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Angelus reflections



PAGES 11, 12

Cardinal Pell's appeal rejected

Holy See Statement

While reiterating its respect for the Australian judicial system, as stated on 26 February after the first instance verdict was announced, the Holy See acknowledges the court's decision to dismiss Cardinal Pell's appeal. As the proceedings continue to develop, the Holy See recalls that the Cardinal has always maintained his innocence throughout the judicial process and that it is his right to appeal to the High Court. At this time, together with the Church in Australia, the Holy See confirms its closeness to the victims of sexual abuse and its commitment to pursue, through the competent ecclesiastical authorities, those members of the clergy who commit such abuse.

PAGE 4

Chirograph of the Holy Father

New statutes of the IOR

PAGE 2

Archbishop emeritus of Jalapa

Cardinal Obeso Rivera dies

PAGE 4

Women Church World

Lydia: in Philipp

PASCUZZI ON PAGE 6/7

American novelist

Toni Morrison

PAGE 9

The mindset of sharing vs hypocrisy and one's own interests

Pope continues catechesis on the Acts of the Apostles



At the General Audience, on Wednesday, 21 August, Pope Francis resumed his catechesis on the Acts of the Apostles, highlighting the importance of communion and solid-

arity in building up the Christian family. Falling short of the sincerity of sharing and of love, he warned, "means cultivating hypocrisy, distancing oneself from the truth, be-

coming selfish, extinguishing the fire of communion" and choosing "the frost of inner death".

PAGE 3



On the Solemnity of the Assumption

A Rosary for Peace in Syria

On Thursday, 15 August, Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, after praying the Angelus, the Holy Father stressed the need to pray the Rosary for "peace in the Middle East and throughout the entire world". Speaking to the many faithful who had gathered in Saint Peter's Square, he added that "prayer recited with faith, is powerful".

On this feast day, the Pope blessed 6,000 Rosaries that will

be given, as a sign of his closeness, to Catholic families in Syria who have suffered during the war or have lost their loved ones. The Rosaries are part of an initiative sponsored by Aid to the Church in Need, and were made by the Carmelite Sisters in Bethlehem.

They will be distributed over the weekend of 14-15 September in parishes where Christians have been killed or kidnapped.

PAGE 5

Renewed fidelity to its original mission

ANDREA TORNIELLI

The renewal of the Statutes of the IOR represents an important step in the process of adaptation to meet the highest international standards. More importantly, it signifies renewed fidelity to the original mission of the Institute for the Works of Religion.

It is not by chance that one of the most significant innovations in this sense is the definition of the role of the Prelate. This is a key figure for maintaining contact with each component of the Institute, for ensuring the circulation of information, and for fostering relations. In fact, the Prelate now "maintains constant exchanges with administrators and employees", as well as "promoting the ethical dimension of their work" and keeping "the archive of the Commission of Cardinals". The office of the Prelate can no longer remain vacant, as has happened in the past.

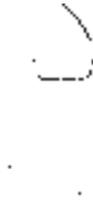
Other important signs are: the greater emphasis on the peculiarity of the IOR, its being subject to canonical norms, and its being set in the renewed Vatican legislative context, called for by Benedict XVI and completed by Pope Francis, with regard to financial transactions, transparency, and anti-money laundering.

Furthermore, significant attention is focused on employees who are also required to adhere to the Code of Ethics approved by the Board of Superintendence as well as to clear rules that prevent them from holding dual roles, providing consultancy or engaging in company shareholding. Therefore, employees must have an exclusive working relationship with the Institute.

The renewed Statutes show greater attention to guaranteeing the renewal of management responsibilities, control, and supervision. Members of the Commission of Cardinals and the Board of Superintendence cannot be re-appointed more than once, whereas the Director, who according to previous regulations could remain in office either for a fixed term or indefinitely, will have to retire at the age of 70, without the possibility of re-appointment. While the previous Statutes provided for a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

The following is a translation of the Chirograph signed by the Holy Father, for the two-year renewal 'ad experimentum' of the Statutes of the Institute for the Works of Religion (IOR).



With a Chirograph dated 27 June 1942, my Venerable Predecessor of venerated memory Pope Pius XII established the Institute for the Works of Religion in Vatican City and granted it juridical personality. The Institute incorporated the pre-existing "Administration for the Works of Religion", whose Statutes had been approved by the same Supreme Pontiff on 17 March 1941, which had originated in the "Commission *ad pias causas*" established by Pope Leo XIII in 1887.

With a further Chirograph dated 24 January 1944, Pope Pius XII issued new regulations for the Institute, leaving it to the Supervisory Commission of Cardinals to propose amendments to the Statutes of 17 March 1941 that might prove necessary for the Chirograph to enter into force.

Now, in order to coordinate and update the Institute's organization and activities to meet current needs, particularly drawing on the cooperation and sense of responsibility of competent lay Catholics, I wish to renew *ad experimentum* for two years the Statutes of the Institute for the Works of Religion, to which Saint John Paul II, with the Chirograph of 1 March 1990, had given a new framework, while retaining its name and finality.

1. The aim of the Institute is to provide for the custody and administration of moveable or immovable goods transferred or entrusted to the same Institute by physical or juridical persons, and intended for works of religion or charity.

2. The Institute enjoys juridical personality and has its offices in Vatican City State.

Chirograph of the Holy Father

New statutes of the Institute for the Works of Religion

For any dispute that may arise, the competent, authorized court is that of the Vatican City State.

3. The following are agencies of the Institute:

- The Commission of Cardinals
- The Prelate
- The Board of Superintendence
- The Directorate

4. The Commission of Cardinals is composed of five Cardinals appointed by the Supreme Pontiff *ad quinquennium* (for a five-year term) which can be renewed only once.

It oversees the Institute's adherence to statutory norms in accordance with the procedure provided for in the Statutes.

5. The Prelate, appointed by the Commission of Cardinals, monitors the Institute's work, serves as Secretary of the meetings of the Commission, and attends the meetings of the Board of Superintendence.

6. The Board of Superintendence is responsible for the administration and management of the Institute, and for overseeing and supervising its financial, economic operations.

The Board is composed of seven members appointed by the Commission of Cardinals, each of whom is appointed for a five-year term and confirmed only once.

7. The President of the Board of Superintendence is also the legal representative of the Institute.

8. The Directorate is made up of the Director General and possibly of a Vice-Director, both of whom are appointed by the Board of Superintendence with the approval of the Commission of Cardinals.

The Director General can be appointed for either a definite or an indefinite term. He is responsible for all the Institute's operational activities and is accountable to the Board of Superintendence.

9. The legal auditing of accounts is carried out by an external auditor appointed by the Commission of Cardinals proposed by the Board of Superintendence for a mandate of three consecutive years which can be renewed only once.

I hereby declare that this Chirograph be published in the daily *L'Osservatore Romano* newspaper together with the new Statutes of the Institute for the Works of Religion, which, following my approval *ad experimentum* for two years, will enter into force immediately from the date of publication and contemporaneously both texts will be inserted in the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*.

Given in Rome, at Saint Peter's, on 8 August in the year 2019, the seventh of my Pontificate

Franciscus

VATICAN BULLETIN

CHANGES IN EPISCOPATE

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Cardinal Polycarp Pengo, Archbishop of Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania. He is succeeded by Archbishop Jude Thaddeus Ruwa'ichi, OFM Cap., Coadjutor of the said Archdiocese (15 Aug.).

Archbishop Ruwa'ichi, 65, was born in Mulo-Kilema, Tanzania. He was ordained a priest on 25 November 1981. He was ordained a bishop on 16 May 1999, subsequent to his appointment as Bishop of Mbulu, Tanzania. He was appointed Bishop of Dodoma, Tanzania, on 15 January 2005. He was appointed Archbishop of Mwanza on 10 November 2010. On 21 June 2018 he was ap-

pointed Coadjutor Archbishop of Dar-es-Salaam.

SPECIAL ENVOY

The Holy Father appointed Cardinal Francesco Monterisi, Archpriest emeritus of the Papal Basilica of Saint Paul Outside-the-Walls, as his Special Envoy to the ceremony for the enthronement of the Emperor of Japan His Imperial Highness Naruhito, to take place in the *Seiden* (State Hall) in Tokyo on 22 October 2019 (10 Aug.).

NECROLOGY

Bishop Bernard Unabali of Bougainville, Papua New Guinea, at age 62 (10 Aug.).

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GENERAL AUDIENCE

The Christian community “grows thanks to the leaven of sharing” and overcomes hypocrisy and interests through the “concreteness of love”. Pope Francis shared this thought with the faithful gathered in the Paul VI Hall for the weekly General Audience on Wednesday morning, 21 August, as he continued his series of catecheses on the Acts of the Apostles. The following is a translation of his reflection which he delivered in Italian.



The mindset of sharing vs hypocrisy and one's own interests

Pope continues catechesis on Acts of the Apostles

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Good Morning!

The Christian community is born from the superabundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit and it grows thanks to the leaven of sharing among brothers and sisters in Christ. There is a dynamism of *solidarity* which builds up the Church as the family of God, for whom the experience of *koinonia* is central. What does this strange word mean? It is a Greek word which means “pooling one's goods”, “sharing in common”, being a community, not isolated. This is the experience of the first Christian community, that is, “communality”, “sharing”, “communicating, participating”, not isolation. In the primitive Church, this *koinonia*, this communality, refers primarily to participation in the Body and Blood of Christ. This is why when we receive Holy Communion, we say that “we communicate”, we enter into communion with Jesus, and from this communion with Jesus we reach a communion with our brothers and sisters. And this communion in the Body and Blood of Christ that we share during Holy Mass translates into fraternal union and, therefore also into what is most difficult for us; pooling our resources and collecting money for the mother Church in Jerusalem (cf. Rm 12:13, 2 Cor 8-9) and the other Churches. If you want to know whether you are good Christians, you have to pray, try to draw near to Communion, to the Sacrament of Reconciliation. But the sign that your heart has converted is when conversion reaches the pocket, when it touches one's own interests. That is when one can see whether one is generous to others, if one helps the weakest, the poorest. When conversion achieves this, you are sure that it is a true conversion. If you stop at words, it is not a real conversion.

Eucharistic life, prayer, the preaching of the Apostles and the experience of communion (cf. Acts 2:42) turn believers into a multitude of people who – the Book of the Acts of the Apostles says – are of “one heart and soul” and who do not consider their property their own, but hold everything in common (cf. Acts 4:32). It is such a powerful example of life that it helps us to be generous and not miserly. This is why the Book says, “there was not a needy person among them, for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid at the apostles' feet; and distribution was made to each as any had need” (Acts 4:34-35). The Church has always had this gesture of Christians who stripped themselves of the things they had in excess, the things that were not necessary, in order to give them to those in need.

And not just money: also time. How many Christians – you for example, here in Italy – how many Christians do volunteer work! This is beautiful. It is communion, sharing one's time with others to help those in need. And thus: volunteer work, charity work, visits to the sick; we must always share with others and not just seek after our own interests.

In this way, the community, or *koinonia*, becomes the *new way of relating among the Lord's disciples*. Christians experience a new way of being and behaving among themselves. And it is the proper Christian method, to such an extent that Gentiles would look at Christians and remark: “Look at how they love each other!”. Love was the method. But not love in word, not false love: love in works, in helping one another, concrete love, the concreteness of love. The Covenant with Christ establishes a bond among broth-

ers and sisters which merges and expresses itself in the communion of material goods too. Yes this method of being together, of loving this way, ‘up to the pocket’, also brings one to strip oneself of the hindrance of money and to give it to others, going against one's own interests. Being the limbs of the Body of Christ makes believers share the responsibility for one another. Being believers in Jesus makes us all responsible for each other. “But look at that one, the problem he has. I don't care, it's his business”. No, among Christians we cannot say: “poor thing, he has a problem at home, he is going through this family problem”. But “I have to pray, I take him with me, I am not indifferent”. This is being Christian. This is why the strong support the weak (cf. Rom 15:1) and no one experiences poverty that humiliates and disfigures human dignity because they live in this community: having one heart in common. They love one another. This is the sign: concrete love.

James, Peter and John, the three Apostles who were the “pillars” of the Church in Jerusalem, take a decision in common that Paul and Barnabas would evangelise the Gentiles while they evangelised the Hebrews, and they only asked Paul and Barnabas for one condition: not to forget the poor, to remember the poor (cf. Gal 2:9-10) Not only the material poor, but also the poor in spirit, the people with difficulty who need our closeness. A Christian always begins with him/herself, from his/her own heart and approaches others as Jesus approached us. This was the first Christian community.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



President of the Mexican Bishops' Conference for three terms

Cardinal Sergio Obeso Rivera dies

Cardinal Sergio Obeso Rivera, Archbishop emeritus of Jalapa, Mexico, died on Sunday evening, 11 August. He was 87 years old. After learning of the Cardinal's passing, Pope Francis expressed his condolences in a telegram addressed to Archbishop Hipólito Reyes Laríos of Jalapa. Cardinal Obeso Rivera's health had recently deteriorated so much that on 2 August, the Archbishop called for prayers for his predecessor who was admitted to hospital. Born in Jalapa on 31 October 1931, Sergio Obeso Rivera became a priest on 31 October 1954. Appointed Bishop of Papantla on 30 April 1971, he received episcopal ordination the following 29 June. On 15 January 1974 he was appointed titular Bishop of Uppenna, with the personal title of Archbishop, and Coadjutor of Jalapa with the right to succession. On 12 March 1979 he was appointed Archbishop of Jalapa (Xalapa). On 10 April 2007 he resigned from pastoral government. He was created a Cardinal by Pope Francis in the Consistory of 28 June 2018. The following is a brief biography of the late Cardinal, accompanied by a translation of the Holy Father's telegram.



In announcing the death of Cardinal Obeso Rivera, the General Secretariat of the Mexican Bishops' Conference recalled his 48 years of episcopal ministry and 65 years of priesthood. As President of the Bishops' Conference for three terms, the Cardinal had been a point of reference during significant moments in Mexico's recent history. In particular, the Mexican Bishops emphasize his role in the peace and reconciliation negotiations that led to the *Auerdos de San Andrés* on indigenous rights and culture, signed on 16 February 1996, and his efforts in 1992 to reestablish diplomatic relations – interrupted for over 100 years – between the Mexican State and the Holy See,

with the Constitutional reform of Article 130. Of no less importance was his work in the episcopal commissions for social pastoral work and for the clergy, as well as his efforts to further the canonization process of Rafael Guízar y Valencia (1878-1938), former Bishop of Veracruz-Xalapa, beatified by John Paul II in 1995 and canonized in 2006 by Benedict XVI.

He was surprised, when at the age of 87, he received the news that the Pontiff wished to raise him to the College of Cardinals in 2018. "Pope Francis wants to tell me: continue to serve the Church with your gifts, few or many", he confided to his people, pointing out that "the example that the Pope gives us goes beyond his intellectual Magisterium". He assured the faithful that he would embrace the cardinalate as an encouragement to "keep his arms open to all, without distinction". And so, despite his precarious state of health, he had continued his mis-

Upon receiving the news of the death of Cardinal Sergio Obeso Rivera, Archbishop emeritus of Jalapa (Xalapa), I express to your Excellency my sorrow, asking you kindly to transmit this also to the relatives of the deceased prelate and to those who form part of the Archdiocese.

Remembering this selfless pastor who, for years and with fidelity, gave his life to the service of God and the Church, I pray for the eternal repose of his soul. May the Lord Jesus grant him the crown of glory that never fades. To all, I impart my Apostolic Blessing.

FRANCIS PP.

sion by holding in particular, spiritual retreats and formation meetings.

Moreover, Sergio Obeso Rivera was an active promoter of dialogue and encounter who aimed to enhance all that unites and reject that which divides. For 28 years he served as pastor to Xalapa, a difficult reality marked by many challenges and contrasts. And it was in Xalapa, in the state of Veracruz, that he was born in 1931, the sixth of nine children born to Emilio Obeso, originally from Asturias, Spain, and Estela Rivera, originally from Las Vigas de Ramírez. After completing his primary education, he entered the seminary on 23 January 1944. Upon completion of his studies in the humanities, he was sent to the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome to perfect his philosophical and theological formation; during that period, he resided at the Pontifical Pius Latin American College. After obtaining a degree in philosophy and a doctorate in theology in Rome, he was ordained a priest on 31 October 1954, the day he celebrated his twenty-third birthday.

On his return to Mexico, for 17 years, from 1955 to 1971, he served in the Seminary of Xalapa as prefect of philosophy and theology, spiritual director and finally as rector. During the same period, he also served as chaplain to the convent of the Blessed Sacra-

ment (today Franciscan Eucharistic Missionaries).

He was not yet 40 when, in 1971, he was appointed Bishop of Papantla by Pope Paul VI. After leading that diocese for two years, he was appointed, with the personal title of Archbishop, Coadjutor with right of succession to the Archbishop of Xalapa, Monsignor Emilio Abascal y Salmerón, whom he succeeded in 1979. Though the heart of his mission was undoubtedly Xalapa, Sergio Obeso Rivera played a leading role in the life of the Church throughout his country. On 18 November 1982, in fact, he was appointed President of the Mexican Bishops' Conference for the three-year period (1983-1985). And at the end of his mandate, he was re-elected president for a second term, until November 1988. That year he was appointed President of the Episcopal Conference's Commission for the Clergy, a position he held for two three-year terms. Elected President of the Mexican Bishops' Conference for the third time (1995-1997), in November 2000 he became President of the Social Pastoral Commission (2001-2003) and was later reelected for the 2004-2006 term.

The late Cardinal's funeral was celebrated on Tuesday, 13 August in the Cathedral of Xalapa, where he was buried.

To overturn verdict for sex abuse

Cardinal Pell's appeal rejected

Responding to questions from journalists in Rome on Wednesday, 21 August, the Director of the Holy See Press Office, Matteo Bruni, affirmed the following in reference to the Victorian Court of Appeal ruling: "As in other cases, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith is awaiting the outcome of ongoing proceedings and the conclusion of the appellate process prior to taking up the case".

"As was stated by the Holy See Press Office on 26 February", Bruni said, "the Holy Father had already confirmed the precautionary measures imposed on Cardinal Pell upon his return to Australia, that is, as is the norm, the prohibition from exercising public ministry and from any voluntary contact whatsoever with minors".

The Court of Appeal of the State of Victoria ruled on 21 August to reject, in a 2-1 decision, the appeal presented by Cardinal George Pell against the jury verdict that last December found him guilty of sexual assault on two 12 and 13 year old choirboys in Melbourne in the

1990s, during the time he was an Auxiliary of the Archdiocese. The Cardinal has been serving a six year prison sentence since February 27.

In a statement, the President of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Archbishop Mark Coleridge, said the country's bishops "believe all Australians must be equal under the law" and that they accept the Court's judgement. The Bishops realise, the Archbishop stated, "that this has been and remains a most difficult time for survivors of child sexual abuse and those who support them. We acknowledge the pain that those abused by clergy have experienced through the long process of the trials and appeal of Cardinal Pell". The President of the Bishops Conference said the bishops "remain committed to doing everything we can to bring healing to those who have suffered greatly and to ensuring that Catholic settings are the safest possible places for all people, but especially for children and vulnerable adults".

More than 200 dead and hundreds missing

The Pope expresses closeness to victims of monsoon rains in India

Upon learning of the tragic loss of life following the recent monsoons and flooding in Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Gujarat, India, Pope Francis shared his condolences on Monday, 12 August, in a telegram addressed to local authorities. In the telegram, signed on behalf of the Holy Father by Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Pope expresses his sadness "to learn of the tragic loss of life" in the monsoons and, "mindful of all those who have lost homes and livelihood", assures his closeness to "the relatives of the deceased and injured". The Pope, Cardinal Parolin writes, also "prays for the relief efforts underway, and upon the nation he willingly invokes the divine blessings of strength and perseverance".

According to official sources, the recent floods have claimed the lives of more than 200 people across four States and forced hundreds of thousands of others to flee their homes to take shelter in relief camps.

The torrential rains have caused landslides throughout the region, hampering rescue and relief efforts. Officials have warned of widespread fuel shortages in districts cut off from larger cities and that hundreds of villages are lacking drinking water and electricity.

In India, seasonal monsoon rains usually begin in June and are essential for the nation's agricultural production. Each year, however, the rains are blamed for catastrophic disasters throughout the country and for the deaths of hundreds of people.

ANGELUS

Solemnity of the Assumption

As part of an Aid to the Church in Need initiative, on Thursday, 15 August, Feast of the Assumption, Pope Francis blessed 6,000 Rosaries together with the faithful who had gathered in Saint Peter's Square to recite the Angelus. The Rosaries will be distributed to Syria's Christian communities. Before the Marian prayer, the Holy Father had reflected on the day's Gospel passage which was centred on the Magnificat. The following is a translation of his reflection which he delivered in Italian.



Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary – Saint Peter Claver Church, USA

A Rosary for Peace in Syria

On the Solemnity of the Assumption the Pope blesses Aid to the Church in Need initiative

Dear Brothers and Sisters
Good Morning!

In today's Gospel Reading, the Solemnity of the Assumption of Mary Most Holy, the Holy Virgin prays with these words: "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour" (Lk 1:46-47). Let us look at the two verbs in this prayer: *magnifies* and *rejoices*. Two verbs: "magnifies" and "rejoices". We *rejoice* when something so wonderful happens that it is not enough to rejoice within, in our soul, but rather we wish to express our happiness with our whole body: thus we rejoice. Mary rejoices because of God. Who knows whether we too have ever rejoiced for the Lord? We rejoice over a successful result and over good news, but today Mary teaches us to rejoice in God. Why? Because he – God – does "great things" (v. 49).

The other verb: *to magnify* refers to great things. "My soul magnifies". To magnify. Indeed magnifying means to extol a reality for its greatness, for its beauty ... Mary exalts the Lord's greatness; she praises him saying that he is truly great. It is important to seek great things in life; otherwise one becomes bemused by many trivialities. Mary shows us that in order to live a happy life, we should put God in first place because he alone is great. How many times instead, we are distracted by things of little value: prejudice, resentment, rivalry, envy, illusions, superfluous material goods... How much pettiness there is in life! We know this. Today Mary invites us to *raise our gaze* to the "great things" that the Lord carried out in her. The Lord does many great things in us too, in each of us. We must recognize them and rejoice, magnify God for these great things.

Today we are celebrating the "great things". Mary is assumed into heaven: small and humble, she is the first to receive the

highest glory. She, a human creature, one of us, attains eternity in soul and body. And there she awaits us as a mother waits for her children to come home. Indeed the People of God invoke her as the *Gate of Heaven*. We are on a journey, pilgrims towards the home that is up there. Today we look to Mary and we see the finish line. We see that a creature was assumed into the Glory of the Risen Jesus Christ, and that creature could not have been but her, the Mother of the Saviour. We see that Mary, the new Eve, is in heaven, together with Christ, the New Adam; she is also there, and this gives us comfort and hope on our pilgrimage here below.

The feast of the Assumption of Mary is a call to each of us, especially those who are afflicted by doubt and sadness, and live with their gaze turned down, unable to raise their glance. Let us look up. Heaven is open. It does not inculcate fear. It is no longer distant because on the threshold of Heaven, a mother, our mother, is awaiting us. She loves us, she smiles at us and she thoughtfully assists us. Like every mother she wants the best for her children and she says to us: "You are pre-

cious in God's eyes; you were not made for the small satisfactions of the world, but rather for the great joy of heaven". Yes because God is joy, not boredom. God is joy. Let us allow Our Lady to take us by the hand. Each time that we hold the Rosary in our hands and pray to her, we are taking a step forward, towards the great destination of life.

Let us allow ourselves to be attracted by true beauty. Let us not be befuddled by the trivialities of life, but rather let us choose the greatness of Heaven. May the Holy Virgin, Gate of Heaven, help us daily to trustfully and joyfully look to where our true home is, where she is awaiting us like a mother.

After praying the Angelus, Pope Francis continued as follows:

Dear brothers and sisters, I express my closeness to the people of several countries in Southern Asia that have been severely affected by monsoon rains. I pray for the victims and the displaced, for all the homeless families. May the Lord give strength to them and to those who have come to their aid.



Many pilgrims are gathered in Częstochowa, Poland, today to celebrate the Assumption of the Virgin Mary and to observe the centenary of the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between the Holy See and Poland. I offer my greetings to those gathered at the feet of the Black Madonna and I exhort them to pray for the entire Church. And I also greet the Polish people who are here!

I offer a cordial greeting to all of you, pilgrims from Italy and from different countries. In particular, I greet the *Donum Dei* Missionary Family, the "Union Seglar de San Antonio Maria Claret", the "Festeros de San Vicente" group from Venezuela who have cycled here from Valencia, and the youth from Novoli who are in an educational camp.

And now I ask you to accompany this gesture with prayer. I will bless a large number of Rosaries destined for our brothers and sisters in Syria. Six thousand Rosaries were made as part of an initiative of Aid to the Church in Need. They were made by the Carmelite Sisters in Bethlehem. Today on this great feast day of Mary, I will bless them and they will be distributed to the Catholic communities in Syria as a sign of my closeness, especially to the families who have lost someone due to the war. Prayer, recited with faith, is powerful! Let us continue to pray the Rosary for peace in the Middle East and throughout the world.

Let us make the blessing, but first pray the Hail Mary ...

(Recital of the Hail Mary and then Blessing)

I wish you all a happy Feast of the Assumption. Please do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch. *Arrivederci!*

The Holy Father with members of 'Aid to the Church in Need'

Lydia: Leader of the first house church in Philippi

The author of this article, Maria Pascuzzi, CSI, is a Sister of Saint Joseph of Brentwood, New York, with a record of service to the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops as well as various local churches. She completed her Licentiate in Sacred Scripture at the Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome, and her doctorate in Sacred Theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome. She has taught in both seminaries and universities and is currently Associate Dean for Undergraduate



Studies at Seton Hall University School of Theology. Sr Pascuzzi has also taught biblical exegesis and biblical languages and is the author of various scholarly publications, including a commentary on Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians for the 3rd revised edition of the *New Jerome Biblical Commentary*. Her published work also focuses on theology and social works. She is an active member of the Catholic Biblical Association of America and the Society of Biblical Literature.

S ometime around ca. 49 CE, Paul sailed across the Aegean Sea from Troas, in Asia Minor, to the port of Neapolis in Greece, and from there moved inland to begin proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ on European soil for the first time. He evangelized throughout the Roman province of Macedonia, beginning in Philippi, before continuing southwest as far as Corinth, capital of the Roman province of Achaia. Luke, the author of Acts of the Apostles, reports that as Paul travelled throughout the cities of Macedonia, women, notably prominent women, were especially receptive to his preaching. (cf. Acts 17:4, 12). One of these Macedonian women was Lydia, Paul's first convert in Europe who partnered with him to ensure the success of his mission in this new territory.

Until recently, it was assumed that women were attracted to earliest Christianity because it provided a welcome escape from the misogynist and oppressive social worlds they inhabited, and afforded opportunities to exercise leadership roles previously denied them. Though this assumption was widespread, and continues to be espoused by some, it is at odds with a broad range of literary, epigraphical, and artifact evidence which attests that first century CE women, whether Greco-Roman or Jewish, married or widowed, enjoyed a fair amount of autonomy and authority both within, and beyond, their own households; some owned and managed businesses, were influential in the public sphere as benefactors and civic patrons, and exercised various leadership roles including cultic leadership roles. Moreover, such an assumption fails to do justice to women like Lydia. She was both a prosperous businesswoman and spiritual seeker who, apparently, had nothing to escape and much to offer earliest Christianity once her faith was awakened to Christ through Paul's preaching.

Lydia is mentioned only in Acts 16:11-15, 40 where Luke reports that she was a native of Thyatira, a city situated in the western part of the Roman province of Asia, in today's western Turkey. Its location at the juncture of major trade roads made Thyatira a prosperous commercial and industrial hub. The city was noted for its trade guilds. Many were devoted to the manufacture and dying of textiles, especially products dyed in purple for which Thyatira was well-known in antiquity. Purple dye, which was produced in varying shades and qualities depending on whether it was sourced from mollusks or plants, was a precious commodity. Premium-quality purple products and garments

were luxury items which only the elite of imperial society could afford. Luke tells us that Lydia was a *porphyropolis*, that is, a seller of purple goods. If shrewd business instincts account for Lydia's migration to Philippi, an affluent Roman colony which was geographically well-situated for international trade both *via* land and sea routes, then her instincts paid off. Luke presents her as comfortably settled into Philippi by the time she met Paul. She not only had a home of her own but one large enough to accommodate a community of Christ-believers estimated to have numbered around 25. And she had a household large enough to look after both her property and her affairs. It is also reasonable to imagine that she moved in well-heeled circles. Given her trade in purple, it is probable that her clients were among the upper crust of Philippian society, perhaps even Roman officials and their entourage.

Though a successful businesswoman, Lydia apparently sought more than comfort and success. According to Acts, Paul's custom upon arrival in a new city was to enter the local synagogue to address fellow Jews. Since Philippi apparently had no synagogue in Paul's day – the existence of a synagogue is first mentioned in inscriptional evidence dating from ca. the 3rd or 4th century CE – he went in search of a *proseuchē*, or place for prayer, outside the city by the river. What he found was a prayer gathering of women, presumably members of the household of Lydia who is singled out as "a worshipper of God." The term *proseuchē* could refer to any

place of religious ritual activity, or specifically, to a place of prayer for Jews. Since this term occurs here in conjunction with "worshipper of God," an expression used by Jews of gentiles who were sympathetic to Judaism, it is often assumed that Lydia was a Jewish proselyte. However, this is not at all certain. Moreover, it is quite possible that while acknowledging the God of Israel, Lydia may have also continued to pray to one, or more, pagan deities. Devotion to more than one god was certainly not uncommon in the first century Mediterranean world where multiple cults, some local, some imported, existed side by side. A number of these, e.g., the cult of the Diana and Isis, were especially attractive to women who served as priestesses and assumed other leadership roles. Based on the information in Acts, perhaps the most that can be stated, with a measure of certainty, is that Lydia was a pious woman whose heart was open to the stirrings of the one, true, God who rendered her receptive to Paul's preaching. Once she and her household were baptized, Luke tells us Lydia extended hospitality to Paul. The verb Luke uses, which is usually translated "prevailed upon" or "urged," literally means to "use force." Luke's word choice suggests that Lydia had a strong character and was not the kind of woman who took "no" for an answer. That characterization, along with a few other features of Lydia's story, require further comment.

Luke's portrayal of Lydia, without mention of a husband, or other male authority upon whom



Lydia's generosity extended beyond the offer of food and lodging to Paul and his missionary companions. Her house became the recognized seat of the nascent Christian community in Philippi over which, as head of the household, she would have exercised leadership.

she is dependent, able to decide on her own authority to open her home to Paul and his companions, stands apart from the normal portrait of first-century CE women whose lives were structured by patriarchy. Patriarchy was a hierarchical system in which all members of a household were subjected to the authority of the oldest living male, or "paterfamilias." Through marriage, a woman usually passed from under the authority of her oldest male relative to the authority of her husband. However, along with this hierarchical social system, there existed a few legal provisions that afforded women a certain amount of independence. For example, a woman's marriage could be contracted *sine manu* which meant she and her assets remained under the *potestas*, or authority, of her father, upon whose death, she could inherit property and retain sole possession of it in her own name. In *sine manu* marriages, the husband acquired no legal authority over his wife or her assets. Further, women who bore a certain number of sons – a number dependent on one's social status – were permitted to manage their own financial and business affairs. Thus, even were Lydia married, she may have benefi-

ted from these or other forms of legislation which would explain why she is presented as operating independently.

In noting that Lydia prevailed on Paul to become her guests, Luke casts Lydia in the role of patron to Paul. Patronage was a ubiquitous social institution in Paul's day. Those with means and social standing (patrons) who sought to enhance their reputations and positions, provided financial, and other favors, to those of lesser standing (clients). Clients remained indebted to their patrons and in return for their generosity pledged loyalty, promoted the patron and did the patron's bidding. Though first-century women were barred from holding public office, there is ample evidence that women, especially but not exclusively elite women, were involved in various civic projects and causes, workers guilds, and to promote favored religious cults. For their benefactions they were regularly honored with commemorative statues, monuments and dedicatory inscriptions. Though no extra-textual evidence exists attesting to their patronage activities, it is possible that Lydia, and other named women in the New Testament such as Phoebe (cf. Rom 16:2), may have been benefactors and patrons to others before directing their support to Paul and his mission.

It is clear from Paul's letters to the Corinthians that he was cautious to avoid the entanglements of the patronage system that had poten-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



The outdoor chapel believed to be the site where Lydia was baptized

women church world women church world

women church world women church

General Audience

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

A practical example of sharing and communion of goods comes to us from the testimony of Barnabas. He owns a field and sells it in order to give the proceeds to the Apostles (cf. Acts 4:36-37). But beside this positive example, there is another that is sadly negative: After selling their land, Ananias and his wife Sapphira decide to hand over only part of the proceeds to the Apostles and to keep part of the proceeds for themselves (cf. Acts 5:1-2). This deceit interrupts the chain of freely sharing, serene and disinterested sharing and the consequences are tragic. They are fatal (Acts 5:5-10). The Apostle Peter exposes Ananias and his wife's deceit and says to them: "why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the proceeds of the land? ... You have not lied to men but to God" (Acts 5:3-4). We could say that Ananias lied to God because of an isolated conscience, a hypocritical conscience, that is due to an ecclesial belonging that is "negotiated", partial and opportunistic. Hypocrisy is

the worst enemy of this Christian community, of this Christian love: pretending to love each other but only seeking one's own interests.

Falling short of sincere sharing, indeed, falling short of the sincerity of love means cultivating hypocrisy, distancing oneself from the truth, becoming selfish, extinguishing the fire of communion and choosing the frost of inner death. Those who behave in this manner transit in the Church like a tourist. There are many tourists in the Church who are always passing through but never enter the Church. It is spiritual tourism that leads them to believe they are Christians whereas they are only tourists of the catacombs. No, we should not be tourists in the Church but rather one another's brothers and sisters. A life based only on drawing gain and advantages from situations to the detriment of others, inevitably causes inner death. And how many people say they are close to the Church, friends of priests, of bishops, while they only seek their own interests. Such hypocrisy destroys the Church!

May the Lord – I ask this for all of us – pour over us his Spirit of tenderness which vanquishes all hypocrisy and generates that truth that nourishes Christian solidarity, which, far from being an activity of social work, is the inalienable expression of the Church, the most tender mother of all, especially of the poorest.

SPECIAL GREETINGS

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

I offer a special thought to young people, the elderly, the sick and newlyweds. Following the example of the Holy Pontiff Pius X, whose feast day we celebrate today, I invite you to walk towards Jesus Christ by listening to his Gospel and through good works. May the Holy Spirit sustain you on your journey.

Renewed fidelity to its original mission

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

Deputy Director, the new one now describes this position as "possible".

Finally, there are two important structural innovations. The IOR's current five bodies have been reduced to four. The internal auditors, who previously held a three-year mandate renewable for an unspecified time, no longer appear on the list. On the other hand, the Statutes provide for an external auditor to be appointed by the Commission of Cardinals at the proposal of the Board of Superintendence. The external auditor will carry out his or her assignment for a period of three consecutive years, with the possibility of a single renewal. The choice of an external auditor, which formalizes the Institute's regular praxis to conform to international standards, eliminates any possible conflict of interest present in the 1990 Statute which provided for the Board of Superintendence to appoint three auditors.

The second new feature is an increase in the number of members of the Board of Superintendence: previously made up of five members it will now be composed of seven. This decision makes it easier for the members of the Board to fulfil their responsibilities, even if they are divided into advisory committees according to the matter dealt with. The Board's work is also facilitated by the possibility of participating in meetings even in absentia, if necessary, using telecommunications.

Furthermore, it introduces the position of Secretary for the Commission who is charged with the report of the Commission and with the custody of the relative minutes. This decision is in line with bank practice, and, with respect to the provision of the 1990 Statute, avoids any involvement, in such a sensitive area, by directors who might be faced with a conflict of interest.

With the new Statutes now in force, the Institute is preparing to draw up a new internal regulation aimed at fully describing and strengthening its management with increased transparency.

Lydia: Leader of the first house church in Philippi

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

tial to compromise his freedom to preach the gospel as he saw fit, or his mobility. Nonetheless, he depended on the financial support of patrons such as Lydia who provided Paul with material support and a roof over his head. Even more importantly, socially well-connected patrons like Lydia, with networks of business associates and clients, would have provided Paul with access to people and places in Philippi and elsewhere who were essential to the advancing of his mission. Moreover, Lydia's generosity extended beyond the offer of food and lodging to Paul and his missionary companions. Her house became the recognized seat of the nascent Christian community in Philippi over which, as head of the household, she would have exercised leadership.

The primacy of her house, and therefore her leadership role in the evolution of the church at Philippi, becomes clear as one reads to the end of Acts 16. After their miraculous liberation from prison, Paul and Silas were invited to the home of their jailer who had witnessed everything. They catechized and baptized him and his entire household thus forming a new cell of Christ-believers. When the local magistrates declared Paul and Silas free, and apologized to

them for wrongful imprisonment, rather than remaining in the household of the jailer, they immediately returned to Lydia's house. It was there in her house that the newly formed family of brothers and sisters in Christ were gathered and where Paul gave his final exhortation to the Christian community of Philippi before leaving (Acts 16:40).

A final aspect of this story which should not be overlooked is that the church in Philippi was born among women and it was to Lydia and her household that Paul entrusted the life and growth of the nascent community of Christ-believers. Certainly, men joined the community and assumed various roles of leadership as well (cf. Phil 1:1). However, women continued to play significant roles in the Philippian community. In his letter to this community, Paul mentions two of them, *Evo-dia* and *Syntycha* who are described as his closest collaborators in the work of the gospel (Phil 4:2). Though limited, there is clear inscriptional evidence that women continued in prominent roles at least until the 6th century CE.

Today scholars disagree about whether Lydia was an actual historical person, or simply a figure fashioned by Luke to represent the affluent, independent, ideal woman whose attraction to Christianity he wished to highlight in his narra-

ive. Whether she existed or not, independent women with assets, like Lydia, were attracted to earliest Christianity and were influential in the growth and development of the first Christian cells of believers. The fact that Lydia is mentioned only here in the entire New Testament, coupled with the general inattention to women that characterized past biblical scholarship, probably explains why she had

been passed over as a minor figure in the story of earliest Christianity. However, it is no exaggeration to say that without the partnership and resources of Lydia, or a woman like her, Paul's initial evangelizing efforts may have never given rise to the flourishing community of Christ-believers at Philippi, who remained a source of encouragement and support to him throughout his ministry.

Pope meets Indian filmmaker



At the General Audience on Wednesday, 7 August, the Holy Father met Mr Antony Albert, a filmmaker from the Indian movie industry, who is currently working on a film production with the support of the Catholic non-governmental organization SIGNIS.

Re-reading Toni Morrison – A new collection dedicated to her work

The two-way journey

GIULIA GALEOTTI

Although there was no lack of African American writers before her, it was Toni Morrison who was able to successfully make African American fiction emerge from its genre, conferring upon it a central role in US literature. And so, reading her work, page after page, one draws closer to understanding the past and present of this enormous and complex country.

It is not possible to understand the United States of America, both at its best and at its worst, without listening to the voices of the slaves and the generations that passed down from them. Throughout the decades, Toni Morrison's writing "gave voice" to these voices through her "unique, unprecedented and audacious" language, as Marisa Bulgheroni describes it in her essay introducing a new collection dedicated to Morrison's work [*Ed. published in Italy by Meridiani-Mondadori, "Romanzi", 2018*].



Toni Morrison

CAROLA SUSANI

Toni's physical presence alone challenges those who behold her, because of that mixture of provocation, benevolence and irony. Indeed, her gaze and posture emanate a strength that can be discerned even in photographs.

Speaking on the Italian radio programme "Fahrenheit", Alessandro Portelli reflected on the statement: "I write for my people" made by Toni Morrison – who died on 5 August at the age of 88 and in 1993 was the first African American woman to win a Nobel Prize for Literature. According to Portelli, this statement is anything but a closure: "From the start, Toni Morrison grasped that the definition of what it means to be human can only be attributed by those whose humanity was questioned". I am not sure whether I completely agree; I am not sure I agree with that "only", but it is true that in speaking to "her people", Toni Morrison speaks of the human with a clarity and force rarely heard before.

And it is true that attempting to define 'human' can only be undertaken in certain radical conditions and that Toni Morrison abides in

Enriched not only by Bulgheroni's essay, but also by another by Alessandro Portelli, the collection contains six of Morrison's unforgettable novels, presented in mostly new [*Ed. Italian*] translations by Silvia Fornasiero, Chiara Spallino and Franca Cavagnoli who translated the first unforgettable editions for the Italian publisher Frassinelli.

Toni Morrison was born in Ohio in 1931 to a working class family. After graduating from university, she taught for some years, and then began working as an editor for Random House publishing, establishing herself as an expert in African American culture. It was an experience that greatly influenced her storytelling. Indeed, she found in African culture the perfect terrain to allow her words to flourish, winning her a Pulitzer prize in 1988 and a Nobel prize in 1993.

By the time she left Random House in 1983 to dedicate herself exclusively to writing, Toni Morrison had already written a number of novels. Her debut had come eight years earlier with "The Bluest Eye" which was translated and released in Italy in 1994 by the Frassinelli publishing house.

Describing Toni Morrison is not easy because what she was capable of doing on paper, weaving history and words together, is simply incredible. Through her legendary women – and some men –, more so than slavery itself, the writer presents us with the trauma and atrocities that it inflicted and imposed upon entire generations, irreparably and deeply scar-

ring them. As if this were not enough, Morrison's storytelling is narrated in a unique and inimitable prose that is founded on oral tradition, used throughout the centuries by the black community to pass on its history. Nonetheless, her fiction is based on a vast and highly attentive knowledge of literary tradition, African American and otherwise.

Indeed, they are stories, facts, events, excerpts and secrets that women passed on from mother to daughter. Often they were stories, facts and secrets that were so atrocious as to appear almost unbelievable. As Bulgheroni wrote, Morrison recounts "what mothers did not want or were unable to recount, retracing the two way journey that, from silence and the suppressed cries of slavery, leads to the guarded freedom of speech of recent times, challenging all censorship and risking scandal".

The novel "Beloved", which along with "Jazz" and "Paradise" (which is not part of the Meridiani collection) makes up what Morrison herself had often defined as a trilogy of African American history, reminds us of this. "Beloved" where, in order to spare her beloved daughter a destiny as a slave, the [child's] mother chooses to kill her. In the character, Sethe, the very essence of motherhood – nurturing – becomes intertwined with the idea of ownership which sustains the entire system of slavery. As Alessandro Portelli writes, this woman is only able to channel "love through possession", staining herself with such atrocious guilt.

The wedge that blocked the system

Toni Morrison and the automatism of power

those conditions. In "The Origin of Others" (Harvard University Press, 2017), Toni Morrison recounts a visit by her great-grandmother Millicent MacTeer, who is held in high regard and venerated by everyone: the great-grandmother enters, sees the girls playing on the floor and says: "Your children have been tampered with". Only from her mother's reaction did Morrison realize that "tampered with" did not mean anything good. She "was looking at us as soiled, mixed. Not pure", Morrison explained, adding that she owed her grandmother a debt for provoking the question welling up within her: "why tampered with?", a question which was to influence a large part of her writing.

What I learned from Toni Morrison, which I submit to you as essential, has to do with children. From "The Bluest Eye" (1970) to "God Help the Child" (2015), children, and more precisely girls, are at the forefront of her narrative. What interests her about children? She is interested in their relationship with power.

By coming into the world, children find themselves within a system of power and imbalanced values. For a working class African American girl, – as Toni Morrison was – this is particularly evident: there is [the fact of] being a girl, being entrusted to adults, being in their hands; there is the colour of the skin, there is the fact of being female, there are the financial means. Some things have value, others a bit less. One of the first things that children learn is their place in the family and so-

cial order. They learn whether they are worth a lot or whether they are worth little. They learn the desire to be worth more, to be better appreciated, more loved. And they do not learn it from things that are spoken: they learn – Toni Morrison says – by example. If they learn the devaluation of their own person, they grow up in deformity and pain.

From the very beginning, Toni Morrison's fortune was to perceive a tension between value systems, that of the "whites" which was dominant and pervasive, and her great grandmother's alternative one, a tension which allowed her to read them as though through a transparent sheet of paper.

If racism is at the heart of Toni Morrison's reflection – the system of power that makes you blindly rejected if your skin is very black (as in "God Help the Child") or that makes you wish for blue eyes because you have introjected [this desire]; you have made it your flesh and blood (as in "The Bluest Eye") – her ability to deconstruct allows us to see ourselves in the mirror, to see the human person adapting to that system with its thirst for love and its greed for recognition. It makes us aware that without a wedge to block the system, without something to make its inflexibility tremble, it will reproduce itself tragically. For the oppressed certainly, but also tragic for the future of oppressors, led to believe that a place in society – any place provided it includes someone to oppress – is the most desired result.

ANGELUS

Sunday, 11 August

War and terrorism are the great defeat of humanity. Pope Francis shared this concern with the faithful who had gathered in Saint Peter's Square for the Angelus on Sunday, 11 August. After reciting the Marian prayer, and on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions, the Pontiff made an appeal for the protection of life and the dignity of the victims of armed conflicts. Prior to the Angelus the Pope had reflected on the day's Gospel passage in which Jesus tells us to be ready for the final encounter with the Lord. The following is a translation of his reflection which he delivered in Italian.



Bernardette Lopez, "Being vigilant"

The Pope appeals for the protection of victims of armed conflicts

War and terrorism are the great defeat of humanity

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Good Morning!

In today's Gospel passage (cf. Lk 12:32-48), Jesus calls his disciples to be continually vigilant. Why? In order to understand God's transition in one's life because God continually passes through life. And he indicates the manners in which to live this vigilance properly: "Let your loins be girded and your lamps burning" (v. 35) This is the way. First and foremost, "the loins girded", an image that evokes the attitude of the pilgrim, ready to set out on a journey. It is a case of not putting down roots in comfortable and reassuring dwellings but rather to surrender oneself, to be open with simplicity and trust to God's passage in our lives, to the will of God who guides us towards the next destination. The Lord always walks with us and often he takes us by the hand, to guide us so that we do not err on this journey that is so difficult. Indeed, those who trust in God know well that the life of faith is not something static, but rather dynamic! The life of faith is a continuous journey towards ever new phases that the Lord himself points out to us day by day. Because he is the Lord of surprises, the Lord of novelty, indeed of true newness.

And then – the first manner was "the loins girded" – next there is the request to keep the "lamps burning" in order to be able to light up the darkness of the night. Thus, we are invited to live an authentic and mature faith capable of illuminating the many "nights" of our lives. We know, we have all had some days which were real spiritual nights. The lamp of faith requires being continuously nourished by the heart-to-heart encounter with Jesus in prayer and in listening to his

Word. I return to something I have said to you many times: always carry a small Gospel in your pocket, in your bag, to read. It is an encounter with Jesus, with Jesus' Word. This lamp of encounter with Jesus in prayer and in his Word is entrusted to us for the good of all: thus nobody can pull back in an intimist way in the certainty of one's salvation, not interested in others. It is a fantasy to believe that one can illuminate oneself within, on one's own. No,



*Education with horizons
open to transcendence helps young people
to dream and to build a more beautiful world. #IYD2019*

(@Pontifex)

it is a fantasy. Real faith opens the heart to our neighbour and urges us towards concrete communion with our brothers, especially with those in need.

And in order to help us understand this attitude, Jesus recounts the parable of the servants who await the return of their master from the marriage feast (v. 36-40), thus presenting another aspect of vigilance: being ready for the last and definitive encounter with the Lord. Each of us will encounter, will find him/herself in that day of encounter. Each of us has their own date for the definitive encounter. The Lord says: "Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes; ... If he comes in the second watch, or in the third, and finds them so, blessed are those servants!" (v. 37-38). With these

words the Lord reminds us that life is a journey towards eternity; therefore, we are called to employ all the talents that we have, without ever forgetting that "here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city which is to come" (Heb 13:14). In this perspective, every instant becomes precious, and thus we must live and act on this earth, while longing for Heaven: our feet on the ground, walking on the ground, working on the ground, doing good on

the ground and the heart longing for Heaven.

We cannot truly understand in what this supreme joy consists. However, Jesus lets us sense it with the analogy of the master who, finding his servants still awake on his return: "will gird himself and have them sit at table, and he will come and serve them" (v. 37). The eternal joy in heaven is manifested this way: the situation will be reversed and it will no longer be the servants, that is, we who will serve God, but God himself will place himself at our service. And Jesus does this as of now: Jesus prays for us, Jesus looks at us and prays to the Father for us. Jesus serves us now. He is our servant. And this will be the definitive joy. The thought of the final encounter with the Father, abund-

ant in mercy, fills us with hope and stirs us to constant commitment, for our sanctification and for the building of a more just and fraternal world.

May the Virgin Mary support this commitment of ours through her maternal intercession.

After praying the Angelus, the Holy Father continued:

Dear brothers and sisters, tomorrow is the 70th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions, important international legal instruments that impose limitations on the use of force and are aimed at protecting civilians and prisoners in time of war. May this anniversary make States evermore aware of the essential need to protect the life and dignity of the victims of armed conflict. Everyone is bound to observe the limitations imposed by international humanitarian law, protecting the defenceless peoples and civil structures, especially hospitals, schools, places of worship, refugee camps. And let us not forget that war and terrorism are always a great loss for all humanity. They are the great defeat of humanity!

I greet you all, people of Rome and pilgrims from different countries: families, parish groups and associations.

Today too there are many young people. I greet you warmly! In particular, the teenagers from Saccolongo and also those from Creola; and the youth pastoral group from Verona; and the young people from Cittadella.

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

ANGELUS

Sunday, 18 August

Bearing witness to the Gospel "overcomes division among individuals, social categories, peoples and nations" and "keeps charity open to all". Pope Francis offered this thought to the faithful gathered in Saint Peter's Square for the Angelus on Sunday, 18 August. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's reflection which he delivered in Italian.



Jyoti Sahi, "Burning Bush"

At the Marian prayer the Holy Father talks about the fire of God's love

Charity open to all overcomes division and particularism

Dear Brothers and sisters,
Good Morning!

In today's Gospel passage (cf. Lk 12:49-53), Jesus warns the disciples that the time for decision has arrived. In fact, his coming into the world coincides with the time for decisive choices: the option for the Gospel cannot be delayed. And in order to make this call clearer, he alludes to the fire that he himself came to bring to earth. He says: "I came to cast fire upon the earth; and would that it were already kindled" (v. 49). These words aim to persuade the disciples to abandon their attitude of laziness, apathy, indifference and closure, so as to welcome the fire of God's love; that love which, as Saint Paul reminds us, "has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit"

(Rm 5:5). Because it is the Holy Spirit that makes us love God and love our neighbour. It is the Holy Spirit whom we all have within us.

Jesus confides his most ardent desire to his friends and also to us: to spread the fire of God's love on earth that enlightens life and through which mankind is saved. Jesus calls us to spread throughout the world this fire, thanks to which, we will be recognized as his true disciples. The fire of love, lit by Christ in the world through the Holy Spirit, is a boundless fire. It is a universal fire. This was so ever since the early days of Christianity: bearing witness to the Gospel spread like a beneficial fire, overcoming all division among individuals, social categories, peoples

and nations. Bearing witness to the Gospel burns. It overcomes all forms of particularism and keeps charity wide open to all, with a preferential option for the poorest and the excluded.

Adherence to the fire of love that Jesus brought to earth, envelops our entire existence and requires the adoration of God as well as a willingness to serve others. Adoration of God and a willingness to serve others. First, the readiness to adore God, also means learning the prayer of adoration which we usually forget. This is why I invite everyone to discover the beauty of the prayer of adoration and to recite it often. And second, the willingness to serve others. I think with admiration of the many youth communities and groups, who during the summer, dedicate themselves to this service to the sick, the poor and people with disabilities. In order to live according to the Gospel spirit, faced with the ever new needs that arise in the world, there is a need for disciples of Christ who know how to respond with new charitable initiatives. And so, with the adoration of God and service to others – practised together, adoring God and serving others – the Gospel truly manifests itself as a fire that saves, that changes the world beginning with a change in the heart of each one.

In this perspective, we can also understand Jesus' other statement mentioned in today's passage which, at first glance, may be disconcerting: "Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division" (Lk 12:51). He came to "separate with fire". To separate what? Good from evil, the just from the unjust. In this sense he came to "divide", to cause "uneasiness" – albeit in a healthy way –

in his disciples' lives, breaking the facile illusions of those who think they can combine Christian life with worldliness, Christian life with compromises of all kinds, piety with a hostile attitude to others. Combining, some think, true religiosity with superstitious practices: how many so-called Christians go to fortune tellers to have their palms read! And this is superstition. It is not God. One must not live in a hypocritical way but be willing to pay the price for choices that are consistent – this is the attitude that each of us should seek in life: [being] consistent – paying the price for being consistent with the Gospel. Being consistent with the Gospel. Because it is good to call ourselves Christian but above all it is necessary to *be* Christian in concrete situations, witnessing to the Gospel, which is essentially love for God and for our brothers and sisters.

May Mary Most Holy help us to allow our hearts to be purified by the fire brought by Jesus in order to spread it with our life through decisive and courageous choices.

After the Angelus, the Holy Father continued as follows:

Dear brothers and sisters, I extend a cordial greeting to you all, faithful from Rome and pilgrims who have come from Italy and various countries.

In particular I greet the "Divine Love" group from Canada, the Scouts from Rio de Loba, Portugal, and the Polish faithful.

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

Former Australian Ambassador to Holy See dies

The Honourable Timothy Andrew Fischer, AC, former Deputy Prime Minister of Australia and first resident Australian Ambassador to the Holy See, passed away on Thursday, 22 August after a 10-year battle with cancer. He was 73 years old.

The staff of the English edition of *L'Osservatore Romano* had the pleasure and honour of knowing a man of deep faith and integrity. We offer our deepest condolences to wife Judy and sons Harrison and Dominic.

May the Lord welcome this most zealous man who served the Gospel in joy.

A memorial Mass of thanksgiving for Mr Fischer will be held at Domus Australia, Via Cernaia 14/B, on a date to be advised shortly, with principal celebrant Holy See Secretary for Relations with States HE Archbishop Paul Gallagher and Australian priests. All are welcome to attend, with prior registration to holysee.embassy@dfat.gov.au.