Crisis at USA-Mexico border

Immense sadness

With immense sadness, the Holy Father has seen the images of the father and his baby daughter who drowned in the Rio Grande while trying to cross the border between Mexico and the United States. The Pope is profoundly saddened by their death, and is praying for them and for all migrants who have lost their lives while seeking to flee war and misery.

To the Apostleship of the Sea
Justice and respect

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To International Youth Forum
Message of unity

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Theology congress in Naples
Open to dialogue and welcome

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Pope Francis celebrates Solemnity of Corpus Christi

In the mind-set of sharing

PAGE 6/7
Monday, 22 June
H.E. Mr Bogdan Konstantinov Paisievici, Ambassador of Bulgaria, in a visit to Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Monday, 17 June
H.E. Mr Tomaž Kunstelj, Ambassador of Slovenia, in a visit to Malabo.

Saturday, 22 June
H.E. Mr Bogdan Konstantinov Paisievici, Ambassador of Bulgaria, in a visit to Sri Lanka.

Saturday, 22 June
Cardinal Peter Turkson, Prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, in a visit to Angola.

Saturday, 22 June
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Francis continues catechesis on the Acts of the Apostles

No room for egoism in a Christian’s soul

“There is no room for egoism in the soul of a Christian”. Pope Francis emphasized this to the faithful who had gathered in Saint Peter’s Square and in the Paul VI Hall for the General Audience on Wednesday morning, 26 June. Continuing his series of catecheses on the Acts of the Apostles, the Pope focused on the narrative of the first Christian community regarding love of God and love of brethren. The following is a translation of the Holy Father’s reflection, which he shared in Italian.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Good morning!
The fruit of Pentecost, the powerful outpouring of the Spirit of God upon the first Christian community, was that many people felt their heart pierced by the Good News – the kerygma – of salvation in Christ, and they freely adhered to him, converting, receiving baptism in his name and in turn, welcoming the gift of the Holy Spirit. About 3,000 people joined that fraternity which is the habitat of believers and is the ecclesial leaven for the work of evangelization. The warmth of the faith of these brothers and sisters in Christ makes their lives the landscape of God’s work which, through the Apostles, is manifested with miracle and signs. What is extraordinary becomes ordinary, and everyday life becomes the site of the manifestation of living Christ.
The evangelist Luke narrates this to us by showing us the Church of Jerusalem as the paradigm for every Christian community, as the icon of a fraternity which attracts and should neither be idealized nor minimized. The narrative in the Acts of the Apostles allows us to look within the walls of the domus where the first Christians gather as God’s family, the space for koinonia, that is, of the communion of love among brothers and sisters in Christ. We can see that they live in a very precise way: they “devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers” (Acts 2:42). The Christians listen assiduously to the didache, the apostolic teaching: they apply a high level of quality in their interpersonal relationships also through sharing spiritual and material goods, they remember the Lord through the “breaking of bread”, that is, the Eucharist, and they dialogue with God in prayer. These are the attitudes of a Christian, the four marks of a good Christian.

Unlike human society which tends to follow its own interests regardless or even to the detriment of others, the community of believers rejects individualism in favour of sharing and solidarity. There is no room for egoism in a Christian’s soul: if your heart is selfish you are not Christian, you are worldly and only seek your own favour, your own advantage. And Luke tells us that the believers are together (cf. Acts 2:44). Closeness and unity are the style of believers: close, concerned for each other, not to speak ill of the other, no, but to help, to get closer. The grace of Baptism thus reveals the intimate bond between the brothers and sisters in Christ who are called to share, to empathize with others and to give “as any had need” (Acts 2:45), that is, generosity, charity, concern for the other, visiting the sick, visiting those in need who need comforting.

And this fraternity, precisely because it chooses the way of communion and attention to the needy, this fraternity that is the Church can live an authentic and true liturgical life. Luke says: “And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favour with all the people” (Acts 2:46-47).

Lastly, the narrative in the Acts of the Apostles reminds us that the Lord guarantees the growth of the community (cf. 2:47); the believers’ perseverance in a genuine covenant with God and with their brothers and sisters becomes an attractive force that fascinates and wins over many (cf. Evangelii Gaudium, 14), a principle that, thanks to which, the community of believers of all times lives.

Let us pray to the Holy Spirit that he make our communities places in which to gather and exercise the new life, works of solidarity and of communion, places in which liturgies are an encounter with God that becomes communion with brothers and sisters, places that are open doors to the heavenly Jerusalem.

SPECIAL GREETINGS

This Audience, the last before the summer break, is taking place with two groups: you who are here in the Square and a group of sick people who are in the Paul VI Hall and are following along on the jumbo screen, because it is very hot and it is better that the sick stay indoors. Let us greet the group of sick people!

I welcome all the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today’s Audience, especially those from England, Scotland, Wales, Australia, Japan, Guam and the United States of America. I greet in particular those taking part in the course on translating Latin liturgical texts sponsored by the Pontifical Atheneum of St Anselm. Upon all of you I invoke the joy and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ. God bless you!

I offer a special greeting to young people, the elderly, the sick and new arrivals. On Friday, we will celebrate the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. I invite everyone to look to that heart and imitate its most authentic sentiments. Pray for all Priests and for my Petrine Ministry, so that all pastoral actions may bear the imprint of the love that Christ bears for each human being.
Dear friends,

I am pleased to offer a warm welcome to all of you who are present for the 2019 International Conference of the Centesimus Annus pro Pontifice Foundation. I thank the organizers and those who have taken part in the discussions you have held on fostering an integral ecology.

Your Conference this year has chosen to reflect on the Encyclical L’audato si’ and the call to a conversion of minds and hearts so that the development of an integral ecology can become ever more a priority internationally, nationally and individually. In the four years since the publication of the Encyclical, there have certainly been signs of an increased awareness of the need to care for our common home. I am thinking of the adoption, by many nations, of the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations Organization; a growing investment in renewable and sustainable energy sources; new methods of energy efficiency, and a greater sensitivity, especially among young people, to ecological concerns.

At the same time, however, a number of challenges and issues still remain. For example, progress on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals has in some cases been slow and even now non-existent; or, sadly, has regressed. Improper use of natural resources and models of development that are not inclusive and sustainable continue to have negative effects on poverty, social growth and social equality (cf. Laudato si’, 45, 48). Laudato si’ is not a “green” encyclical. It is a social encyclical. Don’t forget this. Moreover, the common good is placed in jeopardy by attitudes of unbridled individualism, consumerism and wastefulness. All this makes it difficult to promote economic, environmental and social solidarity and sustainability within a more humane economy which considers not only the satisfaction of immediate desires but also the welfare of future generations. Pope Francis presented this challenge in an address to participants in an international conference sponsored by the Centesimus Annus pro Pontifice Foundation, whom he received in audience in the Sala Regia on Saturday morning, 8 June. The following is the English text of the Holy Father’s discourse, which he delivered in Italian.

Audience with Centesimus Annus pro Pontifice

"To promote economic, environmental and social solidarity and sustainability within a more humane economy which considers not only the satisfaction of immediate desires but also the welfare of future generations".

The task that lies before us is to change "models of global development" (ibid., 194), opening a new dialogue on the future of our planet (cf. ibid., 14). May your discussions and ongoing work bear fruit in helping to bring about a deep transformation at all levels of our contemporary societies: individuals, corporations, institutions and politics. Although this task seems daunting, I encourage you not to lose hope, for that hope is based upon the merciful love of our Father in heaven. He, who calls us to generous commitment and to give him our all, offers us the light and the strength needed to continue on our way. In the heart of this world, the Lord of life, who loves us so much, is always present. He does not abandon us, he does not leave us alone, for he has united himself definitively to our earth, and his love constantly impels us to find new ways forward.

Dear friends, with these sentiments, I entrust all of you, together with your families, to the loving intercession of Mary, Mother of the Church, and I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing as a pledge of joy and peace in Christ our Risen Saviour. I ask you, please pray for me. Thank you.

Mass at Santa Marta

Service and gratuitousness

During his homily at Santa Marta on Tuesday morning, 11 June, the Holy Father identified two qualities that should accompany Christians on their journey: service and gratuitousness. Commenting on the day’s Gospel reading (Mt 10:7-15) in which Jesus instructs the Apostles on how to conduct themselves as they preach the Word of God, Pope Francis reminded the faithful that, as successors of the Apostles, Christians should always be on a journey of service. “Christian life is to serve”, he stressed. It is very sad, he continued, to see “Christians who at the start of their conversion or of their awareness of being Christian, serve, are open to service; they serve the People of God”, but then wind up using them instead. This Francis warned, “does great harm to the People of God”.

As he continued his reflection, the Holy Father said that “the core of salvation is to ‘give freely what you freely received’. Because salvation cannot be bought and was given freely to us by God, it is a matter of using the same principle with others as God demonstrated with us. ‘Sometimes when we need something spiritual or a grace, we say: ‘Well now I will fast, I will do penance, I will pray a novena…”’. While all this is good, “let us be careful: this is not to ‘pay’ for the grace or to ‘purchase’ the grace; this is to expand your heart so that grace may be granted”.

Pope Francis noted that this is particularly true of the pastors of the Church. It is distressing, he continued, when “pastors do business with God’s grace”, because “the Lord’s grace is free and you must give it freely”.

With regard to spiritual life, “there is always the danger of slipping” into the idea of payments, “even when speaking with the Lord, as if we wished to bribe the Lord”. Our relationship of gratuitousness with God “is what will later help us to share it with others, both in Christian witness and in Christian service as in the pastoral life of those who are pastors of the People of God”. Thus, Pope Francis concluded, “may our life of holiness be this expansion of the heart so that the gratuitousness of God, God’s grace … may reach our heart.”
In the Clementine Hall on Thursday morning, 27 June, the Holy Father received in audience participants in a meeting for chaplains and volunteers of Stella Maris – Apostleship of the Sea. In his address, Pope Francis observed that “without sailors, the global economy would come to a standstill; and without fishermen, many parts of the world would starve”. The following is the English text of his discourse.

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

I am pleased to receive you, the national directors, chaplains and volunteers of Stella Maris – Apostleship of the Sea, on the occasion of your meeting, which has taken place here in Rome in these days. I thank Cardinal Turkson for his kind words of introduction and presentation. I welcome all of you and I trust that your gathering has been fruitful.

Your meeting has brought together chaplains and volunteers working in European ports at the service of sailors and fishermen, who by their hard work bring us products on which we depend daily. The work of these men is not always easy. They face human threats, such as piracy and terrorism, and by the extortion of traffickers, and by the seizures of those engaged in human trafficking, and by the exploitation of those who are made new by human greed. I am thinking of the rules and quality of relations that men and women who are made new by the love of God are able to change and to their material and spiritual needs. “Listening helps us to find the right gesture and word which shows that we are more than simply bystanders” (Evangelii Gaudium, 17).

Listening can then lead to action. I encourage you and the chaplains and volunteers of Stella Maris to double your efforts to confront issues that are all too often the fruit of human greed. I am thinking of human trafficking, forced labour and violations of the human and labour rights of so many men and women who live and work on the seas. Through your service, you can help restore to these persons their sense of dignity.

In addition, thanks to you, those who are most vulnerable can find hope for a better future. Your efforts can help them not to give up in the face of a life that is precarious and at times marked by exploitation. Your presence in the ports, large and small, is already a sign of God’s fatherhood and the fact that, in his eyes, we are all children, brothers and sisters to one another. Your presence is also a sign of the primordial worth of the human person, prior to and above every other interest, and an incentive for everyone, starting with the poorest, to work for justice and respect for fundamental rights. Let us remember that “men and women who are made new by the love of God are able to change the rules and quality of relationships, transforming even social structures. They are people capable of bringing peace where there is conflict, of building and nurturing fraternal relationships where there is hatred, of seeking justice where there prevails the exploitation of man by man. Only love is capable of radically transforming the relationships that men maintain among themselves” (Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, 4).

Dear brothers and sisters, I urge you to persevere in commitment to your apostolate, following the fine example of all those who have gone before you. Indeed, you are preparing to celebrate next year the centenary of Stella Maris at your Twenty-fifth World Congress in Glasgow, Scotland, where this mission of the Church was born in the hearts and actions of several lay people. This anniversary will be an occasion to remember the past in order to discern the present and to look ahead to the future. Pope Pius XI wanted the Stella Maris apostolate to extend its mission to the oceans and the shores of every continent. May the Holy Spirit, through the intercession of Our Lady, Star of the Sea, renew this pastoral service in accordance with the needs of our time.

Before concluding, I would like to say a word about peace of heart. Many sailors approach or come to see chaplains and priests with problems of conscience that make them suffer greatly, problems that they have never had a chance to bring up in those circumstances, so far from home, far from their native land, and in the situations that we have described. Dialogue with a chaplain may well open up new horizons of hope. So I would say to you, be merciful, be merciful. And to favour that mercy, I grant to all chaplains of sailors the same faculties I have given to the Missionaries of Mercy. In this way, you will be able to bring peace to so many hearts.

To all of you I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing, which I ask you to bring to everyone you meet. And please, do not forget to pray for me. Thank you!

Justice and respect for fundamental rights

To members of ‘Stella Maris’ – Apostleship of the Sea

In audience with Australian Bishops

On Monday morning, 24 June, the Holy Father received in audience members of the Episcopal Conference of Australia on their visit ‘ad limina Apostolorum’. 
In the mind-set of sharing

The Pope emphasizes the Eucharist as the culmination of Jesus’ life

Holy Father celebrates Mass in a Rome parish

Bread broken for a city suffering from decay and neglect
The Mediterranean is precisely a sea that is also a crossroad... It is a sea geographically closed to the oceans, but culturally always open to encounter, dialogue and mutual inculturation". Pope Francis emphasized this on Friday morning, 21 June, in Naples, where he addressed participants in a congress on "Theology after Vatica..." In the context of the Mediterranean, organized by the San Luigi Section of the Pontifical Theological Faculty of Southern Italy. The following is the English text of the Pontif's discourse.

The Pope reiterates the multicultural and multi-religious reality of the Mediterranean

Dear Students and Professors, Dear Brother Bishops and Priests, Your Eminences, I am pleased to meet with you today and to take part in this Congress. I reciprocate most heartily the greeting of my dear Brother Patriarch Bartholomew, by many years a great precursor of Laudato Si’, who wished to contribute to the reflection with a personal message. I thank you Bartholomew, my beloved brother.

The Mediterranean has always been a place of transit, of exchanges, and sometimes even of conflicts. We are all too familiar with many of them. This place today raises a number of questions, often dramatic ones. They can be expressed in some of the questions that we asked ourselves at the inter-religious meeting in Abu Dhabi: how can we take care of each other within the one human family? How can we foster a tolerant and peaceful brotherhood instead of walls of separation? These and other issues need to be discussed at various levels, and to take part in this Congress. I am pleased to meet with you today and to participate in this Congress. I am very struck by the advice given by Francis to his friars: "Preach the Gospel: if necessary, also with words". That is witness!

This docility to the Spirit implies a style of life and proclamation that is without a spirit of conquest, without a desire to proselytize – which is barren! – and without an aggressive intent to disprove the other. An approach that enters into dialogue with others “from within”, with their cultures, their histories, their different religious traditions; an approach that, in keeping with the Gospel, also includes witnessing to the signs of the anti-Kingdom that disfigure the soul and human history. It is a method that allows us – in a dynamic that is ongoing – to confront ourselves with every human condition and to grasp what Christian light can illuminate the folds of reality and what efforts the Spirit of the Risen Crucified One is arousing, from time to time, here and now.

The dialogical way of proceeding is the path to arrive where paradoxic, ways of feeling, symbols, and representations of individuals and of peoples are formed. To arrive there – as "spiritual ethnographers", so to speak, of the souls of peoples – to be able to dialogue in depth and, if possible, to contribute to their development with the proclamation of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, the fruit of which is the maturation of a fraternity that is ever more expanded and inclusive. Dialogue and proclamation of the Gospel that can take place in the ways outlined by Francis of Assisi in the Regula pastoralis, just the day after his trip to the Mediterranean East. For Francis there is a first way in which, simply, one lives as a Christian: “One way is that they do not make quarrels or disputes, but are subject to every human creature for the love of God and confession to being Christians” (XVI: FF 53). Then there is a second way in which, always docile to the signs and actions of the Risen Lord and his Spirit of peace, the Christi-an faith is proclaimed as a manifestation in Jesus of God’s love for all men. I am very struck by the advice given by Francis: "Preach the Gospel: if necessary, also with words". That is witness!

A theology of welcoming and dialogue

In this Congress, you have first analyzed contradictions and difficulties found in the Mediterranean, and then you have asked yourselves about what the best solutions might be. In this regard, you are wondering which theology is appropriate to the context in which you live and work. I would say that theology, particularly in this context, is called to be a welcoming theology and to develop a sincere dialogue with social and civil institutions, with university and research centers, with religious leaders and with all women and men of good will, for the construction in peace of an inclusive and fraternal society, and also for the care of creation.

When in the Foreword of Veritatis Gaudium the contemplation and presentation of the heart of the kerygma is mentioned together with dialogue as criteria for renewing studies, it means that they are at the service of the path of a Church that increasingly puts evangelization at the center. Not apologists, not manuals, as we hear, but evangelizing. At the center is evangelizing, which is not the same thing as proselytizing. In dialogue with cultures and religions, the Church announces the Good News of Jesus and the practice of evangelical love which He preached as a synthesis of the whole teaching of the Law, the message of the Prophets and the will of the Father. Dialogue is above all a method of discernment and proclamation of the Word of love which is addressed to each person and which wants to take up residence in the heart of each person. Only in listening to this Word and in the experience of love that it communicates can one discern the relevance of kerygma. Dialogue, understood in this way, is a form of welcoming.

I would like to reiterate that “spiritual discernment does not exclude existential, psychological, sociological or moral insights drawn from the human sciences. At the same time, it transcends them. Nor are the Church’s sound norms sufficient. We should always remember that discernment is a grace. At first, ultimately, discernment leads to the wellspring of undying life: “to know the Father, the only true God, and the one whom he has sent, Jesus Christ (Jn 17:3)” (Ap. Exhort. Gaudete et Exsultate, 179)

The renewal of schools of theology comes about through the practice of dialogue and through a dialogical way of proceeding capable of creating a corresponding spiritual environment and intellectual practice. It is a dialogue both in the understanding of the problems and in the search for ways to resolve them. A dialogue capable of integrating the living criterion of Jesus’ Paschal Mystery with that of analogy, which discovers connections, signs, and theological references in reality, in creation and in history. This involves the hermeneutical integration of the mystery of the path of Jesus which led him to the cross and to the resurrection and gift of the Spirit. Integrating this paschal logic of Jesus is indispensable for understanding how historical and created reality is challenged by the revelation of the mystery of God’s love. Of that God who manifests himself in the history of Jesus – in every circumstance and difficulty – as greater in love and in his capacity to rectify evil.

Both movements are necessary and complementary: a bottom-up movement that can dialogue, with an attitude of listening and discernment, with every human and historical instance, taking into account the breadth of what it means to be human, and a top-down movement – where “the top” is that of Jesus lifted up on the cross – that allows, at the same time, to discern the signs of the Kingdom of God in history and to understand prophetically the signs of the anti-Kingdom that disfigure the soul and human history. It is a method that allows us – in a dynamic that is ongoing – to confront ourselves with every human condition and to grasp what Christian light can illuminate the folds of reality and what efforts the Spirit of the Risen Crucified One is arousing, from time to time, here and now.

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This docility to the Spirit implies a style of life and proclamation that is without a spirit of conquest, without a desire to proselytize – which is barren! – and without an aggressive intent to disprove the other. An approach that enters into dialogue with others “from within”, with their cultures, their histories, their different religious traditions; an approach that, in keeping with the Gospel, also includes witnessing to the point of sacrificing one’s own life, as shown by the luminous examples of Charles de Foucauld, the monks of Tibhirine, the Bishop of Oran Pierre Claverie and so many brothers and sisters who, with the grace of Christ, have been faithful with meekness and humility and have died with the name of Jesus on their lips and mercy in their hearts. And here I think of nonviolence as a perspective and way of understanding the world, to which theology must look as one of its constitutive elements. The writings and practices of Martin Luther King and Lanza del Vasto and other peacemakers help us here. The memory of...
Blessed Justin Russsello, who was a student of this Faculty, and of Fr Peppino Diana, also studied here and was a young parish priest killed by the Camorra, help and encourage all to continue the mission of welcoming a dangerous syndrome: the "Babel Syndrome." We think that the "Ba- bel Syndrome" is when we do not know what the other person is saying. That is the first phase of the "Babel Syndrome" when we do not listen to what the other person is saying and think that we know what the other is thinking and is about to say: That is how there is a lack of dialogue.

Examples of dialogue for a theology of welcoming

While "dialogue" is not a magic formula, theology is certainly helped in its renewal when it takes serious account of the importance and advantages of dialogue. This is also true of theological study, as well as of teaching. When we read a text, we dialogue with it and with the "world" in which it is written; this also applies to sacred texts, such as the Bible, the Talmud and the Koran. Often, then, we interpret a particular text in dialogue with 'others from the same period or from different cultures. The texts of the great monotheistic traditions are in fact an invitation to dialogue with those people who were extremists, such as those from "secular" universities or from other religious communities and groups. "When the Church — and, we can add, theology — abandons the rigid schemes and opens itself to an attentive and discerning listening of young people, this empathy enriches it, because it allows young people to make their own contribution to the community, helping it to appreciate new sensitivities and to consider new questions (Ap. Excerpt. Christus Vivit, 65). To appreciate new sensitivities: this is the challenge.

Entering more deeply into the kerygma brings us to the experience and dialogue that arises from understanding and that generates communitarianness. In our case, the Mediterraneans begin understanding the other when they listen to the other, to understand the other who is different and to see in the other who is different a part of the whole. This is the first step in building a society that values diversity and fosters respect for motherhood and peaceful coexistence.

To educate students in this, I studied in the period of decadent theocentricism, the age of the manuals. We used to joke that all the theses in theology could be reduced to the following syllogism. First, things appear this way. But the real "Babel syndrome" is the confusion that arises when we don’t know what the other is saying.

A theology of welcoming is a theology of listening

Dialogue as a theological hermeneutic presupposes and involves conscious listening. This also means listening to the history and experience of the peoples who inhabit the Mediterranean, laying the ground in order to decipher the events that connect the past to the present and to be able to understand the potential that exists in the present.

Interdisciplinarity as a criterion for the renewal of theology and ecumenical studies involves the commitment to continually revisit and reconsider tradition. Reconsider tradition! And keep asking questions. In fact, for Christian theologians, listening does not happen in a vacuum, but is done from a theological heritage that — precisely within the Mediterranean space — has its roots in the communities of the New Testament, in the rich tradition of monotheistic faith, of Fathers and in many generations of thinkers and witnesses. It is that living tradition that has come down to us that can help to enlighten and decipher many contemporary issues.

I would like to give two concrete examples of how the dialogue that characterizes a theology of welcoming can be applied to ecclesiastical studies. First of all, dialogue can be entered into when we study the Bible. When we read a text, we dialogue with it and with the "world" in which it is written; this also applies to sacred texts, such as the Bible, the Talmud and the Koran. Often, then, we interpret a particular text in dialogue with others from the same period or from different cultures. The texts of the great monotheistic traditions are in fact an invitation to dialogue with those people who were extremists, such as those from "secular" universities or from other religious communities and groups. "When the Church — and, we can add, theology — abandons the rigid schemes and opens itself to an attentive and discerning listening of young people, this empathy enriches it, because it allows young people to make their own contribution to the community, helping it to appreciate new sensitivities and to consider new questions (Ap. Excerpt. Christus Vivit, 65). To appreciate new sensitivities: this is the challenge.

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A sea open to dialogue and welcome

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Provided, however, that it is read with a sincere will to purify memory, that is, discerning which was in accord with intention, which was revealed in the Spirit of Jesus Christ, and that which was unfaithful to him and his intention. Let us not forget that tradition is a root that gives life: it transmits life, it grows, flourishes, and bears fruit. So often we think of tradition as a kind of museum. No! Last week or the week before, I read a quote of Gustav Mahler, who said: “Tradition is the guarantee of the future, not the guardian of ashes!” Nice! We live tradition like a tree that lives and grows. In the fifth century Vincent of Lérins underlines, the internal growth of faith, the tradition, using these three criteria: anum consilicie, dilatatio tempus, subitum arte. That is tradition! Without tradition you cannot grow! Tradition serves growth, as the root serves the tree.

Networked theology

Theology after Veritatis Gaudium is a networked theology and, in the context of the Mediterranean, in solidarity with all the “shipwrecked” of history. In the theological task ahead, we recall St. Paul and the journey of early Christianity that connects the East with the West. Here, very close to where Paul landed, one cannot help but remember that the Apostle’s journeys were marked by evidence of St. Alvise, the shipwreck in the middle of the Mediterranean (Acts 27:8f). A shipwreck that makes one think of Jonah’s. But Paul does not flee and may even think that Rome is his Nineveh. He could be seeking to correct Jonah’s defeatist attitude and to redeem his attempted escape. Now that Western Christianity has learned from many mistakes and critical moments of the past, it can return to its sources hoping to be able to bear witness to the God of the peoples of the East and West, North and South. Theology – keeping its mind and heart in the context of the Mediterranean – can help the Church and civil society to set out again in the company of so many shipwrecked people, encouraging the people of the Mediterranean to reject any temptation toward reconquest or toward an identity that is closed in on itself. Both are, are nurtured and grow from fear. Theology cannot be done in a setting of fear.

The work of theological faculties and ecclesiastical universities contributes to the building of a just and fraternal society, in which the care of creation and the building of peace are the result of collaboration between civil, ecclesial and interreligious communities. A task whose aim is a work within the “evangelical network”, that is, in communion with the Spirit of Jesus who is the Spirit of peace, the Spirit of love at work in creation and in the hearts of men and women of every race, culture and religion. In an analogous way to the language used by Jesus to speak of the Kingdom of God, interdisciplinarity and net-working are intended to encourage the discernment of the presence of the Spirit of the Risen One in reality. By understanding the Word of God in its original Mediterranean context, it is possible to read the signs of the times in new contexts.

Theology after Veritatis Gaudium in the context of the Mediterranean

I have spoken a great deal about Veritatis Gaudium. I would like to thank publically, since he is here, Archbishop Zani, who helped craft this document. Thank you! What, then, is the task of theology after Veritatis Gaudium in the context of the Mediterranean? To go straight to the Theology of the Catholic University of Argentina: “Even good theologians like good shepherds feel the odor of the people and of the street and, by their reflection, pour oil and wine on the wounded – the signs of the times in new contexts.”

Theology is an expression of a Church which is a “field hospital”, which lives her mission of salvation and healing in the world. Mercy is not just a pastoral attitude but it is the very substance of the Gospel of Jesus. I encourage you to study how the various disciplines – dogma, morality, spirituality, law, and so on – may reflect the centrality of mercy. Without mercy our theology, our law, our pastoral care run the risk of collapsing into bureaucratic narrow-mindedness or ideology, which by their nature seek to domesticate the mystery. (Letter to the Grand Chancellor of the “Pentecost University Católica Argentina” for the 100th anniversary of the Founding of the Faculty of Theology, 3 March 2015). Theology, by following the path of mercy, prevents the mystery from being denigrated.

Secondly, a serious integration of history within theology is necessary, as a space open to the encounter with the Lord. “The ability to discover the presence of Christ and the Church’s journey through history makes us humble, and removes us from the temptation to seek refuge in the past in order to avoid the present. And this has been the experience of many scholars, who have begun, I wouldn’t say as atheists, but rather as agnostics, and have found Christ. Because history could be understood without this force” (Speech to Participants in the Conference of the Association of Professors of Church History, 12 January 2019).

Theological freedom is necessary. Without the possibility of experimenting with new paths, nothing new is created, and there is no room for the newness of the Spirit of the Risen One. “For those who long for a monolithic body of doctrine guarded by all and leaving no room for nuance, this might appear as undesirable and leading to confusion. But in fact such variety serves to bring out and develop different facets of the inexhaustible riches of the Gospel” (Ap. Exhorr. Evangelii Gaudium, 49). This also implies an adequate updating of the sinu situ

duorum. On the freedom of theological thought, I would make a distinction. Among the options, may we not have the option to move away with freedom; then, in the final instance, it will be the magistrate that decides, because freedom cannot be done without this freedom. But in preaching to the People of God – which is to say, the faithful of God’s people with disputed questions? Let disputed questions remain among theologians. That is your task. But God’s people need to be given substantial food. Of course, we cannot wish our faith and not relativize it.

Finally, it is essential to have light dreams of Theological Faculties, the priority given to welcoming and dialogue, to inter- and trans-disciplinary work and networking. The statutes, the method of teaching, the program of studies should reflect the physiognomy of the Church “which goes forth”. The class schedules and other aspects of university life should be designed to encourage as much as possible the participation of those who wish to study theology. In addition to seminars, films, conferences, even lay people and women both lay and religious. In particular, the contribution that women are making can and must work towards a theology indifferent or desegregated. Where theological research can promote a challenging but compelling process of interculturization.

Conclusion

The criteria of the Foreword of the Apostolic Constitution Veritatis Gaudium are evangelical criteria. The kerygma, dialogue, discernment, collaboration and networking, and here I would add parresia, which was cited as a criterion, which is the ability to press forward to the limits, side by side with hypomenon, patient endurance, the ability to stay within the limits in order to move forward – these are elements and criteria that translate the way in which the Gospel was lived and proclaimed by Jesus and with which it can still be transmitted today by his disciples.

Theology after Veritatis Gaudium is a kerygmatic theology, a theology of discernment, of mercy and of welcoming, in dialogue with society, cultures and religions, in the reconstruction of the peaceful coexistence of individually discerned criteria. The Mediterranean is a historical, geographical and cultural matrix for kerygmatic welcoming practiced through dialogue and mercy. Naples is an example and special laboratory of this theological research. I wish you all the best in your work!
God’s anger will blaze against those who sell arms

In an audience with ROACO Francis expresses desire to visit Iraq

In the Consistory Hall on Monday morning, 26 June, Pope Francis addressed participants in the Plenary Session of the Reunion of Aid Agencies for the Oriental Churches (ROACO), whom he urged to “attend to the plea of all those who in these years have been robbed of hope”. The following is the English text of His Holy Father’s discourse, which he delivered in Italian.

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to receive you at the beginning of the work of the ninety-second plenary session of ROACO. I greet Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, with gratitude for his kind words of introduction, and I thank him and the entire staff of the Dicastery, as well as you and the agencies you represent. You have assembled, from places throughout the world, because of your concern for the present and the future of the Oriental Catholic Churches.

Since our last meeting, I too have had several opportunities to encounter situations connected with the work of the Congregation and that of each one of you. I think of my recent Apostolic Journeys to Bulgaria, North Macedonia and Romania, but especially of the great day of prayer and dialogue with my brothers, the Patriarchs of the Middle East, which took place last 7 July in Bari.

In these days, the reports of the Papal Representatives from several countries and select speakers will help you to attend to the plea of all those who in these years have been robbed of hope. I think once more with sorrow of the dramatic situation in Syria and the dark clouds that seem to be gathering above it in some yet unstable areas, where the risk of an even greater humanitarian crisis remains high. Those lacking food, medical care and schooling, together with orphans, the injured and widows, cry out to heaven. The heart of man may be unfailing, but not God’s heart, grieved by the hatred and violence that break out among his children. His heart can always be touched; it will care for them with the tender love and strength of a father who protects and guides them. But I think sometimes of God’s anger that will blaze out against the leaders of countries who speak of peace and sell arms to make wars. This hypocrisy is a sin.

I think constantly of Iraq — where I want to go next year — in the hope that it can face the future through the peaceful and shared pursuit of what is common good on the part of all elements of society, including the religious, and not fall back into hostilities sparked by the simmering conflicts of the regional powers. Nor do I forget Ukraine, in the hope that its people can know peace; I have tried to soothe their pain with a charitiable initiative to which many individuals and ecclesial groups have contributed. In the Holy Land, I trust that the recently announced second phase of study for the restoration of the Holy Sepulcher, in which the Christian communities of the status quo are working side-by-side, will meet with whole-hearted cooperation from all local and international actors. And this for the sake of a peaceful and respectful coexistence for those living in the Holy Land, as a sign for all of the Lord’s blessing.

We hear the plea of persons in flight, crowded on boats in search of hope, not knowing which ports will welcome them, in a Europe that does open its ports to ships that will load sophisticated and costly weapons capable of producing forms of destruction that do not spare even children. This is the hypocrisy I spoke of. Here we can recognize the cry of Abel rising up to God, as we noted a year ago in Bari, as we joined in prayer for our fellow Christians of the Middle East.

In these days, together with voices of sorrow and lamentation, you will also hear voices of hope and consolation. They are the echoes of that tireless charitable outreach that has been made possible also thanks to each of you and the agencies that you represent. Such outreach manifests the face of the Church and helps give her life, especially by nourishing hope for the coming generations. Young people have a right to be able to hear the attractive and demanding word of Christ. As we often heard during last October’s Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, when the young encounter an authentic and credible witness, they are not afraid to follow that person and begin to think about their own calling. I ask you to continue and intensify your efforts, in the countries and situations that you support, to help young people to grow in humanity, freed from forms of ideological colonization and with open hearts and minds. Help them to value their national and ecclesial roots, and to desire a future of peace and prosperity that leaves no one behind and discriminates against no one. This year, the young people of Ethiopia and Eritrea — following the greatly desired peace between the two countries — abandoned their weapons and now know the truth of the words of the Psalmist: “You have turned my mourning into dancing” (Ps 30:11).

I am certain that young people hear clearly the appeal to sincere and respectful fraternity we made in the Document signed at Abu Dhabi with the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar. Help me to make that Document known and to spread the good covenant for the coming generations. Young people have a right to be able to hear the attractive and demanding word of Christ. As we often heard during last October’s Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, when the young encounter an authentic and credible witness, they are not afraid to follow that person and begin to think about their own calling. I ask you to continue and intensify your efforts, in the countries and situations that you support, to help young people to grow in humanity, freed from forms of ideological colonization and with open hearts and minds. Help them to value their national and ecclesial roots, and to desire a future of peace and prosperity that leaves no one behind and discriminates against no one. This year, the young people of Ethiopia and Eritrea — following the greatly desired peace between the two countries — abandoned their weapons and now know the truth of the words of the Psalmist: “You have turned my mourning into dancing” (Ps 30:11).

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Dear Young Friends,

I am very happy to meet you at the conclusion of the Eleventh International Youth Forum organized by the Diaconate for the Laity, Family and Life, aimed at promoting the implementation of the 2018 Synod on Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment. I am grateful to Cardinal Farrell and his entire staff for this initiative, which acknowledges that you, young people, are the chief protagonists of the pastoral conversion so greatly desired by the Synod Fathers. To call you “protagonists” is not just to say something nice about you. Either you are protagonists or you are not. Either you go ahead of the train or you end up as the final car, dragged along by the rest. Protagonists. You are young people, and you young people on the move, in a synodal Church, and this is what you have been thinking about and reflecting on during these past days.

I thank Cardinal Farrell for his kind words, all of you for the reading of the final proclamation, and Cardinal Baldeserri, who kept the Synod moving forward, for his presence. Thank you!

The Final Document of the last synodal assembly views “the account of the disciples on the way to Emmaus (cf. Lk 24:13-35) as paradigmatic, a model for our understanding of the Church’s mission to the young” (No. 4). When the two disciples were seated at table with Jesus, he “took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him” (Lk 24:35-40). It is not by chance that you celebrated the Solemnity of Corpus Christi at the very time when you were gathered for this meeting. Could it be that the Lord wanted once more to open your hearts so that he could speak to you through this page of the Gospel?

The experience of the disciples of Emmaus led them irresistibly to take up anew on their journey, even though they had already walked some seven miles. It was growing dark, yet they were no longer afraid to walk at night, for Christ was lighting up their lives. We too once encountered the Lord on the journey of our own life. Like the disciples of Emmaus, we were called to bring the light of Christ into the darkness of the world. You, dear young people, are called to be light in the dark night experienced by so many of your friends who do not yet know the joy of new life in Jesus.

Cleopas and the other disciple, after meeting Jesus, felt a vital need to be with their community. There can be no true joy unless we share it with others. “How very good and pleasant it is, when brothers live together in unity!” (Ps 133:1). I imagine that you are all happy that you could take part in this Forum. And now that the time has come to go home, perhaps you feel a certain nostalgia… and Rome will be a little more peaceful. But that is normal, it is part of our human experience. The disciples of Emmaus did not want their “mysterious” guest to go away… “Stay with us”, they said, in an effort to convince him to stay with them. In other parts of the Gospel, we see the same thing happening. We can recall, for example, the Transfiguration, when Peter, James and John wanted to set up tents and remain on the mountain. Or when Mary Magdalene met the risen Lord and wanted to cling to him. Yet, “his risen body is not a treasure to be locked up, but a mystery to be shared” (Final Document of the Synod, 125). You know, a fire, if it is not to go out, if it is not to turn into ashes, has to spread. So feed the fire of Christ burning in your hearts, and let it spread!

Dear young people, let me say to you once again: you are the today of God, the today of the Church! Not just the future, but the today. Either you start playing today, or you have lost the match. Today. The Church needs you, so that she can be fully herself. As Church, you are the body of the risen Lord present in the world. I would like you always to remember that you are members of one body, of this community. You are part of one another, by yourselves, you would not survive. You need one another, if you are to make a difference in a world increasingly tempted to disvivness. Think about it. Our world is more and more divided, and divisions bring wars and conflict in their wake. You have to be a message of unity. It is worth setting out on this path. Only if we journey together, will we be truly strong. With Christ, the Bread of Life who gives us strength for the journey, let us bring his fire to light up the darkness of this world!

I would like to take this occasion to make an important announcement. As you know, the journey of preparation for the 2018 Synod mostly coincided with the journey of World Youth Day in Panama, which took place just three months later. In my 2017 Message to Young People, I expressed my hope for a harmonious coordination between those two journeys (cf. Preparatory Document, 111, 9). Well then! The next international edition of World Youth Day will be held in Lisbon in 2022. (I can hear a fan of Portugal out there!) The theme I chose for this stage of the intercontinental pilgrimage of young people is: “Mary arose and went forth haste” (cf. Lk 11:28). In the two coming years, I would ask you to meditate on these two verses: “Young man, I say to you, arise!” (cf. Lk 7:14; Christus Vivit, 20) and “Stand up. I appoint you at a witness of what you have seen” (cf. Acts 26:16). In this way, I hope that this time too, will see a harmonious coordination between our journey towards the Lisbon World Youth Day and our post-synodal journey. Do not tune out the voice of God, who urges you to arise and follow the paths that he has prepared for you. Like Mary, and in union with her, may you daily bring to others his joy and his love. The theme says that Mary arose and went with haste to see her cousin. Always ready, always hastening, but not anxious or troubled. I ask you to pray for me, and now I will give you my blessing. All together, each in his or her own language, but all together, let us recite the Hail Mary. Hail Mary...