Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for the Pan-Amazon Region

For evangelization and for an integral ecology

Ordination of four archbishops
Pray and proclaim the Word

Ordinary Consistory
Without compassion there can be no loyalty

General Audience
Do not transform religion into ideology

An act of justice to accomplish with a spirit of service and respect

We have come to contemplate, to comprehend, to serve the peoples”. Pope Francis emphasized this in the discourse that opened the work of the Synod for the Pan-Amazon Region. He was echoed by Cardinal Hummes, the Refractor General of the Synod, who concluded his address saying: “This Synod is like a table that God has prepared for His poor and He is asking us to serve at that table”. Synodality as diaconia, as service. We all remember the words that the latter, Cardinal Hummes, said to Jorge Mario Bergoglio upon his election as Pope: “remember the poor”. For six and a half years Francis has been giving concrete implementation to those words: “on tiptoe, respecting their history, their cultures, their good way of living in the etymological sense of the word, not in the social sense which we often attribute to them, because peoples have a proper identity, all peoples have their wisdom, a self-awareness; peoples have a way of feeling, a way of seeing reality, a history, a hermeneutic, and they tend to be protagonist of their history with these matters, with these qualities. And as outsiders we consider ideological colonizations that destroy or diminish the characteristics of the peoples. Ideological colonization is very widespread.”

SEE COVERAGE OF THIS WEEK'S SYNOD EVENTS ON PAGES 8 TO 12
The Holy Father appointed as Metropolitan Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Mercedes-Luján, Argentina. Bishop Jorge Eduardo Scheini- nig, until now he has served as Titular of Ila and Auxiliary of the same Archdiocese (4 Oct.).

Cardinal Scheini, 60, was born in Carapachay, Argentina. He was ordained a priest on 9 December 1983. He was a bishop and in 2017, subsequent to his appointment as titular Bishop of Ila and Auxiliary of Mercedes-Luján.

Changes in Episcopate

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Eamonn Oliver Walsh from his office as Auxiliary of the Archdiocese of Dublin, Ireland (30 Sept.).

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Cardinal Jean-Pierre Riccard from his office as Archbishop of Bordeaux, France (1 Oct.).

The Holy Father appointed Abbé Erik Varden, OCSO, as Bishop-Prelate of Trondheim, Norway. Until now he has served as Abbot of Mount Saint Bernard in Leicester, England (1 Oct.).

Bishop-elect Varden, 45, was born in Sarpsborg, Norway. He holds a doctorate in theology, a licence in oriental ecclesiastical sciences. He entered the Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance in 2002. He was ordained a priest on 16 July 2011. He has served as teacher at the Pontifical Saint Anselm Athenaeum in Rome, while working for the Scandinavian section of Vatican Radio. On his return to the Abbey of Mount Saint Bernard, he served as Superior ad nutum. In 2015 he was elected Abbot of Mount Saint Bernard.

The Holy Father appointed Bishop Eduardo José Castillo Pino, as Metropolitan Archbishop of Portoviejo, Ecuador. Until now he has served as Titular of Tarasa in Byzacena and Auxiliary of Portoviejo (4 Oct.).

Archbishop Castilillo Pino, 49, was born in Guayaquil, Ecuador. He was ordained a priest on 20 November 1994. He was ordained a priest on 1 June 2011, subsequent to his appointment as Titular of Tarasa in Byzacena and Auxiliary of Portoviejo.

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Archbishop Agustín Roberto Radirizann, 80, of the Archdiocese of Mercedes-Luján, Argentina (4 Oct.).

The Holy Father accepted the resignation of Bishop Edward Drennan of Palmerston North, New Zealand (5 Oct.).
The Pontiff ordains four new archbishops

Pray and proclaim

During a Rite held in Saint Peter's Basilica on Friday afternoon, 4 October, Pope Francis conferred episcopal ordination on Michael Czerny, SJ, Paolo Borgia, Antoine Camilleri and Paolo Rudelli. The Pontiff pronounced in substance the ritual homily provided in the Italian edition of the Roman Pontifical for the ordination of bishops, to which he added several personal thoughts. The following is a translation of the Holy Father's homily.

Beloved Brothers and Sons,

Let us consider carefully the great ecclesial responsibility to which these brothers of ours are being raised. Our Lord Jesus Christ, who was sent by the Father to redeem the human race, in turn sent the Twelve Apostles into the world so that, filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, they might proclaim the Gospel to all peoples and unite them under one Shepherd, and that they might sanctify them and guide them to salvation.

In order to perpetuate this apostolic ministry from one generation to the next, the Twelve chose other men to share in their work. Through the laying on of hands, they passed on to them the gift of the Spirit which they themselves had received from Christ, thereby conferring the fullness of the Sacrament of Orders. Thus, through an uninterrupted succession of bishops this prime ministry has been preserved in the living Tradition of the Church, and the work of the Saviour continues and develops to our own day.

In the bishop surrounded by his priests, the same Lord, the Eternal High Priest, is present in your midst. Indeed, it is Christ who, through the ministry of the bishop, continues to preach the Gospel of salvation and to sanctify believers by means of the sacraments of faith. It is Christ who, through the paternal role of the bishop, draws new members to his Body which is the Church. It is Christ who, in the wisdom and prudence of the bishop, guides the People of God on their pilgrim-age until at last they reach eternal bliss.

Therefore, welcome with gratitude and joy these brothers of ours whom we bishops are about to receive into the Episcopal College by the laying on of hands. Render to them the honour that is due to the ministers of Christ and the dispensers of the mysteries of God, to whom the testimony of the Gospel and the ministry of the Spirit for sanctification have been entrusted. Remember Jesus' words to the Apostles: "He who hears you hears me, and he who rejects you rejects me, and he who rejects me rejects him who sent me" (Lk 10:16).

Now, dearest brothers, chosen by the Lord, consider that you have been chosen from among men and from men, not for yourselves but for the things pertaining to God. Indeed, "episcopacy" is the name of a service, not of an honour, since a bishop must strive to serve rather than to rule, according to the Master's commandment: "whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all".

Proclaim the Word on every opportune and inopportune occasion. Proclaim the true Word, not mundane discourses that no one understands. Proclaim the Word of God. Remember that, according to Peter, in the Acts of the Apostles, the two main tasks of the bishop are prayer and proclaiming the Word (cf. 6:4), then all of the other administrative matters. But these two things are the pillars. And, through preaching and offerings of the Sacrifice for your people, draw from the fullness of the sanctity of Christ the manifold richness of the divine grace.

In the Church entrusted to you, be faithful custodians and dispensers of the mysteries of Christ. As the Father has placed you at the head of his family, always follow the example of the Good Shepherd, who knows his sheep and is known by them and who did not hesitate to lay down his life for them. Closeness to your people. The three aspects of a bishop's closeness: closeness to God in prayer — this is the first task; closeness to priests in the presbytery college; and closeness to the people. Do not forget the People of God.

Love with a fatherly and brotherly love all those whom God entrusts to you. First the presbyters and deacons, your co-workers in the ministry. But also love the poor, the defenceless and those in need of acceptance and help. Encourage the faithful to work with you in your Apostolic task; be ready to listen to what they have to say.

Pay careful attention to those who do not belong to the one fold of Christ, because they too have been entrusted to you in the Lord. Remember that in the Catholic Church, made one by the bond of charity, you are united to the College of Bishops — this would be the fourth aspect of closeness — and you must carry within you the solicitude for all the Churches, generously helping those who are most in need of assistance. Safeguard this gift that you are receiving today through the imposition of hands of all of us bishops.

Watch lovingly over the whole flock, among whom the Holy Spirit places you in order to support the Church of God. Keep watch in the name of the Father, whose image you make present; in the name of Jesus Christ his Son, by whom you were constituted teachers, priests and shepherds; and in the name of the Holy Spirit, who gives life to the Church and whose power sustains us in our weakness.
The new Cardinals

Miguel Ángel Ayuso Guixot, MCCJ
President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue
Card. Ayuso Guixot, 67, was born in Seville, Spain. He professed his final vows as a Comboni Missionary of the Heart of Jesus on 2 May 1980 and was ordained a priest on 19 September of the same year. After obtaining a licence at the Pontifical Institute for Arabic and Islamic studies (PIISA) in Rome, he was sent to Egypt in 1981 to serve as parish priest in Cairo, where he assisted young Catholic students, migrants and political refugees from Sudan, living in the city. Thanks to this experience in Cairo, he was sent to Sudan during the country’s civil war. While in Sudan he ran a catechetical centre in the Diocese of El-Obeid and taught Islamic studies in Khartoum.

Msgr Ayuso Guixot obtained a doctorate in dogmatic theology in 2000 from the University of Granada and taught in Cairo and Madrid, Spain. In 2003, he moved to Lisbon, where he served five years as chaplain of the city’s Catholic University. He was then sent to Rome in 2007, following his appointment as Rector of the Pontifical Portuguese College. After completing his doctorate in biblical theology in 2004, he returned to Portugal as a lecturer of New Testament and Theological Aesthetics at UCP in Lisbon, at the same time serving as director of the university’s magazine on theological studies, Didaskalia, and of the Centre for Religious and Cultural studies. After his appointment as consultor of the Pontifical Council for Culture in 2011, he was appointed vice rector of the UCP and the following year was sent as a visiting lecturer to the Catholic Universities of Pernambuco, Rio de Janeiro and Belo Horizonte in Brazil. In addition to numerous theological and exegetical volumes and articles, Msgr Mendonça has published several works of poetry, and in 2014, he represented Portugal in the World Day of Poetry. For years he has edited Che cosa sono le nuvole, a column in the weekly news publication “Espresso”. Pope Francis chose him as preacher of the 2018 Lenten Spiritual Exercises for the Roman Curia and, on 26 June 2018, appointed him Archivist and Librarian of the Holy Roman Church. Msgr Calaça de Mendonça was appointed a bishop on 28 July 1990. In 1992, he obtained a licence in biblical studies. After serving in parish ministry for three years, in 2003 he moved to Lisbon, where he served five years as chaplain of the city’s Catholic University. He was then sent to Rome in 2007, following his appointment as Rector of the Pontifical Portuguese College. After completing his doctorate in biblical theology in 2004, he returned to Portugal as a lecturer of New Testament and Theological Aesthetics at UCP in Lisbon, at the time serving as director of the university’s magazine on theological studies, Didaskalia, and of the Centre for Religious and Cultural studies. After his appointment as consultor of the Pontifical Council for Culture in 2011, he was appointed vice rector of the UCP and the following year was sent as a visiting lecturer to the Catholic Universities of Pernambuco, Rio de Janeiro and Belo Horizonte in Brazil. In addition to numerous theological and exegetical volumes and articles, Msgr Mendonça has published several works of poetry, and in 2014, he represented Portugal in the World Day of Poetry. For years he has edited Che cosa sono le nuvole, a column in the weekly news publication “Espresso”. Pope Francis chose him as preacher of the 2018 Lenten Spiritual Exercises for the Roman Curia and, on 26 June 2018, appointed him Archivist and Librarian of the Holy Roman Church.

José Tolentino Calaça de Mendonça
Archivist and Librarian of the Holy Roman Church
Card. Calaça de Mendonça, 55, was born in Madeira, Portugal. He obtained a licence in theology from the Universidade Católica Portuguesa (UCP) in 1989, and was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Funchal on 22 August 1990. In 1994, he obtained a licence in biblical studies. After serving in parish ministry for three years, in 2000 from the University of Sanata Dharma in Yogyakarta, he held a licentiate in theology. Throughout that period he also served as lecturer in catechetics at the local faculty of philosophy, as president of the philosophy and theology department of the Jesuit University of Sanata Dharma and as dean of the faculty of theology.

Ignatius Suharyo Hardjoatmodjo
Archbishop of Jakarta
Card. Suharyo Hardjoatmodjo, 69, was born in Java, Indonesia. He was ordained a priest on 26 January 1976. After obtaining a license and doctorate from the Pontifical Urban University in Rome in 1979 and 1981, he returned to Indonesia and served as formator at the Major Seminary in Yogyakarta, a role he held until 1997. Throughout that period he also served as lecturer in catechetics at the local faculty of philosophy, as president of the philosophy and theology department of the Jesuit University of Sanata Dharma and as dean of the faculty of theology.

Juan de la Caridad García Rodríguez
Archbishop of San Cristóbal de La Habana
Card. García Rodríguez, 71, was born in Camagüey, Cuba. After completing his studies in philosophy and theology, he was ordained a priest on 25 January 1972 and served in parish ministry in Morón, Ciego de Avila and Jatibonico. Throughout the 1970s when the Cuban regime did not allow priests to preach outside church walls, he went from village to village visiting homes and distributing pamphlets that sought to reaffirm Christian values. In 1984, he was transferred to the parish of Florida, where he also served neighbouring communities.

On 15 March 1997 García Rodríguez was appointed Bishop of the titular Episcopal See of Gummi di Proconsolato and Auxiliary Bishop of Camagüey, receiving his episcopal ordination on 7 June that same year. Following the elevation of the Diocese of Camagüey to a metropolitan See, he was appointed its Archbishop on 10 June 2002. In February 2006, he was elected President of the Bishops’ Conference of Cuba. In 2007 he was appointed a member of...
New Cardinals creaded by Pope Francis at the 5 October Consistory

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the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace.

On 26 April 2016, Pope Francis appointed him Archbishop of San Cristóbal de La Habana. He is currently a member of the Permanent Committee of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Cuba and President of the national Commission for Mission and Family.

Fridolin Ambongo Besungu, OFM Cap.
Archbishop of Kinshasa
Card. Besungu, 53, was born in Beto, Democratic Republic of the Congo. He professed his perpetual vows for the Order of Friars Minor Conventual in 1983, and was ordained a priest on 14 August 1988. He obtained a degree in moral theology at the Alphonsian Academy in Rome. He then returned to his country where he served as parish priest of Boto and lecturer of moral theology at the Catholic University of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in Kinshasa, at the Major Interdiocesan Seminary of Saints Peter and Paul in Lisala and at the Mazereod Institute. Msgr Besungu served in several roles within his Capuchin community, including Major Superior and vice provincial of his order in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and as national president of the Assembly of Major Superiors (ASA MA) and of the circumscriptions of Capuchin Franciscans in Africa (CONCAF). Benedict XVI appointed him Bishop of Bukungu-Bikela on 22 November 2004, and he received his episcopal ordination on 6 March 2005.

Pope Francis appointed him Apostolic Administrator of Mbandaka-Bikoro on 5 March 2016, and then Archbishop on 12 November of that same year. He was elected vice-president of CENCO in June 2017, and played an active role in seeking a peaceful solution to the political crisis in his country. Strongly supporting Catholic organizers of democratic demonstrations, he co-chaired the dialogue that, with the signing of the San Silvestro Accord, led to new elections in 2018.

On 6 February 2018 Pope Francis appointed him Coadjutor of Kinshasa, and on 1 November of the same year Msgr Besungu succeeded as its Archbishop.

Jean-Claude Hollerich, SJ
Archbishop of Luxembourg
Card. Hollerich, 61, was born in Differdange, Luxembourg. He entered the Society of Jesus in 1974, and received his formation at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome in 1980, he received his licence at the Sankt Georgen Graduate School of Philosophy and Theology in Frankfurt. He was ordained a priest on 21 April 1980 and served in parish ministry. In 1983 he served as formator and then professor of theology at the Seminary in Asuncion, and then, from 1985-1986, as its rector. At the same time he taught theology and canon law at the Salesian theological Institute.

On 15 December 1988, Msgr Ramazzini Imeri was appointed by Cardinal San Marco of Rome Bishop of Bokungu-Ikela on 22 January 1989. He was elected Secretary General of the Episcopal Conference of Guatemala in 1990, and then, in 1995, student chaplain of Sophia University. During his 17 years in Tokyo, he served the university, the Catholic community, the Society of Jesus and the German Bishops Conference. Additionally, he served as delegate of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Japan in preparation for World Youth Day 2005, as rector of the Jesuit community of the University of Sophia, as vice-rector for general and student affairs, and as consultant of the Japanese province of the Society of Jesus. After being appointed by Benedict XVI as Archbishop of Luxembourg on 12 July 2011, Msgr Hollerich received his episcopal ordination in the Cathedral of Luxembourg on 16 October that year. He has served as President of the Commission of the Bishops’ Conferences of the European Union (COMECE) which brings together European bishops with the objective of examining the policies and legislation of the EU from the point of view of the social doctrine of the Church. On 3 April 2019 he was elected President of Gotebo International Ministries, the international association of altar servers.

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Alvaro Leonel Ramazzini Imeri
Bishop of Huehuetenango
Card. Ramazzini Imeri, 72, was born in Guatemala City. After completing his formation in Mexico, he was ordained a priest on 27 June 1971 and was immediately assigned to serve at the Major Seminary in Asunción. After obtaining a doctorate in canon law from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome in 1980, he returned to Guatemala, where he served as formator and then professor of theology at the Salesian theological Institute. On 15 December 1988, Msgr Ramazzini Imeri was appointed Bishop of San Marco by Pope John Paul II, and received his episcopal ordination on 6 January 1989. He was elected Secretary General of the Episcopal Conference of Guatemala in 1990, and then, in 1999, student chaplain of Sophia University. During his 17 years in Tokyo, he served the university, the Catholic community, the Society of Jesus and the German Bishops Conference. Additionally, he served as delegate of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Japan in preparation for World Youth Day 2005, as rector of the Jesuit community of the University of Sophia, as vice-rector for general and student affairs, and as consultant of the Japanese province of the Society of Jesus.

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Matteo Maria Zuppi
Archbishop of Bologna
Card. Zuppi, 64, was born in Rome, Italy. He earned a degree in literature and philosophy from Rome’s La Sapienza University before entering the Palestrina diocesan seminary. He earned a degree in theology at the Pontifical Lateran University.

He was ordained to the priesthood for the Diocese of Palestrina on 9 May 1971, and was immediately appointed assistant parish priest at the Basilica of Santa Maria in Trastevere in Rome, serving in this role until becoming its parish priest in 2000. Msgr Zuppi also served as rector of the Church of Santa Croce from 1982 to 2012, as a member of the diocesan presbytery council from 1995 to 2012, and as prefect of Rome’s third prefecture from 2005 to 2010.

In 2010 he began his pastoral ministry at the parish church of Santi Simone e Giuda Taddeo in one of the most populated neighbourhoods in the peripheries of Rome.

He was ordained a bishop on 14 April 2011, subsequent to his appointment by Benedict XVI as titular Bishop of Villanova and Auxiliary of Rome. On 27 October 2015 Pope Francis appointed Zuppi to the Metropolitan See of Bologna, where he welcomed the Pontiff on 1 October 2017.

Cristóbal López Romero, SDB
Archbishop of Rabat
Card. López Romero, 67, was born in Vélez-Rubio, Spain. He joined the Salesians of Don Bosco in 1974, making his first vows at the age of 16 and professing his final vows on 2 August 1974. After completing his studies at the Salesian seminaries of Girona and Barcelona, he was ordained a priest on 13 May 1978 and was awarded a degree in informatic sciences, journalism, sociology, from the Autonomous University of Barcelona in 1984.

In 1984 he left for Paraguay where he worked in youth ministry at the Salesian College in Asunción before he was appointed by Pope John Paul II as provincial of youth pastoral ministry, a role he held until 1997.

While in the Paraguayan capital, he served as pastor from 1981 to 1994, as the Provincial Superior of the Salesians from 1994 to 2000, as community director and teacher at Asunción College from 2000 to 2005, and as president of the Salesian Youth Movement in Paraguay from 1994 to 2005.

He was appointed Archbishop of Rabat on 15 December 2018, when Pope Francis appointed him as his successor on 12 April 2019, subsequent to his appointment by Benedict XVI as titular Bishop of Campidoglio and Auxiliary of Rome. On 15 July 2019 Pope Francis appointed Zuppi to the Metropolitan See of Bologna, where he welcomed the Pontiff on 1 October 2017.

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In 2002 he was called to Rome definitively by Cardinal Peter Turkson, President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, to serve as an advisor. In 2006, as part of Pope Francis' reform of the Roman Curia, the Council was incorporated into what is now the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development. Černý was appointed Undersecretary of the Dicastery's Section for Migrants and Refugees in 2017.

Archbishop emeritus of Nepte
Apostolic Nuncio
Card. Fitzgerald, 82, was born in Walsall, United Kingdom. He was ordained a priest for the White Fathers missionaries on 3 February 1969. He earned a doctorate in theology from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome in 1976, and a degree in Arabic from the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London in 1988.

He was named Provincial Superior of the African Jesuit AIDS Network on the continent he also taught at the Hekima College of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa in Nairobi.

When he was transferred to San Salvador following the assassination of six of his colleagues at the Central American University While in El Salvador he served as vice rector and director of the university, as well as director of its Institute in Human Rights. He acted as mediator in the negotiations that led to the end of El Salvador's long civil war in 1992, and in 1995 he participated in a United Nations investigative commission on the coup d'etat in Haiti.

In 2002 he then served in the Salesian missions from 2002 to 2009. After transferring to Morocco he served as director for the community, parish and scholastic ministry at the vocational training Centre of Kénitra from 2005 to 2011. On his return to Latin America, he was named Provincial Superior of Bolivia, a role in which he served from 2011 to 2014. After returning to Spain, he was elected Provincial Superior of María Auxiliadora, serving from 2014 to 2017. On 29 December 2017, Pope Francis appointed him Archbishop of Rabat, where he received the Holy Father during his Apostolic Journey to Morocco in March of 2019.

Michael F. Černý, SJ
Titular Archbishop of Benevento
Undersecretary of the Migrants Section of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development
Card. Černý, 73, was born in Brno, Czech Republic, and was raised in Montreal, Canada. He entered the Society of Jesus in 1967, and was ordained a priest for the Jesuit Province of Canada on 5 June 1973. He earned a doctorate in interdisciplinary studies from the University of Chicago in 1978. In Toronto the following year he founded the Jesuit Centre (now Forum) for Social Faith and Justice, which he led until 1989.

He taught at the Pontifical Institute for Arab and Islamic Studies (PIASA) in Rome from 1988 to 1978, and was appointed director of the Institute in 1972. In the meantime he also taught at the University of Makerere, Kampala, Uganda from 1970 to 1972.

He served in pastoral ministry for two years in Sudan, and was a member of the general council of the Society of Missionaries of Africa from 1980 to 1986. In February 1987, after some 10 years as a consultant, he was appointed Secretary of the Vatican Secretariat for Non-Christians, which later became the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue.

He was appointed a bishop by Benedict XVI, who assigned him the titular Episcopal See of Nepte. He received his episcopal ordination on 6 January 1992.

On 15 February 2006 he was appointed Apostolic Nuncio in Egypt, a post he held until October 2010. He has since retired to his congregation's home in Liverpool, England.

Sigisant Tamkevičius, SJ
Archbishop emeritus of Kuanas
Card. Tamkevičius, St, was born in Krikštonys, Lithuania. He entered the seminary of Kaunas in 1955 and, after obtaining a degree in theology, was ordained a priest on 18 April 1962. He served as vicar in various parishes. In 1968 he entered the Society of Jesus, which at the time was banned by the Soviet regime. He was among those who launched a petition against government restrictions on the Kaunas seminary in 1969 and was subsequently prohibited by Soviet authorities from practicing his priestly ministry, and forced to work in a factory for one year.

In 1972 he began publishing the underground Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania, which reported the extent of religious discrimination in the Soviet-controlled state. In 1978, together with four other Lithuanian priests, he founded the Catholic Committee for the defence of the rights of the faithful, which revealed to the world the human rights abuses committed behind the Iron Curtain. Members of the group were systematically arrested and imprisoned.

Tamkevičius continued publishing the Chronicle for 11 years, until he was arrested in 1983 and sentenced to 10 years of detention and exile with forced labour. In 1988, he was released as part of Perestroika reforms.

In 1989 he was appointed spiritual director of the Kaunas seminary and one year later assumed the role of rector.

He was ordained a bishop on 19 May 1991 after his appointment by Benedict XVI as Auxiliary Bishop of Kaunas. He was raised to Archbishop of Kaunas in 1996.

Between 1999 and 2004, he served three terms as president of the Lithuanian Bishops’ Conference and one term as vice president.

Eugenio Dal Corso, PDS P
Bishop emeritus of Benguela
Card. Dal Corso, 80, was born in Corso, Italy. At the age of 10 he was welcomed as an aspiring priest into the Congregation of the Poor Servants of Divine Providence. He was ordained a priest on 7 July 1960.

He worked in pastoral ministry and earned a doctorate in dogmatic theology from the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome. For the next few years he taught formation and served as assistant pastor in Verona before being transferred to Naples in 1970 to serve as parish priest of San Giacomo degli Italiani. In 1975, pursuant to his requests to be sent on mission, his superiors transferred him to Argentina where, in LaFerrere, he founded the parish of Nostra Senhora de la Paz, home to some 20,000 faithful. In 1986, after working for 11 years in the South American nation, he was sent to Angola’s capital, Luanda, where he served at the Congregation’s seminary in the Diocese of Òjo.

He was ordained a bishop on 3 March 1966, after Benedict XVI appointed him Coadjutor of Saurimo. On 18 February 2008, he was appointed Bishop of Benguela. Although Dal Corso retired as Bishop of Benguela in March 2008, the new Cardinal has remained active in his work with the poor in southern Africa. Just four months after his retirement, he was named chaplain of the Saint Josephine Bakhita pastoral centre in Caimundo.

Titles and Deaconries

— Miguel Angel Ayuso Guixot, MCCJ, Deaconry of San Girolamo della Carità a Via Giulia
— José Tolentino Caílca de Mendonça, Deaconry of Santo Domingo e Sisto
— Ignatius Suharyo Hardjoatmodjo, Title of Spirito Santo alla Ferratella
— Juan de la Caridad García Rodríguez, Title of Santo Aquila e Pesciella
— Fridolin Ambongo Besungu, OFM Cap., Title of San Gabriele Arcangelo all’Acqua Traversa
— Jean-Claude Hollerich, SJ, Title of San Giovanni Crisostomo a Monte Sacro Alto
— Álvaro Leonel Ramazzini Imere, Title of San Giovanni Evangelista a Spinaacco
— Matteo Maria Zuppi, Title of Sant’Egidio
— Cristóbal López Romero, SDB, Title of San Leone I
— Michael Černý, SJ, Deaconry of San Michele Arcangelo
— Michael Louis Fitzgerald, M.Afr, Deaconry of Santa Maria in Portico
— Sigisant Tamkevičius, SJ, Title of Sant’Angela Merici
— Eugenio Dal Corso, PDSF, Title of Sant’Anastasia
Without compassion there can be no loyalty

Conistory for the creation of 13 new Cardinals

“The readiness of a cardinal to shed his own blood — as signified by the scarlet colour of your robes — is secure if it is rooted in this awareness of having been shown compassion and in the ability to show compassion in turn”. Pope Francis emphasized these words to the 13 new Cardinals created in the Ordinary Public Consistory held in the Vatican Basilica on Saturday, 5 October. The following is the English text of the Holy Father’s homily.

At the heart of the Gospel we have just heard (Mk 6:50-57) the “compassion” of Jesus (cf. v. 34). Compassion is a key word in the Gospel. It is written in Christ’s heart; it is forever written in the heart of God.

In the Gospels, we often see Jesus’ compassion for those who are suffering. The more we read, the more we contemplate, the more we come to realize that the Lord’s compassion is not an occasional, sporadic emotion, but is steadfast and indeed seems to be the attitude of his heart, in which God’s mercy is made incarnate.

Mark, for example, tells us that when Jesus first passed through Galilee preaching and casting out demons, “a leper came to him begging him, and kneeling said to him, ‘If you choose, you can make me clean’. Moved with pity, Jesus stretched out hands to him and said, ‘I do choose. Be made clean!’” (1:40-42).

In this gesture and with these words, we see the mission of Jesus, the Redeemer of mankind. He is a compassionate Redeemer. He incarnates God’s will to touch our sickly flesh and accomplish this by bridging the chasm of separation.

Jesus goes out in search of the outcast, those without hope. People like the man paralyzed for thirty-eight years who lay beside the pool of Bethzatha, waiting in vain for someone to bring him to the waters (cf. Jn 5:5-9).

This compassion did not appear suddenly at one moment in the history of salvation. No, it was always there in God, impressed on his paternal heart. Let us think about the account of the talk of Moses, for example, when God spoke from the burning bush and said: “I have observed the misfortune of the people who are in Egypt. I have heard their cry — indeed, I know their sufferings” (Ex 3:7). This is the compassion of the Father!

God’s love for his people is drenched with compassion, to the extent that, in this covenant relationship, what is divine is compassionate. While, sad to say, it appears that what is human is so often lacking in compassion, God himself says so: “How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? … My heart recoils within me, my compassion grows warm and tender. For I am God and no mortal, the holy one in your midst, and I will not come in wrath” (Hos 11:8-9).

Jesus’ disciples often show themselves lacking compassion, as in this case, when they are faced with the problem of having to feed the crowds. In effect, they say: “Let them worry about it themselves…” “This is a common attitude among us human beings, even those of us who are religious persons or even religious ‘professionals’. We wash our hands of it. The position we occupy is not enough to make us compassionate, as we see in the conduct of the priest and Levite who, seeing a dying man on the side of the road, pass to the other side (cf. Lk 10:30-35). They would have thought: ‘It’s not up to me’. There are always excuses and justifications for looking the other way. And when a man of the Church becomes a mere functionary, the result is even more sour. There are always justifications; at times they are even codified and give rise to ‘institutional disregard’, as was the case with lepers: “Of course, they have to keep their distance; that is the right thing to do”. That was the way of thinking and it still is. This all too human attitude also generates structures lacking compassion.

At this point we can ask ourselves: are we conscious — we, in the first place — of having been the object of God’s compassion? In a particular way, I ask this of you, brother cardinals and those about to become cardinals: do you have a lively awareness of always having been preceded and accompanied by his mercy? This awareness was also present in the heart of the virgin Mary, who prays God as her “Saviour”, for he “looked with favour on the lowliness of his servants” (Lk 1:52).

I find it helpful to see myself reflected in the passage of Ezekiel 16 that speaks of God’s love for Jerusalem: it concludes with the words: “I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall know that I am the Lord, in order that you may remember and be confounded, and never open your mouth again because of your shame, when I forgive you all that you have done” (Ezk 16:60-63). Or again, in that other prophecy of Hosea: “I will bring her into the wilderness and speak tenderly to her…” There shall she respond as in the days of her youth, as at the time when she came out of the land of Egypt (3:14-15). We can ask ourselves: Do I feel God’s compassion towards me? Do I sense in me the conviction of being a son of compassion?

Do we have a lively awareness of this compassion that God feels for us? It is not something optional, or a kind of “evangelical counsel”. No, it is essential. Unless I feel that I am the object of God’s compassion, I cannot understand his love. This is not a reality that can be explained. Either I feel it or I don’t. If I don’t feel it, how can I share it, hear witness to it, bestow it on others? Perhaps, I am not able to do this. Concretely: am I compassionate towards this or that brother or sister, that bishop, that priest? … Or do I constantly tear them down by my attitude of condemnation, of indifference, of looking the other way and actually washing my hands of it?

On this lively awareness also depends, for all of us, the ability to be loyal in our own ministry. This also holds true for you, brother cardinals. The word “compassion” came to my mind right from the moment I started writing my letter to you of 1 September. The readiness of a cardinal to shed his own blood — as signified by the scarlet colour of your robes — is secure if it is rooted in this awareness of having been shown compassion and in the ability to show compassion in turn. And when a man of the Church becomes a mere functionary, the result is even more sour. There are always justifications; at times they are even codified and give rise to “institutional disregard”, as was the case with lepers: “Of course, they have to keep their distance; that is the right thing to do”. That was the way of thinking and it still is. This all too human attitude also generates structures lacking compassion.

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Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Good morning!

Today’s Gospel passage (cf. Lk 17:5-10) presents the theme of faith and its order of magnitude: “The gift we have received is a fire, a nanzopy in rei

nancy signifies the opposite: “the virtue that is not to be confused with timidity or fear”; rather, it is “the virtue that induces practical reason to discern how can we understand if we truly have faith, that is, if we are faithful, genuine, pure, sincere.” Jesus wishes to introduce this path by saying that the measure of faith is service. And he does so with a parable, which at first glance is somewhat disconcerting, because it presents the figure of an overbearing and indifferent master. But the master’s very way of doing things highlights what is the true core of the parable, which is the servant’s attitude of willingness. Jesus wishes to say that this is the people of God, who, for three weeks, the Synod will address the ways in which they can understand their task and their way of acting in the Church. For the Synod, the Church is always on the move, always going out and never with- doing things highlights what is the true core of the parable, which is the servant’s attitude of willingness. Jesus wishes to say that this is the people of God, who, for three weeks, the Synod will address the ways in which they can understand their task and their way of acting in the Church. For the Synod, the Church is always on the move, always going out and never with- doing things highlights what is the true core of the parable, which is the servant’s attitude of willingness. Jesus wishes to say that this is the people of God, who, for three weeks, the Synod will address the ways in which they can understand their task and their way of acting in the Church. For the Synod, the Church is always on the move, always going out and never with- doing things highlights what is the true core of the parable, which is the servant’s attitude of willingness. 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Indigenous peoples: protagonists of their history

At the opening of the Synod’s work on Monday, 7 October, Pope Francis spoke extraordinarily, illustrating the four dimensions – pastoral, cultural, social and ecological – that should characterize their work. “The following is a translation of the Holy Father’s remarks, which he delivered in Italian after a brief introduction in Spanish.”

Sisters and Brothers,

Good morning!

Welcome to all and thank you for your preparation. Everyone has worked so hard, from that moment in Puerto Maldonado until today. Thank you very much.

The Synod... I will speak in Spanish, it is better... The Synod for the Amazon, we might say that it covers four dimensions: the pastoral dimension, the cultural dimension, the social dimension, and the ecological dimension. The first, the pastoral dimension, is the essential one, the one that encompasses everything. Let us address it with a Christian heart and look at the reality of the Amazon with the eyes of disciples in order to comprehend it and interpret it with the eyes of disciples, because there are no neutral hermeneutics, ascetic hermeneutics; they are alwaysconditioned by a prior option, our prior option is that of discipleship, that of the way of missionaries, because the love that the Holy Spirit has placed in us urges us to proclaim Jesus Christ; a proclamation – as we all know – that is not to be confused with proselytism. Let us try to face the reality of the Amazon with this pastoral heart, with the eyes of disciples and of missionaries, because that is what impels us to proclaim the Lord. And let us also approach the Amazonian peoples on tip-toe, respecting their history, their cultures, their good way of living in the etymological sense of the word, not in the social sense which we often attribute to them, because peoples have a proper identity, all peoples have their wisdom, a self-awareness; peoples have a way of feeling, a way of seeing reality, a history, a hermeneutic, and they tend to be protagonists of their history with these matters, with these qualities. And as outsiders we consider ideological colonizations that destroy or diminish the characteristics of the peoples. Ideological colonization is very widespread. And without any entrepreneurial apprehension, we consider offering them prepackaged programmes, in order to “discipline” the Amazonian peoples, to discipline their history, their culture, or this concern to “domesticate” the indigenous peoples. When the Church has forgotten this, that is, the way she should approach a people, she has not been inculturated; she has actually come to disdain certain peoples. And how many failures we regret today. Let us think of De Noguès, in order to “discipline” the Amazonian peoples, in order to “discipline” the Amazonian peoples, to discipline their history, their culture. Let us consider ideological colonizations, because they are “isms”, and “civility” came from the other side. We have considered ideological colonizations that served to destroy peoples, still continuing today in my homeland, with offensive words, and so we speak of second-tier forms of civility, those that come from barbarity; and today there are the “bölitas, los paraguayos, los paraguayos, los cabeza negros”, always this distancing from the reality of a people, qualifying them and holding them at a distance. This is the experience in my country.

And then contempt. Yesterday I was very disappointed to hear – in here – a sarcastic comment about that pious man who brought offerings with his cabecitas negras. And then contempt. Yesterday I was very disappointed to hear – in here – a sarcastic comment about that pious man who brought offerings with his cabecitas negras. And then contempt. Yesterday I was very disappointed to hear – in here – a sarcastic comment about that pious man who brought offerings with his cabecitas negras.

And this need to communicate to the many, to enter a process. And this need to communicate to the many, to enter a process. It does not mean occupying space in the hall but to enter a process. And ecological processes have a need: they must be protected, cared for like a baby, supported at the beginning, cared for delicately. They need the warmth of the community; they need the warmth of the community; they need the warmth of the community; they need the warmth of the community.

Lastly, being in synod means being encouraged to enter a process. It does not mean occupying space in the hall but to enter a process. And if we approach the reality of the peoples well, they will be protected, cared for like a baby, supported at the beginning, cared for delicately. They need the warmth of the community; they need the warmth of the community; they need the warmth of the community; they need the warmth of the community; they need the warmth of the community.
After the opening Mass was celebrated on Sunday, 6 October, the Synod officially began its work on Monday morning, with the First General Congregation, which included an address by the Holy Father, a report from the Secretary General, Cardinal Lorenzo Baldisseri, a presentation by the Relator General, Cardinal Claudio Hummes, OFM, on the subject matter of the entire Instrumentum Laboris, followed by the election of members of the Commissions for the Redaction of the Final Document and for Information.

In the Second General Congregation, held on Monday afternoon, Vatican News reports that, in continuity with last year’s Synod on Young People, the Instrumentum Laboris includes various reflections on the role of youth in society, particularly concerning integral ecology, noting that many young people are following the example of Greta Thunberg who has inspired myriad student strikes against climate change. The ‘option for the youth’ encourages dialogue using young people’s terms with regard to the protection of Creation, inspiring the Church to be a prophetic voice in the area of integral ecology. Today’s youth emphasize the need for a new relationship with Creation, not an exploitative relationship, but rather one that is aware of the sufferings of the planet. The theme of the environment also has an ecumenical and interreligious aspect which presents a positive challenge for the Church, along with the exhortation to dialogue with young people, accompanying them on the true path of discernment in their desire to protect creation as a question of life or death for humanity and for the planet.

Vatican News highlighted the emphasis of several Synod Fathers on the need to protect the water table from chemical contamination, especially pollution coming from certain multinational enterprises, an issue that also pertains to the survival of certain indigenous populations and the need to preserve their culture. Underlying these reflections was the point that many of the interventions in the Synod Hall addressed the extensive activities of the mining industry, noting in particular certain abuses that have harmful repercussions for the Amazon’s indigenous people. Thus, many bishops highlighted the necessity to protect all rights, human and environmental, in order to achieve an integral ecology that re-establishes an equilibrium between humanity and nature.

The attention of the Synod Hall then turned to the question of climate change and its effect on the environment. Recognizing climate as a common good to be protected and preserved, future generations, Vatican News reported on the suggestions to cease the use of fossil fuels, especially in more industrialized countries which share greater responsibility for this problem. Some Synod Fathers expressed their views on how to overcome various forms of colonialism in favour of ways of preserving the cultural identity of the Amazon, as every culture offers its own particular contribution to the catholicy of the Church. Several bishops cited Saint John Paul II to remind participants that it is Christ who animates the centre of every culture, and as such the Church can be viewed as a complex ecosystem with a “wonderful spiritual biodiversity” that is expressed in various communities, cultural expressions that form consecrated life and various ministries within the Church.

On the topic of Indigenous Rites, one of the Synod Fathers suggested that the Church can rightly consider that the aspects of indigenous culture that are not linked to superstition may be harmonized with the spirit of the liturgy. There are experiences to be shared from the Amazon in which indigenous communities have celebrated liturgies that reflect inculturation, for example, Baptism, Matrimony, and Pious Ordination. In such a way a proposition was made to establish ad experimentum an Amazonian Rite in accord with true theological discernment, both liturgical and pastoral, so as to create a Catholic Amazonian Rite that lives and celebrates faith in Christ. Underlying these reflections was the point that just as an environmental ecosystem exists, so too does an ecclesial ecosystem.

Some of Monday’s interventions also touched upon the question of viri probati. The Instrumentum Laboris proposes the idea of viri probati as a way of ensuring the frequent celebration of the sacraments in areas where there is a shortage of priests. One discourse highlighted, however, that this cannot result in a substantial revision of the nature of the priesthood and its relationship with celibacy as envisaged in the Latin Rite of the Church. Along with these interventions was the suggestion to develop a pastoral vocation among young indigenous peoples and a revalorization in the remotest areas of the Amazon, where in some cases people have to wait more than two years to receive the Sacraments.

First and Second General Congregations

Commitment to dialogue

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Francis’ homily at the Synod’s opening Mass

Continued from page 1...

The Pope devoted much time to the question of ideologies, the “isms” that pervade reality with a devastating impact, crushing it, demanding to discipline it in accordance with their own aims and interests, an approach which, according to Francis, end up destroying the “poetry” that is the very reality of a people. A destructive but in the end also self-destructive impact, as Hummes emphasized: “the planet is experiencing a galloping devastation, depredation and degradation of the earth’s resources, all fostered by a globalized predatory and devastating technocratic paradigm reported by Laudato Si’”. The earth cannot take this anymore.

For this reason too, at the end of the report introducing the work, Cardinal Baldisseri, Secretary General of the Synod, proposed a symbolic gesture, immediately approved by the Assembly: to acquire titles to woodlands for the reforestation of 50 hectares of the Amazon Basin, in order to underscore the wish for a ‘Zero-impact Synod’.

Continued from page 1...

writes: “I am already on the point of being sacrificed (4:8). To preach the Gospel is to give life, not a fire that blazes up and devours. When peoples and cultures are devoured without love and without respect, it is not God’s fire but that of the world. Yet how many times has God’s gift been imposed, not offered; how many times has there been colonization rather than evangelization? May God preserve us from the greed of new forms of colonialism. The fire set by interests that destroy, like the fire that recently devastated Amazonia, is not the fire of the Gospel. The fire of God is warmth that attracts and gathers into unity. It is fed by sharing, not by proliferating. The fire that destroys, on the other hand, blazes up when people want to promote only their own ideas, form their own group, wipe out differences in the attempt to make everyone and everything uniform.”

With a spirit of service and respect

Over the next three weeks many topics will be addressed by the Synod Fathers, and Cardinal Hummes wished to list a few of these “core issues” (the outgoing Church and her new pathways in Amazonia; the Church’s Amazonian face: inculturation and inter-culturality in a missionary-eclectic context, ministries in the Church in Amazonia: presbytery, diocese, ministries and the role of women; the work done by the Church in looking after our “Common Home”; listening to the earth and to the poor; integral environmental, economic, social and cultural ecology, the Amazon Church in the urban reality; the issues concerning water). But the fact remains that, as the Pope repeated, it is not an assembly that simply seeks to ‘solve-problems’. “We run the risk of simply proposing pragmatic measures, when on the contrary a context-tailoring of the peoples is required, a capacity for admiration, which leads to thinking in a paradigmatic way. If someone comes with pragmatic intentions, pray the ‘I am a sinner’, so that you may convert and open your heart toward a paradigmatic perspective that springs from the reality of the peoples. We did not come here to invent social development programmes or museum-type cultural preservation, nor for pastoral actions with the same non-contemplative manner by which actions of the opposite kind are moving forward: deforestation, uniformizing, exploitation. They also create programmes that do not respect the poetry – if I may say so – the reality of the peoples, which is sovereign.”

A Synod thus “contemplative” and “poetic”, terms perhaps unsettling especially for those who will view the newly opened ecclesial Assembly with eyes clouded and conditioned by the ideological approach; observers of the Pope’s cautionary words are more applicable: “Ideologies are a dangerous weapon; people can have the tendency to latch on to an ideology in order to interpret a people. Ideologies are reductive and lead us to pose questions in our claim to comprehend intellectually, but without accepting, comprehending without assimilating”.

ANDREA MONDA

Third & Fourth Congregations

Continued from page 1...

Church must always protect life and denounced the “isms” that pervade reality with a devastating impact, crushing it, demanding to discipline it in accordance with their own aims and interests, an approach which, according to Francis, end up destroying the “poetry” that is the very reality of a people. A destructive but in the end also self-destructive impact, as Hummes emphasized: “the planet is experiencing a galloping devastation, depredation and degradation of the earth’s resources, all fostered by a globalized predatory and devastating technocratic paradigm reported by Laudato Si’”. The earth cannot take this anymore.

For this reason too, at the end of the report introducing the work, Cardinal Baldisseri, Secretary General of the Synod, said Vatican News, also focused on the issue of immigration, the migrants, in Amazonia many aspects, but which always requires coordinated ecclesial action based on welcome, protection, promotion and immigration.
Effective Multilateralism

Mr. President,

At the outset, I would like to extend the warm greetings of Pope Francis to you and to all of the delegations participating in this 74th Session of the UN General Assembly. Keenly aware that, in our day, relations within the international community are experiencing particular tension and fragmentation, Pope Francis tirelessly urges every actor on the international stage to strive to promote dialogue at every level, as this step and the “antidote” to every division. Exist ing international institutions, in this regard, can and should play their role for dialogue and we welcome the opportunity of this General Assembly to see the fruit of the reflections His Holiness dedicated his 2019 New Year’s Address to the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See to the theme of multilateralism. Insisting on its central role in the life of the international community, he offered the “pledge of States” an analysis of the challenges facing multilateralism and proposed ways to revitalize it. It is fitting, therefore, that the theme of the General Debate of this Seventy-fourth Session of the United Nations General Assembly is dedicated to galvanizing multilateral efforts for the eradication of poverty, quality education, protection of the environment and the promotion of the common good for the benefit of all.

In recent years, we have seen the value of effective multilateralism, for example, in lifting millions out of poverty, resolving various conflicts, protecting our common home, fighting against epidemics of infectious diseases, and caring for migrants and refugees. At the same time, we are painfully aware of the many ways in which international cooperation and commitment have been inadequate to the challenges faced.

Among such challenges, we must consider the situation in the Middle East, and of the various conflicts, especially in Syria and Yemen, which call for the most effective cooperation and the courageous commitment of the family of nations to put an end to the immense suffering of so many people and to set out on the road that leads to peace and reconstruction. The Israeli-Palestinian peace process, which has been going on for a long time, is of perennial concern and it runs the risk of seeing the advancement of unilateral measures and solutions instead of a collaborative response from the international community. However, we should remember that the principle of the two states, which could and should be found for Jeru salem, a place that has a historic vocation to be a city of peace! May the international community agree to resume and realize that intent of the first and fundamental UN resolution for a special status, internationally guaranteed for Jerusalem, which ensures the historical, material and religious character of the holy places to the three monotheistic religions.

What a sign of hope this would be for a renewed commitment by the United Nations!

Another area of pressing concern involves the situation in Venezuela and in Nicaragua, where institutional channels must be fully availed of in the search for negotiated solutions to the political, social and economic problems, in easing the tensions and in alleviating the suffering of the population. In this regard, it is important also that the recommendations presented by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights be fulfilled. As the positive signs continue for another year of the mandate, as established by Security Council Resolution 2366 (2017) of the UN Verification Mission in Colombia, we continue to hope that Colombia remains an inspiring example for the world of effective multilateralism.

As we mark the centenary of the establishment of the League of Nations and prepare next year for the centenary of the founding of the United Nations, it is crucial to revitalize the ethos of international cooperation. That is why galvanizing effective multilateralism is one of the most important priorities for the international community, since it is a precondition for addressing so many of our day’s greatest challenges.

Multilateralism in the pursuit of peace and security

Mr. President,

One of those great challenges is the absence of peace and security in many parts of the world. The United Nations was founded after two world wars to catalyze international cooperation, so as to prevent the scourge of another, and to do so through the promotion of peace based on fundamental human rights, integral human development and the observance of international law. Some of the most notable achievements in the history of the United Nations have involved multilateral cooperation in bringing peace to war-torn areas. Others have benefited from the less conspicuous, but equally crucial, collaboration in peacebuilding that has prevented conflicts from erupting or reemerg ing.

As the Report of the Secretary-General on the Work of the Organization describes, such joint action has recently, to different degrees, helped to prevent conflicts and reestablish peace in some countries and regions, such as in South Sudan, the Central African Republic or between Eritrea and Ethiopia. At the same time, however, armed conflicts, violent extremism, and terrorism continue to menace and destabilize many parts of the world, uprooting over 70 million people.

In our common efforts to prevent conflicts, end wars through mediation, and build post-conflict peace and reconciliation, it is opportune to recall Security Council Resolution 888 (2001) on the tenth anniversary of its adoption. This is a welcome occasion to renew our dedication to protecting women and children from widespread sexual violence during armed conflict, to boosting the implementation of positive diplomatic initiatives, conflict resolution, peace-building, humanitarian and other post-conflict measures, including the work of peacekeepers, national forces and police in order to enhance the effectiveness of their protection of women and children by peacekeeping missions. Sexual violence is degrading, dehumanizing and a grave violation of the victim’s rights and dignity. The use of sexual violence as a weapon of war is absolutely unacceptable and must be stopped. In the face of such heinous crimes, we must never overlook the plight of those children conceived as a result of sexual violence in war. Both mothers and children are innocent victims. They must be protected, assisted and rehabilitated without being separated from their families and communities. That effort must be spared to ensure their full reintegration into society.

Small arms and light weapons is particularly alarming as it spurs and exacerbates violence, conflict and war. Their proliferation and the documents that armed groups are multiplying, worldwide military spending, arms procurement is increasing, and the threat of the weaponization of artificial intelligence, cyber space and outer space is growing.

In some places, young people sadly are more adept with guns and rounds of ammunition than they are with pens and schoolbooks. Without greater international and regional cooperation, and awareness of the dangers and responsibilities related to the production and movement of arms, especially among weapon-producing States, the cycle of death, destruction and disruption will simply continue. In order to tackle the problem of illicit arms trafficking, it is necessary to work to promote, especially through education, an understanding of life and peace that may respond effectively to the causes that are at the basis of the demand of such weapons.

Greater multilateral cooperation is likewise needed to create the conditions and take the measures to avoid the elimination of nuclear weapons.
The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)—an essential step forward toward a nuclear-weapons-free world. They are the fruit of the efforts of many countries and peoples to promote greater awareness and understanding of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear and conventional dis- asters that would result from the use of nuclear weapons and are comple- ments, not distractions, to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which will have its tenth Review Conference next year.

The entry into force and full im- plementation of such Treaties can happen only if mutual trust exists. Their more than just legal obliga- tions; they are moral commitments based on trust among States. Such trust has been seriously eroded by both the recent lack of progress in nuclear disarmament and by the de- cision of some States to develop new nuclear weapons capabilities or “modernize” and “upgrade” existing ones. This deterioration of trust not only imperils the achievement of true and lasting peace among na- tions, but also undermines the foundations for multilateralism in general. It is for this reason that the Secretary-General has said that “dis- armament and non-proliferation [must] be put at the center of the work of the United Nations.” Strengthening dialogue and rebuild- ing trust are a difficult endeavor, but there is no other path available to guarantee common collective security and lasting peace.

Multilateralism in the Eradication of Poverty

Mr. President,

One of the triumphs of multilater- alism in recent years has been the global mobilization to lift people out of extreme poverty. The imple- mentation of the Millennium Develop- ment Goals, in addition to other achievements, has helped lift nearly a billion people above the poverty line. The 2030 Agenda for Sus- tainable Development is an unpre- cedented multilateral commitment to help the more than 731 million people still in extreme poverty not only be freed from that situation of abject deprivation, but continue to rise above the poverty line through ad- dressing the many causes that are necessary for their integral develop- ment. Yet, as the Secretary-General’s Re- port notes, while much progress has been achieved, if we continue at the present pace, the targets may not be reached by the end of the current period of the world’s population still live on under two dollars a day and struggle to access health care, education, water and sanitation. World hunger grew in 2018, after years of decline.11 For women, working poor has increased and millions, espe- cially women and youth, remain without adequate education. One implemen- tation of the Agenda, our efforts need to be sustained and intensi- fied. Such conditions are shameful in an era like ours, with so many technical means and capabili- ties available to address them! We must ensure our way of work toward the reduction of poverty is through adequate employment. During this centenary of the International La- bour Organisation, which has sought to promote suitable working conditions and recognize the dignity of workers, it is urgent for us to fo- cus on the importance of decent work, not only in lifting them and their families out of poverty, but in their overall personal devel- opment. Integral human develop- ment does not mean only the reduc- tion of poverty; it also implies, inter alia, access to quality education and health care, clean drinking water and sanitation, reliable social protec- tion systems and infrastructures.

In many places, girls face multiple bar- riers to entering primary school, sec- ondary schools and in one out of every three countries there is still, in formal or informal educations, no teacher between boys and girls in access to schooling.12 When Pope Francis addressed the General Assembly in 2015, he said that in three times about the “right to educa- tion” and said this principle “is ensured first and foremost by respecting and reinforcing the primary right of the family to educate its children, as well as the right of churches and social groups to support and assist families in the educa- tion of their children. Education conceived in this way,” he emphasized, “is the basis for the implemen- tation of the 2030 Agenda.” There must be a concerted multilateral commitment to ensuring it.

Over the course of its 5,000-year history, the Catholic Church has played a major role in the creation of schools, universities and other forms of institutions of learning in so many places, providing education to children, orphans, uneducated adults, immigrants and refugees, and those with learning and other disabili- ties who were being totally left be- hind. Catholic religious Orders have been founded with the explicit pur- pose and charism to educate chil- dren, as well as the right of the family to educate its children. Education conceived in this way,” he emphasized, “is the basis for the implemen- tation of the 2030 Agenda.” There must be a concerted multilateral commitment to ensuring it.

In his Encyclical letter Laudato Si’, Pope Francis encouraged every- one to come not merely smarter, but wiser today. He called upon the international community to take up the challenges that the inter- national community is currently facing. He launched the “Educational Alli- ance” wherein he renewed the invita- tion to dialogue on how we are shaping the future of our planet and the need to employ the talents of all, since all change requires an educa- tional process that fosters the new universal solidarity and a more welcoming society. Pope Francis be- lieves that: “Never before has there been such need to unite our efforts in a broad educational alliance, to form mature individuals capable of overcoming division and stagnan- tim, and to restore the fabric of rela- tionships for the sake of a more human, less selfish and more fraternal humanity […] We are ex- periencing an era of change: a transforma- tion that is not just about new semantics while indiscriminately discarding traditional paradigms”.

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In this transformative process we must have the courage to place the human person at the center and to work for the promotion of an integ- ral ecology, which is based on the inseparable bonds among concern for nature, justice for the poor, com- mitment to society and interior peace.

Multilateralism in climate action

Mr. President,

When it comes to care for our common home and the threat posed by climate change, the international community has been galvanizing its multinational cooperation. We saw it with the Paris Agreement in 2015. We witnessed it again last December in Katowice, with the adoption of the “Katowice Rulebook” to imple- ment the Paris Agreement. We wit- nessed it once more earlier this week during the Climate Action Summit to step up enhancement national commitments on greenhouse gas reductions, energy efficiency and renewable en- ergy, as well as to strengthen mutiga- tion efforts. These commitments will promote sustainable models of pro- duction and consumption, to de- velop circular economy approaches, to build resilient societies and to show- case transformations in high-emit- ting industries.

In spite of these multinational commitments, there is a clear and urgent need for more transformative and will and greater global cooperation in providing the resources to imple- ment the Paris Agreement. In this regard, the Report of the Secretary-General states that at its present pace, the world is not heading towards re- duce the global average temperature by 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, but rather to- wards a 3.5 degrees Celsius, which would have catastrophic con- sequences.

To change a multilateral re- sponse, there is a particularly urgent need for a transparent framework to strengthen trust and to invest in fulfilling the commitments made. There is a need for more effective multilateral cooperation between the developed and developing world, for
example, on financing measures to curb climate change, on technology transfers and on how to apply the principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities” and respective capacities in addressing burden-sharing. We can and we must achieve the goals we set out to accomplish the future of future generations. As encouraged by Pope Francis at the Climate Action Summit some days ago, we have to pursue with courage, honesty, and responsibility.

As we care for our common home, we must give special attention to the Amazon, where numerous fires have devastated the region. We all recognize how important the Amazon is for the whole world and indeed for the future of humanity. As Pope Francis underlined, “when the very future of humanity is at stake, devastation of the region mustnersibly call for us to act.”

The Amazon is not the only important ecosystem and vast biome facing serious threats. The Congo Basin, the rainforests in Southeast Asia, as well as national forests and vegetation covers, are similarly at risk. In his visit to Madagascar last month, Pope Francis emphasized the grave dangers confronting the country’s unique and rich biodiversity and forests. In his Address to the Authorities, Civil Society and Diplomatic Corps accredited in Antananarivo, the Pope called on them to protect the country’s “treasure…in plant and animal biodiversity” that “is especially threatened by excessive deforestation, which is responsible for deforestation of which ‘promises the future of the country and of the earth, our home.”

Multilateralism and inclusion

Mr. President,

The culture of effective multilateralism and inclusion is a goal and dialogue. It seeks to involve as many as possible in joint commitment and action. It is an issue that touches different peoples, cultures, religions and traditions.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is an example of an international community, in Goal 16, to promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. The pursuit of peace will never thrive in a culture of exclusion in which peoples do not have effective access to institutions that are at the service of all.

To ensure that no one is excluded from the benefits of economic development, there must be a multilateral commitment to prosperity for all throughout opening up economic opportuni- ty to individuals and peoples. People need access to adequate health care, education, and a High-Level Summit on Universal Health Coverage is so important. The non-government provider of health care services in the world, with some thirty thousand institutions, almost two thirds of them in Least Developed Countries. The Church runs 26 percent of the world’s health care facilities. As with education, health care institutions run by the Catholic Church serve the common good and society; as such, they usually receive the encouragement and support of governments. It is regretful, however, that their work at the time of need and their people is sometimes impeded, especi- ally when this is due to political or economic reasons.

People likewise need access to the enjoyment of all their fundamental human rights, which is often denied. When Pope Francis called in his Apostolic Exhortation to the szeremonizers of the Geneva Conventions, Pope Francis recalled that these important international legal instruments impose limitations on the use of force and protect civil- ians and prisoners in time of war. He urged States always to observe these “the limitations imposed by interna- tional humanitarian law, protecting defenseless peoples and civil struc- tures, places of worship, refugee camps.”

Meanwhile, in November we will mark the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which enumerates basic rights like a child’s right to life, to his own name and identity, to be raised by his parents within his family environment, to have a relation- ship with both parents, even if they are separated, and to be protected from abuse and exploitation. The fact that all but one State have ratified the Convention is an illustra- tion of a multilateral commitment to the rights of the child and the protection of children. It is a challenge, noble and necessary common commitment, common work, and common good.

Thank you, Mr. President.

1. Pope Francis, Address to the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See for the Traditional Exchange of New Year’s Greetings, 7 January 2019. 
10. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
Do not transform religion into ideology

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Good morning!

Beginning with the narrative of the stoning of Stephen, a figure emerges which, along with that of Peter, is the most present and significant in the Acts of the Apostles: that of “a young man named Saul” (Acts 7:58). At first, he is described as one who approves of Stephen’s death and wants to “lay waste the Church” (cf. Acts 8:3), but he will later become God’s chosen instrument to proclaim the Gospel to the peoples (cf. Acts 9:15; 22:13, 26:17).

With the high priest’s endorsement, Saul hunts down Christians and captures them. Those of you who come from populations who are persecuted by dictatorships, you well understand what it means to hunt people down and capture them. That is what Saul did. And he does this believing he is serving the Law of the Lord.

Luke says that Saul “was breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord” (Acts 9:6). Once on his feet, however, Saul is angry and hostility invades each of us to question ourselves: How do I live my life of faith? Do I seek to encounter others or am I counter to others? Saul’s state of anger – because Saul is angry – and hostility invites each of us to question ourselves: How do I live my life of faith? Do I seek to encounter others or am I counter to others? Do I belong to the universal Church (the good, the bad, everyone) or do I have a selective ideology? Do I adhere God or do I adhere dogmatic formulations? How is my religious life? Does the faith in God that I profess make me friendly or hostile towards those who are different from me?

Luke recounts that, while Saul is wholly intent on eradicating the Christian community, the Lord is on his trail in order to touch his heart and convert him to Himself. It is the Lord’s way: he touches hearts. The Risen One takes the initiative and manifests himself to Saul on the way to Damascus, an event that is narrated three times in the Book of Acts (cf. Acts 9:3–9; 22:3–21; 26:4–23). Through the pairing of “light” and “voice”, typical of theophanies, the Risen One appears to Saul and asks him to account for his fratricidal wrath: “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” (cf. Acts 9:4). Here the Risen One manifests that he is one with those who believe in him: To strike a member of the Church is to strike Christ himself! Even those who are ideologues because they want the “purity” – in quotation marks – of the Church, strike Christ.

Jesus’ voice says to Saul: “Rise and enter the city and you will be told what you are to do” (Acts 9:6). Once on his feet, however, Saul can no longer see anything. He has become blind, and from a strong, authoritative and independent man, he becomes weak, needy and dependent upon others because he cannot see. Christ’s light has dazzled him and rendered him blind: “thus what was his inner reality is also outwardly apparent, his blindness to the truth, to the light that is Christ” (Benedict XVI, General Audience, 3 September 2008).

From this “one to one” between Saul and the Risen One, a transformation begins which reveals Saul’s “personal Paschal journey”, his passage from death to life: what was once glory becomes “refuse” to reject, in order to gain the true worth which is Christ and life in him (cf. Phil 3:7–8)

Paul receives Baptism. Thus for Saul, as for each of us, Baptism marks the beginning of a new life, and it is accompanied by a new gaze upon God, upon himself and upon others, who from enemies, have now become brothers and sisters in Christ.

Let us ask the Father that, as with Saul, he will allow us too to experience the impact of his love which alone can make a heart of flesh from a heart of stone (cf. Ez 11:19), able to welcome “the same sentiment of Jesus Christ within us” (cf. Phil 2:5).

Special Greetings

I greet the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today’s Audience, especially the groups from England, Scotland, Ireland, Denmark, Norway, Nigeria, Uganda, Belize, Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Korea, Canada, and the United States of America. Upon all of you, and your families, I invoke the joy and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ. May God bless you!

I offer a special greeting to young people, the elderly, the sick and wellness. During this Marian month, imitate the zeal and the missionary fervour of Our Lady; make yourselves proclaimers of Christ in every area of your life.