from clamour; it cultivates memory, and in a certain sense it seems to me that it may be compared to the cultivation of a majestic tree, whose branches stretch skyward, but whose roots are firmly anchored in the ground. If we compare this tree to the Church, we see that she stretches heavenward, where our homeland and our ultimate horizon lie; the roots, however, sink into the soil of the very Incarnation of the Word, into history, into time. With your patient efforts you archivists work on these roots and help to keep them alive, in such a way that even the greenest and youngest branches of the tree may draw good sap for their future growth.

This constant and by no means minor commitment of yours and of your colleagues, allows me today, in memory of that significant an-

iversary, to announce my decision to open to the consultation of researchers the archival documentation pertaining to the Pontificate of Pius XII, up to his death, which occurred at Castel Gandolfo on 9 October 1958.

I have decided that the opening of the Vatican Archives for the Pontificate of Pius XII will take place on 2 March 2020, exactly one year after the 80th anniversary of Eugenio Pacelli's election to the Chair of Peter.

I take this decision having heard the opinions of my closest Advisors, with a calm and trusting spirit, certain that serious and objective historical research will succeed in evaluating in its proper light, with appropriate criticism, the praiseworthy moments of that Pontiff and, no doubt also the moments of grave difficulty, of anguished decisions, of human and Christian prudence, which to some may appear reticent, and which were instead human and hard-fought attempts to keep alive, in periods of intense darkness and cruelty, the flame of humanitarian initiatives, of hidden but active diplomacy, of hope in the possible favourable opening of hearts.

The Church is not afraid of history but, rather, she loves it, and would like to love it more and better, as God loves it! Thus, with the same confidence of my Predecessors, I open and entrust this patrimony of documents to researchers.

As I thank you again for the work you have done, I hope you may continue in the task of providing assistance to researchers – scientific and material assistance – and also in the publication of sources pertaining to Pacelli which will be considered important, as in fact you have already been doing for several years.

With these sentiments, I wholeheartedly impart the Apostolic Blessing to all of you, and I ask you, please, to pray for me. Thank you.



precisely the day before yesterday, of the 80th anniversary of the election on 2 March 1939 as Supreme Pontiff the Servant of God Pius XII, of venerable memory.

The figure of that Pontiff, who was at the helm of the Barque of Peter at one of the saddest and darkest moments of the 20th century, in turmoil and largely destroyed by the last world war, with the consequent period of the reorganization of nations and post-war reconstruction, this figure has already been examined and studied in many aspects, at times debated and even criticized (one might say

Thursday, 31 January

The joyful priest

A priest who is true to his vocation can be recognized by the joy he feels and brings to people, Pope Francis said during his homily for Mass at Santa Marta on Thursday, 31 January, the Feast of Saint John Bosco. Indeed the Pope's reflection on the qualities that should distinguish priests drew inspiration from an event from the Saint's life: "On the day of his ordination, his mother said to him: 'you will be a priest, you will begin to suffer'", Pope Francis said. The purpose of this warning and "prophecy" from his humble mother was to let her son know that if he perceived no suffering, then that was a clear sign that "something was wrong". Why should a priest suffer?, the Pope asked. The reason can be found in Don Bosco's life choices. He "had the courage to view reality with the eyes of a man and with the eyes of God". Indeed, Francis noted, "in those Masonic days ... where the poor were truly poor", Don Bosco was moved to seek new avenues, human avenues that could help young people grow.

We all have these moments when "we feel nothing, the illusion of service to the Lord does not support us, and doing good is difficult for us". But even Jesus felt such times of "desolation", Pope Francis pointed out, such as his "sadness when he cried before Lazarus' tomb" and "when he told the Apostles on Holy Thursday: 'My soul is very sorrowful, even to death'". However, the Holy Father said, we must endure and resist these dark moments with "memory and hope".

We should remember the happy moments like "the happy days of the encounter with the Lord, for example" or when we have done a good deed and felt Jesus' presence nearby. Recalling "those early days when everything was luminous" is "the first prescription against desolation", the Pope explained. The second, he continued, is "hope". Indeed, he observed, "you only need endurance, so that you may do the will of God and receive what is promised", quoting the Letter to the Hebrews.

Thus, "when the devil attacks us with temptations, with vices, with our wretchedness" we should always "look to the Lord, the

Pope suggested, whether we "feel this invitation to convert, to open the heart to be healed, to find the Lord, to go forward".

But above all, Jesus commissioned the disciples to "proclaim so that the people would convert". And this required the authority to do so, which, Jesus said, the disciples were to earn by taking "nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts". Thus, their sole authority came from following in Jesus' footsteps, devoid of any attitudes of superiority. Rather, they were to be poor, with that "poverty that brings meekness and humility". It is with this "attitude of poverty, humility, meekness" that we can have the "authority to say: 'Convert', to open hearts". Through the "meekness and the authority of their example", the Apostles were able to cast out demons, "not with the authority of one who speaks from above but is not interested in people. That is not authority; it is authoritarianism", the Holy Father stressed. They were thus able to heal not only the spirit, but by applying healing oils, they also healed bodies. Because, the Pontiff added, "an anointing is God's caress". Like the Apostles who had to learn the wisdom of the "caresses of God", we too can heal people. "Each of us has the power to heal if we take this path": with a kind word, patience, advice or a humble glance. Pope Francis concluded by invoking the Lord to "give us this grace to heal as he healed: with meekness, humility, with fortitude against sin, against the devil, and to go forth in this beautiful mission of healing".

Friday, 8 February

The great gift of martyrdom

Commenting on the day's Gospel reading which described the martyrdom of John the Baptist, Pope Francis called on the faithful gathered for Mass on Friday, 8 February, to learn how to give one's life for others as John the Baptist did, in contrast to Herod whom Satan enveloped in corruption, hatred and vanity.

John the Baptist, the Pope said, knew he had to "annihilate" himself, to steadily "diminish", whereas Jesus was to grow. John's light, Francis observed, "slowly burned out, up to the darkness of that cell, alone in prison, where he was beheaded". Indeed, "the life of martyrs is not easy to recount: martyrdom is a service; it is a mystery; it is a very special and great gift of life". Pope Francis said.

The Holy Father then highlighted three attitudes found in the Gospel. The first of these attitudes is corruption, as demonstrated by the king, who believed John the Baptist was a prophet. Initially, the king protected and listened to John. However his perplexity upon hearing John accuse him of adultery led him to attempt to strike a "diplomatic balance" between his own dubious behaviour and the holiness of the prophet before him.

The second attitude is that of Herodias, the wife of the king's brother. "The Gospel says that she 'hated' John" because he spoke with clarity. And, the Holy Father continued, "we know that hatred is capable of anything". Indeed, "hatred is the breath of Satan", who does not know how to love". Herodias "had the satanic spirit of hatred".

The third attitude, vanity, is exhibited by the young dancer, Herodias' daughter, whose dancing so pleased King Herod that he promised her anything she desired.

Satan is behind all these attitudes, sowing "hatred in the woman, vanity in the young woman and corruption in the king", the Pope concluded. And within this context, John the Baptist died alone in a cell "because of the whim of a vain dancer, the hatred of an evil woman and the corruption of an indecisive king".

John, the greatest "man born of a woman", Pope Francis said, thus allowed himself to di-

Morning Mass at the Domus Sanctae Marthae

Moreover, the Pope continued, because Don Bosco "had the courage to look with the eyes of God", he looked "at reality with a father's love" and "at God with the eyes of a beggar who asks for something luminous", in this way moving forward. Priests "must have these two polarities: looking with the eyes of a man and with the eyes of God" which means, the Holy Father explained, spending "ample time before the tabernacle". Don Bosco had these two qualities which helped him to "see the way" and this is why, rather than just imparting precepts, "he drew near" to the people, "with their same liveliness... He walked with them, he listened with them, he saw with them, he cried with them".

But he warned there "is always the risk of looking too much at the human being and not at all at the divine, or too much at the divine and not at all at the human; however, if we do not take risks in life, we will never achieve anything".

Francis thanked God for having given us Don Bosco, who "knew what it meant to earn his daily bread, this man who understood what compassion was, what the real truth was".

Describing Don Bosco as a "teacher of joy", Pope Francis said that joyfulness in a priest shows he is doing well and looking at reality both with the eyes of a man and with the eyes of God. "Let us ask the Lord for the intercession of Don Bosco today, for the grace that our priests be joyful".

Friday, 1 February

Memory and hope

Like the many Christians who today are being persecuted and attacked for their faith, all Christians should face their darker moments with perseverance. Pope Francis made this affirmation in his homily for Mass on Friday, 1 February.

Indeed, the day's reading from Hebrews (10:32-39), which recounts Christians "struggling through a dark moment, a bad moment because they are being persecuted", is "a catechesis on perseverance: persevering in the journey of faith, persevering in service to the Lord", he explained



endurance of the cross, remembering the first beautiful moments of love, of the encounter with the Lord and the hope we are charged with".

The Holy Father concluded with a prayer for the "grace of memory and of hope, so that we may have that "endurance on the journey of our life".

Thursday, 7 February

Humility and healing

Christians must learn the "wisdom of God's caresses" and have the humility "to open their heart to be healed by the Lord", Pope Francis said in his homily during Mass on Thursday, 7 February. Moreover, Christians should exercise this same humility and meekness when caring for our needy brothers and sisters.

The Holy Father referred to the day's Gospel narrative which recounts the moment when Jesus sent his disciples out to heal, as he did when he came into the world to "heal the root of sin within us". This healing, the Pope explained, "recreated us from the roots and made us go forth with his teaching, his doctrine which is a doctrine that heals". The "first healing is conversion": opening our heart, "so that the Word of God may enter" because "a closed heart cannot be healed" just as a sick person cannot get better without a doctor's care. We should ask ourselves, the

Domus Sanctae Marthae

minish so as to leave his place to the Messiah. "Life has value only when we give it; when we give it in love, in truth; when we give it to others, in everyday life, in the family".

Monday, 18 February

Compromises in response to uncomfortable questions

We should stop making excuses or compromises in response to the uncomfortable questions God asks us, such as where is our brother, the one who is hungry, sick, in prison, unable to attend school, or who is a drug addict: Pope Francis expressed this concern in his homily during Mass on Monday morning, 18 February. We should not avoid these questions by making excuses, he stressed, adding that the Church's commitment on the front-line of social work is God's desire and certainly not the desire of a "communist party".

Referring to the day's first reading from Genesis which narrates the account in which God asks Cain the whereabouts of his brother, Abel, Pope Francis described God's question as embarrassing to Cain. And Cain responds defensively: "what do I have to do with my brother's life? Am I his keeper? I wash my hands of it". Thus, Cain was trying to escape God's gaze", the Pope explained.

Jesus too, the Pontiff recalled, "often asked Peter uncomfortable questions, for example: 'Do you love me?'. He asked the disciples: 'what do people say about me?', and 'what do you say?'. In our everyday lives, we answer these uncomfortable questions with "general principles which say nothing but that say everything, everything that is in the heart".

Pope Francis recommended we ask ourselves the same question: where is my brother? As if God were asking us. And our response, the Pope stressed, should include those whom Jesus names in Matthew, Chapter 25: the sick, the hungry, the thirsty, the naked.

The Holy Father noted that "we are accustomed to responding with compromises, giving answers to escape the problem, to avoid seeing the problem, to avoid touching the problem". Today, he continued, it would do us good to ask, "where is my brother?", and, listing all those mentioned in Matthew, to "answer openly with loyalty and joy".

Tuesday, 19 February

God's feelings

"Our times are no better today than they were during the Great Flood", and children are the first victims of the world's wars and injustices, while the poor pay the highest price, Pope Francis said during his homily on Tuesday, 19 February. This is why we should have the same feelings as God, and we should feel regret and pain, setting aside "sentimentalism" or abstract ideas and entering "the mystery of God's heart". Taking his cue from the day's reading from Genesis (6:5-8; 7:1-5, 10), which recounts the Great Flood, the Holy Father paused to reflect on two aspects: God saw the evil of mankind and regretted creating man on earth and this "grieved him in his heart". This means, the Pontiff continued, that God has feelings and is capable of anger. Though at first he reveals himself as a father, he is not an abstract God.

"We know for certain that when he became flesh, he had the capacity to feel like we do, with body and soul, to feel in his heart, God's heart". And, the Holy Father continued, "God the Father who loves us ... is capable of getting angry". However, "our God loves us with the heart; he does not love us with ideas". Have you ever thought, Pope Francis asked the faithful, that when "he disciplines

us, like a good father, he disciplines us with his heart", suffering from this more than we do.

In the same way, "our prayer, our relationship with God is not a relationship of ideas, but a heart to heart relationship". Today's humanity should weep like Jesus "at the problems we have, at the world's calamities, the poor, the hungry, the persecuted, the tortured". Therefore, the Holy Father continued, we should invoke the grace to have "a heart like God's heart", because, like Jesus' heart a human heart is "divine". Thus, "let us enter the mystery of the sorrowful heart of God who is Father, and let us speak with Him as we witness the many calamities of our time".

Thursday, 28 February

Five minutes for an examination of conscience

In the whirlwind of everyday life, in which people may tend to rely on health, wealth and power, they may recklessly go about just doing as they please. Pope Francis cautioned against this, during Mass on Thursday morning, 28 February, and explained that setting aside five minutes each day for an examination of conscience can help us take stock of our failures and weaknesses.

The Pontiff's reflection drew from the day's passage from the Gospel of Mark (9:41-50), in which Jesus offers words of "advice", including: "have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another". The Pope explained that "to have salt in yourselves" means "to have wisdom, that your life is wise".

Turning to the first reading from the Book of Sirach (5:1-10), which advises against desiring "wealth" and following our own "inclination and strength", the Pope called for a change of heart and conversion to the Lord.

He pointed out that wisdom is achieved each and every day by reflecting on our lives and taking time to carefully consider our actions. "Do not follow your instincts, your strength, indulging in the passions of your heart", the Holy Father stressed. Everyone has desires, he acknowledged, but we "must be careful and dominate these passions" or they will end up "dominating you".



The Pope advised the faithful to "stop, think: you are not eternal". We cannot continue to do just whatever we please, he said, trusting in God's infinite mercy. We cannot be rash and reckless, believing we will get away with whatever we have been doing. And while we may have gotten away with something once, we do not know when the end will come.

"Do not say, 'God's compassion is great, he'll forgive me my many sins, and so I continue doing what I want'", the Pontiff urged. A father or grandfather's advice might be: "Do not delay to convert to the Lord, do not postpone it from day to day, for suddenly the wrath of the Lord will burst forth", he warned.

Recalling that no one knows when life will end, the Holy Father urged that we take five minutes at the end of each day to examine our conscience, to convert to the Lord, that we not put it off to tomorrow. If we submit to one of our passions, we must try to avoid succumbing to it again. By dominating ourselves – rather than by being controlled by our desires – we will become "responsible" for our "actions". Taking five minutes at the end of each day, the Pope reiterated, "will help us consider a change of heart and conversion to the Lord".

Congregation for the Causes of Saints

Promulgation of Decrees

On Tuesday, 12 February, the Holy Father received in audience Cardinal Angelo Becciu, Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. During the audience, the Supreme Pontiff authorized the Congregation to promulgate the Decrees regarding:

- the miracle attributed to the intercession of Blessed John Henry Newman, Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church, Founder of the Oratory of Saint Philip Neri in England, born in London, England on 21 February 1801, and died in Birmingham, England, on 11 August 1890;

- the miracle attributed to the intercession of Blessed Mariam Theresia Chiramel Mankidiyan, Foundress of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Family, born in Puthenchira, India on 26 April 1876 and died in Kuzhikkattussery, India on 8 June 1926;

- the martyrdom of the Servant of God Salvador Victorio Emilio Moscoso Cárdenas, priest of the Society of Jesus, born in Cuenca, Ecuador on 21 April 1846 and killed in hatred of the faith in Riobamba, Ecuador on 4 May 1897;

- the heroic virtues of the Servant of God József Mindszenty, Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church, former Archbishop of Esztergom and

Primate of Hungary, born in Csehimindszent, Hungary on 29 March 1892 and died in Vienna, Austria on 6 May 1975;

- the heroic virtues of the Servant of God Giovanni Battista Zuaboni, diocesan priest, Founder of the Company of the Holy Family Secular Institute, born in Vestone, Italy on 24 January 1880 and died in Brescia, Italy on 12 December 1939;

- the heroic virtues of the Servant of God Manuel García Nieto, priest of the Society of Jesus, born in Macotera, Spain on 5 April 1894 and died in Comillas, Spain on 13 April 1974;

- the heroic virtues of the Servant of God Serafina Formai (in the world: Letizia), Foundress of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of the Good News, born in Casola Lunigiana, Italy on 28 August 1876 and died in Pontremoli, Italy on 1 June 1954;

- the heroic virtues of the Servant of God María Berenice Duque Hencker (in the world: Ana Julia), Foundress of the Congregation of the Little Sisters of the Annunciation, born in Salamina, Colombia on 14 August 1898 and died in Medellín, Colombia on 25 July 1993.

ANGELUS

“Those who have educational responsibility or who govern” must lead with wisdom; otherwise they risk “causing damage to the people” entrusted to them. Inspired by the day’s Gospel passage, Pope Francis emphasized this on Sunday, 3 March, as he addressed the faithful who had gathered in Saint Peter’s Square for the Angelus. The following is a translation of the Holy Father’s reflection, which he shared in Italian.



Francis’ message to those who govern or have educational responsibility

Be sound and wise leaders

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Good morning!

Today’s Gospel passage presents brief parables with which Jesus seeks to indicate to his disciples the path to follow in order to live wisely. With the question: can a blind man lead a blind man? (Lk 6:39), he wishes to emphasize that a leader cannot be blind, but must see clearly, that is, he must have wisdom in order to lead wisely, otherwise he risks causing damage to the people who are entrusted to him. Jesus thus calls attention to those who have educational responsibility or who govern: spiritual pastors, public authorities, legislators, teachers, parents, exhorting them to be aware of their delicate role and to always discern the right path on which to lead people.

And Jesus borrows a wise expression in order to designate himself as an example of teacher and leader to be followed: “A disciple is not above his teacher, but every one when he is fully taught will be like his teacher” (v. 40). It is a call to follow his example and his teaching in order to be sound and wise leaders. And this teaching is included above all in the Sermon on the Mount – which, in the past three Sundays the liturgy has offered us in the Gospel – indicating the attitude of meekness and of mercy in order to be honest, humble and just people. In today’s passage we find another significant phrase, which exhorts us to be neither presumptuous nor hypocritic-

al. It says: “Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?” (v. 41). So often, as we all know, it is easy or convenient to see and condemn the flaws and sins of others, without being able to see our own with such clarity. We always hide our flaws; we even hide them from ourselves; while it is easy to see the flaws of others. The temptation is to be indulgent with ourselves – lenient with ourselves – and severe with others. It is always useful to help one’s neighbour with wise advice, but while we observe and correct our neighbour’s flaws, we must be aware that we too have flaws. If I believe I have none, I cannot condemn or correct others. We all have flaws: everyone. We must be aware of them, and, before condemning others, we must look within ourselves. In this way we can act in a credible way, with humility, witnessing to charity.

How can we understand if our view is clear or if it is obstructed by a log? And again Jesus tells us so: “no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit; for each tree is known by its own fruit” (vv. 43-44). The fruits are actions but also words. A tree’s quality can also be understood from words. Indeed, those who are good draw good from their hearts and their mouths, and those who are bad draw bad, by practicing the most damaging exercise among us, which is grumbling, gossiping, speaking ill of oth-

ers. This destroys. It destroys the family, destroys school, destroys the workplace, destroys the neighbourhood. Wars begin from the tongue. Let us consider a bit this lesson of Jesus and ask ourselves the question: do I speak ill of others? Do I always seek to tarnish others? Is it easier for me to see others’ flaws than my own? And let us try to correct ourselves at least a little: it will do us all good.

Let us invoke Mary’s support and intercession in order to follow the Lord on this journey.

After the Angelus, the Holy Father continued:

Dear brothers and sisters, I greet all of you, coming from Rome, from Italy and from different countries. In particular the pilgrims from Warsaw, Madrid, Ibiza and Formentera.

I greet the community of the Minor Seminary of the Diocese of Otranto on pilgrimage to Rome with their parents.

Today many Italian parishes are present, many young confirmands and many school students. It is not possible for me to name every group, but I thank you all for being here and I encourage you to walk with joy, with generosity, witnessing everywhere to the Lord’s goodness and mercy.

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

