Holiness consists in humbling oneself

As he spoke about Saints Peter and Paul on Saturday, 29 June, the Pope continued his task — now more than six years in the making — of presenting the face of Jesus. After all, this is the principal activity of the vicar of Christ: to ‘re-present’ Him, to show us his face. And on Saturday the Pope told us that ‘Christ’ — that is, the Messiah — is “a word that points not to the past, but to the future: the Messiah is the one who is awaited, he is newness, the one who brings God’s anointing to the world. Jesus is not the past, but the present and the future. He is not a distant personage to be remembered, but the one to whom Peter can speak intimately: You are the Christ. For those who are his witnesses, Jesus is more than a historical personage; he is a living person: he is newness, not things we have already seen, the newness of the future and not a memory from the past. The witness, then, is not someone who knows the story of Jesus, but someone who has experienced a love story with Jesus”.

Speaking intimately with God is the ultimate meaning of Christianity. Saint Paul says it his own way in his Letter to the Romans: we “have received the spirit of sonship ... we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’”. ‘Father’ — but perhaps better translated as ‘dad’. Speaking on the Lord’s Prayer at the General Audience of 22 May, the Pope affirmed that prayer is born from the courage to call God by the name ‘Father’: “it is not so much a matter of a formula, as much as a filial intimacy into which we are introduced by grace: Jesus is the revealer of the Father and he gives us intimacy with him”. In the Old Testament the Hebrews do not have this courage; the name of God is sacred, intangible and cannot be pronounced, even if there are various foreshadow-
Bishop of the Diocese of Tianjin dies

Bishop Stefano Li Side of the Diocese of Tianjin, Mainland China, died peacefully on the eve of Pentecost, 8 June 2019, at age 92. He had suffered from a chronic illness for many years, and had recently been admitted to a hospital in Tianjin.

The Prelate was born on 2 October 1926 in Zunhua, Hebei Province, to a family with a long Catholic tradition. In early childhood he felt called to consecrate himself completely to the Lord, so in 1949 he entered the local minor seminary. In 1945 he moved to the major seminary of Sheng in Beijing in 1949. On 10 July 1955, he was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Tianjin.

He was arrested in 1958 in the grave context of the 1950s. He was released in 1962, arrested again in 1965, after which he was sentenced to interment and forced labour until 1980. Returning to his pastoral ministry in St Joseph’s Cathedral, he was consecrated Bishop in Tianjin on 15 June 1981, without government recognition.

In 1988 he was imprisoned for the third time, until 1991. In 1992 the authorities sentenced him to house arrest in the remote mountain village of Liang Zhiuang Zi, Jixian District, 60 km from Tianjin, where he remained until his death. He was only granted leave to enter the hospital. Despite his distant exile, he was visited by numerous faithful. The prelate consistently defended the principles of the Catholic Church and witnessed to the Gospel of Christ, heroically maintaining communion with the Successor of Peter.

Bishop Stefano Li Side was much loved and was always a point of reference for priests and lay faithful. Deeply devoted to the Blessed Mother, he was very attentive to the evangelization and mission of the Church. He strengthened vocations to the priesthood and in 1994 founded the Congregation of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary. He also extended his practical pastoral attention to the neediest people. A man of prayer, entirely dedicated to the service of God, Bishop Li Side lived in poverty and deep humility. He always urged the faithful to respect the laws of the country and to help the poor. Even in the various painful vicissitudes that marked his long life, he never complained, accepting everything as God’s will.

Commemorative Missions and mourning ceremonies were held in a mortuary chamber in Jizhou District, and in St Joseph’s Cathedral in Tianjin. His mortal remains rest in Jizhou District.

The Diocese of Tianjin today has about 60,000 faithful, 65 priests, and 2 women’s congregations consisting of some 70 sisters.
Pastoral guidelines of the Holy See concerning the civil registration of clergy in China

For some time requests have been received by the Holy See, from Bishops in Mainland China, for a concrete indication of the approach to be adopted in relation to the obligation of presenting an application for civil registration. In this regard, as is known, many Pastors remain deeply disturbed since the modality of such registration – which is obligatory, according to the new regulations on religious activities, on pain of inability to function pastorally – requires, almost invariably, the signing of a document in which, notwithstanding the commitment assumed by the Chinese authorities to respect also Catholic doctrine, one must declare acceptance, among other things, of the principle of independence, autonomy and self-administration of the Church in China.

The complex reality of China and the fact that there does not appear to be a uniform praxis with regard to the application of the regulations for religious activities, on pain of inability to function, makes it particularly difficult to determine in the desire to maintain the integrity of the Church's life and that history has shown that there does not appear to be a uniform praxis with regard to the application of the regulations for religious activities, on pain of inability to function.

In the third place, the context of the actual relations between China and the Holy See, characterised as they are by a consolidated dialogue between the two Parties, differs from that which saw the birth of the patriotic structures in the 1950s. In the fourth place, a factor of great importance should be added, namely, that over the years, many Bishops who were ordained without the previous mandate have asked for and received reconciliation with the Successor of Peter, so that today all Chinese Bishops are in communion with the Apostolic See and desire an ever greater integration with the Catholic Bishops of the whole world.

In light of these facts, it is legitimate to expect a new approach on the part of everyone, also when addressing practical questions about the life of the Church. For its part, the Holy See continues to dialogue with the Chinese Authorities about the civil registration of Bishops and priests in order to find a formula that, while allowing for registration, would respect not only Chinese laws but also Catholic doctrine.

In the meantime, bearing in mind what has been noted above, if a Bishop or a priest decides to register civilly, but the text of the declaration required for the registration does not appear respectful of the Catholic faith, he will specify in writing, upon signing, that he acts without failing in his duty to remain faithful to the principles of Catholic doctrine. Where it is not possible to make such a clarification in writing, the applicant will do so at least orally and if possible in the presence of a witness. In each case, it is appropriate that the applicant then certify to his proper presence of a witness. In each case, it is appropriate that the applicant then certify to his proper presence of a witness.

The Holy See continues to ask that the civil registration of the clergy take place in a manner that guarantees respect for the conscience and the profound Catholic convictions of the persons involved.
Lack of food is a challenge for all

Audience with participants in the 41st session of the General Conference of FAO

“The goal of Zero Hunger worldwide remains a great challenge” that “concerns each of us”, because “the approach we take makes us responsible, in one way or another, for increasing or alleviating the suffering of many of our brothers and sisters”, Pope Francis emphasized in an audience with participants in the 41st General Conference of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), whom he met in the Clementine Hall on Thursday, 25 June. The following is the English text of his discourse, which he delivered in Spanish.

I greet the President, Mr Enzo Benech, the distinguished delegates of the different nations and agencies, and all those taking part in this 41st Session of the FAO Conference. In particular, I wish to convey my greetings and appreciation to the Director-General, Professor José Graziano da Silva, who in a few weeks will conclude his service to this Organization. My heartfelt thanks for your work. And I congratulate His Excellency Mr Qu Dongyu on his election as FAO Director-General. I am confident that, with the help and cooperation of all, we will continue to cooperate in expanding and increasing, with responsibility and commitment, the effort to attain Goals 1 and 2 of the 2030 Agenda, and thus eliminate the complex, grave and unacceptable scourges of hunger and food insecurity with greater speed and efficacy.

The goal of Zero Hunger worldwide remains a great challenge, even if it must be acknowledged that great progress has been made in recent decades. In order to combat lack of food and access to drinkable water, there is a need to intervene on their underlying causes. The origin of this tragedy lies above all in a failure of compassion, the lack of interest on the part of many and a scant social and political will to honour international obligations.

Lack of food and water is not an internal and exclusive affair of the most poor and vulnerable countries, but one that concerns each of us. The approach we take makes us responsible, in one way or another, for increasing or alleviating the suffering of many of our brothers and sisters (cf. Address to the Members of the European Federation of Food Banks, 18 May 2009). We are all called to hear their desperate cry and to find ways of enabling them to remain alive and see their most basic rights respected.

One of these means, which is within our reach, is a reduction in the waste of food and of water. For this to happen, increased awareness of the problem and a greater sense of social responsibility will prove an investment, both short and long term. The younger generation will then pass on this witness to those yet to come, in the realization that this social tragedy can no longer be tolerated (cf. Laudato Si’, 50).

There is an evident link between environmental instability, food insecurity and migratory movements. The increased numbers of refugees throughout the world in recent years – the most recent UN statistics are striking – have shown us that one country’s problem is a problem of the entire human family. For this reason, agricultural development needs to be promoted in the most vulnerable regions, strengthening the resilience and sustainability of the land. This can only be accomplished, on the one hand, by investing in the development of technology and, on the other, by coming up with innovative and solidary policies for development.

FAO and other international organizations are appropriate actors to coordinate necessary and decisive measures aimed at ensuring that all, particularly the poorest, have the access to basic goods. These multilateral bodies need to be supported by the commitment of governments, businesses, academia, institutions of civil society and private individuals. Joint efforts by all will realize the goals and commitments already undertaken, through programmes and policies capable of helping local populations to grow in a sense of responsibility for their countries, communities and, ultimately, their own lives.

I would like to conclude by reaffirming the commitment of the Holy See to cooperate with FAO and to support the global effort to eliminate hunger in the world and to ensure a better future for our planet and for mankind as a whole. May God bless you in your work and your devotion to the authentic progress of our great human family. Thank you very much.
Unity is not uniformity but a symphony of many voices in charity

True unity “is not uniformity but a symphony of many voices in charity”. This message lay at the heart of Pope Francis’ address to the Delegation of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, whom he received in audience on Friday morning, 28 June, in the context of the traditional exchange of Delegations for the Feast Days of the Churches’ respective Patron Saints. The following is the English text of the Holy Father’s discourse.

Dear Brothers in Christ,

I offer a cordial greeting and a warm welcome to you, the distinguished members of the Delegation of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, whom my beloved brother Bartholomew and the Holy Synod have sent on the occasion of the Solemnity of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul. Your presence manifests the solid bonds existing between the Churches of Rome and Constantinople, and our common effort to journey towards the fullness of communion for which we long, in obedience to the clear will of Jesus (cf. Jn 17:21). The feast of Saints Peter and Paul, which falls on the same day in the liturgical calendars of East and West, invites us to renew the charity that generates unity.

At the same time, this feast reminds us of the apostolic courage of proclamation, which also entails a commitment to respond to the new challenges of the present time. This, too, is fidelity to the Gospel. With regard to such concern for today’s situation, I like to think of the attitude presented by the Ecumenical Patriarchate concerning other timely topics, such as efforts to combat modern forms of slavery, the need to accept and integrate migrants, displaced persons and refugees, and the promotion of peace at various levels.

Last month, during my pastoral journeys to Bulgaria and Romania, I had the joy of meeting Patriarch Neophyt and Daniel and their Holy Synods, and was able to admire the faith and wisdom of those Pastors. On such occasions, as in my different meetings with my brother Bartholomew and with other Heads of Churches, I have been able to appreciate the spiritual richness present in Orthodoxy. I assure you that I left those countries with a greater desire for communion, increasingly convinced that the restoration of full unity between Catholics and Orthodox will come about through respect for specific identities and a harmonious coexistence in legitimate forms of diversity. The Holy Spirit, for

Walking together in synodality

Message from Patriarch Bartholomew

In celebration of the Feast of the Patron Saints of Rome, a delegation of His Holiness Bartholomew, Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch, consigned a message to the Holy Father. The following is the English text of the Patriarch’s Message.

Your Holiness,

Once again, the light of the feast day of the holy, glorious and all-praiseworthy Chiefs of the Apostles Peter and Paul, has dawned. Therefore, we join in the celebration of our sister Church of Rome, “who presides in the East” (St Ignatius of Antioch, To the Romans) conveying our fraternal congratulatory wishes to Your Holiness, expressed in person through our Patriarchal Delegation, which is sent on the occasion of the Thronal Feast of your Church in accordance with the established blessed tradition.

Today, the Church of Rome, where the Chiefs of the Apostles have received the crown of martyrdom, is filled with light. As Saint Gregory Palamas once said on this feast, “the appearance of today to both these luminaries together brightens the Church, for their presence produces a wealth of light, not an eclipse. […] Light is not produced by one and received by the other in such a way that the latter’s radiance would vary somehow depending on the distance between them. Rather, both share equally in Christ, the everlasting Source of eternal light, and have attained the same height, glory and radiance. That is why the coming together of these lights signifies their solidarity and support for one another, illuminating the souls of the faithful twice over.” (Homily 28, 4)

The solemnity of today is indeed a synaxis, a gathering, a coming together inviting our sister Churches to embrace in charity. Unfortunately, due to various difficulties of our common history, the light of today’s synaxis is darkened by the fact that our sister Churches cannot yet share in the common cup of the Eucharistic synaxis. Nevertheless, the restoration of communion between our Churches remains our sincere hope, the main object of our prayers and the goal of the dialogue of truth established between our Churches.

We are delighted that the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between our Churches, which is now working for almost forty years, has progressed on a meaningful document on “Primacy and Synodality in the Second Millennium and Today.” As we informed the Coordinating Committee that met last November at the hospitable Monastery of Bose fulfilled an important step forward, and we pray that the future meeting next November will succeed in finalizing a text to be discussed at the next plenary of the commission. Indeed, reflecting together on this important topic is essential in order to restore communion between our sister Churches.

Our common participation in the Eucharistic synaxis presupposes that we are progressing together on the
Holiness in humbling oneself

The Apostles Peter and Paul stood before us as witnesses. They were tired of preaching and journeying as witnesses to Jesus. “Saul, why do you persecute me?” we might wonder. How many times might Peter have experienced feelings of guilt. How many times might Paul have thought back to his denial! Thinking back to their failures, they encountered irrepressible peace and joy. People who, like Peter and Paul, are unrepentant before God. Peter immediately told Jesus: “I am a sinful one” (Lk 5:8). Paul wrote that he was “a beast of the squalor, so to be called an apostle” (2 Cor 11:23). Throughout their lives they preserved this humility, to the very end. Peter died crucified upside-down. Paul was considered worthy to imitate his Lord. He is looking for people who are not self-sufficient, but ready to open their hearts to him. People who, like Peter and Paul, are unrepentant before God.

Witness to life. Their love, tough, even too our heart and brain. Both were deeply religious. Peter was one of the very few skeptics (cf. Jn 6:65), and Paul was “realistic for the traditions of his ancestors” (Gal 1:14). Yet they also made great mistakes: Peter denied the Lord, while Paul persecuted the Church of God. Both were set in the core by questions asked by Jesus: “Simon son of John, do you love me?” ( Mt 16:17). “Who are you?” (Acts 9:4). Peter was grieved by Jesus’ questions, while Paul was blinded by his words. Jesus called them by name and changed their hearts. After all that happened, they put their trust in him, on one who clarified his own life. Let us ask ourselves: who among us, in two or so repentence, witness to Jesus.

Witness to Jesus. Jesus is not the past, but the present: the Messiah is the one who is already among us. Jesus is not only a model, an example, a point of reference: he is life itself, the Church. He is looking for people who are not self-sufficient, but ready to open their hearts to him. People who, like Peter and Paul, are unrepentant before God. “The Son of Man is” (cf. Lk 9:20). Paul repeats this constantly, almost four hundred times: “For we are not like Moses, who spoke to an Israelite.

During the Angelus in Saint Peter’s Square on Saturday, 29 June, after celebrating Mass for the Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul, Pope Francis offered “good wishes to all the people of Rome and to those who live in this city,” and insisted: “It was the Son of God who came to face society’s issues with a sense of civic responsibility.”

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In closing, I wish you all a happy feast day, and love, the same hope, the same love, the same faith. The Lord is looking for each one of you and is pleased to say: “You are my Church.”

The Pope offers his best wishes to the people of Rome.
Speaking intimately with God

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

mass, not religious news. We may open computer sites and the papers, and talk about holy things, but this is to remain at the level of what are people saying? Jesus does not care about polls, past history or statistics. He is not looking for religion editors, much less 'front page' or 'statistical' Christians. He is looking for witnesses who say to him each day: 'Lord, you are my life.'

Having met Jesus and experienced his forgiveness, the Apostles bore witness by living a new life, they no longer held back, but gave themselves over completely. They were with the Eucharist, with half-measures, but embraced the only measure possible for those who follow Jesus: that of boundless love. They were "swooned out as a libation" (cf. 2 Tim 4:6). Let us ask for the grace not to be lukewarm Christian living by half measures, allowing our love to grow cold. Let us rediscover who we truly are through a daily relationship with Jesus and through the power of his forgiveness. Just as he asked Peter, Jesus is now asking us: "Who do you say that I am?" "Do you love me?" Let us allow these words to penetrate our hearts and inspire us not to remain content with a minimum, but to aim for the heights, so that we too can become loving witnesses to Jesus.

Today we bless the pallia for the Metropolitan Archbishops.

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Walking together in synodality

same path. In fact, walking together (synodality) is another image of the Church, or rather, another definition of the Church. For this reason, synodality derives its origin from the very depths of the mystery of the Church. It is not merely a matter of canonical tradition, but of fundamental theological and ecclesiological truth. Without synodality, the Church would lose it, give it away. Today our Churches are called to bear witness to the story of Jesus ("but do not experience ‘a love story with Jesus’); and there are those who, instead, either do not know or have forgotten the essence of that story, and brandish it against other persons or things as a talisman that can assuage the real or presumed fears that assail them. Before the Angelus on the same Saturday the Pope alluded to the obvious contradiction of this latter approach, stating that the Pope can, of course, say ‘Church’, however, ‘we do not say this with a sense of exclusive belonging but rather with an inclusive approach, to distinguish ourselves from others but to appreciate the beauty of being with others because Jesus wants us to be united and open. Indeed the Church is not ’mine’ because she responds to my ego, to my desires, but rather, because I pour my affection into her’. ‘Affection’ is the crucial point, the key between the synodal approach there are Christians in the middle, who, like Peter and Paul (and Francis), acknowledge they are sinners and in need of forgiveness for whom, more simply, ‘Jesus is a living person’.

Andrea Mondà

Mass on the Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul

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Pope Francis to Ecumenical Patriarch

that matter, is the one who creatively awakens a multiplicity of gifts, harmonizes them and brings them into authentic unity, which is not uniformity but a sympathy of many voices speaking the same Church. As Bishop of Rome I wish to reaffirm that, for us Catholics, the purpose of dialogue is full communion in legitimate forms of diversity, not a monotonous levelling, much less absorption.

For this reason I consider it valuable for our encounters to share our roots, to rediscover the goodness that the Lord has sown and made grow in each of us, and to share it, learning from one another and helping each other not to fear dialogue and concrete collaboration. The scandal of divisions not fully healed can only be removed by the grace of God as we journey together, accompanying in prayer each other’s steps, proclaiming the Gospel of love, harmony, working to serve those in need and dialogue in truth, without allowing ourselves to be conditioned by past prejudices. Thus, in that sincerity and transparency which the Lord loves, we will grow closer to one another and come to appreciate our own identity. We will grow in knowledge and mutual affection. We will experience the fact that, for all our differences, there is indeed much more that unites us and inspires us to move forward together.

Your Eminence, dear Brothers, I thank you for your visit and for your kind expression of closeness. I ask you to convey my warm fraternal greetings to His Holiness Bartholomew and to the members of the Holy Synod. And I ask you also, please, to keep for me a place in your prayers. May God the Almighty and Merciful, through the intercessions of Our Lady, comfort and encourage you, Peter, Paul and Andrew, the brother of Peter, bless and sustain your efforts on the path to full communion.

Thank you.

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In times of trouble in the world and within our respective Churches, reflecting on primacy and synodality is extremely important not only for restoring communion between our sister Churches, but also for the stability of our respective Churches. As your illustrious predecessor in the see of Rome, Pope Benedict, once formulated, "if the Church in the very depth of her being consists of the cooperation of the one, the presidency of love carries with it a responsibility for unity, which has a significance within the Church yet, at the same time, a responsibility for distinguishing what is Christ as against worldly society." (J. Ratzinger, Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith: The Church as Community, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005, p.253-254).

In this spirit, we were glad to join you last July in Bari with the heads of the Christian Churches of the Middle East, where we gathered together to pray and reflect on peace and reconciliation. The location of Bari, where the relics of Saint Nicholas of Myra, venerated by both the Catholic Church and Orthodox, are kept, was certainly a symbol of this strong desire for unity. And as the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church underlined, 'True peace is not achieved by force of arms, but only through love that 'does not seek its own' (1 Cor 13:5). The oil of faith must be used to soothe and heal the wounds of others, not to redouble new fires of hatred.' (Encyclical, 17)

Your Holiness, dearest Brother Francis, as we celebrate today the Thorial Feast of the Church of Rome, we reiterate our commitment for our common advancement on "the coming together" of our Churches. We pray that internal problems within our respective Churches may neither harm nor stop this blessed goal. In this sense, may our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ grant you health, strength and perseverance in your primatial ministry. Conveying to Your Holiness, the venerable Hierarchs and the Christ-loving faithful of your Church, our warmest greetings, we embrace you fraternally, and remain with much love and honor in Christ our God, whom we beseech to strengthen our common efforts and lead us towards unity.

At the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the twenty-ninth of June, 2009

Your Holiness’ beloved brother in Christ
Protect the dignity and rights of migrants

With Catholic civil aviation chaplains and members of the airport chaplaincy

Pope Francis reminded Catholic civil aviation chaplains and members of the airport chaplaincy that an important part of their mission is to ensure that the dignity of migrants “is always protected and their rights safeguarded”. He received the group in the Clementine Hall on Monday, 25 June, at that start of a four-day international seminar sponsored by the Observatory for Promoting Integral Human Development and attended by representatives of 92 airport chaplaincies and religious and lay pastoral agents. The following is the English text of the Holy Father’s discourse, which he delivered in Italian.

Your Eminence,

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I offer all of you a cordial welcome at the start of this International Seminar on the theme: “Catholic Civil Aviation Chaplains and Members of the Airport Chaplaincy at the Service of Integral Human Development.”

I thank Cardinal Turkson for his kind words of introduction.

In the course of my Apostolic Journeys, I have passed through many airports, where you, dear chaplains and pastoral workers, provide pastoral care in complex and very particular situations. Technological advances, a frenzied pace of activity and a constant flow of people all tend to create an atmosphere of anonymity and indifference in airports, making them great human outposts. Millions of people of different nationalities, cultures, religions and languages daily cross paths with people of different nationalities, cultures, religions and languages daily cross paths, so that every day, that single hour of transit, is unique and unrepeatable. You are creative in finding constantly new ways to show pastoral charity to all, whether managers, employees or passengers. Your witness, and the message you communicate in that particular moment, can leave a life-long impression. Availability is itself a powerful form of witness.

Let me relate a story I was told. A businessman, concerned about his business affairs, was in the airport. He went into the chapel looking for an electric outlet to recharge his computer. He found one. So he sat there for a while, waiting for the computer to recharge, taking his time... Then a lay chaplain came up to him and said, “Do you need anything?” He said no, but the chaplain went on to say, “You did the right thing, because electrical energy is like God’s energy, it is available to everyone, whether Christian or not, the Good Christ, who alone knows what lies hidden in the heart...”

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Dear Brothers!

I offer a cordial welcome to you, members of the General Chapter of your Order. I thank the new Minister General, Fr. Carlos Trovarelly. My congratulations go to him and to the Definitors General for the trust their brothers have placed in them.

Recently the Holy See approved your Constitutions, renewed at the Extraordinary General Chapter held last summer. In order to incorporate this revision, you have now discussed the Extraordinary General Chapter Statutes which touch upon the essential elements of your fraternal and missionary life, such as formation, interculturality, sharing and transparency in economic management. This task is laborious, but is effort well spent! Indeed, the Constitutions are the necessary instrument to safeguard the charismatic patrimony of an Institute and ensure its future transmission. They express the concrete way of following Christ proposed by the Gospel, the absolute rule of life for all consecrated people and particularly for the followers of Saint Francis of Assisi, who, in the profession, commit themselves to “live according to the form of the holy Gospel” (cf. Saint Francis, Testamento, 14). I am quite struck by that advice Francis gave to the brothers: “Preach the Gospel: if necessary, also with words”: it is a way of life. If every consecrated life “is born from hearing the Word of God and embracing the Gospel as its norm of life” (Synod of Bishops on the Word of God, Proposito 24), the Franciscan life in all its manifestations is born from hearing the holy Gospel, as the Proverbs shows us in the Proverbianum when, after hearing the story of the following, he exclaims: “This is what I wish, this is what I am seeking, this I long with all my inmost heart to do” (Thomaz of Celano, The First Life of Saint Francis, IX, 22).

The Gospel is for you, dear brothers, “rule and life” (Saint Francis, Regula Breviarii, I, 1) and your mission, necessary otherwise to the one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, is to be a living Gospel, “a living ‘lexicon’ of God’s word”, as Benedict XVI said (Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation Verbum Domini, 85). The Gospel must be your vademecum. Always listen to it carefully; pray with it; and after the example of Mary, “Virgin made Church” (cf. Saint Francis, Greeting to the Blessed Virgin Mary, 1), meditate assiduously on it, so that, by assimilating it, you may conform your life to the life of Christ.

This way of following is characterized, first and foremost, by fraternity, which Francis considered a gift: “The Lord gave me some brothers” (Testamento, 14). Fraternity is a gift to be received with gratitude. It is a reality that is always ‘on the move’, under construction, and thus asks for everyone’s contribution, without anyone excluding himself or being excluded, in which there are no ‘consumers’ but only builders (cf. General Constitution ofOFM Cons., 55). A reality in which one can live out paths of continual apprenticeship, of openness to the other, of mutual interchange; a welcoming reality, ready and willing to accompany, a reality in which it is possible to pause from everyday life, in order to cultivate silence and the contemplative gaze and thus recognize God’s influence in it; a reality in which you all consider yourselves brothers, both the ministers and the other members of the fraternity; an experience in which each one is called to love and nurture his brother, as a mother loves and nurtures her own child (cf. Saint Francis, Regula non Bullata, IX, 7). I encourage you to nurture your fraternity with the spirit of holy prayer and devotion “which all other temporal things should serve” (id., Regula Breviarii, II, 4). In this way, your fraternal life in community becomes a form of prophecy in the Church and in the world; and it becomes a school of communion, to be exercised always, following Francis’ example, in a relationship of love and obedience with the Pastors.

Another feature of your way of life is minority. I really like this: thinking about your minority. This is a difficult choice because it runs counter to worldly logic, which seeks success at any cost, wishes to take first place, to be considered as lords. Francis asks you to be minors, following the example of Jesus, who came not to be served but to serve (cf. Mt 20:27-28) and who tells us: “whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all” (Mt 20:26-27). May this be your only ambition: to be servants, to serve one another. Lived in this way, your existence will be a prophecy in this world where the ambition of power is a great temptation.

May you pray peace. The Franciscan greeting that distinguishes you is “Peace and good unto you”, that is, to live in harmony: peace God, with others and with creatures, reconciliation with oneself, with God, from the heart of Christ. Reconciliation is the prelude to the peace that Jesus left us (cf. Jn 14:27).

A peace that is not the absence of problems, but which comes with God’s presence within us, and which manifests itself in all that we are, do and say. May you be heralds of peace, first and foremost through life and then through words. May you be instruments of forgiveness and mercy at all times. May your communities be places where mercy is exercised, as Saint Francis asks you in his Letter to a Minister: “And by this I wish to know if you love the Lord God and me, his servant and yours if you have acted in this manner: that is, there should not be any brother in the world who has sinned, however much he may have possibly sinned, who, if he is looking for mercy, and if he were not to seek mercy, you should ask him if he wants mercy. And if he should sin there- after a thousand times before your very eyes, love him more than me so that you may draw him back to the Lord. Always be merciful to brothers such as these”. (91) There is no peace without reconciliation, without forgiveness, without mercy. Only one who has a reconciled heart can be a ‘minister’ of mercy, a builder of peace.

To do all this, an appropriate formation is necessary. A formative path that favours in brothers an ever fuller conformity to Christ; an integral formation, which involves all the dimensions of the person; a personalized and ongoing formation, as it is a lifelong itinerary; a formation of the heart, which changes our way of thinking, feeling and behaving; a formation in faithfulness, well aware that today we are living in a transi- ent culture, that ‘forever’ is very dif- ficult and definitive choices are not in fashion. In this context, there is a need for solid formators, experts in listening and in the roads that lead to God, capable of accompanying others on this journey (cf. Saint John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation Vita Consacrata, 65) formators who are skilled in discernment and accom- paniment. Only in this way can we contain, at least in part, the haemor- rhage of abandonment that besets the priestly and consecrated life.

Dear brothers, I wholeheartedly impart my Apostolic Blessing to you and to all the Communities of your Order. I pray for you. And it also comforts me that the Minister General said you will pray for me. Thank you!

Fraternity and minority
To the Order of Friars Minor Conventual

“Shalom te’ob” in Hebrew, which we can best translate as reconciliation: reconciliation with oneself, with God, with others and with creatures, that is, to live in harmony: peace which brings you harmony. It is a reconciliation that moves in concentric circles, starting from the heart and extending to the universe — but in reality it starts from the heart of God, from the heart of Christ. Re- conciliation is a prelude to the peace that Jesus left us (cf. Jn 14:27).

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Caring for others ... entails respect for the gift of life from beginning to end. For we are not the masters of life, it is given to us in trust, and physicians stand at its service’. Pope Francis recalled this in an address to members of the International Federation of Catholic Medical Associations (FIAMC) whom he received in audience in the Sala Regia on Saturday morning, 29 June. The following is the English text of the Holy Father’s discourse.

Your Eminence, Dear President,

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I offer you a cordial welcome and I thank Cardinal Turkson for his kind words. I am impressed that at this meeting you wanted to make a special act of consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Please know of my prayers that this will prove spiritually fruitful for each of you. I would now like to share with you a few simple thoughts.

The earliest Christian communities often spoke of the Lord Jesus as a “physician”, highlighting in this way his constant, compassionate concern for those suffering from every kind of illness. His mission consisted above all in drawing near to the sick and the disabled, especially to those for whom reason were looked down upon and marginalized. Jesus thus overturned the sentence of condemnation that so often labelled the sick person as a sinner. By his compassionate closeness, Jesus showed the infinite love of God our Father for all his children most in need.

Care for the sick emerges, then, as an essential aspect of Christ’s mission and, consequently, of the Church’s mission as well. The Gospels show a clear link between Jesus’ preaching and the acts of healing that he performed for all those who were, in Matthew’s words, “afflicted with various diseases and pains, demons, epileptics and paralytics” (Mt 4:24).

Important too is the way that Jesus cared for the sick and suffering. He often touched those persons and let them touch him, even in cases where it was forbidden. This was the case, for example, with the woman who had suffered for years from haemorrhages. Jesus sensed that he had been touched and that healing power had gone forth from him, and when the woman felt to her knees and confessed what she had done, he said to her: “Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace” (Lk 8:48).

For Jesus, then, healing involves drawing near to the person, even if at times there were some who would prevent him from doing so, as in the case of the blind Bartimaeus in Jericho. Jesus had the man brought before him and asked: “What do you want me to do for you?” (Mt 20:33). It might surprise us that the “physician” should ask the patient what he expects from him! Yet this highlights the importance of words and dialogue in a relationship of care. For Jesus, care entails entering into dialogue, in order to bring out the individual’s own desire and the soothing power of God’s love working through his Son. Caring means starting a process: a process of relief, consolation, reconciliation and healing. When care is given with genuine love for the other, it expands the horizons of the recipient, for human beings are a unity: a unity of spirit, soul and body. We can see this clearly in the ministry of Jesus. He never heals just one part, but rather the whole person, integrally. At times, he starts with the body, at other times with the heart – by forgiving sins (cf. Mt 9:5), but always for the sake of restoring the whole.

Finally, Jesus’ care involves raising up and then sending forth those whom he has drawn near to and healed. Many of the sick who were cured by Christ then became his disciples and followers.

In a word, Jesus draws near, shows concern, heals, reconciles, calls and sends forth. It is obvious that, for him, a relationship with persons afflicted by illness and in need involves one both personal and profound. Not a mechanical relationship, but a distant one.

It is to this school of Jesus, physician and brother to the suffering, that you, as physicians, believers and members of the Church, have been called. You are called to draw near to those experiencing the suffering brought on by illness. You are called to provide care with sensitivity and with respect for the dignity and for the physical and psychological integrity of each person.

You are called to listen attentively and to respond appropriately, in addition to the physical care you provide. This will make the latter all the more, if possible, and consequently, all the more effective.

You are called to offer encouragement and comfort, to reach out and to give hope. Care cannot really be given or received in the absence of hope. In this sense, all of us need hope. We are grateful to God who grants us that hope. But also grateful to all those who are called to it in medical research.

The last hundred years have seen immense progress in this area. New therapies and numerous experimental treatments have developed, forms of care that would have been unimaginable in earlier generations. We can and should alleviate suffering, while at the same time teaching people to become more responsible for their own health and the health of their relatives and friends. And we must remember that the work of caring for others also entails respect for the gift of life from beginning to end. For we are not the masters of life; it is given to us in trust, and physicians stand at its service.

Your mission is a witness of humanity, a privileged means of helping others to see and feel that God our Father cares for every individual, without distinction. To do this, he wishes to employ our knowledge, our hands and our hearts, in order to care for and bring healing to every human being. To each of us he wants to grant life and love.

All this requires of you competence, patience, spiritual strength and fraternal solidarity. The way you fulfil your mission as Catholic physicians should unite professionalism with the capacity for teamwork and ethical integrity. This will benefit both the patient and the environment in which you carry out your work. Very often – as we know – the quality of a hospital ward depends not merely on the sophistication of its technology, but on the level of professionalism and ethical commitment shown by the head physician and the medical team. We see this every day, many ordinary people who go to hospital: “I want to see this doctor, or that one” – why? Because they sense their closeness, their dedication.

By constant spiritual renewal and by drawing from the wellspring of God’s word and the sacraments, you will accomplish your mission well. The Holy Spirit will grant you the gift of discernment needed to confront sensitive and complex situations, and to say the right things in the right way, and with the right silence, at the right time.

Dear brothers and sisters, I know that you are already doing it, but I urge you also to pray for your patients and for all your colleagues and assistants. And because, do not forget to pray for me. Thank you!

VATICAN BULLETIN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

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The Holy Father appointed Cardinal Rummey Mamas- ceno Assisi, Archbishop emeritus of Arequipa, Brazil, as his Special Envoy to the celebration of the centenary of the Coronation of Our Lady of the Rosary of Chiquin- quira, Patroness of Colombia, to take place at the National Marian Shrine of Chiquin- quira on 9 July (25 June).

SPECIAL ENVoy

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START OF MISSION

On 5 May, Archbishop Gian- franco Gallone, began his mission as Apostolic Nuncio in Zambia with the presentation of his Letters of Credence to the President H.E. Mr Edzard Chagwa Lusaka. On 29 May, Archbishop For- tunatus Nwachukwu, began his mission as Apostolic Nuncio in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines with the presenta- tion of his Letters of Credence to the President H.E. Sir Frederick Bal- lantyne, Governor General.

NECROLOGY

Bishop Paulino do Liv- ramento Evaro, CSSp, Bishop emeritus of Santiago de Cabo Verde, at age 87 (28 June).
Bishop Giuseppe Fabiani, Bishop emeritus of Imola, Italy, at age 92 (15 June).
Bishop Carlito Joaquin Cenzon, CICM, Bishop emerit- us of Baguio, the Philippines, at age 80 (29 June).

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Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

In today’s Gospel passage (cf. Lk 9:57-62), Saint Luke begins the narrative of Jesus’ last journey towards Jerusalem, which ends at Chapter 19. It is a long journey, not only geographically and spatially, but also spiritually and theologically, towards the fulfillment of the Messiah’s mission. Jesus’ decision is radical and total, and those who follow him are called to measure up to it. Today the Evangelist presents us three characters – three cases of vocation, we could say – that shed light on what is required of those who wish to follow Jesus to the end, completely.

The first character promises him: “I will follow you wherever you go” (v. 57). Generous! But Jesus replies that the Son of man, unlike foxes that have holes, and birds that have nests, “has nowhere to lay his head” (v. 58). The absolute poverty of Jesus. Indeed, Jesus left his paternal home and gave up all security in order to proclaim the Kingdom of God to the lost sheep of his people. In this way Jesus pointed out to us, his disciples, that our mission in the world cannot be

A further step toward Peace
The Pope expresses hope as leaders of the USA and North Korea meet at the DMZ

At the end of the Angelus in Saint Peter’s Square on Sunday, morning, 30 June, Pope Francis expressed his hope that the meeting between the leaders of the USA and North Korea “may be a further step in the journey of peace, not just on that peninsula but in favour of the entire world”. Before the Marian prayer, he reflected on the day’s passage from the Gospel of Luke, which recounts the beginning of Jesus’ last journey to Jerusalem. The following is a translation of the Holy Father’s reflection, which he shared in Italian.

Dear brothers and sisters! In recent hours we have witnessed in Korea a fine example of the culture of encounter. I greet the protagonists with the prayer that this significant gesture may be a further step on the journey to peace, not just on that peninsula but in favour of the entire world.

On this last day of June, I hope that all workers will be able to enjoy a period of rest during the summer that may be of benefit to them and to their families.

I pray for those who have most suffered the effects of the heat in recent days: the sick, the elderly, who have to work outdoors, on construction sites.... May no one be abandoned or exploited.

And now, I offer my cordial greeting to all of you, people of Rome and pilgrims: families, parish groups, associations.

I greet in particular the group of Sisters of Saint Elizabeth and the pilgrims who have come by bicycle from Sartirana Lomellina. I see that there are many Polish people.... I greet the Poles. Well done!

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